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COACH PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND  
BEHAVIORS OF MALE AND FEMALE ATHLETES AND THEIR  
IMPACT ON COACH BEHAVIORS

by

Suzanne L. Tuffey

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
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Approved by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel Gould". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Dissertation Advisor

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APPROVAL PAGE

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An interpretive investigation was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of (1) coach perceptions of psychological characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and (2) how these perceptions impact coach behavior. The participants were fourteen collegiate head cross country coaches (1 female, 13 male) who were identified by their peers as having knowledge and experience in coaching males and females. They have been coaching an average of 23.2 years (range = 8-29) and have coached both females and males an average of 15.7 years (range = 3-28).

A semi-structured interview format was used to achieve the investigative purposes. More specifically, the interview consisted of three parts. In the first part, coaches were asked to identify and describe characteristics and behaviors of their male and female athletes. Content analyses were conducted on the identified raw data themes to aid in describing and interpreting coaches' perceptions of their female and male athletes. The following themes emerged as characteristic of female athletes: emotional / sensitive; need from coach; coachable; feel expectations / want to please; competitive with teammates; weight conscious / eating disorders; academically conscious and; additional attributes conducive to athletic success. Themes emerging as characteristic of male athletes included the following: know it all attitude / challenge coach; tend to get off track; ego-involved / struggle with not winning; team emphasis; less emotional than female / hide feelings and; additional attributes conducive to athletic success.

In the second part of the interview, specific situations were related to the coaches who were asked to describe how they would behave or react in the situation when it involved a male and a female athlete. Content analyses were conducted on responses to each situation to help describe and interpret how and why coaches interact differently with

female and male athletes. Behavioral differences identified by coaches included the tendency to take a more blunt, confrontive approach toward males and a more sensitive, cautious approach toward females. Additionally, there was a tendency to emphasize winning with males and doing one's best with females.

In the last part of the interview, variables identified in the review of literature as evidencing gender differences were described to the coaches. They were asked to describe any gender related differences they perceive on each of these variables. Separate content analyses were conducted on coaches' responses to describe and interpret coaches' perceptions and to verify or disconfirm findings derived from the review of literature. In addition to the description and interpretation of the results from each of the three parts of the interview, pervasive findings that emerged throughout coaches' responses were discussed.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the past several decades, there has been an explosion of female involvement in sports. Participation has been increasing in both recreational and competitive sports as well as across ages from youth to master level programs. For example, between 1960 and the early 1980s, female participation in high school sports increased more than 500% while at the collegiate level figures show a 300 to 500% increase in female participation (Cahn, 1994). Additionally, with present concern over compliance with Title IX legislation by federally funded sports programs, the number of opportunities for females, and ensuing participation rates, is undoubtedly going to continue to increase.

Where sports had previously been a domain reserved for males, it is now evident that women are extensively involved in sports. Yet, scientific work in the sport setting that seeks to understand and predict behavior that is then applied to coaches and athletes is based primarily on male subjects (Duda, 1990). Can we assume men and women respond and behave similarly in the competitive sport setting? From a theoretical and applied perspective for sport psychologists, coaches, and others involved in the sport environment, this situation raises important questions related to the influence of gender on the sport experience.

On a theoretical level, Duda (1991) suggests that sport psychology as a field has contributed little to our understanding of gender in behavioral and psychological processes in the physical domain due to the dearth of empirical investigations. Many of the theories that do address gender related behaviors in sport have been taken from other domains, such as the academic setting, and applied to the physical domain with the assumption that the theories will be applicable. Additionally, the research that have been conducted in the

physical domain is based on studying male participants with results assumed to hold true for females. For instance, in a review of empirical research published in the Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology from 1979 to 1986 (Duda, 1990), it was found that only 17% of the studies involved females. Relatedly, a survey of six journals and three conference proceedings in the sport sciences from 1966 to 1982 found that 6% of the studies focused on female athletes, while only an additional 5% made purposive comparisons between males and females (Birrell, 1988). The few empirical studies that have assessed gender differences have typically been conducted by administering questionnaires to male and female athletes and performing statistical analyses to ascertain significant differences on isolated variables. As will be seen later in this review, an examination of this empirical literature on gender differences in the athletic arena provides some support for the notion that differences exist relative to psychological variables such as goal orientation, self-confidence, and anxiety to name a few.

Taking a broader perspective, Birrell (1988) suggests that not only do men and women differ on specific sport psychological variables, but that women's values and styles in sport are different from those of men. Furthermore, she argues that research in sport needs to recognize and incorporate the different lived realities of men and women. Do these gender related differences need to be incorporated into our understanding of sport behavior? Is the physical domain a context where gender becomes a salient social category that influences cognitions and behavior?

On a practical level, the increased involvement of women in sport raises the question of whether the coach's approach and behavior toward male and female athletes should be (or can be) similar. Or, conversely, are the differences between male and female athletes on relevant psychological variables pervasive enough to necessitate a different coaching approach? For example, Anson Dorrance, a highly successful collegiate and Olympic soccer coach with over 10 years of experience in coaching men and women,

believes that motivating the two genders is as different as night and day (Schrof, 1994). Additionally, coach Dorrance has observed male-female differences in confidence levels and in value placed on the coach-athlete relationship that necessitate a different interaction. In fact, Coach Dorrance talks at coaching clinics across the country about differences in coaching male and female athletes (personal communication, November 1994). Similarly, Rollie Geiger, a highly respected collegiate cross country and track coach with over 15 years' experience coaching men and women, believes that gender related differences exist between the two teams that subsequently influence his coaching behavior (personal communication, March 1994). From a coaching perspective, then, it may be important to understand and appreciate unique characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes to ensure quality coaching that maximizes the athlete's experience and performance in sport. Additionally, understanding how perceived differences might be influencing coach behavior toward their athletes should be helpful information.

This investigation seeks to understand gender-related influences in sport from a holistic perspective by interviewing experts in the field, namely successful coaches who work with both male and female athletes. It is recognized that a number of ways exist from which to investigate the unique characteristics and behaviors of female and male athletes. However, a decision was made to conduct an investigation that is qualitative in nature because the strength of such inquiry seems most appropriate given the investigative goals and purposes. The interest in depth and detail of coaches' responses, the exploratory emphasis of the investigation, and the desire to take a holistic perspective to facilitate a better understanding are goals well-suited to qualitative inquiry. More specifically, the purposes of the present investigation are to gain an in-depth understanding of coaches' perceptions of the psychological characteristics and behaviors of their male and female athletes and how these perceptions influence coaches' approach and behavior towards their athletes.

Interestingly, as early as 1925, Coleman Griffith, a man often called the “Father of American Sport Psychology”, discussed the importance of studying expert coaches and recording the principles used, but his advice was not followed. More recently, Rainer Martens (1987a) has suggested that research in the physical domain has been remiss by ignoring the potentially valuable knowledge possessed by coaches and other experts in the field. Martens argues that we can acquire knowledge by helping those who have a great deal of experiential knowledge direct their awareness to a problem or issue. Coaches, who are “in the trenches” working with their athletes, can provide such an abundance of experiential knowledge. They have close contact with athletes on a regular basis and are in an ideal position to note subtle gender-related differences. Additionally, regardless of sport scientists’ theoretical understanding of gender influences in sport, coaches are forced to consciously or unconsciously develop an interaction style and coaching approach based on their experiences with and perceptions of male and female teams. Thus, having coaches direct their awareness to characteristics and behaviors of their female and male athletes will be an initial step toward enhancing our understanding of the influence of gender in sports.

The knowledge generated from the investigation has potential practical and theoretical implications. On a practical level, the information from the study can be disseminated to coaches at all levels to facilitate their work with athletes and make them more aware of their coaching perceptions and behaviors. It may be the case that coaching education programs need to elevate coaches’ awareness of their perceptions regarding the influence of gender in the sport domain. Or, coach education programs may need to work toward overcoming biases and stereotypes held by coaches that may restrict the athlete’s sport experience.

On a theoretical level, an attempt was made to tie investigative findings into existing theories or hypotheses as well as other studies that have investigated gender influences, thus adding greater depth to the knowledge base. Additionally, this exploratory



investigation generated hypotheses and research questions to be addressed in future studies.

### Purposes

The purposes of the present investigation are as follows:

- (1) to understand coaches' perceptions of psychological characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes, and
- (2) to understand how such perceptions may influence their coaching behavior.

To achieve these purposes, in-depth interviews were conducted with collegiate coaches who work with both male and female teams to explore their perceptions of psychological characteristics and behaviors of their female and male athletes. Where perceived differences between male and female athletes existed, further exploration was conducted to understand why differences exist. Additionally, the coaches were asked to describe their response to specific sport situations with their male and female teams to uncover how perceptions influence coaching behavior. Qualitative data analysis procedures were conducted to describe, interpret, and validate the information provided by the participants.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Related Empirical Literature

Much of our knowledge in sport psychology regarding gender differences on specific psychological variables is descriptive in nature. A typical research methodology entails administering questionnaires to male and female athletes, then analyzing the data to test for statistical differences between the two groups. This research has primarily been limited to cognitive rather than behavioral assessments of identified variables. An underlying assumption of such research endeavors is that sport participants *should* be alike on given variables. When differences exist, an implicit conclusion is that one group is inadequate or abnormal and needs to change. Such an approach is in contrast to studying gender differences to better understand and appreciate the uniqueness of male and female athletes and to facilitate coaches' work with athletes.

Although the empirical research assessing gender differences on psychological variables has limitations in its scope, a review of this literature will aid in the conceptualization and development of the present investigation. It seems important to develop a clear understanding of what is known regarding gender differences on these variables prior to conducting the interviews. While the interviewed coaches were initially asked to discuss their experiences and perceptions of male and female athletes without being tied to the variables identified through the literature searches, in the last part of the interview, coaches were asked to verify gender differences on each of the variables identified from the literature review. Therefore, in the following sections, empirical research measuring gender differences on variables relevant to sport participation are summarized. Specifically, general findings on gender differences in the following areas are

reviewed: anxiety, self-efficacy, motivation, aggression, leadership style preference, coaching behavior, communication, and physical education teacher education.

These variables were selected to be reviewed based on findings from several literature searches. First, empirical studies assessing gender differences on sport psychological variables were identified through searches of the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) and United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Sport Literature data bases. A list of variables was generated. Those that were investigated in three or more articles and deemed relevant based on the purposes of the present investigation and congruence with input from coaches were selected. Furthermore, a review of nonscientific articles on gender differences in coaching identified several additional variables not included in the first list. These variables were then researched to uncover any empirical findings regarding gender differences. These specific variables were chosen, then, based on reports from empirical and nonscientific literature searches and the input of coaches with years of experience in working with male and female athletes. It is acknowledged that this is an incomplete list as, undoubtedly, several other unidentified sport psychological variables are likely to exist that discriminate between male and female athletes. Lastly, it should be noted that this literature search was limited to studies conducted in the sport setting in an effort to parallel the context of the present investigation. An exception to this occurred when variables identified by coaches had not been studied in the sport setting. In these cases, research findings outside of sport were reviewed.

### Anxiety

The relationship between anxiety and athletic performance has been widely studied throughout the history of sport psychology. Numerous theories have been forwarded and tested in an effort to explain and predict this relationship. Although the anxiety-performance relationship is not completely understood, empirical research and experiential

knowledge suggests that anxiety has a significant influence on athletic performance (Gould & Krane, 1992). For this reason, anxiety will continue to be a much studied topic.

One important past development in anxiety research was the delineation of anxiety as a stable, personality disposition and as a variable mood state. Spielberger (1966) defined trait anxiety as "a motive or acquired behavioral disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively nondangerous circumstances as threatening and to respond to these with state anxiety reactions disproportionate in intensity to the magnitude of the objective danger" (p. 17). Thus, individuals who are high trait anxious will perceive more situations as threatening than those who are low trait anxious. State anxiety is viewed as a situation-specific emotional state characterized by feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1966). Additionally, Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene (1970) developed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) to account for and measure both trait and state anxiety. With sport-specific measures advocated as providing a better understanding of sport behavior, two sport-specific inventories were developed to measure trait and state anxiety. These inventories are the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT; Martens, 1977) and the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory (CSAI), respectively.

Another more recent development that has enhanced our understanding of the anxiety-performance relationship is the conceptualization of anxiety as a multidimensional construct. Based on the research of Borkovec (1976), the once unidimensional construct of anxiety has been differentiated into cognitive and somatic components. Cognitive anxiety is characterized by a lack of concentration, concerns with performance, and disrupted attention whereas somatic anxiety refers to physical symptoms such as butterflies in the stomach, tension, and a rapid heart rate (Davidson & Schwartz, 1976). To objectively measure the multidimensional nature of anxiety, Martens, Burton, Vealey,

Bump, and Smith (1990) developed the sport-specific Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2), which also measures state self-confidence.

One facet of anxiety research has focused on individual factors that influence multidimensional trait and state anxiety, with one of these factors being gender. To understand how males and females may differ in trait anxiety, the norms reported in the development of the SCAT (Martens et al., 1990), as well as the results of empirical investigations are reviewed.

On the SCAT, a measure of competitive trait anxiety, the reported norms indicate that female youths exhibit higher levels of trait anxiety than male youths ( $M=18.74$  and  $17.82$ , respectively). For high school athletes, males demonstrated SCAT scores higher than females ( $M=23.03$  and  $22.45$ ); the same held true for college-aged athletes, with males scoring  $20.92$  and females  $19.79$ . A review of these norms suggests trait anxiety scores vary across ages.

Gender differences in competitive trait anxiety have been assessed in several empirical investigations. Rainey and Cunningham (1988) measured competitive trait anxiety using the SCAT with 64 male and 64 female collegiate athletes. Additionally, the relationship between fear of failure and fear of evaluation and competitive trait anxiety was assessed using separate multiple regressions for males and females. A test of the hypothesis that females would score higher than males on the SCAT was nonsignificant, although the trend was consistent with predicted results. Specifically, the mean for females was  $22.83$  and the mean for males was  $21.52$ . Results of the multiple regression for males revealed expectancy of criticism (a measure of fear of evaluation) and performance worries (a measure of fear of failure) as significant predictors of SCAT scores accounting for 22% of the variance. For females, the only significant predictor of SCAT was performance worries, which accounted for 24% of score variance. This finding is preliminary evidence

that indicates the manifestation of anxiety in male and female athletes may be related to different antecedent factors.

Gill (1988), in an investigation of gender differences in sport psychological variables, also used the SCAT to measure competitive trait anxiety of male and female physical activity participants in high school and college-aged samples. As predicted, females scored higher than males on the SCAT in all three samples. Separate discriminant function analyses of gender differences indicated that anxiety was one of the variables on which males and females differed significantly.

White (1993) investigated gender differences on specific psychological skills using the Psychological Skills Inventory for Sport (PSIS; Mahoney, Gabriel, & Perkins, 1987). This inventory was designed to measure athletes' self-assessment of six psychological characteristics: anxiety, concentration, confidence, mental preparation, motivation, and team emphasis. While few studies have used the inventory to assess gender differences, Mahoney has found females report more problems with anxiety. However, with a sample of elite male and female skiers, White (1993) found no significant difference between males and females on the anxiety subscale.

In addition to differences in trait anxiety, gender differences in state anxiety also have been investigated in several studies. Feltz (1988) investigated, in part, state anxiety levels of male and female college-aged participants before several executions of a modified back dive. Statistical analyses revealed a significant gender difference for anxiety with males reporting lower anxiety scores than females. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in actual heart rate, a physiological measure of somatic anxiety. Further analyses conducted to assess this finding suggested that "neither males nor females appear to be inaccurate in their perceptions; rather, they tend to be biased in opposite directions on their perceptions" (p. 158). Consistent with this result is the research finding by Gackenback

(1982) that males offer less verbal expression of stress and self-report less stress than females.

Evidence for gender effects can also be found by reviewing norms from a state anxiety inventory. The CSAI-2, a measure of state anxiety, is factored into two components, cognitive and somatic anxiety. As reported by Martens et al. (1990), norms for cognitive state anxiety indicate that females score higher than males across high school (21.61, 18.48), college (18.40, 17.68), and elite level (20.11, 19.29) participants. Norms for somatic state anxiety indicate that females score higher than males at the high school (18.92, 17.70) and elite (17.98, 16.29) levels, while the situation is reversed for college-aged athletes with males demonstrating higher somatic anxiety scores than females (17.68, 16.85).

Jones and Cale (1989) and Jones, Swain, and Cale (1991) have conducted empirical investigations of gender differences in the temporal patterning of anxiety using the CSAI-2. One of the purposes of these studies was to assess the validity of the pattern predicted by multidimensional anxiety theory which posits that cognitive anxiety and self-confidence remain unchanged in the precompetition period and somatic anxiety increases immediately prior to competition. In the investigation by Jones and Cale (1989), the CSAI-2 was administered to both male and female athletes six times during the precompetition period. Results supported multidimensional anxiety theory predictions for males but not for females. Specifically, females evidenced an increase in precompetition cognitive anxiety and a decrease in self-confidence, a pattern similar to that found in a study by Krane and Williams (1987) with female gymnasts.

The study by Jones et al. (1991) sought to examine the reliability of the findings by Jones and Cale (1989), using a similar sample of male and female athletes. In addition, situational antecedent variables were measured as a possible source of gender differences. The results added further support to the notion that male and female athletes exhibit

different temporal patterning in cognitive anxiety scores prior to competition. In this study, cognitive anxiety remained stable in males in the time leading up to competition, while females evidenced increases in cognitive anxiety. Males and females both showed increases in somatic anxiety but only on the day of competition. There also was a gender difference in CSAI-2 self-confidence. Both genders evidenced a decrease in confidence but females to a greater extent than males.

To assess antecedent variables that may account for gender differences on the CSAI-2 subcomponents, multiple regression analyses were conducted. The results showed that different antecedent variables were predictors of cognitive and somatic anxiety and self-confidence for males and females. Specifically, "significant predictors in the females were associated with personal goals and standards [task orientation]; significant predictors in the males were associated with interpersonal comparison and winning [goal orientation]" (p. 1). Of particular importance to the present investigation is the implication suggested by the authors. Specifically, it is suggested that the findings indicate coaches may need to interact differently with male and female teams because of gender differences in precompetition anxiety and different antecedent variables influencing anxiety. The present investigation studied this suggested implication empirically by assessing whether coaches do, in fact, alter their coaching approach based on perceived differences.

In summary, the research findings related to gender differences in self-reported levels of anxiety evidence a general pattern, although variability across findings is common. While some reported measures of trait anxiety indicate that females have scored higher than males, others report no significant differences between males and females in trait anxiety. Additionally, SCAT norms indicate male and female differences vary across ages. Cognitive state anxiety measures evidence strong support that females score higher than males whereas reported somatic state anxiety scores sometimes show no significant gender differences and other times evidence gender differences as a function of age.



However, the trend is for females to report higher multidimensional state and trait anxiety scores than males. Additionally, initial research suggests males and females may differ in the antecedent variables of anxiety, as well as in their reporting of anxiety.

### Self-Confidence / Self-Efficacy

Self-confidence, or the belief in one's abilities, has been a widely studied topic in, among others, the physical domain. It is thought to be a mediating construct affecting participation and subsequent performance (Bandura, 1977). The finding of significant gender differences in self-confidence in other achievement settings has prompted similar assessments of gender differences in the competitive sport setting. In the following section, selected sport research findings related to gender differences in self-confidence are discussed.

A difficulty in reviewing this literature is that the construct of self-confidence has been operationalized in several ways such as sport confidence, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and perceived competence. Although these constructs are slightly different, in general, they all purport to measure an individual's perception of their physical abilities. Therefore, this review draws from empirical research that measures gender differences in the perception or estimate of one's ability regardless of the specific name given to the construct.

A study by Petruzzello and Corbin (1988) assessed gender differences in self-confidence on two gender-neutral lab tasks with college-aged participants. A second part of the study measured the effects of performance feedback on the self-confidence of females. The researchers sought to test Lenney's (1977) hypothesis that the self-confidence of females in achievement situations is influenced by situational factors. Specifically, Lenney suggested that females may display less confidence than males when (a) the task is male oriented, (b) the situation is competitive or evaluative, or (c) feedback

is ambiguous. In the investigation, prediction of performance success on the task served as the measure of self-confidence. A chi-square analysis revealed significant differences between males and females in their prediction of success with more males than females predicting high performance success. Additionally, it was found that feedback to females more rapidly increased self-confidence than no feedback, especially for those with low self-confidence. However, this increased self-confidence was task-specific and did not carry over to other tasks. Although no males were provided feedback to permit comparisons between genders, this finding could have important implications for coaches working with female athletes in that feedback seems to have an especially positive effect on confidence.

A similar study (Corbin, Landers, Feltz, & Senior, 1983) also found that males made significantly higher performance estimates on a muscular endurance task. Further analyses suggested that female modesty rather than male boastfulness may account for the gender differences in performance estimates.

Another measure of self-confidence is that which is assessed as a subscale in the CSAI-2. Norms, reported by Martens et al. (1990), demonstrate that males display higher CSAI-2 subscale self-confidence scores across competitive levels. Additionally, research on the temporal patterning of CSAI-2 subscales by Jones and colleagues (1989, 1991) indicated that males and females evidence different precompetition patterns of self-confidence with females scoring lower than males.

Additionally, the work by Mahoney et al. (1987) using the PSIS suggests that, among males and females, self-confidence is the most differentiating of the characteristics with females scoring lower than males. However, other researchers (Vealey, 1988; White, 1993) have found that the confidence levels of male and female elite athletes do not differ significantly.

Feltz (1988) assessed causal elements of self-efficacy on a high avoidance motor task in an attempt to verify a respecified model of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy which

was based on her earlier work. The model posits that previous related experiences, self-efficacy, and heart rate predict performance, and previous performance and self-efficacy predict subsequent performance. In part, she compared males and females on efficacy expectations related to the task. Statistical analyses resulted in no significant difference between males and females on efficacy expectations, although males evidenced higher self-efficacy scores on both trials. Separate path analyses were conducted for males and females to test the proposed self-efficacy model. Results suggest that females fit the model better; they evidenced a reciprocal relationship between efficacy and performance in that efficacy influences performance and performance outcome influences subsequent self-efficacy. It is suggested that future research in self-efficacy needs to compare males and females to assess for consistent differences that may be incorporated into models because initial work suggests gender differences in the self-efficacy performance relationship.

Recently, a meta-analysis on gender differences in self-confidence in physical activity was conducted (Lirgg, 1991). Specifically, the purpose of the analysis was to address the hypotheses proposed by Lenney (1977) that suggest that gender differences in self-confidence are due to specific situations. The study sought to test whether the gender typing or competitive/evaluative nature of the task (i.e., competitive versus noncompetitive) influences self-confidence in motor performance. Studies published after 1977 that assessed confidence in females and males and contained statistics amenable to effect size calculations were included in the analyses. In total, 35 studies yielding 46 effect sizes were included in the meta-analysis. Results showed that females and males differ statistically in self-confidence in physical activity. The overall effect size was .40 in favor of males. However, a closer look at the data revealed that "although males on the average were more confident, the results are extremely variable, and no conclusion concerning the magnitude of gender differences can be reached on the basis of this analysis alone" (p. 298).

Analyses were also conducted to assess if gender typing of the task and competitive versus noncompetitive tasks influenced the effect sizes. Support was found for Lenney's (1977) hypotheses regarding the gender typing of the task in that tasks judged to be more masculine than others produced greater differences in self-confidence. However, this finding must be viewed with caution because only one feminine typed task was included in the analysis. The competitive situation in which the task took place did not differentially affect the gender difference, thus refuting Lenney's hypothesis that females will be less confident than males in competitive situations.

In summary, a review of the empirical literature on gender differences in self-confidence reveals that males tend to be more confident than females in the physical domain. However, this finding may be due, in part, to specifics of the research methodology (i.e., masculine typed tasks) as suggested by Lenney. Additionally, although differences exist, the magnitude of these differences are oftentimes small.

### Motivation

Motivation, often defined as the intensity and direction of effort (Martens, 1987b), is believed to be a salient determinant of behavior. Therefore, in order for coaches to understand and influence athletic-related behavior, the motivation of athletes also must be understood. Because of this, a primary emphasis of much research in sport psychology has been to better understand motivation and how to facilitate motivation in athletes.

Although the general definition of motivation appears simple and straightforward, it is an extremely complex, multifaceted construct. One reason for its complexity is because numerous situational and individual factors affect motivation and motivated behavior; of importance in this review is the effect of gender on motivation. For example, Weiss and Chaumeton (1992), in their overview of motivational orientations in sport, suggest that gender is a mediating variable impacting motivational orientations and motivated behavior

that needs to be a topic of future research. Additionally, motivation is viewed as a complex construct because it can be approached from various positions and can be conceptualized as an outcome as well as an individual difference variable.

The focus of the following section is to review the literature addressing gender differences in motivation. Three general approaches to understanding motivation are reviewed. These include causal attributions, participation motivation, and various aspects of achievement motivation.

Causal attributions. Attribution theorists are concerned with identifying and understanding how people explain the causes of events that they experience or observe. It is believed that attributions assigned to outcomes are mediated by perceived ability, expectations, and perceptions of subjective success (Roberts & Duda, 1984). Furthermore, these attributions then influence subsequent performance, affective responses, and motivated behavior. Researchers and practitioners believe that to better understand and describe sport behavior, it is necessary to understand the causal attributions of sport performance.

A leading researcher in attribution theory is Bernard Weiner (1985). In his more recent empirical work, he has identified three causal dimensions or common properties that underlie all attributions. The three dimensions include (1) locus of causality - whether the cause of the outcome is perceived to reside within or external to the individual; (2) stability - concerns the relative variability of the cause over time; and (3) controllability - whether the cause of the outcome is under the control of the individual or others. Any causal element that is identified (i.e., luck, effort, ability) can be categorized along these dimensions, thus allowing for comparison across individuals and domains. It is suggested that an individual's perception of cause in terms of these dimensions is more meaningful than the attribution itself. Additionally, Weiner (1985) has developed a model illustrating the causal attribution process, which posits a relationship between the causal dimensions

and affective reactions, expectancies, and future behaviors. Much research is needed to validate the proposed relationships within the sport domain.

Empirical research on causal attributions has been aided by the development, and subsequent modification, of the Causal Dimension Scale (CDS; Russell, 1982). The instrument allows subjects to make an open-ended attribution and then classify this response along the three dimensions where they perceive it to best fit. This is a methodological improvement over earlier work, whereby the subject would assign an attribution to an outcome and the *researcher* would classify the response along the causal dimensions.

Numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of the attribution process in sport. However, few have focused on potential gender differences in this process. In 1983, Blucker and Hershberger noted that scant attention in sport psychology has been given to the comparison of male and female athletes regarding how they explain performance outcomes. Over 10 years later, the situation has not changed that much in that few empirical investigations have assessed gender differences in causal attributions. Furthermore, results from these investigations have produced inconsistent findings, suggesting more research is needed to better understand the attribution process in males and females.

Early research suggested that females are more modest and take less responsibility in their attributions than males. Specifically, females tend to make more external attributions for success whereas males make more internal attributions (Deaux, 1976; Rejeski, 1980). Explanations for this finding have been linked to the influence of expectations. Because it is believed that females, in general, have lower expectations for success, when they are successful they attribute success to external rather than internal factors. Such attributions then perpetuate low expectations in future tasks because the cause of the successful outcome is perceived to lie outside of the individual's control.

Based on these findings, a self-serving bias, which posits that individuals will make internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure, may not be applicable to females because of their tendency to make external attributions.

In later research, Tenenbaum and Furst (1986) investigated the consistency of athletes' attributional responses to performances as well as gender differences in these responses. Where previous studies have typically measured only one attribution for each outcome, this study assessed up to three attributions using the CDS. Based on previous findings, it was hypothesized that on the first attribution winners would give more internal, stable, and controllable causes than losers. However, this self-serving bias was not predicted to hold true for the second and third attributions. Because of the paucity of research differentiating males and females on attributions, the researchers made no a priori hypotheses. Univariate analyses revealed that on the first attribution, as predicted by the self-serving bias, winners made more internal, stable, and controllable attributions. However, the differences between the groups did not continue as losers began to make internal attributions. Of particular importance in this review is the finding related to gender. A significant main effect ( $p < .05$ ) for gender was found on the three attributions across all three dimensions. Specifically, males consistently rated the causes of outcomes as more internal, stable, and controllable than females. One exception was on the third attribution where females rated the cause as more internal than the males. This finding is in contrast to the lack of significant gender differences reported by Scanlan and Passer (1980), who used only one attribution. This is also contrary to the findings of Gill, Gross, Huddleston, & Shifflett (1984) in which females rated effort, an internal attribution, as more important than males.

Riordan, Thomas, and James (1985) measured gender differences in causal attributions made by 54 male and 25 female racquetball players. It was predicted that athletes would make self-serving attributions irrespective of gender. Although previous

studies have found gender differences, it was thought that the high involvement of both males and females would negate any gender differences in attributions. When considering both male and female players, analysis revealed partial support for a self-serving bias on the locus of causality dimension. Specifically, following a win players were more likely to make an internal attribution. Contrary to predictions, gender differences were evidenced on the locus of causality dimension. Losing females were more likely to make external attributions than males. Thus, females supported the self-serving bias by making internal attributions for wins and external attributions for losses whereas males made more internal attributions for both wins and losses. This partially supports the findings of Tenenbaum and Furst (1986) in that males tend to make more internal attributions irrespective of outcome. Additionally, analysis of gender differences revealed that females made significantly more stable attributions than males following a win, suggestive, perhaps, of expectations as high or higher than that of males.

Also investigating causal attributions, Anshel and Hoosima (1989) assessed the effect of positive and negative feedback on attributions as a function of gender. Subjects were required to perform a lab task and given either positive or negative feedback after each trial. Following the last trial, subjects completed the CDS. Although small gender differences were evidenced, it was concluded that males and females do not reliably differ with respect to causal attributions. One noted trend, however, was that males scored higher on the stability dimension than females.

Lastly, a study worthy of mention is that conducted by Bird and Williams (1980) in which they took a developmental perspective in their assessment of gender differences in causal attributions. It was found that male and female children (7- to 12- year-old) used similar attributions to explain sport outcomes. However, 13- to 18- year-old males and females identified different attributions. Males tended to attribute outcome to internal



causes (effort), whereas females more often attributed outcome to external, unstable causes (luck).

This brief review of gender differences in causal attributions has clouded rather than cleared the water. The studies seem replete with inconsistent findings, thus allowing few, if any, generalizations. Although it is generally suggested that males and females differ in attributions some studies have found no gender differences. Additionally, where gender differences have been evidenced, there seems no clear pattern on the three dimensions to these noted differences (i.e., some studies report males to make more stable attributions, whereby others report females to be more stable).

Participation motivation. Research on participation motivation is concerned with understanding the reasons individuals adopt for initiating and maintaining involvement in physical activity, as well as reasons individuals choose to discontinue involvement. A review of studies on participation motivation, conducted primarily on the youth population, reveals recurrent motives for participation that include competence, fitness, affiliation, team aspects, competition, and fun (Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). While much is known regarding participation motivation, less is known about potential gender differences in these motives. Based on their review of empirical studies on participation motivation, Weiss and Chaumeton (1992) suggest that some gender differences have been found, but the descriptive nature of the investigations limit interpretation. They posit that more theoretically based studies may affect findings regarding gender and other variables.

Although empirical research has produced some inconsistent results, in general, findings seem to suggest that female athletes are more motivated to participate by social factors, whereas males are more motivated by competitive factors. These results have been found in both the exercise and competitive sport settings (Gill, Gross, & Huddleston, 1983; Tappe, Duda, & Menges-Ehrnwald, 1989). Some of the more recent studies

assessing gender differences in participation motivation are reviewed in the following section.

Gill, Gross, and Huddleston (1983) measured participation motivation of young male and female athletes from a wide array of sports using a questionnaire they developed for this purpose. An analysis of gender differences found that females place less emphasis than males on achievement / status as a motive for participation. Specifically, both groups rated "improvement of skills" as the most influential motive for participation, but females rated "fun" as next important while males rated "challenge" and "competition" as important. A similar study was conducted by Gould, Feltz, and Weiss (1985) on a sample of male and female youth swimmers using a modified version of the inventory developed and used by Gill et al. (1983). T-tests revealed that males and females differed significantly ( $p < .05$ ) on 4 of 14 items from the self-report questionnaire. Specifically, "fitness", "friendship", "something to do", and "fun" were rated as more important by females than males. Thus, it was suggested that females place more emphasis than males on fun and friendship as salient motives for participation, but did not differ on achievement-related motives.

A recent investigation by Flood and Hellstedt (1990) studied, in part, participation motivation of male and female Division II intercollegiate athletes across a variety of sports. Although this study sampled an older age group, the findings of Gill and colleagues (1983) were predicted to hold true for collegiate athletes. A modified version of the Gill et al. (1983) participation motivation questionnaire was administered to the athletes. In the data analysis, individual items from the inventory were combined into four primary motives: affiliation, social, competition, and fitness/skill. A MANOVA and follow-up tests revealed competition was significantly more important for males than females. Additionally, females rated social motives as more important than competitive motives. Therefore, within this sample of collegiate athletes, females rated social and fitness items as the strongest motives, whereas males rated competition and winning as the strongest motives

for participation. As predicted, these findings are in support of previous research on participation motivation. Furthermore, the authors suggest that the information is useful to individuals involved within this athletic program because the identified male / female differences "may influence the recruitment of new athletes and assist in fulfilling and maintaining the athletes' needs who are already involved in the program" (p. 166). Thus, the results have both theoretical and practical implications. Although the findings are consistent with earlier work on participation motivation, more work is needed with collegiate athletes to strengthen the results.

In sum, research on athletes of various ages suggests that gender differences exist with respect to motives for participation. For the most part, evidence suggests that males rate competitive reasons and females rate social reasons as the most important motives for participation.

Achievement motivation. Achievement motivation refers to a person's efforts to master a task, achieve excellence, overcome obstacles, perform better than others, and take pride in accomplishments (Murray, 1938). Research on achievement motivation seeks to understand how an individual's achievement orientation influences a variety of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings such as activity choices, goal persistence, and intensity of effort. Related to this review is the influence of gender as an individual difference variable affecting achievement motivation and motivated behavior. Early work on achievement motivation by McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1953) suggested that gender differences exist, and subsequent research reported males to be more competitive than females (Lenney, 1977; Spence & Helmreich, 1983). However, this early theory and research on achievement motivation was not sport-specific and, therefore, may not explain sport behavior because of unique aspects of the sport environment.

To remedy this situation, Gill and Deeter (1988) developed a sport-specific, multidimensional measure of achievement motivation called the Sport Orientation

Questionnaire (SOQ). The SOQ measures three dimensions of sport achievement: (1) competitiveness - an achievement orientation to enter and strive for success in competitive sport; (2) win orientation - a desire to win and avoid losing in competitive sport; and (3) goal orientation - an emphasis on achieving personal goals in competitive sport. Numerous studies conducted by the investigators (Gill, 1986; Gill & Dzewaltowski, 1988; Gill, Dzewaltowski, & Deeter, 1988) provide evidence for the internal consistency and stability of the three dimensions. Additionally, research suggests that gender differences exist in sport orientation as measured by the SOQ.

Gill and Dzewaltowski (1988) conducted an exploratory analysis of achievement orientations with a sample of male and female collegiate athletes and nonathletes using three achievement orientation measures - the SOQ, Vealey's Competitive Orientation Inventory (COI), and Spence's Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire (WOFO). The COI was designed to measure the degree to which an individual is oriented toward winning or performing well in competitive sports. The two orientations are outcome and performance, respectively. The WOFO is a multidimensional measure of achievement orientation not specific to sport. The three primary dimensions of achievement orientation measured are mastery, work, and competitiveness. Of particular interest in this review are the findings regarding gender differences. Univariate statistical analyses indicated that males scored significantly higher ( $p < .001$ ) than females on the competitiveness and win orientation dimensions of the SOQ. Additionally, females scored higher than males on the goal orientation dimension, but the difference was not significant ( $p < .06$ ). On the COI, females scored significantly higher than males on the performance orientation, whereas males scored significantly higher on the outcome orientation. Additionally, the authors report that females score at least as high as males on measures of general achievement orientation, suggesting that gender may influence emphasis *within* the achievement setting and not achievement orientation per se.

Gill (1988) conducted an additional study on achievement orientation focusing primarily on gender differences using three samples of high school and college physical activity participants. Questionnaires administered to the participants included the SOQ, WOFO, and SCAT. Gender differences were analyzed separately for each sample using discriminant analyses to compare males and females on achievement orientation scores. Additionally, stepwise discriminant analyses were conducted to assess the contribution of specific achievement orientation scores in accounting for the gender differences. In support of previous findings, results showed consistent gender differences in achievement orientation. In all samples, male scores on the SOQ dimensions of competitiveness and win orientation were significantly higher than the female scores. No statistical difference was evidenced on goal orientation. Moreover, males and females had similar scores on general achievement orientation except for the competitiveness dimension. It is concluded that "gender differences in competitive orientation and sport participation do not seem to reflect either general achievement orientation or interest in sport. Instead, the observed differences may well reflect gender differences in the extent to which individuals emphasize interpersonal comparisons and winning versus personal performance goals within sport" (p. 157).

In sum, research on achievement orientation suggests that in sports males are more oriented toward winning and competition, whereas females are more oriented toward personal goals / self-referenced success. These achievement orientations influence different motivations and motivated behaviors of male and female athletes.

In addition to assessing achievement orientation, achievement motivation also has been investigated by assessing individual differences in achievement goals. Achievement goals are derived from an individual's primary goals for achievement behavior as well as the meanings attached to success and failure (Nicholls, 1984). Researchers studying achievement goals hold that to understand motivation, a person's achievement goals in

interaction with his or her perceived competence also must be understood. Furthermore, two primary goal perspectives or orientations have been identified by researchers: task and ego orientations. Although slight variations exist in conceptualization of the goal orientations and different names are used, behavioral predictions based on these constructs are similar.

The central focus in a task orientation is mastery of the task, whereby success is subjective or self-referenced. It is suggested by Nicholls (1984) and Dweck & Elliott (1983) that such an orientation leads to adaptive behavior patterns, such as increased effort and persistence on the task, and perceptions of competence, which enhance motivation.

The central focus in an ego orientation is to demonstrate high ability relative to a comparison group such that success is other-referenced. Furthermore, it is suggested that this orientation may lead to maladaptive behavior patterns, especially for those with low perceived ability. To avoid demonstrating incompetence, it is hypothesized that ego-oriented individuals who doubt their ability will avoid challenging tasks and, instead, select easy or extremely difficult tasks (Nicholls, 1984).

The majority of research assessing achievement goal orientations has focused on testing the specific hypotheses regarding behavior set forth in the theories. However, a few researchers have focused on variables that may influence or are related to task and ego goal orientations with one variable being gender. In general, research has demonstrated that males are more ego-oriented and females are more task-oriented (Duda, 1986, 1989; Ewing, 1981). Thus, males tend to focus on comparing their performance with and defeating others, whereas females focus on comparing their performance against personal standards and personal improvement.

Duda (1989) took this line of research a step further by assessing the relationship between achievement goals and perceived purposes of sport. A positive relationship has been found in the academic achievement setting between students' goal perspectives and

their perceptions of the wider purposes of education (Nicholls, Patashnick, & Nolen, 1985). Specifically, an ego orientation was related to a belief in education as a means to an end, i.e., wealth. A task orientation, on the other hand, was related to a belief in education as an end in itself; education for its own sake is meaningful.

Duda attempted to replicate these findings in a sport setting as well as to assess gender differences in goal orientations. The sample in her study included 128 male and 193 female high school athletes who were required to complete the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire and Purpose of Sport Questionnaire. To assess gender differences on goal perspective, t-tests were conducted. Consistent with previous findings, females scored significantly higher than males in task orientation ( $p < .03$ ) and males scored significantly higher than females in ego orientation ( $p < .01$ ). Gender differences on perceived purposes of sport were analyzed using a MANOVA, which indicated that females perceived mastery/cooperation to be important purposes of sport ( $p < .001$ ) and males believed enhanced competitiveness, high status career opportunities, and social status (all  $P < .001$ ) to be more important purposes of sport. These findings are also consistent with Jones et al. (1991) who found that personal goals and standards are associated with anxiety in females, whereas interpersonal comparisons and winning are associated with anxiety in males. Lastly, consistent with Nicholls and colleagues (1985), a task orientation was positively related to the belief that sports should teach people to try their best and cooperate and respect others, and it should enhance self-esteem. An ego orientation was positively related to the belief in athletics as a vehicle for external benefits and personal gains.

In summary, the findings suggest that males and females not only have different goal orientations in the achievement setting (in support of previous findings) but also perceive different purposes of athletic involvement. "In particular, females viewed athletics as a context that promotes working with others and the significance of trying one's best more than males did. Males, by contrast, perceived that a major purpose of athletics was to

enhance the competitive spirit and accentuate the importance of winning at all costs" (p. 332). These findings suggest that the athlete's perception of the wider purposes of sport may also play a significant role in achievement-related behavior and may need to be addressed to better understand motivation and motivated behavior.

As mentioned previously, one variable that is purported to interact with achievement goals and influence motivated behavior and affect is perceived competence. Specifically, it is postulated that enhancing an individual's perception of competence in sport activities will have a positive effect on affect and motivation (Harter, 1984). One way perceived competence has been conceptualized and measured is by assessing expectations for success. Of importance in this review is the finding that males and females differ in their expectations for success in the sport domain. In general, females report lower expectations for success than males (Eccles, 1985), which then influences differences in achievement behaviors.

Interestingly, research also suggests that males and females differ in their preference for sources of information by which they judge their physical competence (reported by Weiss, 1994). For children under the age of 14, no gender differences in information source preferences have been found. However, research on athletes 14-18 years old indicates gender differences. Specifically, males rate competitive outcomes and speed and ease of learning as more important in evaluating physical competence than do females. Females, on the other hand, rate self-comparison; goal achievement; and feedback from peers, coaches, and spectators as more important than males. These findings imply that, for coaches trying to facilitate motivation by enhancing an athlete's perceived competence, different strategies should be used for males and females because different sources are deemed important in judging competence.

As noted previously, one limitation of research on gender differences in achievement motivation is that the work typically is not theoretically based. One



noteworthy exception is the research of Eccles' and her colleagues (Eccles, 1985; Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Foff, Kaczala, Meece, & Midgley, 1983; Eccles & Harold, 1991). Rather than simply assessing the existence of gender differences in achievement motivation, they have attempted to identify why gender differences exist. They have developed a theoretical model for studying and understanding motivational factors affecting achievement-related decisions and behaviors. Within this model, gender is one source of influence. To date, most of the work developing and using the model has been on academic achievement, but it can be applied to a variety of achievement contexts such as competitive sport.

The theoretical model is based on an expectancy x value model of choice (Eccles & Harold, 1991). At the core of the model is the assumption that individuals are presented with an array of choices in various contexts. The choices an individual makes are linked most directly to two factors: one's expectations for success and the value, or importance, placed on the various options. In the model, the attitudes and beliefs identified as important mediators of expectancies include (1) self-concept of ability, (2) estimates of task difficulty, (3) interpretations of previous experiences and performances, (4) identification with gender roles, and (5) beliefs and behaviors of significant socializers. Task value, the second major influence on choice, is broken down into four components: utility value, perceived cost, incentive value, and attainment. It is believed that gender may exert an influence on the subcomponents of both expectancies and values of sport involvement. Such gender differences in value and expectancies are influenced by sociocultural factors and individual characteristics and experiences.

Eccles and Harold (1991) report the results of two studies addressing gender differences in sport achievement using their expectancy x value model. The first study examined self-perceptions, values, and activity choices of male and female adolescents. Results indicated that boys rate themselves as more able in sports and rate sports as more

important and enjoyable than girls. Additionally, these differences in value and expectations were greater for sports than for math or English. To test the Eccles et al. (1983) model, a path analysis was conducted to assess the mediating role of beliefs and self-perceptions in gender differences in participation. As predicted, gender differences in free time spent on sport (a measure of achievement choice) was significantly related to expectations and value.

Eccles and Harold (1991) conducted a similar study with a sample of elementary school children to examine when and how gender differences emerge. Gender differences in perceptions of expectancy and value were found with this age sample to be similar to those found with junior high students. Additionally, a test of motor proficiency was given to all subjects to measure their sports aptitude. The assessment of gender differences, using one-way ANOVAs, indicated that gender accounts for only 2% of the variance in motor proficiency scores, but gender accounts for 14% of the variance in children's perceptions of their sport ability. The findings suggest that differences are a consequence of gender-role socialization more so than "natural" differences.

In summary, in support of the model, the results "document the existence of consistent and strong gender differences in children's ratings of their own ability in sport and of the importance they attach to the sport domain" (p. 29). Girls, in comparison with boys, have a more negative assessment of their athletic ability, place less importance on sports, and see themselves as less able in sports than in other achievement domains. These gender differences in expectancies and value are mediators of participation / task choice.

Although not couched in Eccles model, Snyder (1993) conducted a study comparing male and female collegiate athletes on academic versus athletic motivation. The study required the athletes to choose between an athletic- versus academic-oriented response to a scenario (i.e., go on a class field trip and miss practice or miss the field trip to attend practice). The choice on each scenario is a measure of perceived importance.

Consistent with results from similar investigations, female athletes seemed to consistently prioritize academics over athletics more so than males. This held true for both Division I and III athletes. Based on these findings, the author suggests that female athletes do not place as much importance on athletics relative to academics as their male counterparts.

Summary. A review of the empirical research assessing gender differences in various approaches to motivation suggest that differences exist. The review of empirical research on causal attributions made by female and male athletes indicated that no clear trend exists. Regarding participation motivation, it has been found that males and females identify different motives for participating in sports. Specifically, females emphasize more social motives, whereas males more often emphasize competitive motives for participation. Within the achievement sport setting, it has been found that females are oriented more toward personal goals and self-referenced success, whereas males are oriented more toward competitiveness and winning. Lastly, males and females have been found to differ in the value placed on sports and expectations for success - girls tend to have lower expectations and place less importance on sports than boys. These differences in value and expectations influence gender differences in motivation and motivated behaviors.

### Aggression

The prevalence of violent behavior in sports has caused concern to sport scientists, coaches, parents, and others. Because of this concern over the behaviors modeled, taught, and emphasized in the competitive sport setting, aggression in sport has been a focus of numerous investigations.

Aggressive behavior is defined as an overt verbal or physical act with the intent to cause psychological or physical harm to another person (Husman & Silva, 1984). This is distinguished from assertive behavior that may involve the use of verbal or physical force

but with no intent to cause harm. Assertive behavior in sport, therefore, is task oriented and involves no intent to injury.

Buss (1961) identified dichotomies of aggressive behaviors in an effort to facilitate our research and understanding of aggression. These dichotomized categories are physical and verbal aggression and direct and indirect aggression. To date, the majority of research on aggression has looked at physical and verbal aggression with little attention given to direct and indirect modes of aggression. This distinction proposed by Buss was used to organize this review of gender differences in aggressive behaviors.

With respect to physical and verbal aggression, research suggests that males are more physically aggressive than females (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Relatedly, Silva (1983) studied the perceptions of males and females regarding the legitimacy of rule-violating behaviors. He found that males scored significantly higher in rating the legitimacy of these behaviors. With respect to verbal aggression, no consistent difference has been evidenced from empirical research assessing males and females (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). This finding is contrary to what is believed based on observation, namely that females use more verbal aggression than males. Bjorkqvist, Osterman, and Kaukiainen (1992) posit that this discrepancy is due to a failure of measurement techniques to distinguish different types of verbal aggression.

In recent research, Bjorkqvist and colleagues have studied the dichotomies of indirect and direct aggression. Indirect aggression is "conceptualized as a kind of social manipulation: the aggressor manipulates others to attack the victim, or, by other means, makes use of the social structure in order to harm the target person, without being personally involved in attack" (p. 52). Indirect aggression is difficult to measure via traditional self-report measures because the behavior is often denied by the individual. To remedy the situation, researchers have used peer estimation techniques in which peers

evaluate the indirect aggression of each other. Examples of indirect aggression include gossiping, secretly planning to bother others, and telling bad or false stories.

Using this distinction between physical aggression, direct verbal aggression, and indirect aggression, several studies have been conducted measuring gender differences in adolescents (reported by Bjorkqvist et al., 1992). Results compiled from several samples revealed that boys consistently use more physical aggression than girls, no significant differences were evidenced on the use of verbal aggression, and girls were reported by peers to use indirect aggression significantly more than boys. The authors conclude that gender differences exist with respect to the choice of aggressive strategies used by individuals. It should be noted, however, that these findings are not based in the sport domain. No studies were found in the sport domain that assessed direct and indirect aggression in males and females. Given the physical nature of athletics, it seems necessary to conduct similar research with athletes before generalizing to that population. However, the preliminary research findings suggest that males and females use different types of aggression. Specifically, males tend to use more physical aggression, and women tend to demonstrate indirect aggression more often.

### Leadership Styles

Martens (1987b) has informally defined leadership as knowing how to chart a course and develop the social and psychological environment to achieve the charted goals. It is readily accepted by sport scientists that the leadership provided by a coach can have a positive or negative effect on the athlete's performance and satisfaction with the sport experience (Smoll & Smith, 1980). What is not completely understood, however, is the precise leader behaviors that facilitate performance and positive psychological reactions. Therefore, one aim of research in sport leadership is to identify effective leadership styles

with effectiveness usually operationalized by win-loss records or psychological responses of athletes.

Where early research on effective leadership focused solely on traits of the leader with the assumption that the presence of specific traits defined effective leadership, an interactionist approach is now taken. In its present conceptualization, leadership is assumed to be a function of the situation and individual factors, both of the leader and the group members. Effective leadership must be placed in context, thereby suggesting that a given leadership style is more effective with a specific situation and specific group of athletes, whereas a different situation may call for a different leadership style.

The majority of research and theory development on leadership effectiveness comes from the industrial and educational setting. However, concern over a lack of applicability of these theories to the sport setting prompted Chelladurai (1980) to develop a model of leadership specific to sports. His Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML) proposes specific relationships between antecedent variables, leader behavior, and outcome that have been widely tested in the sports domain.

In the model, leader (coach) behavior is influenced by three antecedent factors: the situation, leader characteristics, and member characteristics. One characteristic identified as relevant, and of primary interest in the present review, is gender. Furthermore, three aspects of leader behavior are identified: actual leader behavior, leader behavior preferred by the athlete, and leader behavior required by the situation. The model posits that to achieve positive outcomes, a congruence between these three interacting aspects of leader behavior is necessary.

To accurately test the relationships set forth in the model, Chelladurai and colleagues (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985) have developed two instruments to measure various aspects of leadership behavior. One, the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS), provides a general measure of leadership style with subscales comprising

coach's decision-making style, motivational tendencies, and instructional behavior. Several versions of the LSS have been developed to measure athlete's perceived and preferred coaching behavior as well as coach's perception of his or her own behavior. The second instrument was designed to measure the coach's decision-making style with style operationalized on a continuum from autocratic to delegative/group decision-making.

As noted, gender has been identified in the MML as one individual characteristic that influences leader behavior and has been the focus of empirical investigations. Although research is far from complete, some general findings are reviewed in the following section. This research is divided into two areas: those assessing gender differences in general coaching style preferences and those assessing gender differences in coaching decision-making style preferences.

Prior to complete development of the MML and LSS, Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) conducted an investigation of preferred leadership style with one variable under analysis being gender. Existing scales of leadership behaviors that were modified to fit the sport setting were completed by 160 male and female physical education students. Of the five factors derived from a factor analysis of the subjects' responses (training, autocratic, democratic, social support, and rewarding behaviors), three evidenced significant gender differences in preferred leader behavior. Specifically, males expressed a greater preference for the coach to be autocratic, and females expressed a greater preference for democratic coaching behaviors. Additionally, and contrary to expectations, males preferred a more supportive coach than females.

Terry (1984) and Terry and Howe (1984) have also assessed the coaching preferences of competitive athletes using the LSS. In both studies, the only gender difference found was that males preferred more autocratic coaching behaviors than females. This offers partial support for the findings of Chelladurai and Saleh.

A unique study worthy of mention is that conducted by Pratt and Eitzen (1989). They sought to assess the differences in coaching philosophy and behavior between male coaches of male and female basketball teams. A 100-item questionnaire designed for the study was completed by 511 high school coaches. Analysis of the responses indicated that more similarity than differences appeared in the approach and philosophy toward male and female teams. However, in the 32 items for which there was a significant difference, a pattern emerged: "male coaches of male teams in the aggregate were always on the more traditional, autocratic, and demanding side of coaching than were the male coaches of the female teams" (p. 158). This study provides a different source of knowledge regarding leader behavior toward males and females. Where other studies report that males *prefer* more autocratic behavior from their coaches than females, this study found that coaches report the *use* of more autocratic behaviors with males.

A second area of study in leadership research has focused on identifying coach decision-making styles preferred by male and female athletes. Decision styles vary in the amount of influence given to the members (athletes) from autocratic, whereby the coach solves the problem alone, to delegative or group, whereby a joint decision is made. A typical research methodology is to present sample sport situations to the athlete and have them identify the decision-making style they would prefer their coach to use. Chelladurai and Arnott (1985) assessed the decision-making style preferences of 144 male and female collegiate basketball players. An analysis of gender differences showed that females preferred to participate in the decision process more than males. Additionally, both males and females rejected the delegative decision-making style.

Chelladurai, Haggerty, and Baxter (1989) conducted a similar study with 99 collegiate basketball players. The decision-making style questionnaire administered to the athletes contained 32 cases in which the subjects were required to identify the style they would prefer their coach to use in each situation. A repeated measures ANOVA indicated



that males and females differed significantly in only one case. Specifically, females ( $M=8.5$ ) preferred more participation in the decision-making process than males ( $M=6.05$ ). It was concluded, however, that males and females are more similar than different in decision-making style preferences.

The results of empirical investigations related to leadership style preferences of male and female athlete suggests that differences may exist. Several studies have found that males prefer a more autocratic coaching style than female athletes. Relatedly, female athletes prefer more participation in decision-making choices. These findings, if replicated, suggest the need for different interaction styles when working with male versus female teams. It should be noted, however, that although differences exist, males and females are more alike than different.

### Coaching Behaviors

Research in sport has found that males and females differ in their preferences for leadership style demonstrated by coaches. This research, however, has been limited to the *leadership* behaviors of coaches. What about other coaching behaviors such as practice behaviors, competition behaviors, or coach-athlete relationship and daily interactions? Do male and female athletes prefer different coaching behaviors? An additional question, relevant to the present study, is do coaches perceive different preferences and needs of their male and female athletes and, if so, do they alter their coaching behaviors to meet the athletes' needs? Hence, although coaching behavior did not appear as a variable in the empirical literature search on gender differences, it was thought to be an area worthy of review for several reasons: (1) coach behavior is a broad category encompassing leadership style for which preference differences among male and female athletes has been documented, (2) a review of the experiential literature suggests that coaches perceive gender differences in the value / importance athletes place on the coach-athlete relationship,

and (3) the investigator's own perceptions based on experience as an athlete and coach of male and female athletes indicate differences may exist. In the following section, the general area of coaching behavior is reviewed as well as potential athlete gender differences.

Coaching behavior has been an area of research because of the widely held belief that these behaviors affect sport-related experiences, attitudes, and behavioral responses of the athletes (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992). The coach-athlete relationship and interactions are acknowledged as important determinants of the sport experience. Research, therefore, has sought to identify effective coaching behaviors that can then be taught to coaches. One developed intervention is Coach Effectiveness Training (CET), which was designed to enhance the coach-athlete relationship (Smoll & Smith, 1980). The program, derived from an empirical data base, is structured around a conception of success as giving maximum effort and a positive approach to social influence. Guidelines stress the use of four desirable coach behaviors: reinforcement, mistake-contingent encouragement, corrective instruction, and technical instruction. Four undesirable coach behaviors are discouraged. These include nonreinforcement, punishment, punitive instruction, and regimenting behaviors.

The original model that CET was developed from linked coach behaviors to athlete attitude. This model has subsequently been expanded to incorporate a number of situational and individual difference variables that are believed to influence coaching behavior and athlete attitude and behavior. One athlete individual difference variable that is postulated to affect the athletes' perceptions of coaching behaviors and subsequent responses is gender. Unfortunately, little research has investigated the influence of gender in this process. The majority of research has focused on assessing the impact of CET on coaching behaviors and *young male* athletes' perceptions and reactions to these behaviors.

Few investigations have studied female athletes, much less compared male and female athletes.

An exception to this void in the research is an unpublished study conducted by Smith & Smoll (1983; reported by Barnett et al., 1992). The investigators report gender differences in elementary school children's perceptions of coaching behaviors and coaching behavior preferences. It was found that female athletes perceive coaches as providing more reinforcement and encouragement and less punishment than male athletes. Additionally, females indicate a stronger liking for reinforcement and encouragement and a stronger dislike of punishment and nonreinforcement than males. Barnett et al. (1992) infer from this finding that girls may be more sensitive to their coaches' actions and "the coach-athlete relationship may play a more salient role in the sport experience of girls" (p. 124). However, beyond this study, there is little empirical evidence to support this suggestion.

Based on this brief review of coaching behavior, it could be argued that young male and female athletes differ in their perception of and preference for coaching behaviors. Findings thus far must be limited to youths as little research has been conducted with other age groups. One aspect of the present research, therefore, is to identify and compare coach behavior toward collegiate male and female athletes in given situations. Additionally, where different behaviors are reported by the coach, the salient characteristics and behaviors of the athletes that elicit such coach behaviors were probed.

### Communication

Although communication was not identified through the empirical literature search as a variable differentiating male and female athletes, it would be remiss not to investigate potential gender differences in communication as this undoubtedly affects coach-athlete interactions. In fact, Yukelson (1993) suggests that much of what goes on in athletics revolves around communication. "Communication affects motivation, confidence,

concentration, and team dynamics. It has an impact on leadership, internalization of team goals and objectives, expectations coaches and athletes have for one another, and interpersonal processes, as well as individual attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. It affects strategy acquisition, teaching, skill development, and the ability to give feedback about performance effectively" (p. 125). Because communication is so important to coach-athlete interaction, a brief review of communication and gender differences in communication is in order.

Communication has been defined as a process by which we understand others and, in turn, endeavor to be understood by them (Anderson, 1959). Communication involves sending, receiving, and interpreting both verbal and nonverbal messages. Skills involved in this communication process include listening, verbal expression, nonverbal expression, and nonverbal receiving (Bump, 1986). As is noted in the following section, males and females have been found to differ in these communication skills. It would therefore be expected that the communication process would differ for male and female athletes.

Although scant communication research in the sport domain exists, several general books have been written dedicated entirely to gender and communication in our culture (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Shaw & Gouran, 1990; Wood, 1994), thereby suggestive of the relevance and breadth of the topic. The great expanse of this gender and communication research precludes anything but a cursory review of the findings. In general, it has been asserted that the two different worlds in which males and females live is evident in their disparate forms of communication. For example, gender differences exist in the broader reasons as to why males and females communicate, how males and females indicate such things as support and interest, and numerous aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication (Wood, 1994).

More specifically, regarding primary purpose of communication, it has been found that females communicate to establish and maintain relationships with others, whereas

males communicate to convey information and establish status. Consistent with this distinction in purpose, female communication is characterized as having a communal quality (i.e., fostering connections, support, and understanding). Male communication, on the other hand, has an agency quality (i.e., solving problems, achieving objectives or goals, and asserting self). It has been summarized that talk is specialized according to gender, with most of the instrumental, get-the-job-done talk coming from males and most of the expressive, supportive talk coming from females (Eakins & Eakins, 1978). However, more recent work suggests this is slowly changing as the status of females in society is changing (Shaw & Gouran, 1990). Still, broad differences exist between males and females as to the purpose and type of communication.

Additionally, verbal communication differs for males and females. Studies have found that aspects of communication such as the amount and content of speech to pitch and tone of speech differ for males and females (Cotten-Husten, 1989). Similarly, differences exist in nonverbal communication such as eye contact, posture, facial expression, and touching. It has been suggested that while males tend to dominate verbal communication, females tend to dominate in nonverbal communication. For example, one study (reported by Eakins and Eakins, 1978) used the Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity to assess gender differences in perception of nonverbal communication. The test utilized film clips of a series of scenes involving individuals using various body movements and facial expression. The male and female subjects were to select the best written interpretation of the nonverbal cues. Results indicate that from 5th grade to adulthood, females score better than males in interpreting the scenes, except those males holding jobs involving "artistic, expressive" work.

In sum, empirical research in nonverbal communication has found that females tend to be better at sending and receiving nonverbal messages and are particularly adept at perceiving negative nonverbal signals (Shaw & Gouran, 1990). This finding that females

are more aware of negative signals supports the suggestion by Barnett et al. (1992) that female athletes may be more sensitive to coach actions than males.

This cursory review of communication has highlighted differences among males and females and adds support to the suggestion that the interaction between the coach and athlete may differ depending on gender. Specifically, because males and females differ in how and why they send, receive, and interpret messages, the communication process should differ depending on the gender of both the sender and receiver. However, little empirical research in the sport setting exists to support this suggestion. Coach perceptions of communication differences in their male and female athletes were explored in the present investigation.

#### Physical Education Teacher Education

As mentioned previously, the literature search for this review was limited to the sport setting except in cases where few studies assessing athletes were conducted, as in the areas of communication and aggression. Another general area of research outside of the sport setting that will facilitate our conceptualization of the present investigation is that which comes from the physical education teacher education domain. Specifically, research has been conducted that has assessed teachers' interactions with male and female students and teachers' perceptions of and experiences with their males and female students. Although the contexts are different (physical education class versus competitive sport), similarities can be drawn between teacher-student research and the present interest in coach-athlete research. This research has many parallels to the present research endeavor and is thus worthy of further review. Therefore, the teacher education research that most closely ties into the purposes of the present investigation are briefly reviewed.

One aspect of physical education teacher education research has focused on teacher-student interactions and has assessed whether teachers interact differently with male and

female students; such teacher behaviors may either promote or deter participation and equity in the gymnasium. For example, Dunbar and O'Sullivan (1986) reported that interactions between teacher and student tend to favor boys. That is, in comparison to girls, boys were asked more questions, were asked to demonstrate more often, and received more positive and corrective feedback from their teacher. Additionally, research indicates that teacher verbal interaction favors boys in mixed-sex classes. Specifically, Spender (1983) reports that, relative to girls, boys have an increased number of interactions and an increased amount of time per interaction with the teacher which also contains more praise. Similarly, Sadker and Sadker (1986) have found that male students typically receive more attention and more response from teachers than female students. Macdonald (1990), who studied the behavior of 12 physical education specialists, found that in mixed-sex classes boys had a significantly greater proportion of interaction with the teacher than did girls. Additionally, in comparison with girls, boys also had a significantly greater proportion of positive interactions with the teacher irrespective of the teacher's gender.

A recent study by McBride (1990) assessed the behaviors of male and female physical education specialists and student perceptions of teacher behavior to discern possible gender-role stereotyping. With this sample of three male and three female teachers, McBride found that although boys had more incidents of discipline and girls participated in more informal talk with their teachers, there was no significant difference evidenced on these variables. However, the author noted that the long-term cumulative affect of minor discrepancies is unknown so these nonsignificant differences should not be disregarded. Additionally, the amount of praise given by teachers was fairly evenly distributed between boys and girls. The only noticeable behavioral differences found in this study were between the male and female teachers. Specifically, female teachers used more management cues and called on boys by name more frequently than their male counterparts.

These research findings go against the hypothesis that differences would be evidenced in teacher behavior towards female and male students.

Macdonald (1990) interviewed twelve physical education teachers about their teaching approach to female and male students, paralleling the present investigation looking at coaching approach to female and male athletes. Macdonald found that "the majority of teachers believed it was appropriate to alter teaching approaches to maximize pupils' participation in the single-sex classes. For boys, this entailed being "stricter", "harder", and "more definite". For instance, "a female teacher said that with the boys she would 'tend to give direct orders more, whereas a lot of girls do not respond to that sort of thing. They tend to need mothering . . . no, that's not the word . . . a little bit of encouragement . . . a friendlier approach. You really have to keep reinforcing their self-esteem as the girls tend to worry they'll make a fool of themselves if they can't do something.'" (p. 158-159). These teachers seem to be suggesting that different characteristics and behaviors of male and female students necessitate a different approach or interaction in order to facilitate participation and development in physical education classes. One now wonders if the same would hold true in the sport setting.

A second area of research in the physical education teacher education domain is that which has assessed teacher perceptions and expectations of female and male students. It is suggested that differential expectations may lead to differential treatment. For example, Crowe (1977) reported that both male and female junior high physical education teachers tend to expect better physical performance from boys than girls. Additionally, Macdonald (1990) assessed teacher expectations by interviewing physical education teachers. A common theme emerging from the interviews was the teachers' satisfaction with teaching boys because of the effort they displayed. However, it was found that teachers expected boys to make a greater effort than girls, and thus were more perceptive to evidence of such effort. Unfortunately, "if this pattern of interaction is considered in terms of the cycle of



teacher expectations dictating pupils' behavior, the girls may continue to withdraw from verbal interactions in mixed-sex classes due to the teachers' expectations of girls as submissive" (p. 160).

Lastly, two studies by Griffin (1984; 1985) add support to the notion that stereotypic expectations of female and male students may not, in fact, be accurate. These studies sought to identify participation patterns of boys and girls in physical education class. Through class observations and formal and informal discussion with the physical education teachers, numerous styles of participation and interaction patterns of males and females were identified. It is suggested that variation exists both within and between genders, thus refuting gender-stereotyping. An implication of the study is that such descriptions of participation styles "would provide researchers and teachers with information to enrich and diversify their assumptions about the realities of student participation in physical education" (p. 101). Similarly, one intention for the present investigation is to identify characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes to enhance coaches' awareness and facilitate positive interactions.

In sum, this brief review of the physical education teacher education literature has brought to light issues under study in the present investigation, albeit in a different setting. Specifically, teacher education research has investigated the influence of gender in the gymnasium and how teacher expectations and perceptions may impact teacher-student interaction. Relatedly, the present investigation was undertaken to understand the influence of gender in the sport environment and how coach perceptions influence coach-athlete interactions.

#### Understanding Potential Gender Differences: Integrating Divergent Findings

This review of the empirical literature examining gender differences in sport psychological variables indicates that males and females are not alike on a number of

relevant variables that influence the sport experience. Males and females process and respond to the sport environment in different ways. Table 1 integrates these divergent findings by summarizing the differences between males and females identified from the empirical literature.

Table 1

Summary of Gender Differences Identified from the Empirical Literature

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Anxiety	*Somewhat equivocal results with a trend for females to have higher multidimensional state and trait anxiety scores than males.
Self-confidence	*Males tend to be more confident than females; magnitude of difference is small.
Motivation	*No clear trend in causal attributions. *Males emphasize achievement / status motives. *Females emphasize social / affiliative motives. *Males oriented within sport toward winning / competition. *Females oriented within sport toward personal goals; self-referenced success. *Girls place less importance; less expectations in sport than boys.
Aggression	*Few studies but preliminary evidence suggests that males demonstrate more physical aggression; females demonstrate more indirect aggression.
Leadership	*Males prefer more autocratic coaching; females prefer more democratic coaching. *Females prefer more participation in decision-making than males.
Coach behavior	*Limited research indicates males and females may perceive and prefer different coaching behaviors.
Communication	*Limited sport research. *Male-female differences in numerous aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication. *Females more sensitive to nonverbal communication.
Teacher behavior	*Different expectations and perceptions of females and males in physical education setting.

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In general, a review of Table 1 suggests that sport-specific research on anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, and leadership behaviors demonstrates somewhat consistent differences between male and female athletes, although findings still evidence variability. Research on coach behavior preferences indicates that gender differences exist, although this finding must be viewed with caution as only a limited number of studies have assessed gender differences in coaching behavior preferences. No clear gender differences are evident from research on causal attributions in sports. Lastly, although gender difference in aggression, communication, and teacher behavior have been demonstrated empirically, most of this research comes from other domains and may not hold true in the sport setting. More sport-specific research assessing gender differences in these areas is needed.

#### Related Nonscientific / Experiential Literature

There are several avenues that can be pursued to obtain knowledge regarding gender differences on sport psychological variables. One source of knowledge, reviewed in the prior section, is that gleaned from scientific investigations. Another source of knowledge regarding gender differences is that which comes from experience; working on a regular basis with male and female athletes places one in an ideal position to note even subtle differences. To fully understand gender differences and their impact on coaching behaviors, it is paramount to synthesize these various sources of knowledge. In the following section, nonscientific articles regarding gender differences will be reviewed in chronological order.

In an effort to increase awareness of variables impacting how one coaches men and women from physiological, biomechanical, and psychological perspectives, Sawula (1972), a Canadian national volleyball coach, discussed his perception of differences in male and female athletes based on over 14 years of coaching experience. Regarding psychological aspects, Sawula noted that the biggest difference he observed concerned the

degree of athlete reliance on the coach. Specifically, he believed that men were more independent and trained and practiced on their own, whereas women were more dependent and seemed to need a leader (coach) present. Once training, however, he observed that women practiced longer and harder than men and were often more determined in striving for set goals. Relatedly, he observed that women placed greater importance on having a relationship with the coach and persevered more if a good relationship existed, more so than male athletes. The notion that females value relationships partially supports the empirical findings on motivation in that females tend to be more motivated by social / affiliative reasons, whereas males exhibit more achievement / status motives. Furthermore, this coach noted that personality conflicts were more common among women. "Feelings are held inside and not brought out in the open. Grudges are held for a long time and the reasons seem almost extremely petty. Women tend to take their problems from school, home and work to practice" (p. 45). Conversely, he found that men readily bring a conflict into the open then quickly forget about it.

The author suggested that to enhance coaching practices with men and women these, and other, differences must be understood by coaches. Sawula (1972) believed such knowledge would positively impact one's coaching practice. It should be noted that, although this coach acknowledged that differences are tied into sociocultural factors, he painted a picture of females as lacking in comparison to males in the sport domain as opposed to identifying the strengths of the differences.

Because of the rapid increase in female participation rates in athletics, Colfer (1977), a running coach for over 14 years, felt it important to equip coaches with knowledge regarding gender difference to enhance their expertise. At the onset, he stated that he believed that fewer differences actually existed in personality and psychological characteristics between male and female runners than were *assumed* to exist. For instance, he suggested that women are stereotyped as more emotional than men, yet he has seen no

differences in their ability to exercise control and cope with stressful competitive situations. Colfer did, however, perceive a few differences to be worthy of mention as he felt they impacted his coaching practice. He suggested that, because the young female athlete often did not have equal exposure to sports as males, she was often less sure of her abilities, which impacted her behavior in competitive sports. This finding is in congruence with empirical research that suggests that females are less confident in the sport domain (Lirgg, 1991). Additionally, he believed it important to realize that the motivations of female athletes are different from males yet not necessarily better or worse. "Girls and women tend to be more socially oriented than boys and men. They use sports for social interaction. This does not detract from competition or the desire for success. In fact, it may develop a stronger feeling for team unity" (p. 14). Research on athlete motivation (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Gill, 1988), in fact, affirms this coach's observation that males and females bring different motives to the sport domain.

Based on personal experience in coaching men and women and talking with other coaches who had done the same, Brooks (1979) tried to answer the question, "Is there a difference in coaching men and women?" In line with coach Suwala (1972), she noted that a major difference between men and women was the need of women for more attention and personal contact with the coach. Additionally, within the team, Brooks observed that jealousy was more common among women. She also noted that males and females differ in their emotional responses in athletics, particularly toward defeat; whereas male athletes were typically emotionless after defeat, females often cried and showed an outward expression of sorrow. Females and males, therefore, seemed to use different methods of coping. This observation is congruent with empirical research on coping strategies in that females use more emotion-oriented coping and males use more problem- or action-oriented coping (Billings & Moos, 1981). More importantly, Brooks found that trying to curb such

emotional expression was "psychological suicide" for women. Thus, trying to approach and respond to male and female athletes in a similar manner had detrimental effects.

The display of aggressive behavior was another observed difference. "Women tend to hold the aggressive behavior within themselves or release it indirectly. Gossiping, interpersonal rejection, indirect verbal and social aggression are usually ways women athletes release hostility. . . Men, on the other hand, can fight and act out a tough and strong role without severe criticism" (p. 20). Interestingly, present empirical research regarding direct and indirect aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992) is only now beginning to document this observation from 15 years ago.

Shapiro (1979) addressed a similar question, "Are different approaches necessary in coaching male and female teams?" In his review, he expounded upon physiological, psychological, and sociocultural differences that may require coaches to adopt different coaching philosophies and methodologies. He suggested that females are less confident in their physical ability; thus the gap between psychological and physical limits was greater for females than males. Cultural factors and sex role standards were implicated as reasons for this disparity. Shapiro warned against coaches holding lower expectations for females and thereby perpetuating a false belief. Additionally, he observed that females rarely expressed competitiveness, motivated behavior, or verbal frustration and anger as did men. However, he believed that women were as driven and motivated but did not express such feelings due to societal restrictions and expectations. Shapiro suggested that coaches' awareness and sensitivity to differences as well as an appreciation of sociocultural reasons for such differences was necessary to maximize the athlete's potential. He concluded by answering his original question and suggesting that "No, there should be no difference in treatment, expectations, or standards. Yes, there should be an understanding of social, cultural and psychological factors influencing the athlete and of the physiological capabilities that may require different teaching techniques and tactics" (p. 84).

Almost 10 years later, coaches and practitioners were addressing the same questions regarding athlete gender differences and the impact it has on coaching practices. Richardson and Tandy (1986), drawing from research and experiential knowledge, suggested that in addition to an understanding of techniques and strategies in sports, coaches must have an understanding of the major differences and similarities between male and female athletes. They noted that these differences should impact coaching practices.

One identified difference is that males are more motivated toward sport achievement and are more confident of their sport abilities. Richardson and Tandy (1986) posit that females have less confidence because they have typically been praised for participation not accomplishment and therefore have lower expectations of their ability. It is suggested that coaches should use confidence building techniques with women to enhance perceptions of their physical abilities. Relatedly, females seem to attribute success to external factors, whereas males tend to attribute success to internal factors. Furthermore, they have observed that males often make self-serving attributes for failure by attributing failure to external factors. This notion of a self-serving bias in attributions of males and females has received equivocal support in the empirical literature (Rejecki, 1980; Riordan et al., 1985). Additionally, it has been observed that male athletes prefer more formal, structured competitive environments, whereas females prefer informal, relaxed environments. This observation relates to empirical findings on motivation that suggest that females are motivated by social / affiliative reasons and males are more motivated by competitive factors. In conclusion, it is suggested by Richardson and Tandy that these noted differences be used to assist in the development of coaches' programs to facilitate quality coaching.

In the Tennis USTA magazine, Starr (December 1991) discussed genetic, cultural, and educational factors that influence how boys and girls play tennis. Based on experiential knowledge garnered from experts in the sport of tennis, Starr posits that

coaches need to appreciate gender differences in their work with the athletes. "A lot of coaches who have coached boys and then go on to girls apply the same modus operandi. They treat the girls as guys and end up not getting the response they expect" (p. 13). One specific difference identified is that girls tend to be more complex and sensitive than boys. Several coaches agreed that because of girls' sensitivity, they rarely use their "gruffest" voice when criticizing girls as they do with boys. It is also suggested that "girls and boys approach competition differently as a general rule. While boys grow up in a world of team sports where winning and losing is part of everyday reality, girls still have fewer competitive opportunities. As a result, says National Team coach Lynne Rolley, 'they handle competition more intensely' " (p. 13). Differences in attention span of male and female athletes is another noted difference believed to influence the practice sessions and tennis strategy of these coaches. It has been observed that boys are easily distracted and more impatient, therefore drills must be frequently changed. Girls, on the other hand, are able to concentrate for long periods of time and can play a baseline game without losing their concentration. Some of these noted differences are congruent with empirical literature on competitive orientation and coaching behavior.

In U.S. News & World Report, Schrof (April 11, 1994) examined the unprecedented success of Anson Dorrance, the coach of UNC-Chapel Hill women's soccer team who have won 12 of the past 13 national championships. Coach Dorrance, based on more than 10 years' experience in coaching men and women, is convinced that men and women need to be motivated differently. He has found that men typically have big egos that need adjusting, whereas even his most talented women have little confidence that must be built up. In a unique approach, coach Dorrance says his coaching strategy is to combine the strengths of the male and female perspective. "I teach the girls the value of competitiveness, aggression and dominance . . . they teach me the importance and strength of relationships" (p. 54). He helps foster a bond amongst the players and himself and



stresses the concept of "playing for each other". Additionally, Dorrance believes that women, more so than men, value the coach-athlete relationship and need to know the relationship is never at risk while on the field. Because of this, coach Dorrance is best friends with his female players. With male athletes, he found he needed to adopt a strict authoritarian role to maintain their respect.

The observations and experiences of Dorrance are congruent with findings from empirical research that suggest that women are more motivated by social motives, men prefer an authoritarian coaching style, and women have less confidence in their abilities. Probably one reason for his unbridled success is his ability to synthesize his observations and apply them to his coaching practice.

Lastly, Rollie Geiger, a head cross country and track coach, talked extensively with the investigator about his coaching approach to the men's and women's teams and why, in some situations, his approach is different (Personal Communication; March, 1994). [An interesting note is that the original idea for this study came, in part, from coach Geiger. He mentioned to the investigator, a former athlete of his, that he thought someone should study gender differences. He felt he coached the two teams very differently and wondered if other coaches did the same.]

One situation in which coach Geiger believes it necessary to have different interaction between the two teams is prior to and following competitions. He has found that women respond best when approached one-on-one regarding racing strategy and feedback, whereas the men are equally responsive to one-on-one or group meetings. He interacts this way because he perceives the need of women to feel important and special to the coach. Additionally, because he feels women are more sensitive to criticism, individual meetings are more appropriate for such feedback.

Another major difference identified by Geiger deals with pre-race emphases. He has found that the men are best motivated by talking about what it will take to win, whereas

the women are best motivated by emphasizing "do your best". However, once the gun goes off and the race is underway, the men and women are equally competitive. This coach's perception supports the work of Gill and colleagues (1986; 1988) on competitive orientations in that men score higher on outcome orientation and women score higher on performance orientation.

Coach Geiger also noted that women do not typically blend well as a team, often because of minor arguments and "harboring of problems and negative feelings". He has found this to be true across numerous teams, suggesting it was not just bad chemistry between a few individuals. He noted, conversely, that the men's team deals openly with any problems or disagreements and then gets on with the business of running. His own belief is that because the female athlete is often the "star" of her high school team and has received most of her high school coach's attention, she has a difficult time adjusting to being an equal member of a talented team.

#### Understanding Gender Differences: Integrating Experiential Observations

This review of experiential literature addressing gender differences, albeit limited, has added some new insight but has also paralleled some of the findings from the empirical literature. While most of the reviewed articles have been based primarily on coaching observations and experiences, the differences identified by these coaches still complement some of the empirical literature. A unique aspect of the experiential literature is the emphasis placed on using the observed differences to structure appropriate coaching behavior to facilitate a positive sport experience. Table 2 summarizes the gender differences identified in the reviewed experiential literature.

Table 2

## Summary of Gender Differences from Experiential Literature

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<u>Gender difference</u>	<u>Author</u>
Females value relationship with coach.	*Sawula (1972) *Brooks (1979) *Schrof (1994) *Geiger (1994)
Females more dependent on coach than males.	*Sawula (1972)
Females less confident than males.	*Colfer (1977) *Shapiro (1979) *Richardson & Tandy (1986) *Schrof (1994)
Females more sensitive to comments.	*Starr (1991) *Schrof (1994) *Geiger (1994)
Males deal openly with conflict; females hold grudge (indirect aggression).	*Sawula (1972) *Brooks (1979) *Geiger (1994)
Males express anger; competitiveness.	*Shapiro (1979)
Females motivated by social factors.	*Colfer (1977)
Males motivated to win; females to do best.	*Geiger (1994)
Males attribute success to internal factors; Females attribute success to external factors.	*Richardson & Tandy (1986)
Males emotionless in defeat; females express emotion.	*Brooks (1979)
Females more intense; better attention span.	*Starr (1991)

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As can be seen in Table 2, many of these coaches have noted similar differences between male and female athletes. Specifically, four coaches believe that females value a relationship with the coach and are less confident than males. Strong support was also indicated for the notion that females are more sensitive than males to comments and to the idea that males and females use different types of aggression to deal with conflicts or problems.

In addition to congruence among the coaches, many of the identified gender differences support findings from empirical research. For example, observations related to self-confidence, aggression, motivations, and communication support general results from scientific investigations as reviewed in an earlier section of this paper.

#### Gender Differences in Coaching: Current Status of Knowledge

This review of both empirical and experiential sport-related literature has identified and described numerous variables on which male and female athletes have been found to differ (See Tables 1 and 2). The review indicates that commonalities and differences exist on the findings both within and between these two sources of knowledge. Although this past literature has facilitated our understanding of gender differences in the sport domain, several limitations exist that have slowed our understanding and conceptualization of gender differences in the athletic domain. Limitations from empirical investigations include (1) a reductionistic as opposed to holistic approach, (2) a reliance on athlete self-report as the only source of knowledge, and (3) the failure to study the effects of gender differences. Limitations of the experiential literature include (1) the failure to move beyond the case study mode to understand athlete gender differences, (2) a lack of depth and completeness in journalistic accounts, and (3) a failure to provide detailed information about the context in which the coach functioned. In the following section, these limitations will be briefly reviewed.

### Limitations of Past Research

Although the empirical and experiential literature has helped identify relevant variables on which male and female athletes differ, several limitations to this research exist. First, few holistic studies of gender differences in sport have been undertaken. Instead, the majority of research has taken a reductionistic approach to assessing gender differences, where one variable is isolated and one component of the analysis is the investigation of gender differences. A holistic approach would incorporate the dynamic interaction between variables, the influence of contextual and situational variables, and the saliency of variables in relation to each other rather than in isolation. Thus, rather than imposing a limited theory onto the study of gender and its effect on coaching by assessing only one variable, the present investigation will give coaches free reign in interpreting their own experiences and telling their own stories, which are expected to be multifaceted with many interrelated components.

Second, much of our knowledge regarding gender differences has come from only one source - athletes' self-reports. While this is a valuable source of knowledge, it is only one of numerous potential sources. Research has tended to ignore other sources of knowledge such as that from expert coaches. This limitation will be addressed by acquiring knowledge of gender differences from this untapped source. Specifically, experienced coaches will be interviewed regarding their perception of differences between their male and female athletes. This knowledge can then be combined with that garnered from other sources to provide greater strength to the findings.

Third, few investigations have studied the effects of gender differences on coach behavior in the sport domain. It has been found that some psychologically based differences exist between males and females, but the relevance of such differences is not often addressed. Researchers will often include a section on suggested implications of their research findings, but rarely is this studied empirically. In the present study, this limitation

will be addressed by studying coaches accounts of the effects of perceived gender differences on coaching *behavior*.

Regarding the experiential articles, most are, in a sense, a case study of each coach's perceptions of athlete gender differences; the information often lacks depth and a sense of completeness. Thus, while this is valuable and insightful information, a next necessary step is to scientifically integrate the information across cases in an attempt to generate broader support and a more complete picture. In this investigation, each coach will be studied as a unique case. In addition, an effort will be made to synthesize and interpret observations across coaches.

Lastly, the experiential accounts have tended to ignore the sociocultural context in which athlete and coach thought, behavior, and feeling occurred. This would be relevant information because behavior is best understood as a function of both the individual and the environment. In this investigation, an effort was made by the investigator to understand and remain sensitive to the sociocultural environment. Additionally, this information will be used in the interpretation of the findings (See Appendix A for brief account of present sport context).

In part, it is with these noted limitations in mind that the present investigation was developed. Specifically, these limitations will be addressed by (1) taking a more holistic approach in that coaches will be able to identify what they perceive to be salient variables characterizing males and females, (2) acquiring knowledge regarding gender differences from a relatively untapped source - coaches, (3) investigating the affect of noted gender differences on coaching behavior, (4) synthesizing and interpreting perceived gender differences across coaches, (5) probing for depth in responses to facilitate understanding, and (6) remaining sensitive to the context in which behavior is taking place. The unique approach of the present investigation will enhance our understanding of male and female behavior in the sport environment and how gender impacts the coaching process. The

present investigation seeks to understand the unique experiences and interpretations provided by each interviewed coach as well as to synthesize the insight provided across coaches.

### Approach to Present Investigation

#### Purposes

This investigation is undertaken with two primary purposes in mind. First, an understanding of psychological characteristics and behaviors of female and male athletes from a coach's perspective is sought. To achieve this purpose, experienced coaches who work with male and female athletes will be asked to identify and discuss what they perceive to be salient gender-related characteristics and behaviors.

An understanding of how such perceptions impact coaching practice and behavior is a second purpose of the study. Interviewed coaches will be asked to describe their cognitive and behavioral responses to their male and female athletes in specific situations. Differences in response to males and females will be investigated in detail.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Participants

Participants in this research project were 14 head coaches of collegiate cross country and track programs (13 males and 1 female). In the analyses of coach responses, the one female coach was included with the 13 male coaches because of similarity in her responses. That is, after reviewing the transcribed interviews, no obvious differences were evident to distinguish her as the sole female coach. However, although the majority of her responses were similar to those of the male coaches, one section of the results focuses on her as a unique case. An effort was made to identify any of her perceptions and behaviors that may have been influenced by her gender.

The 14 interviewed coaches all had been collegiate athletes themselves, thereby bringing experiential knowledge of competitive athletics into their coaching practice. They have been involved in coaching an average of 23.2 years (range = 8-29 years), predominantly at the college level but touching all levels, and have coached both male and female athletes an average of 15.7 years (range = 3-28 years). Because most of these coaches began their careers prior to 1972 and the establishment of Title IX, many of the coaches did not coach women early in their career (mainly because such programs were not in existence). Interestingly, and as is noted in the Individual Profiles (contained in Appendix B), several of these coaches were stalwart supporters of the women's movement into competitive athletics and helped establish programs at their respective schools.

The rationale behind interviewing collegiate coaches is as follows. First, coaching is a career for individuals at the collegiate level, as opposed to the high school or youth sports level where coaching is typically only one aspect of their career, i. e., teaching. For



collegiate coaches, it is believed that working with athletes is a major focus and priority in their daily schedule. This vast amount of time and energy spent with and around athletes places college coaches in an ideal position to note subtle and obvious gender differences.

Second, college coaches, especially those in a head position, will typically have more coaching experience than coaches at other levels. It is believed that such experiences are necessary for the coaches to draw from when discussing their perception of their female and male athletes. As Griffith (1925) and Martens (1987) have suggested, "expert" coaches, such as those interviewed in this investigation, possess a wealth of untapped knowledge from which sport scientists can gain valuable information.

Third, it has been suggested that pre-adolescent athletes, such as those in junior high and youth programs, evidence fewer gender differences than post-adolescent athletes when gender differences appear to be more profound (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). For this reason, it was felt that more information-rich cases could be obtained by studying coaches who work with college-aged athletes.

It is recognized that coaches of different-aged athletes also may have been able to provide valuable information. However, because of the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher decided to limit the participants to a sample of coaches who would be drawing their perceptions from a similar sample of college-aged runners.

Additionally, potential participants for this study were limited to cross country coaches for two primary reasons. One, running is one of the few sports at the college level in which the same coach works with both the men's and women's team. Two, a decision was made to select a sport that is considered gender-neutral as opposed to a feminine- or masculine-typed task. Sports that are deemed more appropriate for one gender over the other may influence cognition and behavior in the sport setting. As an example, a review of empirical investigations on self-confidence (Lirgg, 1991) provided support for Lenney's

(1977) hypothesis that self-confidence is affected by the gender typing of the task. Therefore, the gender neutral task of running was chosen in this investigation.

### Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling, a method that allows for the selection of information-rich cases, was the procedure used to select participants for this investigation. Patton (1990) identified 16 purposeful sampling strategies and suggests that the strategy that maximizes the selection of information-rich cases given the constraints of the setting should be the strategy of choice. In this investigation, "snowball or chain sampling" was the strategy chosen to locate information-rich participants. Using this strategy, well-situated or knowledgeable people are asked to identify individuals who would be good sources from which to gather information. "The chain of recommended informants will typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over" (p. 176). These key names should be selected as participants.

Specific to this investigation, board members of the Cross Country Coaches Association and regional coordinators of the eight NCAA qualifying meets were contacted to identify potential participants. As anticipated, the individuals that were identified by these coaches began to converge onto key coaches who were then selected as potential participants for this investigation. Specifically, 18 coaches, who were identified by at least two informants (most were selected by three or more informants) as having a great deal of knowledge and insight into coaching both males and females, were contacted by the investigator. Most of these coaches were extremely receptive to participating in the project. However, logistical difficulties prevented interviewing three of these potential participants (2 males and 1 female). Additionally, one coach noted that while he is head coach of both men and women, he actually coaches only the men and was, therefore, not interviewed.

## Instruments

### Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed and pilot tested by the investigator for use in this investigation (Appendix C). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the semi-structured interview is applicable when the interviewer knows what he or she does not know and can therefore frame the appropriate questions to seek out the answers. This was the case in the present investigation as the researcher sought to understand coaches' perceptions of their male and female athletes and was able to frame questions to elicit such perceptions. Additionally, a semi-structured interview format allows for comparisons to be made among participants, but also allows for the uniqueness in the participants' responses to emerge.

In the development of the interview guide, an effort was made to solicit the participants' perceptions of their male and female athletes without biasing them by introducing specific areas of potential gender-based differences. Therefore, the first part of the interview guide contained questions to elicit the participants' perceptions of salient characteristics and behaviors of their male and female athletes. The questions and probes were asked to encourage the coaches to "tell their story" without leading them in any specific or predetermined direction.

The second section of the interview guide contained three scenarios developed to elicit coach behavior toward male and female athletes in various situations. These were developed based on the investigator's experiences as a coach and athlete as well as input from other coaches who were asked to identify difficult situations they often face with their teams. Situations mentioned by several coaches were developed into scenarios. Participants were asked to describe and explain how they would respond to the depicted scenarios with their male and female athletes. It was believed that having coaches describe their behavior in the given situations was probably a good assessment of actual behavior,

more so than simply asking the coaches if they behave and interact differently with male and female athletes.

Lastly, the interview guide contained questions related to specific areas or variables that were identified in the literature review. Coaches were asked to respond to whether they perceived gender differences in the given area and to describe such differences where they do exist.

The interview guide was pilot tested with several coaches with experience in coaching male and female athletes. Modifications were made to the guide to improve the flow of the interview based on these pilot interviews. Additionally, comments and constructive criticisms were obtained from these coaches regarding how to improve the interview which were then incorporated into the interview guide.

### Researcher as Instrument

The investigator plays a crucial role in qualitative research. He or she interacts with the "objects" of study (i.e., the participants) and offers interpretation and understanding to the events under examination. Lincoln and Guba (1985) paint a compelling picture as to the unique qualities offered by humans as the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry. Some identified characteristics include the following: adaptability in collecting information about multiple factors at multiple levels, the ability to take a holistic perspective, being able to simultaneously operate at the propositional and tacit knowledge level and integrate these two sources, the ability to immediately respond to the situation and probe as hypotheses and insights arise, and the capacity to summarize respondent's information and seek clarification or further understanding.

Although these are potentially powerful advantages, they are rendered meaningless unless the researcher as human instrument is able to demonstrate trustworthiness and credibility. One means of assessing trustworthiness is the researcher's training and

experience in qualitative methodology. The investigator conducting the present study has taken several graduate courses in qualitative inquiry that have explored the issue from both a philosophical and methodological perspective. Additionally, because of the researcher's interest and belief in qualitative inquiry, personal reading has further enhanced this grounding in qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Recently, the researcher has been extensively involved in a qualitative-based investigation of burnout in junior tennis players. The researcher served as the human instrument in data collection and had a functional role in the data analysis procedures. Lincoln and Guba state that humans possess the ability to learn and profit from experience such that great improvements in human instrumental performance can be realized. Thus, this experience is believed to have enhanced the researcher's competence in conducting qualitative investigations.

As the primary instrument in the study, it is important to reveal certain characteristics of the researcher that may have impacted aspects of the investigative process. The investigator has an extensive athletic background that has undoubtedly influenced numerous aspects of the research process such as initial interest in the issue, an enhanced understanding of the athletic environment, and building rapport with the coaches. Part of her experiences were as a cross country athlete at a national-calibre Division I athletic program. In addition, for the last three years, the researcher has also been a coach of a Division I men's and women's cross country team which not only add to her credibility when talking with the participants but also provided an experiential aspect to her own understanding of the issue.

Also important to reveal is the general orientation held by the researcher as a professional in the field. She tends to view issues from a cognitive-behavioral orientation in that thoughts, feelings and beliefs are believed to influence subsequent behavior; such an orientation influenced her understanding of coach behavior. Furthermore, she took an applied-practical perspective toward this investigation with a focus on deriving information

with practical utility for coaches, coach educators, and others working with male and female athletes.

In sum, a combination of the researcher's experiences, values, and beliefs has greatly influenced this investigation, from the research question asked to methodological decisions made. Since it is not possible or desirable for the researcher to separate self from one's own construction of reality and biases, the alternative is to become aware of these biases and subjectivities as has been done and will continue to be done throughout the research process.

### Procedures

Potential participants were contacted by telephone and informed of the nature of the investigation. Specifically, they were told that the purpose of the investigation is to better understand, from coaches perspective, characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and how these characteristics influence coaching behaviors. Additionally, the investigator noted that each coach's individual identity would be kept confidential.

For those coaches who agreed to participate, a time was set to conduct the interview which was tape recorded for later analysis. Of the 14 interviews, twelve were conducted on the telephone and two were conducted in person as they lived close to the researcher. The participants were asked if they would like to review the interview guide to help prepare them for the interview. For the three who felt it would be helpful to read the interview guide, a modified version of the interview guide was faxed to their office. The modified version (contained in Appendix D) is similar to the guide but the probes and section 3, which contains questions aimed at verifying findings from the literature review, were omitted. This allowed coaches to think about their own experiences and perceptions when identifying salient differences rather than focusing on variables suggested by the probes.

The semi-structured interview guide developed for this study was used to conduct the interviews. To begin, each participant was asked an identical sequence of open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of psychological, emotional, and social characteristics of their male and female athletes. Additionally, similar predetermined probes were asked to each participant as needed during the interview. The predetermined probes were used to minimize interviewer bias by ensuring similar follow-up questions and depth in follow-up.

Next, three sport scenarios were read to the participants and they were asked to describe and explain how they would typically behave toward their male and female athletes in the given situations. Lastly, coaches were asked questions related to the variables identified through the literature review. Specifically, they were asked if they have observed differences between males and females with regard to the variables and, if so, to describe and explain the differences.

### Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis in this investigation was to construct the data provided by the coaches into meaningful wholes. Data analysis aimed to provide well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations in identifiable contexts. Peshkin (1990) has delineated four categories of qualitative data analyses -- description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation -- the first three being most applicable in the present investigation. Additionally, different outcomes are possible from each analysis. For example, possible outcomes from descriptive analysis include delineation of processes, relationships, settings, situations, and people. Possible outcomes from interpretation include development of new concepts, provision of insight, and elaboration of existing concepts. Verification may involve verifying previously held assumptions, theories, or generalizations.

In the present study, the researcher described the salient variables impacting how coaches perceive male and female athletes, while respecting important contextual factors.

Additionally, the relationship between perceptions and coaching behavior was explored. Moving beyond mere description, the data also were interpreted. That is, meaning, higher level order, extrapolations, and explanations were provided, while attempting to remain true to the words of the coaches. Lastly, the researcher sought to verify some of the empirical findings regarding gender differences on psychological variables.

In general, responses to sections 1 and 2 of the guide, which contain coaches' perceptions of the characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and coach behaviors, lent themselves to descriptive and interpretive analyses. Specifically, a goal of analysis was to not only describe coaches' perceptions of athlete characteristics and behavior, but also to search for a relationship between coach perceptions and subsequent coach behavior. Additionally, responses to sections 1 and 2 were interpreted by attempting to organize and explain coach perceptions and behavior in light of the coach's own background and biases and the present context of intercollegiate athletics.

Responses to section 3 of the interview underwent description and verification. That is, in addition to description, coach responses were analyzed to substantiate or negate the findings from the review of empirical literature on gender differences with regard to specific psychological variables. The present study, therefore, provides a unique source of knowledge from which to understand male and female characteristics and behaviors. This was compared and contrasted with the knowledge derived from athlete self-report.

To accomplish these objectives, hierarchical content analysis procedures were conducted as outlined by Scanlan, Ravizza, and Stein (1989) and Gould, Eklund, and Jackson (1991). Patton (1990) suggests that in using an inductive approach to data analysis, the researcher attempts to make sense of the issue/object under study without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon. Specifically, the following steps were used to analyze the interview data:



1. All tape-recorded interviews, which lasted from 45 min. to 2 1/2 hours, were transcribed verbatim resulting in 286 pages of single-spaced text.
2. The investigator read and reread all transcripts to become completely familiar with each participant. The investigator also listened to each taped interview to pick up additional insight that the printed word can not provide such as tone of voice, pauses, and use of sarcasm.
3. Idiographic profiles of each participant were developed by the investigator. These profiles (contained in Appendix B) present information about each participant as a unique case in and of itself. The goal of developing such profiles is to gain a deeper understanding of coach perceptions of male and female athletes, while maintaining the uniqueness of the case and the rich description provided by the coach.
4. In addition to the idiographic profiles, the investigator identified raw data themes that seemed to characterize each participant's responses. Raw data themes are described as quotes or paraphrased quotes that capture a distinct idea or concept provided by the coach.
5. Using the raw data themes developed in step 4, an inductive analysis was conducted to identify common themes or patterns of greater generality. In qualitative analyses, higher level themes encompassing linked raw data themes are labeled "First Order Themes", "Second Order Themes", and so forth with the highest level being labelled a "General Dimension" which represents themes of the greatest generality. In the present investigation, raw data themes emerged only to a first-order theme.

6. Lastly, after all first-order themes had been identified, the investigator reviewed the emergent patterns to ensure that the themes made intuitive sense and could be easily understood. The raw data themes comprising each first-order theme were reread to check that they fit coherently into each theme.

7. The peer reviewer audited steps 1-6 to verify the emergent patterns and interpretations. Where disagreement or concern existed, the peer reviewer and investigator went back to the transcribed interviews to place the raw data themes in context and come to renewed consensus on its meaning.

#### Building Trustworthiness

Because the goals of qualitative inquiry are different from those of more traditional positivistic research, it is inappropriate to apply the same criteria to judge the rigor of the investigation and investigative findings. Additionally, different philosophical assumptions undergird the qualitative research tradition, which are, in many ways, incompatible with the assumptions of positivistic research. These underlying assumptions impact the criteria used to determine the validity of the research. However, it is necessary to have some criteria by which qualitative investigations are held accountable and trustworthiness of the data can be developed.

Criteria developed for experimental investigations include internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Paralleling these, alternative criteria have been developed by qualitative researchers to judge the trustworthiness of research investigations. The criteria have been termed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, respectively. In the following sections, each of these terms are defined and specific procedures / techniques are identified that were used in the present investigation to enhance

the trustworthiness of the data and interpretations. These are drawn from the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990).

### Credibility

This term speaks to the quantitative equivalent of internal validity, which is ultimately concerned, according to Lincoln and Guba, with the extent to which a one-to-one relationship is evidenced between data and "true" reality. Internal validity rests on the assumption that a single, tangible reality exists. However, interpretive inquiry adheres to the assumption of realities being multiple and constructed; therefore, internal validity is not an appropriate criterion. Instead, the task of the researcher is to demonstrate that these multiple constructions are adequately represented. This is achieved by activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced.

One activity to enhance credibility is prolonged engagement, which has been defined as "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the 'culture', testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). The culture of concern in the present investigation is collegiate athletics, one in which the investigator is extremely familiar. Although the investigator was not engaged in the unique culture in which each coach operates, an understanding of the general culture of collegiate athletics is familiar to the investigator. Specifically, the investigator has been "enmeshed" in collegiate athletics for 5 years as an athlete and 3 years as a coach and has, therefore, been a part of this athletic culture of interest. Additionally, the investigator's coaching background helped establish trust and rapport with the respondents. Being familiar with the demands and pressures of coaching, knowing coaching and sport-specific terminology, having experience in coaching both males and females, and approaching the coaches as another coach with an interest in this specific issue helped build a trusting relationship.

Triangulation is mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) as another technique to enhance the credibility of findings and interpretations and was used in the present investigation. Different types of triangulation include methods, source, analyst, and theory triangulation, all of which are designed to validate and verify qualitative analyses. In the present study, “triangulating analysts” was used. Patton (1990) has described this technique as having two or more persons independently analyze the same qualitative data set and then compare their findings. A peer reviewer was employed to audit the transcripts and verify or call to question the data analyses and interpretations (See Appendix E for peer reviewer background information).

Testing rival explanations and negative case analysis are two additional techniques that were used to add to the credibility of this study. Patton suggests that after the investigator has described the patterns, linkages, and plausible explanations through inductive data analysis procedures, it is important to search for competing or rival themes and explanations. This can be done inductively and logically. Inductively, it involves looking for other ways to organize the data that might lead to different findings and interpretations. Logically, it involves thinking about logical possibilities and checking whether such possibilities are supported by the data. Trying alternative patterns and explanations in a search for the best fit between data and analysis will lend credibility and rigor to the final interpretation offered in this investigation.

Negative case analysis, which is similar to testing rival explanations, involves a search for cases or situations that do not fit with an identified pattern or trend. For example, Patton (1990) suggests these negative cases “may be exceptions that prove the rule. They also may broaden the rule, change the rule, or cast doubt on the rule altogether” (p. 463). Unfortunately, there are no specific guidelines on how to look for and deal with negative cases. Negative cases should be addressed, yet to revise emergent themes until all negative cases are ruled out may be at the expense of interesting data. Additionally, it

seems unrealistic in an imperfect world to expect perfect explanation of a phenomenon. Rather, evidence should be gathered to present a strong case for a given interpretation while realizing it isn't the complete picture. Therefore, in the present investigation, negative cases were looked for and themes / interpretations were modified due to the negative cases, but the goal was not necessarily to fit all cases. The negative cases not fitting the emergent themes are, however, reported. For instance, in the present investigation not all coaches perceived females to be more outwardly emotional than males, but enough data accumulated to convince the researcher that a trend exists.

### Transferability

The notion of transferability is used in interpretive research in response to calls for external validity -- concern with the extent to which findings can generalize to other settings. An underlying assumption of positivistic research is that time- and context-free generalizations are possible and can, in fact, be determined statistically. Conversely, interpretive research is based on the assumption that only time- and context-bound working hypotheses are possible. Hence, the degree of external validity in interpretive inquiry depends on the similarity between contexts. Guba (1978) suggests that the "naturalist does not attempt to form generalizations that will hold in all times and in all places, but to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending upon the degree of fit between the contexts" (p. 13). The responsibility of the researcher is to provide adequate information regarding the context, whereas the decision of transferability is left to the reader.

The provision of "thick description" is posited as a technique used by researchers to enable others to make decisions regarding transferability. Patton (1990) states that thick description involves systematic reporting of sufficient details of data collection and analyses to permit others to understand and draw their own interpretations. Unfortunately, no clear

guidelines exist to identify what constitutes thick description. In the present investigation, the researcher made a conscious effort to provide details of the data collection and data analysis processes to attain thick description. Additionally, the individual reviewing (auditing) this investigation served as a quality check as to the level of description obtained.

Along similar lines, Patton emphasizes the importance of design checks. He suggests that the investigator must be careful to limit conclusions to the situations, time periods, persons, contexts, and purposes for which the data collections are applicable. The methods and results of the present investigation were kept in context when writing the research report, thus allowing others to make decisions regarding transferability.

### Dependability

Dependability in interpretive research is the quantitative equivalent of the concept of reliability -- the stability, consistency, and predictability of a phenomenon or event. In interpretive inquiry, it is assumed that things are dynamic and constantly changing so it becomes impossible to replicate exactly any research finding.

A technique that was used to address the dependability of the present investigation was the audit check. Lincoln and Guba compare this inquiry audit to a fiscal audit where an individual examines the process by which financial accounts were kept and examines the accuracy of the final product. Similarly, the two primary responsibilities of an inquiry auditor are to examine the process of the inquiry and attest to its dependability and to examine the products of the inquiry (data, interpretations) to attest that the data supports the conclusions. As mentioned previously, a peer reviewer with knowledge of qualitative research audited the process and products of the present investigation to attest to its dependability.

### Confirmability

Confirmability parallels the call in positivistic research for objectivity. The underlying assumptions of interpretive inquiry hold that subject and object are inseparable and inquiry is value-bound and, therefore, not objective based on a positivistic perspective of the term. Because objectivity is not possible or desired, confirmability speaks to the characteristics *of the data* rather than characteristics of the investigator: are the data confirmable? The confirmability of the data was addressed through the audit process noted earlier, whereby another individual familiar with qualitative inquiry independently analyzed the data.

While complete objectivity is not possible or desired for this type of research, it is necessary for qualitative researchers to minimize their own subjectivities and biases. Keeping a reflexive journal is a technique that enhances the researcher's awareness of subjectivities as well as helps the auditor determine the influence of such biases on outcomes. Lincoln and Guba describe the reflexive journal as a kind of diary in which the investigator records a variety of information about self and method. Regarding the self, the journal can provide the same kind of information about the human instrument (researcher) that is often provided about instruments used in experimental research. With respect to method, the reflexive journal provides important information regarding methodological decisions and factors that influence these decisions; this information can be used by the auditor.

Based on the suggestion of Lincoln and Guba, the researcher's reflexive journal consisted of three major parts: (1) a section devoted to the daily schedule and logistics of the study; (2) a section devoted to personal thoughts, where the researcher reflected on what was happening in terms of personal values and interests and speculated and noted insights during the research process; and (3) a methodological section where methodological decisions and rationales were recorded. The reflexive journal is a valuable

tool that can attest to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the investigation. Because of its importance both to the researcher and to the establishment of trustworthiness, the reflexive journal was kept meticulously and truthfully as needed throughout the research process.

While Lincoln and Guba focus on establishing trustworthiness via specific techniques and procedures (as discussed above), Patton conceives of credibility as being more far-reaching. He suggests that three issues must be addressed to enhance the credibility of a qualitative study:

First, it must be demonstrated that rigorous techniques and methods for attaining and analyzing the data have been used. This issue was dealt with in the previous section that focused on techniques that were used in this investigation to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research.

Second, the credibility of the researcher needs to be established as it will affect how the results and interpretations are received by the reader. Because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, information needs to be provided to build credibility. For example, what personal experience and training does the researcher bring to the investigation? What perspective does the researcher hold? This information about the researcher was detailed in the Researcher as Instrument section. Furthermore, Patton suggests that any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation needs to be addressed. During the investigative process, the reflexive journal captured the ongoing thoughts, insights, and decisions of the researcher that were then integrated into the analysis of the research project.

Third, the researcher's philosophical belief in and appreciation for interpretive inquiry needs to be addressed. This, too, has been noted in the Researcher as Instrument section.



### Summary

Although qualitative investigations are fairly well accepted as a legitimate way of knowing, it is necessary to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the research process and investigative interpretations. In this section, the specific procedures and techniques that were used in the present study to enhance its trustworthiness were explicated. These factors, in combination with a belief in the credibility of the researcher, should help the reader view this investigation as a credible, legitimate source of information.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The present investigation was undertaken with two general purposes in mind:

(1) to understand coaches' perceptions of psychological characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes; and (2) to understand how any perceived differences influence coach behaviors or interaction with athletes. Because these two purposes are intimately linked, it would be inappropriate to analyze and interpret them separately. Therefore, these two purposes are best interpreted and understood together.

The presentation and discussion of findings are divided into the following sections which parallel specific parts and questions of the interview guide:

- (1) General coach perspectives;
- (2) Coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of female athletes;
- (3) Enjoyment and challenges of coaching female athletes;
- (4) Coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of male athletes;
- (5) Enjoyment and challenges of coaching male athletes;
- (6) Coach behavioral responses to specific situations;
- (7) Coach perceptions of gender differences on psychological variables; and
- (8) Additional findings and discussion.

### General Coach Perspectives

Thirteen of the fourteen coaches interviewed (93%) indicated that, in general, they perceive their male and female athletes as differing on some psychological characteristics and behaviors. Furthermore, some of these perceived differences necessitate that they interact differently with their male and female athletes, as illustrated in the following:

I think in many cases coaches who do both [coach men and women] at the same time have to have almost like two different personalities. You have to relate to the women and their needs and so forth because their needs and wants are, or seem to be, different from the men. And I think you have to approach them a little differently. (DM)

One of the reasons that drew me into coaching both men and women is that I can sense or see the differences between the men and women and relate differently to them but still on a good level. (GS)

Oftentimes the characteristics of the women are the same as the men but the approach is different, the posturing is different, the way they carry themselves is different . . . while their behaviors may be different, I think the needs are pretty much the same. And the approach to that, how you may react to that, may be different but your end result, your goal, and just the atmosphere of the activity is pretty much the same. (MJ)

I think it [coaching both men and women] is a nice balance of interactions. I mean, you interact with the guys and you also interact with the women and they require a different interaction and it keeps things fresher. (DM)

Coaches were often able to identify specific characteristics and behaviors of their athletes that influenced a different coach behavior or approach toward the male and female athletes. For example, one coach noted how the situation may differentially influence his interactions with males and females:

Again, in dealing with suggestions or criticisms or evaluations, I think I have a tendency with the females to be more careful in choosing what it is I say than I do with the men. And . . . as far as the approach to a daily practice session, as far as dealing with what they are to accomplish with the practice session, there is no difference in what I do there. (LD)

Throughout the 14 interviews, all but one coach made a statement similar to those cited above. Namely, that there are some ways in which female and male athletes differ - - be it behavior, emotional expression, or needs - - and that these differences, in some way, affect subsequent coach-athlete interaction. It is important to note, however, that coaches readily acknowledged that female and male athletes are more similar than different. Hence, while it is essential that the differences be understood and appreciated, they must not be overemphasized or taken out of context. One coach, when asked to describe characteristics and behaviors of his female athletes, illustrated this point when he commented:

I don't know, they [males and females] seem to be a lot similar to me rather than different. I don't know, maybe it is just the kids we recruit out here or the kids we manage to get in the program, but they just I just see the men and the women really approaching a lot of things in the same way. (JQ)

Although the primary focus of the ensuing analyses is to identify common ground or themes of agreement, an in-depth understanding of each coach as a unique case in and of itself is a prerequisite to a complete understanding of gender in the sport setting. Therefore, individual profiles of each of the 14 coaches were developed and are contained in Appendix B. Studying each coach as a separate case allows for the identification of his / her unique perceptions and coach behaviors. To illustrate the uniqueness of each case, the perceptions and behaviors of two coaches are contrasted with an emphasis on describing differences. These two were purposely chosen as they represent two varied coach perceptions - - a comparison of these two cases follows. Additionally, one "outlying" case (that is, a coach who differed widely in his opinions from his counterparts) is also briefly discussed in an effort to highlight the uniqueness of each individual's perspective.

Case comparison. A comparison of the individual cases of JD and GS serves as an acknowledgment of the uniqueness of individual coach perceptions. Each coach was asked

to describe characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes, including the most challenging and enjoyable aspects of coaching each. A review of JD's responses suggests that, although he identified differing characteristics, he feels males and females are "pretty much the same" and therefore identified numerous similar characteristics. Likewise, when describing challenges and enjoyment, he noted that these would be the same for both male and female athletes. JD commented:

You know, it is kind of funny when you talk about males and females and differences because I never really look at, look at people too much as being male and female - although I am sure that I do some things differently. I pretty much look at people as people . . . I just enjoy young people.

Alternately, GS discussed numerous differing characteristics of males and females and often noted them in relation to each other. For example, he described male athletes as less coachable, less dedicated, tending to hide their emotions, and being less willing to talk about their feelings than female athletes. In regards to enjoyment and challenges, he noted he enjoys the coachability of females and finds the "show me" attitude of males and tendency to not do as told to be challenging. Conversely, the challenge in coaching women is having to take a measured approach because of their sensitivity, whereas the enjoyment in coaching males is being able to react and express his emotions. These perceptions of challenges and enjoyment of GS in coaching males and females stand in direct contrast to each other where the characteristic that is a challenge with one gender is the opposite in the other gender and therefore a source of enjoyment. Taken together, the perceptions of JD and GS regarding characteristics of male and female athletes seem to vary quite a bit. Whereas JD perceives few differences, GS described several strong differences.

Coaches were asked to describe their behavior toward males and females in three specific situations. Interestingly, although JD and GS had varied perceptions of male and female athletes, they described similar responses to the situations. In preparing the teams

for a race, both described using different approaches toward male and female athletes. In general, their approaches would take pressure off female athletes and put a little pressure on males. In response to the second situation, in which a freshman athlete is struggling with his or her performance, both described a tendency to communicate the same thing to a male and female but noted they would be more blunt or "in the face" with male athletes because it is needed and can be handled by these athletes. It is only in the last situation, in which an athlete is having personal problems, that JD and GS varied in their responses. JD noted that his response would depend on the individual, but would not differ due to gender. Conversely, GS noted that he would approach them differently because of differing characteristics of males and females. While females are open and willing to discuss problems, males tend to be closed - - so a different approach is necessary to get the males to open up.

Variability also arose in their perceptions of differences on specific psychological variables. While both noted differences in outward expression of some of the variables, JD often qualified this perception by suggesting the males and females are similar in actual level but just differ in expression. While GS also noted this in reference to one variable, he more often talked of differences between the two genders. Another major difference is there where JD perceives a similar relationship within each team and between the male and female athletes and himself, GS feels he has a different relationship with males and females and also perceives different team relationships amongst the males and females.

Given JD's prior responses, it was not surprising that he does not feel the issue of gender should be included in coaching education. He believes we should look for commonalities instead of discussing differences and further dividing people. GS, on the other hand, believes coaching education programs should discuss the issue of gender to increase coach awareness of and sensitivity toward gender differences.

This brief comparison of two cases has served to demonstrate the variability among coaches regarding their perceptions of male and female athletes and its impact on coaching behavior. Although the ensuing analyses of the 14 interviews emphasized common themes, this comparison serves as an illustration of the uniqueness of each coach's perceptions.

Unique case of RM. Whereas thirteen of the coaches perceive differences in their female and male athletes that impact their interaction with their athletes, one coach felt otherwise. RM perceives few, if any, differences and feels he doesn't interact differently with his male and female athletes. His individual profile provides greater detail on his unique perspective. It is believed that an awareness of RM's background and philosophy toward coaching will aid in understanding his responses. Briefly, RM seems to have a deep belief that if differences exist (although he notes that he sees very few meaningful differences) they are not true gender differences. Rather, the differences are due to society treating males and females differently which he feels is often limiting to one or the other gender. Therefore, in his interaction with the athletes, he feels he purposely approaches the athletes similarly.

The case of RM, then, shows that while this group of coaches has a good deal in common relative to their perceptions and perceived gender related behaviors, one individual differed widely in his opinion. Moreover, while the common ground or themes should and will be recognized and emphasized in these results, in the spirit of interpretive research, this individual's "unique" perspective should be noted.

#### Coach Perceptions of Characteristics and Behaviors of Female Athletes

The fourteen interviewed coaches were asked to reflect on their experiences in working with female athletes and to identify psychological characteristics and behaviors that typify these female athletes. In doing so, some of the coaches found it helpful to

characterize their females by comparing them with males. Because of this, several of the identified characteristics and behaviors of female athletes are noted in relation to male athletes.

To get a broad perspective of each coaches' composite perception of their female athletes, the words used by each coach to describe these athletes were identified and are contained in Table 3 as raw data themes. An asterisk next to the raw data theme indicates that, in this section, the coach identified this specific characteristic of the female athletes as influencing his interaction with them. The influence each characteristic has on coach behavior is integrated within and expounded upon in this, and later, sections.

Table 3

Coach descriptors of female athletes.

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<u>Coach</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
DC	conscientious excitable and enthused academic-minded like to have things explained* tender-hearted, i.e., easily upset, dwell on personal issues receptive to help
JD	internally motivated high expectations perfectionistic caring about one another academically intelligent dedicated competitive with teammates struggle with eating disorders
LD	accepting of challenge self-reliant committed to and focused on goal hard-working tend to take things personally
KD	very emotional, i.e., get upset* concerned with weight competitive mentally strong



- RG            less accepting of poor performance  
 feel emotional burden of having to help team  
 parents / HS coach often still involved  
 competitive with teammates so tend to train alone\*  
 feel like they fail others  
 difficulty with accepting criticism in group  
 like to communicate with coach; approached individually\*  
 sensitive to weight  
 less close as a team  
 gives back to coach
- MJ            competitive  
 place great trust in coach; open to innovation and risk  
 feel expectations of others\*
- CL            susceptible to injury  
 difficulty with handling too much emotional stress  
 struggle with eating disorders  
 perceptive to nonverbal behaviors\*  
 higher commitment  
 more academically conscious  
 too competitive with teammates; tend to train alone  
 desire to please coach\*  
 want emotional commitment of coach  
 gives back to coach; shares success
- RM            coachable; receptive and willing to do as told  
 perceptive  
 persistent  
 appreciative  
 fun to be with
- DM            disciplined and dedicated  
 tend to overwork  
 incidences of eating disorders  
 emotional  
 need reinforcement; motivation from coach\*  
 feel like she let team and coach down after poor performance  
 coachable
- JQ            reacts to frustrations with tears\*  
 motivated to run by love of running  
 will quit team when no longer enjoyable or struggling with performance  
 wants individual time with coach or feels neglected  
 dwells on poor performances, gets upset
- GS            coachable, i.e., willing and open because of desire to improve  
 may give up too much control to coach  
 wants to please coach so will do as told  
 asks a lot of questions to coach  
 more emotional, i.e., tears up\*  
 puts a lot of pressure on self\*  
 tenuous self-confidence

DU	competitive with teammates* sensitive; tendency to take things personally* puts faith in coach; dependent on coach
DWe	enthusiastic, dedicated greater commitment; takes running seriously less distracted by college life better students accepting of things promoted by coach wants to please coach, parents, and others bears burden of expectation will continue to run for others
DWi	emotionally and psychologically mature sexually responsible less socially mature deep commitment, focus on running nutrition conscious; eating disorders hungrier want / demand coach attention

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It should also be noted that in the last part of the interview, coaches were asked to describe any differences they have noticed between male and female athletes on specific variables (e.g., anxiety, confidence). From this discussion, several additional characteristics of male and female athletes were alluded to by the coaches. However, these additional characteristics were not included in this analysis. Instead, the content analysis was limited to characteristics and behaviors that stood out to the coaches, not those prompted by the investigator questioning on specific variables.

Looking through each coach's composite of raw data themes regarding female athletes shows that while no two coaches are identical in their perceptions of females, numerous similarities exist across the 14 coaches. To ascertain these similarities, a content analysis was conducted by the investigator on the 88 identified raw data themes. Eight themes emerged from the content analysis of raw data themes regarding psychological characteristics and behaviors of female athletes as perceived by the coaches and are contained in Table 4. These eight themes regarding characteristics and behaviors of

females were labeled as follows: emotional/sensitive; needing from coach (i.e. communication, motivation, relationship); coachable; feeling expectations of others / wanting to please and not let others down; competitive with teammates; weight conscious/struggling with eating disorders; academically conscious; and additional attributes conducive to athletic success. Each of these eight themes are discussed in greater detail with supporting quotes to aid in illustrating the theme with the words of the coaches. Integrated throughout the discussion of each theme are the influences the athlete characteristic has on coach behavior. Additionally, several raw data themes were identified only briefly by no more than two coaches and, therefore, did not emerge into a first-order theme as they did not have strong support across the interviewed coaches.

Table 4

## Themes characteristic of female athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
Emotional/sensitive 7 (50%)	Tender-hearted, i.e., easily upset, dwell on personal issues Tend to take things personally Very emotional, i.e., get upset* Emotional More emotional, i.e. tear up* Dwell on poor performance, gets upset Sensitive; tends to take things personally*
Need from coach 7 (50%)	Like to have things explained* Like to communicate with coach; be approached individually*  Need reinforcement, motivation from coach* Want emotional commitment of coach Ask a lot of questions to coach Want individual time with coach or feel neglected Want / demand coach attention
Coachable 7 (50%)	Receptive to help Place trust in coach; open to innovation and risk Coachable, receptive and willing to do as told Coachable Coachable, i.e., willing and open because of desire to improve Put faith in coach, dependent on coach Accepting of things promoted by coach
Feel expectations; want to please 6 (43%)	Feel emotional burden of having to help team Feel like they fail others Feel expectations of others* Feel like she let coach / team down after poor performance Desire to please coach* Wants to please coach so will do as told Wants to please coach, parents, and others Bears burden of expectation Will run for others
Competitive with teammates 4 (29%)	Competitive with teammates Competitive with teammates so tend to train alone* Too competitive with teammates; tend to train alone Competitive with teammates*

Weight conscious Eating disorders 6 (43%)	Struggle with eating disorders Concerned with weight Sensitive to weight Incidences of eating disorders Struggle with eating disorders Nutrition conscious; have eating disorders	
Academically conscious 4 (29%)	Academic-minded Academically intelligent More academically conscious Better students	
Additional attributes conducive to athletic success 11 (79%)	Conscientious Excitable, enthusiastic Internally motivated Perfectionistic Caring of one another Dedicated Accepting of challenge Self-reliant Committed to, focused on goal Hard-working Competitive Mentally strong Competitive	Disciplined, dedicated Higher commitment Motivated to run by love of running Enthusiastic Greater commitment; take running seriously Less distracted by college Deep commitment, focus Persistent Appreciative Fun to be with Perceptive

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A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

For each theme that emerged in this and other analyses, the number and percent of coaches who identified each theme as characteristic of athletes is indicated in the table. While this is a valuable source of information regarding the strength of the theme, equally valuable in assessing the strength of the theme is the quality of support provided by each coach. For example, one coach talked extensively about the tendency of female athletes to be competitive with each other and also briefly mentioned that females share and give back more than males. While these two raw data themes are characteristics of female athletes, there was a qualitative difference in the strength of the raw data themes that is not evident when one only assesses frequency of responses. For each theme, this "qualitative" assessment of the strength of the theme is integrated throughout the discussion. However,

caution should be used when interpreting the tables where only number and percentage of coaches who support the theme is evident.

Emotional / sensitive. One first-order theme that emerged from the raw data themes concerned the emotionality coaches perceived to characterize female athletes. Seven coaches (50%) identified raw data themes of female athletes that make up this theme for a total of seven raw data themes. These include: "tender-hearted, i.e., easily upset, dwell on personal issues", "tend to take things personally", "very emotional, i.e. get upset", "emotional", "more emotional, i.e., tear up", "dwell on poor performances, get upset", and "sensitive; tend to take things personally". These coaches perceive that females' emotions are much closer to the surface and are therefore easily 'triggered', which often influenced coach approach as reflected by the following:

I think their emotions are much closer to the surface and I think that was probably the hardest thing, initially, for me to deal with - was to get used to the fact that a female might tear up, might cry. It could be something good, it could be something bad, it could be that particular day and I just had to learn, you know, not to get put off. I think a lot of males are put off by that. . . . It would be similar to, you know, males like to cuss. I mean, if you get offended by that or get distracted by that you are going to kind of have a difficult time. (GS)

Their feelings are closer to the surface. You just have to be a lot more patient. They tend to be more sensitive to your approach to them and I find myself having to check my mood closer before I get involved in talking with them on day to day things or if something needs to be addressed. I need to take a much more measured approach. (CL)

Furthermore, part of this emotionality is the tendency for females to internalize things and remain emotional about it - - more so than their male counterparts. And, as the following quotes illustrate, this characteristic impacts their interaction with female athletes (noted by three of these coaches):

Females have a tendency to internalize their poor performances and that they have a tendency - again, this is all a generalization - but they have a tendency to take the performance more personally and criticisms of the performance more personal than guys do. They internalize and carry it with them . . . And so, in dealing with evaluating performances I find that I have to be a little bit more careful in how I verbalize criticism of races with women, more than with men. (LD)

If you say something in a negative way, I think that males kind of shrug it off and I think that females would take it much more personally as an attack on them as opposed to they had a bad race or maybe didn't give their all that day. You have to reword it in a more positive framework and keep criticism very constructive and minimize it. (DU)

Because of the perceived tendency of females to internalize poor performances and criticisms of performances and to react emotionally in these situations, these coaches find that they temper what and how they critique the athlete's performance. The coaches talked of drawing a positive from a poor performance or emphasizing that the criticism is directed at her performance not her as a person to buffer against her tendency to internalize. Two other coaches specifically noted, and many others alluded to the notion, that although males and females may differ in the emotions they express, they try not to let this affect their interaction. Instead, the coaches seem to suggest that they respect the different emotional reactions from males and females.

This characteristic is discussed in more detail in a later section dealing with coach perception of males and females on different variables. It should be noted here, however, that the characteristic of emotionality and expression of emotions was a pervasive difference between male and female athletes that had an influence on coach behavior and interaction with athletes.

Need from coach, i.e., communication, motivation, relationship. This first-order theme emerged from seven raw data themes of female athletes from seven coaches (50%). All the raw data themes related to the needs and the wants that the female athletes require from the coach. The specific raw data themes include "like to have things explained", "like

to communicate with coach; be approached individually", "need reinforcement, motivation from coach", "want emotional commitment of coach", "ask a lot of questions to coach", "want individual time with coach or feel neglected", and "want / demand coach attention". These seven coaches perceive that females require more from them - - the athletes want a relationship and individual communication with them. Additionally, three of these coaches note that this tendency of the females influences coach-athlete interaction.

One coach feels that this need of females for communication and reinforcement from him is the biggest difference he perceives between males and females and it impacts how and how often he communicates with females.

Females need a lot more talking to than males . . . you have to be more personable with females than with males. They like you to talk to them; the men really don't care I don't think. The women need a lot of verbal reassurances, verbal reinforcement. They just need a lot more mental, emotional, positive reinforcement. . . . And in terms of workouts, they are more inquisitive as to why are we doing this? what is the purpose of this? The men just tend to go out and do it. (DM)

Related to this theme, two other coaches perceive the following:

Ladies like to have things explained to them a little more, not to question what a coach is doing but to better understand. (DC)

[with females] there is the emotional commitment you make to them and I think that they expect it. The men it is more, on a day to day basis, it is more showing up at the office and getting work done. And on the women's side, it is that they want you to understand what they are going through and I think that you too have to give more of yourself in those circumstances. (CL)

Another coach noted that when approaching the athletes prior to a competition, he has found it best to talk to the females one-on-one, whereas he can approach the males as a group. He perceives that females want to talk individually with him to go over *her* race plan. Also, he finds that females tend to have a lot of questions of him that are best answered individually and not to the group. Another coach finds that he has to consciously



be aware of how much time he is spending with each female athlete. He feels it is important for her to communicate with him as she will feel neglected if she has not gotten *her time* with him.

In sum, this theme reflects some of the coaches' perception that females want and need more from the coach than basic coaching. As will be discussed in more detail later, this need may tie into findings from the scientific literature regarding the importance females place on relationships and the social aspect of participation (Flood & Hellstedt, 1990; Gill, 1988). It could be suggested that because the coach-athlete relationship is of value to the female athlete, she wants the coach to demonstrate he or she also values the relationship.

While this theme suggests that some coaches are involved in more communication and interactions with female athlete, the reviewed literature regarding perceptions and behaviors of physical educators found otherwise. Specifically, physical education teachers tended to interact more often with male students although the difference was not always statistically different (Dunbar & O'Sullivan, 1986). However, it was noted that while differences may be small, the cumulative effects of different interactions are unknown. Similarly, one wonders about the cumulative effect on males of fewer interactions and involvement with their coach.

Additionally, an interesting question that comes to mind is whether male athletes may also need more from the coach in terms of motivation, communication, reinforcement but just don't make those needs known. As previously mentioned, several coaches noted that females are more expressive of their feelings and emotions so they probably make it known to the coach what they need. Conversely, males are less expressive but may have similar needs which are not being met. One aspect of coach education may be to encourage or teach coaches to *ask* athletes about their needs and wants from them.

Coachable. A fourth theme that emerged from raw data themes of female athletes concerns the perception that females are very coachable. Seven coaches (50%) described female athletes as being open and accepting of what they as the coach promote. This characteristic was often noted in contrast to male athletes whom coaches perceive as having a tendency to challenge the coach and the training program. This theme encompassed the raw data themes "receptive to help", "place trust in coach; open to innovation and risk", "coachable, receptive and willing to do as told", "coachable", "coachable, i.e., willing and open because of desire to improve", "put faith in coach, dependent on coach", and "accepting of things promoted by coach".

Four of these coaches suggested that the relatively new status of females as highly competitive athletes accounts for their tendency to be more coachable than males. Interestingly, one coach mentioned that this characteristic of females is changing the longer they are involved in competitive sports.

Because women, historically, had not had near the opportunities that men had had. . . they were more receptive, they didn't arrive already with all the answers, they appreciated interest and attention and help, they were more likely to be willing to follow the lead or take a risk or try it a different way because they were more receptive to being coached and led. . . . and now that is changing. (RM)

One coach feels that for some female athletes this characteristic may also tie into their desire to please others and not let others down. He suggests the following:

[with females] I think there is a willingness to be coached or a coachability factor. And they are very open, very eager almost - I want this to sound correct - almost in a pleasing manner. I mean, they want to do what you want them to do. . . . Because I think there are two situations. One where it is a pleasing - they want to do what you want them to do because you are the coach. I think there is another one where maybe more in the elite area who they will do what you want them to do because they want to be good. And they are going to say just tell me what to do and I will do it. (GS)

Interestingly, two of these coaches also noted that females may actually give up too much control to the coach and become dependent on him or her. One coach said the males and females are on two extremes - - the men are a bit too independent and think they know everything they should be doing, whereas the women are a little too dependent on the coach and look to him or her for everything.

Feeling expectations / wanting to please others. This theme tied together common sentiments regarding the perception that female athletes feel expectations of others and want to do well to please these individuals and not let them down. Nine raw data themes mentioned by six coaches (43%) encompassed this theme and included "feel emotional burden of having to help team", "feel like they fail others", "feel expectations of others", "feel like she let coach / team down after poor performance", "desire to please coach", "wants to please coach so will do as told", "wants to please coach, parents, and others", "bears burden of expectation", and "will run for others". The theme seems two-fold in that, first, females perceive significant others as having expectations of them and, second, they feel a burden from these expectations because they want to please and not let others down. The coaches perceive that women are concerned with others - - i.e., coach, parents, teammates, friends - - and don't want to do anything that would let others down.

Three coaches made specific reference to the tendency of parents and high school coaches to stay closely involved with the female athlete - - "the umbilical cord is never cut". This may exacerbate athlete perception of expectations. One coach noted:

It is the expectations of others. I think sometimes fathers or coaches have a tendency to hang on a little bit longer. I think people have different expectations of females - - some of it very positive expectations and some of it very limiting.  
(MJ)

Quotes from two coaches highlight the notion that females tend to perceive they are letting others down when they fail.

A female has a tendency to when she fails she not only fails herself but she fails you as the coach, she fails her parents and I don't think a male does that. A male is going to be able to say 'I failed and I'll be okay'. Maybe the reason the female is so emotional is not I failed but I failed you and you and you - the community and so on. . . . maybe that is one of the reasons it is hard for them to accept failure because if I accept then I have also failed all these other people. (RG)

A lot of times, I think if anything, with the female - especially if it is a good relationship between the coach and the athlete - is that the females I think in many cases feel that not only are they letting the team down but they are letting the coach down. One girl, who had a bad race, she was so upset that she didn't perform well for me that she didn't think she deserved to be alive. (MJ)

One coach talked of this desire to please as also impacting the training situation:

Especially the females . . . I think that they want to please you maybe a little more than the boys do and they may struggle more mightily to get that time [in workouts] and then they have overworked. (CL)

This coach realized through experience that his females would overwork to meet certain times in an effort to please him. He has found it best, therefore, not to time women in workouts and instead tell them to run at a certain effort.

Additionally, one coach noted that a female bears such a burden of expectation that if she runs poorly and the team is still successful, she has a hard time feeling a part of the success. Unless she does her part as a member of the team, she can't enjoy the team's success. In contrast, he noted that men have little trouble taking part in the team's success regardless of his individual performance.

This characteristic would seem to have potentially important implications for coaches. Unfortunately, in this section, only one coach noted specifically how this characteristic influences his behaviors. However, when discussing coach responses to specific sport scenarios, coaches discussed how female perception of expectations and her desire to please others influences coach approach. This is discussed in a later section.

Competitive with teammates. In this section of the interview, four coaches (29%) discussed their perception of women as being competitive with teammates and, therefore, having a tendency to often train alone. The four raw data themes that emerged to form this theme included "competitive with teammates", "competitive with teammates so tend to train alone", "too competitive with teammates; tend to train alone", and "competitive with teammates". Additionally, two of the four coaches discussed this characteristic as influencing their approach to the athletes. One coach said the following:

I tend to think that women are more competitive against their own teammates than the men. You know, like it is very, very important for my #1 runner she wants to be #1 every single meet. Just for example, she'd rather take 3rd at the conference meet and be 1st on the team than to be 2nd at the conference meet and be 2nd on the team and things like that. They tend to be a little bit more competitive in practice as well - wanting to maintain their spot on the team even in a workout. (DU)

Because of this tendency among the females, this coach noted several steps he has taken to control the team competitiveness such as emphasizing a team orientation and implementing team rules to encourage mutual support.

One coach feels that females struggle with the notion of training with their teammates because they are also their competitors in races and, therefore, end up training alone quite often. He feels this differences (in that men don't have this difficulty) may be due to how they were brought up and socialized into games and sports.

I really believe that boys learn to play games together and they win and they lose whereas little girls don't seem to. And little boys are competing, I think, consistently in that situation and I don't think little girls do the same. . . I don't think it is a competitive type atmosphere. (RG)

This notion that females tend to be competitive with each other is also discussed in the Discussion chapter as it arose in subsequent sections of the interview. However, it should

be noted here that this perception of females as being competitive with each other seems to contradict findings from the reviewed scientific literature on motivation which suggested that males tend to emphasize achievement whereas females emphasize affiliation (Gill et al, 1983). Based on this finding, it would be expected that women would be less competitive with each other as relationships are of importance. An interpretation is provided is provided to clear up this seeming contraction.

Weight conscious / eating disorders. Six coaches (43%) discussed the issue of eating disorders as being problematic among their female athletes. This theme emerged from the raw data themes "struggle with eating disorders", "concerned with weight", "sensitive to weight", "incidences of eating disorders", "struggle with eating disorders", and "nutrition conscious; have eating disorders". These coaches perceive that their female athletes struggle to deal with their weight and how it relates to running performance. One insightful coach commented that

Males as they gain the normal changes are normally positive but on the women's side when you go through puberty there is a greater chance, you know, you pick up the body changes and there is also a higher percentage of body fat and also the younger ladies also just get bigger so things become more difficult. (CL)

In addition, he noted that when women do lose weight they tend to initially run faster, which facilitates a belief that lighter equals faster - - and subsequent problems often develop. Conversely, he finds that men, because they already have a low percentage of body fat, tend to run slower when they lose weight.

Furthermore, because females are perceived as being very sensitive about their weight, the coaches struggle with how to address the situation when a female gains excessive weight. While two of these coaches discussed an approach they had developed to deal with the issue, several others were unsure of how to approach the female athlete;

they are aware of the issue but have no defined strategy to prevent or deal with the problem. Related to this, one coach noted

The biggest factor I find, particularly with females, is the fact that they tend to - and this is the time of year [as freshman] - and they are starting to go through puberty. This is one of the most difficult things I find in talking with females about is their weight. If it comes down to a matter of a young lady getting too heavy, you know, somehow you subtly try to talk to them about it and send them to a nutritionist. (DWe)

Another coach asked:

What do you do like with a freshman . . . she goes from 118 lbs. when she gets here to 120 lbs. and everything is fine. All of the sudden, she is 127 lbs. So, if you don't weigh in, what do you do? How do you know? What do you say - you look heavy? or do you say to weigh on your own? What do you do because it is a big deal? (RG)

This theme is touched upon further in the Discussion chapter as not only did several coaches in this interview note its relevance, but the athletic community is becoming more aware of and concerned about the problem of eating disorders among female athletes (NCAA, 1989; Thompson, 1987). Unfortunately, while some of the coaches are aware of the issue as it affects females, few had a plan on how to address the issue and seemed unsure of what their role should be.

Academically conscious. Another theme that emerged from the raw data themes of female athletes was the characterization of females as being concerned with academics. Especially in comparison to their male counterparts, four coaches (29%) perceive female athletes as being more concerned with academics. Specifically, the four raw data themes encompassing this theme included: "academic-minded", "academically intelligent", "more academically conscious", and "better students". Interestingly, two coaches noted that this

is starting to change as they see female athletes becoming more like males and becoming less concerned with academics.

Additional attributes conducive to athletic success. A final theme emerging from coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of female athletes relates to attributes displayed by the females. Eleven of the coaches (79%) described their female athletes using at least one attribute believed to be important to athletic success such as "hard-working", "competitive", and "committed". In total, 24 raw data themes emerged to form this theme. Not all of these raw data themes were unique, however, as several coaches identified similar attributes. One coach described his female athletes as follows (and noted males display similar attributes):

Characteristics such as being committed to what it is that they want to do, recognizing that they need to work hard in order to achieve that, being focused about what it is that they are doing when it is time to do it, being good about shifting focus. (LD)

Interestingly, one coach discussed how females tend to become obsessive in things they are doing, almost too motivated or overdoing things. These sentiments were echoed by another coach, who also addressed how he tries to deal with this tendency.

Sometimes their strength is their weakness. They are so highly motivated and they are so highly dedicated that they sometimes don't know when to back off. . . they can get too motivated sometimes and that can be as detrimental as being unmotivated . . . So, we try to get them to be realistic about where they are at and what they need to do to continue on. You need to be consistent and just stay with it - if you are doing the right things and they are intelligently done, you will get better. (JD)

### Enjoyment and Challenges of Coaching Female Athletes

To gain a more complete understanding of coaches' perceptions of female athletes, the interviewed coaches were asked to reflect on what they find most enjoyable and most



challenging about working with females. Typically, the characteristic or behavior identified as most enjoyable and challenging in females stand out to the coach because the characteristic or quality does not exist to such an extent in males. Thus, it serves as an indication of the strength of the characteristic. After identifying coach responses, content analyses were conducted separately for raw data themes concerning enjoyment and challenges derived from working with female athletes. Two separate analyses were conducted as it was felt that challenges and enjoyment represented two discrete variables that could each contribute to a better understanding of athletes.

Enjoyment. Fifteen raw data themes were identified by the 14 coaches and, from these, three first-order themes emerged as primary sources of enjoyment. These themes include coachability, enjoy same qualities in both males and females, and share success / give back and are contained in Table 5. Additionally, three raw data themes were unique in that they did not coalesce with other raw data themes but are discussed as they provide insight into understanding female athletes.

Table 5

## Enjoyment of coaching female athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
Coachability 4 (29%)	Coachable; listen well Coachable and disciplined; absorb what coach says Do as asked; coachable Receptive to coaching; listen
Enjoy same qualities in both 5 (36%)	Enjoy seeing young people work hard and develop Enjoy characteristics of both male and female distance runners (motivation, introversion, dedication) Enjoy watching both have fun Derive equal enjoyment from males and females Enjoy dedication, commitment, enthusiasm of both
Share success; give back to coach 3 (21%)	Share success; appreciative of coach Give back to coach; share success Appreciate help, communicate this to coach
Unique 3 (21%)	Taking to next level Honestly competitive, feel free to be self Display deep commitment

A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

One theme that emerged from coaches' perceptions of the most enjoyable aspects of working with females concerns female coachability. This same theme also emerged as a higher order theme characteristic of female athletes as discussed in the previous section. Four coaches (29%) perceive the coachability of females as being a primary source of enjoyment. The raw data themes of females that merged to form this theme include "coachable; listen well", "coachable and disciplined; absorb what coach says", "do as asked; coachable", and "receptive to coaching; listen". This theme is illustrated by the words of DM:

I think they [female athletes] tend to be very, very coachable. In other words, they tend to absorb everything you tell them and they tend to be, I think, very very disciplined. I think they rely on the male coach . . . . The biggest thing is the fact that they tend to be, they tend to be very, very coachable.

As was noted in the previous section, many coaches believe females are more coachable than males because of their limited experience in competitive athletics. Thus, they eagerly look to the coach for guidance in helping them reach their athletic goals. The literature on youth sports would support this perception. McPherson and Brown (1988), in their review, noted that gender differences in the socialization process results in disparate levels of participation for boys and girls. Specifically, "socialization processes, beginning in early infancy, has encouraged sport participation among males while directing females away from sport" (p. 269). Likewise, Greendorfer (1992) reported that boys and girls are socialized into different activities with males tending to be involved in competitive games, whereas females tend to be involved in cooperative games. It makes intuitive sense, then, that less experience would facilitate a greater need for guidance from the coach by the female athlete.

The theme that emerged with the greatest number of coaches offering support relates to the notion that coaching males and females is equally enjoyable; the coaches enjoy the same qualities in both males and females. Five coaches (36%) were unable to distinguish between females and males in terms of sources of enjoyment they derive in working with the athletes. One of these coaches stated:

I think part of the success they have had has been enjoyable and the dedication and commitment a lot of them have demonstrated over the years has been the most enjoyable thing about working with women . . . . and for men it is pretty much the same thing. . . The success they have had and the enthusiasm and commitment toward it. (DWe)

Similarly, another coach noted that he enjoys providing an activity through which kids [both male and female] can have fun.

I'm getting so old that kids are kids. They [females] seem to be just as excited and have as much fun as the guys ever had and so that part of it is real fun . . . and, shoot, with guys it is the same thing. It seems like they enjoy what they're doing and kids having fun. Hey, I don't know, I think I'd like to coach baseball or any other sport just when kids are having fun and making fun out of their life at the same time - that is what I like to see. (JQ)

A last theme that emerged concerned coaches deriving enjoyment from the sharing of success and giving back to the coach that is displayed by female athletes. Three coaches (21%) describe this source of enjoyment as females being "appreciative; sharing success", "giving back and sharing success", and "appreciative of help; communicate this to coach". These three coaches perceive females as appreciating the efforts of the coach and sharing their success with the coach. CL suggested:

I think they [females] give you back more directly - I think it is more satisfying. They will share with you their success and so when they succeed you succeed. And they are more open that way - the communication.

This theme may also tie to the tendency of females to be more coachable than their male counterparts. It would stand to reason that athletes who look to the coach for guidance and are receptive to the direction they provide would also have a tendency to recognize the input of the coach in any success they may experience. Conversely, athletes who are more independent and tend to challenge coaching direction would be more likely to assume complete ownership of success.

Additionally, three coaches (21%) identified unique sources of enjoyment derived from coaching females. These included "helping the athlete get to the next level", "deeper commitment", and "honest competitiveness displayed". The latter two raw data themes of females stand in comparison to males. Regarding the last raw data theme, this coach noted that what he enjoys is that women are honestly competitive, whereas males tend to get caught up in "macho posturing" and often don't feel free to be themselves. This perception

parallels the notion that females tend to be open and expressive with their emotions, more so than males who tend to keep things inside or hide feelings with a facade.

**Challenge.** Fourteen raw data themes were identified that pertain to what these coaches perceive to be the biggest challenge in coaching females. A content analysis resulted in the emergence of three first-order themes plus three unique raw data themes that did not coalesce to a higher level. These themes, contained in Table 4, were labeled as follows: dealing with emotions / sensitivity; meeting needs and wants of athlete and; helping deal with additional challenges. Not surprisingly, the first two themes also emerged as themes from the raw data themes characterizing female athletes.

Table 6

## Challenges of coaching female athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
Dealing with emotions, sensitivity 5 (36%)	Dealing with emotions, i.e., getting upset, dwell on problem Dealing with tendency to Internalize, take things personally Getting too upset over poor performance, tend to dwell on Dealing with emotions; sensitivity to coach approach Handling emotional aspects
Meeting needs / wants of female 3 (21%)	Females want and expect emotional involvement of coach Emotional involvement needed, i.e., communications Tend to demand / need more attention
Helping deal with additional challenges 3 (21%)	Helping deal with involvement / expectation of others Helping female deal with additional challenges Helping deal with issue of lesbianism
Unique 3 (21%)	Wanting too much too soon; high expectations Getting females to work as a group Motivating in the off-season

**A (B%):** A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

One theme, which emerged from raw data themes provided by five coaches (36%), concerns the challenge in dealing with the emotions / sensitivity of female athletes. The specific raw data themes identifying this challenge of coaching females are "dealing with emotions, (i.e., getting upset, dwell on problem)", "dealing with tendency to internalize, take things personally", "getting too upset over poor performance, tend to dwell on", "dealing with emotions; sensitivity to coach approach", and "handling emotional aspects". As one coach noted:

It [the challenge] is probably dealing with their emotional problems because they are much more tender-hearted; they are much more easier to get upset over not necessarily our coach-athlete relationship but an athlete to an athlete relationship or boyfriend-girlfriend. A lot of guys it will be like water off the back and they will just go on but the girls, a lot of times, will dwell on those things. (DC)

Compared with males, coaches perceive females as tending to dwell on and internalize poor performances or problems, become easily upset, and react sensitively to coach approach. These coaches struggle to understand females' emotional reactions which tend to be different or more extreme than those of male athletes. Reflections of one coach exemplify this theme:

The challenge with females is probably trying to balance being happy more than dwelling on discouragement kind of things. It seems to me like females take bad days way more seriously than guys do. I think a person makes progress if they are just being mellow and keeping after it rather than just having cycles of high and low. So just trying to smooth things out seems to be a big challenge to me. (JQ)

Additionally, two of these coaches noted that because females tend to internalize and take things personally, they find they need to take a measured, cautious approach with the women. This same notion was discussed by several other coaches in their discussions of characteristics and behaviors of their female athletes.

Another theme, which also emerged as a theme regarding characteristics of female athletes, is the challenge of meeting the needs / wants of the female athlete. The raw data

themes from three coaches (21%) that encompass this theme include "females want and expect emotional involvement of coach", "emotional involvement needed, i.e., communication", and "tend to demand / need more attention". These coaches seem to feel the biggest challenge is investing themselves in the coach-athlete relationship with females who also want the coach to be a friend, supporter, . . . They perceive females as wanting and needing from them, beyond the X's and O's of training and racing. As cited earlier, one coach noted:

[the biggest challenge is] the emotional commitment that you make to them and I think that they expect. The men it is more, on a day to day basis, it is more showing up at the office and getting work done. On the women's side it is that they want you to understand what they are going through and I think that you too have to give more of yourself in those circumstances. (CL)

Lastly, three coaches (21%) suggested that helping females deal with additional challenges they face - - that are not often faced by the male athlete - - to be the most challenging aspect of coaching women. These themes include "helping athlete deal with involvement and expectations of others", "helping athlete deal with additional challenges, i.e., maturation, society", and "dealing with issue of lesbianism". In regards to the last raw data theme, this coach noted:

There is created or grown the perception that the highly achieving female is also homosexual. . . . lots of track and field athletes feel some of the negative perceptions. I have kids on my team that struggle with the issue of they don't want to be viewed or lumped as if they are athletic they are lesbians. And sometimes they go out of their way to prove they aren't and that creates problems. (RM)

These three coaches feel that females in athletics face unique challenges that male athletes do not face and it is a challenge for them as coaches to help the athlete deal with these additional challenges or barriers.

Challenging aspects of coaching females that were unique were identified by three coaches (21%). These raw data themes, which failed to emerge to a higher level theme,

include "wanting too much too soon; high expectations", "getting females to work as a group", and "motivating in the off-season". DU, the coach who identified this last raw data theme, noted that this challenge may not be characteristic of female athletes in general but may be unique to his situation. When he took over the women's program three years ago, he acquired a team that trained only during the season and didn't invest much of themselves into the sport. His challenge, therefore, has been to turn the program around and instill internal motivation. He feels that over time, as the females gain experience in high level athletics, this challenge may disappear.

Summary of Coach Perception of Female Athletes. From the content analysis of the 88 raw data themes identified by the coaches as characterizing female athletes, eight first-order themes emerged. Each of these themes was identified by at least three coaches and emerged as a significant characteristics as perceived by these coaches. The themes included emotional/sensitive, needing from coach ( i.e. communication, motivation, relationship), coachable, feeling expectations of others / wanting to please and not let others down, competitive with teammates, weight conscious/ struggling with eating disorders, academically conscious, and additional attributes conducive to athletic success. Each of these were discussed in some detail and many are further expounded upon in later sections.

To provide additional insight into coach perception of female athletes, two separate content analyses were conducted on raw data themes relating to what coaches perceive to be the most enjoyable and most challenging aspects of coaching female athletes. The higher order themes that emerged were described and interpreted to enhance our understanding female athletes.



### Coach Perceptions of Characteristics and Behaviors of Male Athletes

As had been done regarding female athletes, coaches were asked to reflect on their experiences in working with male athletes and to identify psychological characteristics and behaviors that typify these male athletes. Similarly, many coaches found it helpful to characterize their male athletes by contrasting them with female athletes. Because of this, several of the identified characteristics and behaviors of male athletes are noted in relation to female athletes.

To get a holistic perspective of each coach's perception of their male athletes, the sum of raw data themes each coach identified as characteristic of males are contained in Table 7. An asterisk next to the raw data theme indicates that the coach identified this characteristic of the male athletes as influencing his interaction with them. These are integrated and expounded upon in this, and later, sections.

As mentioned previously, in the last section of the interview where coaches were asked to describe any differences they have noticed between male and female athletes on specific variables (e.g., anxiety, confidence), several additional characteristics of male athletes were identified by the coaches. However, these additional characteristics were not included in the present analysis. Instead, the analysis was limited to characteristics and behaviors that stood out to the coaches, not those prompted by investigator questioning on specific variables.

Table 7

## Coach descriptors of male athletes

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<u>Coach</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
DC	competitive enthusiastic, good spirited aggressive less concerned with academics think they know everything less receptive to help hold high expectations of themselves
JD	pretty much the same as females highly motivated mentally tough believe in self competitive intelligent inquisitive hold high expectations able to emotionally handle pressure and expectations*
LD	similar to females high achieving perfectionistic demanding of self*
KD	aggressive less emotional very competitive more determined to succeed arrogant and almost cocky know-it-all attitude
RG	close group both socially and athletically not threatened when teammates are running well tolerant of each others' differences accepting of poor personal performances tie into team success regardless of individual performance
MJ	tradition-bound with training, i.e. challenge innovation and risk able to find "collective focus" easily ego-involved in performance
CL	tend to "get off track", involved in other activities* ego / self-image tied to performance* need to be convinced of training; challenge coach

RM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>same characteristics as females</li> <li>perceptive</li> <li>willing</li> <li>persistent yet impatient</li> <li>appreciative</li> <li>fun to be with</li> <li>distracted by other things; less disciplined</li> </ul>
DM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some do least work to maintain scholarship</li> <li>very competitive</li> <li>disciplined</li> <li>less emotional</li> <li>more self-motivated</li> <li>not needing as much verbal communication with coach</li> <li>tend to not always do what they should, e.g., morning runs</li> </ul>
JQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>males and females more similar than different</li> <li>react to frustration physically, i.e., pound fist</li> <li>like being part of team; will not quit - have to be cut</li> </ul>
GS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>less coachable or willing to follow coach direction</li> <li>"show-me" attitude</li> <li>less dedicated</li> <li>tend to hide emotions, feelings*</li> <li>less willing to discuss feelings with others</li> </ul>
DU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>independent</li> <li>self-sufficient with training</li> <li>tend to challenge coach; need to be convinced of training program</li> </ul>
DWe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>less accepting of what coach promotes</li> <li>want to fit in with team; gain peer acceptance</li> <li>struggle with not being the star performer (as in high school)*</li> <li>tend to get off track, involved in other activities not conducive to running</li> <li>dedicated and committed</li> <li>enthusiastic</li> </ul>
DWi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>less emotionally and psychologically mature</li> <li>less sexually responsible</li> <li>more inclined to socialize, party and have more disciplinary problems</li> <li>less focused (take opportunity for granted)</li> <li>tend to focus more on winning*</li> </ul>

As can be seen from a cursory review of the identified characteristics and behaviors of male athletes, numerous commonalities exist across coaches in their perception of male athletes. To aid in systematically identifying these common characteristics as perceived by the coaches, a content analysis was conducted in which specific raw data themes coalesced

into first-order themes. The content analysis of the 73 raw data themes resulted in six first-order themes (see Table 8) plus unique raw data themes that were identified by fewer than three coaches and did not emerge into a higher-order theme. The six themes included the following: know-it-all attitude / challenge coach; tend to get off track; ego-involved / struggle with not winning; team emphasis; less emotional than females / hide feelings; and additional attributes conducive to athletic success. Each of these themes are expounded upon with supporting quotes to help illustrate the theme. Additionally, when applicable, the influence of the given characteristic on coach behaviors is discussed.

Table 8

## Themes characteristics of male athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data themes</u>
Know-it-all attitude; challenge coach 7 (50%)	Think they know everything Tradition-bound with training, i.e., challenge innovation Need to be convinced of training; challenge coach Less coachable and less willing to follow directions Show-me attitude Tend to challenge coach; need to be convinced of training Less accepting of what coach promotes Know-it-all attitude
Tend to 'get off track' 5 (36%)	Tend to get off track and involved in other activities* Distracted by other things; less disciplined Tend to not always do what they should, i.e. a.m. runs Tend to get off track and involved in activities not conducive to running More inclined to socialize, party and have more disciplinary problems Less focused
Ego-involved; struggle with not winning 4 (29%)	Ego / self-image tied to performance* Struggle with not being the star performer* Tend to focus more on winning* Ego-involved in performance
Team emphasis 4 (29%)	Close group both athletically and socially Able to find "collective focus" easily Like being part of team; will not quit - have to be cut Want to fit in with team; gain peer acceptance

<p>Less emotional than females; hide feelings 3 (21%)</p>	<p>Less emotional Tend to hide emotions; feelings* Less willing to discuss feelings with others Less emotional</p>	
<p>Additional attributes conducive to athletic success 7 (50%)</p>	<p>Competitive Aggressive Mentally tough Competitive Perfectionistic Perceptive Persistent yet impatient Very competitive Dedicated; committed Very competitive</p>	<p>Enthusiastic, good-spirited Highly motivated Believe in self High achieving Demanding of self Willing Appreciative Disciplined Enthusiastic More determined to succeed</p>

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A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

Know-it-all attitude: challenge coach. One first-order theme that emerged from the responses of seven coaches (50%) as being characteristic of male athletes is the tendency for males to challenge the coach regarding training; to exude a "know-it-all" attitude. This characteristic was often discussed in contrast to female athletes whom many coaches perceive as being very coachable. The following raw data themes were used by the coaches - - "think they know everything", "tradition-bound with training, i.e. challenge innovation and risk", "need to be convinced of training; challenge coach", "less coachable and less willing to follow directions", "show-me attitude", "tend to challenge coach; need to be convinced of training", and "know-it-all attitude". Comments from two of these coaches illustrates this theme.

Convincing them [the males] that what you want to do from a coaching standpoint, agreeing on what workouts should be, and that the direction that your schedule is going. . . .And so the challenge with the males is to convince them that their opinion could possibly need extending or whatever while on the women's side they will, you know, analyze it and accept it with more of an open mind. (CL)

[males have a] show-me attitude. I mean, they don't just - and this is the interesting thing - you have to prove to them why they need to do things. Which again, I don't mind, but they are a little more questioning. (GS)

These coaches perceive that their male athletes feel they know everything and, therefore, tend to challenge the coach when the training program goes against what they believe they should be doing. As noted, this characteristic was often discussed in relation to female athletes who tend to be more accepting of what the coach promotes. Four of the coaches tied this difference to the history of women in competitive athletics. These coaches noted that because women are new to the competitive arena, they are more willing to listen to the coach for advice. Conversely, because men have a long history in competitive athletics, they are more confident that they know what they should be doing and will challenge the coach. One wonders whether, as female athletes gain more confidence in the competitive sport environment, they will begin to take on this characteristic and become less coachable.

Tendency to get off track. Five coaches (36%) described their male athletes as having a tendency to get off track by becoming involved in other activities not conducive to running such as partying and excessive socializing or by not doing what they should in regards to training. The six raw data themes included in this theme are "tend to get off track and involved in other activities", "distracted by other things; less disciplined", "tend to not always do what they should", "tend to get off track and involved in activities not conducive to running", "more inclined to socialize, party and have more disciplinary problems", and "less focused".

RM mentioned that he even sees this tendency when recruiting male athletes. He finds that when males are on recruiting visits they often appear more interested in women

and parties than in academics or the quality of the athletic program. Another coach commented on this tendency:

I think that you have to be maybe a little bit more careful as far as what the men are doing off the track that they have a little greater tendency to become involved in, you know, the party scene and this type of thing. And I think the women athletes, the ones who have survived, want to be in athletics. . . . They have put up with more and consequently they tend to have a little higher commitment, I think, on and off the track. And I think on the men's side you have to be careful that all the good work that they are doing in practice is not being given away by lack of sleep or habit patterns that are not conducive to performance. (CL)

Three of these coaches noted that because of this tendency, they have to keep an eye on the males and monitor more closely what they are doing athletically and socially.

Sometimes you've got to check up on them to make sure they are doing it. . . and a lot of times the male sometimes will find it a lot easier to say 'nah, I don't feel like getting up this morning to go running'. Whereas a female, if you tell them this is the way it is, that is the way it is going to be - they end up doing it. (DWi)

Additionally, one coach mentioned that he has far more disciplinary problems with the men who tend to get involved in other activities that affect their running.

In an attempt to explain this tendency to get off track, it was noted by one coach that it may occur more in males than females because males have more social opportunities available to them. Two others believe that this tendency to get off track occurs because males take for granted the competitive opportunities that they have as the opportunities have always been there. Conversely, they noted that women take the opportunity more seriously and are appreciative because it is a relatively new experience, as illustrated in the following quote:

Getting them headed down the right road. It seems like they. . . my experiences, and this would just be subjective guess on my part, that they have been exposed to athletics so long that to a degree they take it more for granted I think. (RM)

Again, the historical context of sport is believed to influence this athlete characteristic, as was suggested with the characteristic of males relating to their tendency to challenge the coach.

Ego-involved / struggle with not winning. This theme, mentioned by four coaches (29%), reflects the tendency of male athletes to have their ego / self-image closely tied to *winning*. The specific raw data themes identified by the four coaches include "ego involved in performance", "ego / self-image tied to performance", "struggle with not being the star performer", and "tend to focus more on winning". One coach noted:

I think males have more of their ego tied up in how well they perform. So, I think you have to make sure that your young athletes are focusing on trying to produce a quality effort for themselves, independent of actual results that it takes to get a win or place high . . . . And I think males have a little more difficulty with that and I think that their self-image is tied up quite heavily in how well they do; their physical prowess. (CL)

Because males tend to focus on winning and have their sense of self wrapped up in winning and physical prowess, these coaches make an effort to emphasize performance relative to oneself rather than simply based on outcome. Specifically, three of these coaches perceive that this characteristic of their male athletes influences their approach / interaction with the athletes. In their interaction with males in particular, the coaches try to de-emphasize winning and look at other markers such as effort and personal improvement.

The most challenging thing with males is to nurture the concept of self-improvement versus the win concept. They slip through the crack where winning becomes more important than improving. So, I am constantly on my soap box about being the best you can be and focusing on yourself. . . I don't



know, it may be a symptom of our society in terms of climbing the corporate ladder syndrome where you've got to get to the top or you're not a success. (DWi)

We preach to appreciate themselves and focus more on being the best they can be rather than, you know, being the person who might win all the races. And I think it is a difficult concept for them [males] to accept. . . to realize it is just too daggone competitive now that I need to focus on myself rather than worry about how I might do against a lot of other people. (DWe)

These coaches believe that if athletes can learn to judge performance success on effort, they can still feel good about themselves regardless of final outcome.

The literature on gender differences in goal orientation supports this finding in that males tend to be oriented toward winning, whereas females tend to emphasize performance relative to self, doing one's best (Gill, 1988; Gill & Dzewaltowski, 1988). This finding has important implications for coaches. Specifically, it suggests coaches need to overemphasize to males a focus on doing one's best and evaluating performance relative to self to combat the tendency of males to focus on winning.

Team emphasis. Another theme that emerged from four (29%) coaches' perceptions of male athlete characteristics were raw data themes related to the notion of team. Specifically, males were characterized as being a close team as reflected in the raw data themes "close group both socially and athletically" and "able to find collective focus easily" and as placing importance in being part of the team as reflected in the raw data themes "like being part of team; will not quit - have to be cut" and "want to fit in with team: gain peer acceptance". Interestingly, the literature reviewed earlier suggested otherwise - - namely that females, more so than males, place value and importance in affiliation and relationships. Some of the interviewed coaches, however, perceive males as desiring to be part of a team. In a later section this issue will be re-examined and discussed.

In some detail, one coach contrasted male and female athletes and characterized the males as desiring to be on a team:

Guys like to be involved in a team and on the guys side a lot of guys came out of places where they didn't have much of a team so this is a way for them to pick up on them having friends and doing some fun things . . . And a lot of ladies start out that way but then they, that motivation disappears when they either are frustrated on trying to make a lot of progress or not having as much success. (JQ)

One coach talked about the difficulty he has in maintaining gender equity standards because of what he perceives as more males wanting to come out just so they can be part of the team:

We have 43 men and 25 women and more men - even if they are not going to go to meets - more men are out than women. So, it almost seems that more men want to participate even if they are not going to play, whereas the women won't participate unless they are going to play. (LD)

Not only does this relate to males wanting to be part of a team, but this situation could also relate to more males than females being involved in sports. While there are more females competing in competitive sport than ever before, males still outnumber females in terms of participants. In sum, these coaches perceive males as having a team emphasis which is demonstrated in the closeness of the team as well as in the importance males place on being involved with a team.

Less emotional. Three coaches (21%) perceive that, in comparison to females, male athletes are less emotional. This theme emerged from four raw data themes which included "less emotional", "tend to hide emotions and feelings", "less willing to discuss feelings with others", and "less emotional". This coach perception of males as less emotional and females as more emotional was supported throughout the interviews and is discussed in later sections as well. In fact, 13 of the 14 coaches felt this characteristic to be a major difference between male and female athletes that has an impact on coach behavior. While the characteristic was discussed more in relation to women whom coaches viewed as

being expressive with their emotions, three coaches noted the characteristic in relation to males and suggested that males tend not to express certain emotions. This theme regarding male athletes triangulates the previous theme characterizing female athletes as emotional.

One coach discussed this lack of emotional expression by males in some depth and noted that because of this tendency it is easy to misread the male athlete. Therefore, he makes an effort to look beyond the outward expression in trying to understand his males.

Guys are a little bit more stubborn. . . . They are not going to show emotion so you might misread a situation if you are going to go just on their outward appearance, mannerisms, or whatever. With the guys, I mean, some guys just won't talk at all. I don't know whether that is the male-female socialization process or what - but that is kind of frustrating with guys at times. (GS)

Interestingly, many coaches discussed this difference as being typical in society in general because of different socialization processes for males and females. Males are raised to believe they need to be strong and that the expression of some emotions is a sign of weakness, whereas emotional expression is okay and even encouraged with females.

Additional attributes conducive to athletic success. A last theme that emerged from the raw data themes regarding male athletes is the characterization of males as displaying positive attributes. These attributes, such as "competitiveness", "dedication", and "enthusiasm", are believed to be positive qualities that facilitate athletic success. Seven coaches (50%) each noted numerous positive attributes of their male athletes for a total of 20 attributes. Additionally, three coaches noted these positive attributes to be the same for their males and females. When asked to describe his male athletes, one coach at an academically competitive university noted

The same type of person, by and large, who comes here as a female also comes here as a male. Again, they are high achieving, perfectionist types, and they expect an awful lot of themselves. And their approach to sports, as is true with their approach in the classroom, is - they demand an awful lot of themselves. (LD)

Similarly, after describing female athletes, another coach was asked to do the same with male athletes.

[they are] pretty much the same. They are highly motivated . . . most of them are pretty mentally tough, at least the good ones are. They don't think that they, you know, they may not be ready to do something but they think that they can do it and they are pretty competitive that way - although not any more so than our women. I'd say our females are just as competitive as our males. There is not that much difference there. (JD)

### Enjoyment and Challenges of Coaching Male Athletes.

Another means of gaining an understanding of coaches' perceptions of male athletes was to have them reflect on what they find most enjoyable and most challenging about working with males. Typically, the characteristic or behavior most enjoyable and challenging in men stand out to the coach because the characteristic or quality does not exist to such an extent in women. Content analyses were conducted separately for raw data themes identified by coaches concerning enjoyment and challenges derived from working with male athletes.

Enjoyment. Because some coaches identified more than one source of enjoyment in working with male athletes, sixteen raw data themes, identified from the 14 interviewed coaches, were included in the content analysis. These raw data themes emerged into three first-order themes plus three unique raw data themes. The emergent themes include camaraderie / able to be self with males, enjoy same qualities in both males and females, and aggressiveness of males. These themes and the unique raw data themes (see Table 9) are expanded upon in the ensuing section.

Table 9

## Enjoyment of coaching male athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
Camaraderie / able to be self with males 5 (36%)	Not having to watch language Can react and express frustration - no need for measured approach Male camaraderie, i.e., can swear Can relate and share better because of male camaraderie Can be more like self, i.e. don't need to watch language
Enjoy same qualities in both 5 (36%)	Enjoy seeing male and female athletes work and development Enjoy characteristics of male and female distance runners i.e. motivation, introversion, dedications Enjoy both Enjoy males and females having fun Enjoy both equally
Aggressiveness 2 (14%)	Male aggressiveness; they go after it. Male aggressiveness; go for it attitude.
Unique raw data themes 3 (21%)	Team building easy with males Openness / communication with males <u>during</u> competition Being able to teach it is okay to hug , cry

A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

The theme Camaraderie / able to be self with males emerged from five raw data themes mentioned by five male coaches (36%) and included "can be more like self, i.e. don't need to watch language", "not having to watch my language", "can react and express frustration - no need for measured approach", "male camaraderie, i.e. can swear", and "can relate and share better because of male camaraderie." This is illustrated in the comments of one coach:

There are certain frustrations in coaching and I don't have to be measured and calculating and have a structured approach. I can react. If I am mad at somebody I can openly show it and just almost in a confrontation type of thing. And there is a certain side of me that finds that refreshing and a release. And I think there is - without sounding like a male chauvinist pig - there is a certain male camaraderie that you can share some things with a male athlete that you are not going to share with a female athlete. (GS)

These coaches feel that sharing the same gender with the athlete facilitates a certain bond where they feel they can be themselves around the male athletes. Conversely, they feel that they must be a little guarded in what and how they communicate with female athletes.

I think my personality is geared more for the male than the female. . . I guess I'm more relaxed. I don't find myself being careful with what I say to the men. On the other hand, I try to chose my words on the women's side differently. I would not use profanity with the women and I may use profanity with the men. (RG)

Interestingly, and as will be discussed in a later section, five coaches noted that differences in their interaction (i.e., not swearing with females) are due to their own biases and socialization and not necessarily what is needed by the athletes. One also wonders about the potential long-term affects of male coaches not 'being themselves' with their female athletes. Is this perceived by the athlete?

A second theme that emerged related to coaches' perceptions is that what they enjoy in coaching is the same for male and female athletes. Five coaches (36%) noted that the characteristic of males they would identify as being most enjoyable is the same characteristic of females. In the words of two coaches:

I just enjoy young people. I enjoy coaching them and I enjoy people that are at a certain level and they work hard and they develop, you know, just seeing development. It doesn't have to be that they develop into an NCAA champion . . . as long as you are improving and becoming better people and, you know, growing as people. (JD)

I guess I would say I don't enjoy either one more than the other. They are both very enjoyable to me. I guess it has just doubled my satisfaction of coaching. (DU)

The aggressiveness displayed by male athletes is a primary source of enjoyment for two coaches (14%). Both coaches noted that they enjoy the "go after it" attitude that is

characteristic of their male athletes. This theme is illustrated in the statement made by one of these two coaches:

I enjoy their aggressiveness. If they have a disappointment, they will bounce right back immediately and go after it again, where the female sometimes they will think about it for a little bit and then go back after it again. (KD)

Three coaches (21%) identified unique sources of enjoyment that didn't emerge into a higher-order theme but are worthy of mention. One coach noted the "ease of team building" with male athletes as being most enjoyable, paralleling the "team emphasis" theme that emerged from the content analysis of male athlete characteristics. Another coach enjoys the "openness and communication" he can share with males during competition. He perceives males as typically being closed and less expressive than females, but finds that *during competition* they seem to let down their guard and express themselves. Lastly, RM noted that he enjoys being able to "use the competitive arena to teach" male athletes that it is okay to hug or cry. He expresses these emotions and encourages his athletes to do the same.

Challenge. A content analysis of the 14 raw data themes from 13 coaches regarding their perception of the most challenging aspect of working with males resulted in the emergence of four first-order themes plus three unique raw data themes (see Table 10). The first three of these general themes parallel themes that emerged from the content analysis of characteristics of male athletes. This was expected given that challenging characteristics of males, if pervasive or strong enough, can be viewed as a subset of the broader category of male characteristics. Because these themes have been discussed in some detail in an earlier section, they will be only briefly presented.

Table 10

## Challenge of coaching male athletes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Raw data theme</u>
Getting male headed in right direction 4 (29%)	Making sure they are doing what they should Getting them focused, headed down right road Getting headed in right direction, easily diverted Checking that they are doing as they should
Dealing with challenge, know-it-all attitude 3 (21%)	Dealing with challenges; need to be convinced of training Dealing with show-me attitude Dealing with know-it-all attitude
Dealing with win focus 2 (14%)	Nurturing self-improvement versus winning Keeping egos in line in handling loss
Dealing with high expectations 2 (14%)	Expectations too high; unrealistic goals Expectations too high for males and females
Unique raw data themes 3 (21%)	Helping reach potential Keeping interested in post-collegiate running Changing approach as best for male athlete

A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

The first theme emerged from four raw data themes and dealt with the challenge of getting males headed in the right direction. Four coaches (29%) perceive that males have a tendency to not always be doing as they should and therefore need to be monitored and kept on track. These four coaches find this to be the most difficult aspect of coaching males.

A second theme addressed the challenge in dealing with the know-it-all attitude and challenges presented by male athletes. Three coaches (21%) noted this characteristic of male athletes to be extremely challenging. This theme stands in contrast to the enjoyment coaches derive from females who they perceive as being extremely coachable.



Another theme that emerged from raw data themes provided by two coaches (14%) concerned the challenge in dealing with male athletes' tendency to focus on winning. These coaches find it difficult to get the athletes to focus on personal performance and not get their egos wrapped up in winning and losing.

Two coaches (14%) noted that the tendency of males to have expectations that are too high is the biggest challenge for them. In the words of one coach:

↓

Expectations are a little bit high. . . . most of them go overboard with their goals. I don't know if they haven't thought about them enough, have an inflated view of themselves, or don't know enough about the sport to know it is going to be really hard for them to do. So, I think for them to not only have goals but to have realistic goals so they don't get disappointed and don't have to accept failure. (DC)

Additionally, both coaches suggested that males' high expectations affect how they approach the male athletes. They stated that their emphasis with males tends to be on setting realistic goals and helping them focus on taking one step at a time.

Lastly, three unique raw data themes regarding the challenge of working with male athletes did not emerge into a higher order theme. As can be seen in Table 8, these include "helping reach potential", "keeping interested in post-collegiate running", and "changing approach as best for male athlete". This last raw data theme was especially interesting - the coach noted the following:

One of the tough things in coaching both is that I think sometimes you have to deal with people in different ways. And what I find is that sometimes I treat the males more like I have treated females and maybe to an extent that is a mistake. Men seem, as a group, to respond better when, you know, if I am shooting from the hip more. If I were just coaching men my approach would be different, whereas I think if I were just coaching females I don't know that my approach would be that different. (LD)

This coach suggested that his natural approach works best with female athletes so his challenge is adjusting his approach as needed by the male athletes.

Summary of coach perception of male athletes. The 14 coaches, when asked to describe characteristics and behaviors of their male athletes, identified a total of 73 raw data themes. The content analysis of these raw data themes resulted in the emergence of six first-order themes labeled know-it-all attitude / challenge coach, tend to get off track, ego-involved / struggle with not winning, team emphasis, less emotional than females / hide feelings, and additional attributes conducive to athletic success. Each of these themes were discussed in some detail with direct quotes from the coaches to illustrate the theme.

The content analyses of the most enjoyable and most challenging aspects of coaching male athletes served to add further insight into characteristics and behaviors of male athletes. While some of the emergent themes are similar to those derived from the content analysis of coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of their male athletes, unique themes also emerged, both of which have furthered our understanding of the male athlete.

#### Coach Behavioral Response to Specific Situations

One aspect of this investigation involved soliciting coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of their male and female athletes, some of which were discussed by the coaches in terms of contrasts between males and females. These characteristics and behaviors were presented and discussed in the previous sections. Coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of males and females, however, is only one piece of the puzzle to understanding gender in sport. Also of importance is understanding if and how the perception of specific characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes influences subsequent coach behavior. In an effort to understand coach behavior toward male and female athletes, three sport scenarios were related to the 14 interviewed cross country coaches. The scenarios included (1) preparing the team for the conference championship, (2) dealing with a freshman who is struggling with his/her running, and (3)

helping an athlete who is having personal problems. Coaches were asked to describe how they would respond to the situation if it involved a male athlete and if it involved a female athlete. If the coach's response would be similar regardless of whether it involved female or male athletes, he or she was asked to describe this response. The findings concerning coach approach toward female and male athletes in each of the three scenarios are contained in Table 11 and discussed in the ensuing section. First, however, a general observation is in order.

It was rarely the case that coaches described a blatantly different approach toward their male and female athletes in the three scenarios. More often, noted differences in behavior or interaction were very subtle in nature, i.e., tone of voice. In retrospect, these subtle differences in approach may be difficult to detect in an interview. The words of one coach illustrate the subtleness of differences:

Yes, there is a difference [in how I interact prior to competition] and I guess the . . . I mean, there are similarities. My approach to competition would be the same for males and females but how I might try to convey that approach would differ.  
(DWe)

This coach struggled in using words to describe differences in his approach. While he seemed to recognize that his approach to males was not identical to his approach to females, the differences seemed hard to verbalize and description. So, while an effort was made to relate a fairly specific sport scenario, the scenarios may still have been too global to be sensitive to subtle differences in approach. It is suggested that future investigations use a more sensitive methodology, such as filmed observations, to attempt to detect subtle differences in coach behavior. Nevertheless, the information obtained from the interviews was still valuable and worthy of analysis. Therefore, in the following section, the interviewed coaches responses to each of the three scenarios are analyzed and discussed.

Table 11

## Coach response to situations

<u>Situation coaches</u>	<u>Coach response</u>	<u># (%)</u>
Pre-race approach	Similar approach toward male and female	10 (71%)
	Different approach toward male and female	4 (29%)
	*emphasize winning with males and doing best with females	2
	*put pressure on male; take pressure off female	2
Freshman running poorly	Similar approach toward male and female	11 (79%)
	Different approach toward male and female - more confrontive, blunt with male	3 (21%)
	*women struggle more with this problem	5
	*men struggle more with this problem	1
Personal problem	Similar approach toward male and female	3 (23%)
	Approach different based on individual	4 (31%)
	Different approach toward male and female	6 (46%)
	*different because of different male-female characteristics	3
	*difference in <i>how</i> , not <i>what</i> , is communicated	2
	*different because of coach bias	1

A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

Pre-race approach. Each coach was asked to describe how he/she would approach the female and male teams prior to their conference championship to prepare the team for the race. A review of the responses from the 14 coaches indicated that 10 of the coaches (71%) would use a similar approach toward the male and female teams. The two teams would be approached separately, but a similar approach would be used. While there was a difference in what each coach would communicate and emphasize to the athletes, of importance in this investigation is the finding that for each of these 10 coaches their approach would not differ toward males and females. For example, one coach commented:

I try to treat them so much the same because I think approaching competition and doing a lot of the things like mentally getting them ready or feedback or just

thinking through races or competitions that part seems to be - or even the teamness part - that seems to be a lot similar to me rather than different. . . . males and females really approach a lot of the things in the same way. (JQ)

Another coach described his approach as follows:

If we can work on our kids - the same for males and females - that the significance of what they are involved in is to try and overcome the self-limiting beliefs they may be holding. . . . So I try to put it in perspective that each and every competitive opportunity is a chance for personal growth. It is a collective effort but certainly you've got to emphasize the significance of personal effort and the fact that without maximum personal effort by every individual there will be no team accomplishment. (DWi)

Interestingly, other coaches also emphasized this notion of a team effort. While cross country is really an individual sport, five of the coaches would emphasize to both teams the importance of everyone running well for the team to do well.

In somewhat of a contradiction, KD described a similar approach to her males and females but later recounted a situation that illustrated the importance of using different approaches. She discussed how a male athlete talked with the women's team prior to a competition and tried to get them ready by yelling and inciting them. It was an approach that worked for him and the men's team, but it backfired with the women's team who felt he was putting them down. The coach suggested that the male athlete's approach just didn't work with the female athletes.

The analysis indicated that four coaches (29%) would use a different pre-competition approach. Interestingly, the described differences were similar for the four coaches. In general, the approach of these coaches seemed intended to take the pressure off of women and to arouse the competitiveness of males. Specifically, two coaches noted they would emphasize to the males what they need to do to win and would discuss doing one's best with the women. As one coach stated:

With women, I talk in terms of in order for you to do your best this is what you have to do. And I know I told the men's side two weeks ago that this is what you have to do to win the conference. So, you know, how you approach the athletes is just setting goals of winning versus doing your best. 'This is how the men's team can win the conference championship' - - 'Ladies, this is how we are going to be able to run most successful as a program'. (RG)

Two other coaches described a similar emphasis but discussed it in terms of putting the pressure on men and taking it off of women.

With the guys I think you can put a little more pressure on them . . . if you are going into a conference meet, you can lay out the facts and say 'you're going to have to get your butt in gear and dig down and get into another level if you are going to be competitive'. With the females, I find it is better to not dwell so much and put that kind of pressure on them but to concentrate more on 'I want you to give the best effort you can give'. So, emotionally, maybe, the men handle a little bit more pressure at times when you put expectations on them and they will respond a little better than women. (JD)

While the majority of interviewed coaches indicated a similar approach toward males and females prior to a competition, the differences in approach that were noted by four coaches are all similar. This notion of emphasizing winning to the males and doing your best to the females parallels the scientific literature on competitive orientations held by male and female athletes (Nicholls, 1984; Duda, 1989). However, one has to wonder what cues the coach is responding to when approaching males and females. If it is strictly outward expression of emotion, coaches may be misreading males who tend to hide emotions or put up a tough facade.

Interestingly, this coach emphasis would seem to facilitate or encourage male athletes' tendency to focus on winning, yet several coaches noted the males' tendency to focus on winning as being a challenge in coaching male athletes.

Freshman running poorly. In the second situation, a freshman athlete is frustrated and upset because she / he is not performing as anticipated. Coaches were asked to

describe how they would approach a male and a female athlete in this situation. Many coaches noted that because this is such a common occurrence, they usually try to deal with it in the recruiting process by disrobing the athlete of expectations. One coach stated:

I think that the message that you have to give them will not differ for male or female. I tell them in the recruiting process #1 that they don't understand what I am talking about now, but their freshman year will be the year that the university invests in them - because there are so many aspects that they have to learn to adapt to and it will be so much more difficult simply to repeat their performances at the same level they have in high school. (CL)

An analysis of coach responses indicates that 11 coaches (79%) would use a similar approach toward a male and female, whereas the remaining 3 coaches (21%) would use a different approach. Across coaches who would use a similar approach toward males and females, differences arose as to the particular approach they would use with the athletes. In general, the coaches indicated they would want to talk with the athlete one-on-one and help them put things back in proper perspective. For example, one coach commented:

The way I would counsel either sex is that you're focusing more on what place you're in or whether you are winning or losing more than you're focusing on what type of personal improvement you're making. . . so, I mean, you really have to refocus the kids toward self-improvement. With freshman, we throw time and place out the window. We are more concerned with level of effort. (DWi)

Another coach responded in the following way:

It [my approach] would be talking to them and trying to get them to come more clear on what their views on competition are and what their expectations of themselves are and what they think other people's expectations are - and maybe try to get those ideas and attitudes - you know, if they need to approach it from maybe a healthier perspective. But I don't think there would be much difference between them. (DWe)

The three coaches who described a different approach all would use a more confrontative, blunt approach with the males than the females.

I may have to yell a little more at the males and to try to get into his head that this is not high school; you can't live by the past; and just achieve your individual goals and not worry about everybody else - just concentrate on yourself. The way I would approach the female is I would try to tell her the same thing but it would be more of a - - my experience is the female just starts getting kind of down and upset and crying in that situation and so you've got to keep being very reassuring that they are going to keep improving. (KD)

Coaches who would use a different approach perceive the need to communicate in a more blunt and "in the face" manner with males to get them to understand. Conversely, with females, they tend to communicate in a more reassuring, positive, and less confrontative manner. Interestingly, one of these three coaches was a female, suggesting this finding is not tied to coach gender.

Interestingly, six of the coaches described differences in how a male and a female freshman athlete would respond if he/she was not running as anticipated. Five of these coaches perceive females as tending to struggle a bit more their freshman year and indicated two reasons for this occurrence. One, it was suggested that females feel more pressure to perform because the distance is the same from high school to college so they have no excuse for not running at least as well as in high school. Males, on the other hand, have an excuse because the distance increases - - they are not expected to make an immediate impact. As one coach noted:

I think that the freshman year is more difficult for the female than it is for the male because of the fact that implements and everything are the same. I think very quickly the men can see that the increased distance and height have an immediate effect on their ability to compete, whereas the women don't have that same explanation. So, [for men] it is easier to justify on the inside - that psychological crutch to lean on. (CL)

A second reason given for women struggling more their freshman year was that because women tend to want to please and not let others down, they have a difficult time dealing with not meeting expectations.



I think they may bear that burden of having to please or feeling like they need to please greater than guys do because - - and I think, in the past, that women have stood out, you know, there were fewer good women than there were men and the fewer good ones stood out more. And with that went some baggage that probably wasn't real great for them. (DWe)

The one coach who perceives that males tend to struggle more than females feels it is because freshman males haven't yet physically matured and, therefore, can't be as competitive with upperclassmen. Conversely, because women have typically matured physically there are fewer maturational discrepancies between freshman and seniors that would impact performance as there are with males.

Personal problems. The last situation dealt with an athlete who is having personal problems that are starting to impact his/her performance. The coaches were asked to describe how they would approach a male and female athlete having these personal difficulties. An analysis of responses from 13 coaches suggested that three coaches (23%) would use a similar approach with a male and female, four coaches (31%) would use different approaches with different individuals but the response would not differ based on gender, and six coaches (46%) would use a different approach toward a male and a female athlete.

Four coaches noted that their approach would depend on the person and the nature of the problem with gender having little to no bearing on the approach. As one coach commented:

That is why I don't like a lot of rules where you get tied down to making everybody the same - because each person needs to be handled a little different. . . . Kind of like if you have a family, you'll find out that all your kids are a little different and you handle them different. So, you really have to know the people and know what works I guess. (JD)

Of the six coaches who indicated they would use a different approach toward a male and female, three believe different approaches are necessary because of different

characteristics of male and female athletes. Specifically, the tendency of males to not express themselves and even hide feelings requires a different approach than that used with females who tend to be open and expressive. Two coaches express this sentiment in the following:

With a male athlete, they won't tell you quite as much; they won't get into so much depth with you; they won't let you know how hurt they are. So [with personal problems] I would try to relate to the male athlete that I have had this happen to me before . . . I couldn't do that with a female because I don't have the female's heart, you know, emotionally. (DC)

You know, I mean obviously in those kinds of things you try to get them to talk. It is hard with guys. It is hard to get them to open up because they just tend to not be that open. With the girls, the majority of them are going to talk about it which makes it a whole lot easier to deal with the situation. (GS)

Two other coaches noted differences in *how* they would communicate with a female and a male, not necessarily in *what* they would communicate. This is nicely illustrated in the words of one coach.

The way you say something. I think with the female sometimes you try to be more - maybe a little more - sympathetic, whereas a male I think you can get right down and discuss the problem right with them. I have no problem saying to a guy 'you're fat' or 'you're getting heavy'. A female I have to approach a little bit differently because I can't say to a female 'you're getting way too heavy'. But in that respect, I mean, that is why you just have two different types of personalities. (DM)

As when dealing with an athlete who is having performance problems, these coaches feel that with males they can be more blunt and confrontative, whereas with females they need to take a measured, delicate approach.

Lastly, one coach felt he would use a different approach because of his own biases and personal socialization process. Being a male, he feels a greater sense of responsibility toward females and would be a little more protective if she was struggling with certain personal problems. The influence of coaches own socialization history on their coaching

behavior toward males and females was alluded to throughout the interviews by several coaches and is discussed further in a later section as it seems to play an important role in understanding coach behavior.

Summary of responses to situations. The analysis of coach responses to the three scenarios indicated that some differences exist in how coach's approach male and female athletes. However, relative to the number of differences derived from coach perception of characteristics of male and female athletes and differences in coach behavior based on these characteristics, the identified different approaches are fewer than would be anticipated. It is posited that the methodology used to tap into coach behavior may not have been sensitive to the subtle nature of behavioral differences. More specifically, it may be that the general approach toward males and females is the same, but subtle differences such as tone of voice, use of positive reinforcement, and nonverbal behaviors may exist. Future research in this area needs to address these possibilities more directly.

#### Coach Perception of Gender Differences on Psychological Variables

In the last section of the interview, coaches were asked to identify and describe any gender differences they have noticed on specific psychological variables. These variables were identified from reviews of empirical and experiential sport science literature pertaining to gender. The findings derived from these reviews were discussed and summarized in Table 1.

The variables on which coaches were asked to described any gender differences included anxiety, confidence, conflict, team relationships, coach-athlete relationship, goals, expression of emotion, sensitivity, and reaction to poor performance. To conclude the interview, coaches were asked if they believe gender issues should be included in coaching education programs. The findings garnered from the content analyses conducted on coach

responses regarding gender differences on each of the variables are summarized in Table 12 and discussed in some detail in the subsequent sections.

Table 12

## Perception of gender differences on psychological variables

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Coach response</u>	<u># (%)coaches</u>
Anxiety	Females appear more anxious but no difference in actual anxiety.	8 (57%)
	Females more nervous than males	2 (14%)
	No meaningful difference in anxiety	3 (21%)
	Difference in anxiety but changes with age/experience	1 (7%)
Confidence	Differences a function of ability, success not gender	7 (50%)
	Males appear more confident but no differences in actual confidence	3 (21%)
	No difference in confidence for males and females	3 (21%)
	Females more content (aspect of confidence)	1 (7%)
Conflict	No difference in how males and females deal with conflict	1 (7%)
	Males and females differ in how they deal with conflict	13 (93%)
	*F - indirect, form alliances; M - direct, confront	8
	*F - bothered by conflict; M- disregard, blow off	3
Relationships on team	No difference in relationships within teams	4 (31%)
	Intrateam relationship differences for males - females	9 (69%)
	*Females more competitive with teammates, train alone	6
	*Males more competitive with teammates	2
Coach-athlete relationship	*Females a more bonded group	1
	No difference in coach relationship with males and females	4 (29%)
	Different relationship with males and females	10 (71%)
	*no example of difference provided	5
Goals	*as male coach can relate better to male athlete	2
	*different athlete male-female characteristics requires different relationships	3
	No difference in race goals of males and females	7 (54%)
	Males and females have different race goals	6 (46%)
*F - beat teammates; M - beat opponents	1	
*F - do one's best; M - win	5	

Emotions	No difference in expression of emotions	1 (7%)
	Males and females express emotions differently	13 (93%)
	*express same emotion differently	5
	*M - hide feelings; F - open, expressive	7
	*no description	1
Sensitivity	No difference in sensitivity to criticism	1 (7%)
	Females and males differ in sensitivity, reaction to criticism	13 (93%)
	*Females more sensitive; take criticism personally	8
	*Both sensitive, but females react/show hurt	5
Reaction to poor performance	No difference in reaction to poor performance	3 (23%)
	Males and females differ in response to poor performance	10 (77%)
	*F - blame self; M - have excuse	3
	*F - have excuse; M - accept responsibility	2
	*F - cry, get out frustration; M - turn it in	1
	*F - upset inwardly; M - upset outward	4
Coach education	Gender should not be in coach education	4 (29%)
	Gender should be included in coach education to increase awareness and dispel myths	10 (71%)

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A (B%): A represents the number of coaches who discussed this theme; B% represents the percentage of coaches who discussed this theme.

Anxiety. Coaches were asked if they perceive a difference in the level of pre-competition anxiety of male and female athletes. An analysis of responses of the 14 coaches revealed the following: eight coaches (57%) perceive that females appear more anxious but there is probably no difference in their actual levels of anxiety; two coaches (14%) feel that females tend to be more nervous prior to competition than males; three coaches (21%) perceive no meaningful difference in anxiety; and one coach (7%) perceives that anxiety differs between males and females but notes that the level of anxiety changes for both from their freshman to senior year.

As can be seen, the majority of coaches perceive that females display their anxiety more than males but that males and females don't differ in actual level of anxiety. As two coaches noted:

I would say outwardly but inwardly no. All that pent up inside anxiety is there. But, when you're just talking to them face-to-face somehow it seems to me that

the females are sharing a little more. Outwardly they show their nervousness where guys somehow don't quite show it as much when I truly think they are both just as nervous. (JQ)

Yes. . . uh, no. I don't think they really differ but I think you will notice the emotions maybe a little differently in the female than the male. Males are kind of conditioned that you are supposed to hold everything in and not show emotions and I think females can wear it on their sleeves a bit more. There is probably not that much difference in their anxiety. (JD)

The literature review on gender differences in anxiety revealed a trend for females to report higher multidimensional state and trait anxiety levels (Feltz, 1988; White, 1993). It may be that females not only are more willing to disclose true anxiety levels on written questionnaires, but also tend to be more behaviorally expressive of their anxiety. If this is the case, coach perceptions complements and provides greater understanding to athlete self-report.

An obvious implication for coaches is that they may need to go beyond outward expression when assessing the athlete, especially males in the case of anxiety. When simply going on outward expression, coaches may be misreading their male athletes and assuming they have things under control. In reality, males may need more support and reinforcement from coaches than indicated by overt expressions.

Confidence. A summary of the empirical and experiential literature on confidence suggests that males tend to be more confident than females, although the magnitude of the difference is small. In the present investigation, an analysis of coach perceptions regarding gender differences in confidence found that seven coaches (50%) perceive confidence to be more a function of ability and success than gender, three coaches (21%) perceive that males *appear* more confident but may not truly be more confident, three coaches (21%) see no difference between males and females, and one coach (7%) noted that females are more content, which he views as a part of confidence.

Fifty percent of the coaches believe confidence varies as a function of ability and success rather than gender such that the more elite, more successful athletes tend to be more confident. When asked if a difference exists, one coach suggested:

No, not really. But I think between good males or females and poorer ones there is. In other words, the better athletes - whether male or female - have more confidence, I think, or at least show it and display more confidence. I don't know if they are actually more confident sometimes. (RG)

Similar to the perception regarding differences in anxiety, three coaches perceive differences in the outward expression of confidence, with males demonstrating greater confidence, but don't feel males and females differ in actual levels of confidence. This is illustrated in the words of one coach:

Yes, I think females in general are not as assured of themselves . . . Now, whether the male athlete truly believes that or not is a different story. But, the males will give the appearance that 'I'm ready' and inside they could be a complete bundle of 'I don't know whether I'll run well or not'. But the female will be honest in her actions and let you see that 'hey, I'm worried about this one'. (DC)

Research by Corbin et. al. (1983) partially supports this coach perception in that they found the performance estimates (a measure of confidence) of males to be higher than females. This difference was suggested to be due to female modesty rather than male boastfulness. However, several of the coaches in the present study view the difference as due to female honesty and male boasting as noted in the following:

It could be for example that a male says 'I'm going to go out there and just kill them today - I really feel great'. And the women is going 'oh, I don't know' - and then the male runs poorly and the female runs well. I think that one was just bravado and the other was just an expression of some nervousness. (CL)

Again, the implication seems to be that coaches need to be wary of assessing the athlete's mental state on outward behavior alone and work extra hard at breaking down barriers with male athletes.

Conflict All 14 coaches were questioned if they perceive a difference in how male and female athletes deal with team conflict or disagreement. Only one coach (7%) perceives no difference in how males and females deal with conflict -- he noted both teams get along well and have little conflict. Thirteen (93%) of the 14 coaches described differences between males and females. More specifically, eight of these coaches perceive that females deal with conflict indirectly by forming alliances or cliques, whereas males are more direct and confrontive, sometimes in a physical manner. Additionally, once the issue is confronted on the men's side, it is over with; women tend to hold on to the problems longer. The direct words of three coaches illustrate this perception.

It seems like the guys are more direct with their differences and disagreements and the females would be more indirect where they would be more inclined to form alliance and little groups rather than where with guys somebody with a problem they might disregard him or be very blunt and deal with it. The girls, I think, would be more likely to form alliances with other people. (DWe)

Females hope it goes away. They don't like to deal with it open. They won't confront about what upset them. They will sit around and talk among others. . . whereas a male, more times than not, they will have it out. Now, I think there is another thing - guys can have a blow up like that and maybe it will get resolved and maybe it won't but there will be no residual fallout. I found that the females, if they really have it out, they hang on to that much longer, it may fester for a long time. (GS)

Women kind of chit-chat behind each others' backs, you know. And the men will come right out. And if they are having a problem with someone they will just start yelling and fighting and get it over with and then they'll forget about it. The women will gossip behind the back and then just kind of dwell on it for a while. (KD)

Importantly, this notion that males are more direct and females more indirect in dealing with conflict supports the findings from the empirical and experiential literature on aggression (Bjorkqvist, et al., 1992; Brooks, 1979; Sawula, 1972).



Three other coaches feel the difference is that males tend to 'blow off' or disregard conflicts and not deal with it, whereas females are bothered by conflict and find it necessary to address the problem. As noted by one coach:

I think men blow things off easier. They will forget about it and maybe not even deal with it, whereas the women I don't think they can let it go unresolved. So, therefore, they will have to deal with it and until it is dealt with it is going to bother them in terms of workouts and racing and academics and everything. (DU)

Similarly, another coach commented:

I think females will be much more apt to have their disagreement and work it out and then end up maybe with a little stronger bond. Someone told me that the Chinese pictorial symbol for war was two women under the same roof - - and there are some days when it seems that way. But I think that on a personal level, I think men will tend to either not do anything at all or withdraw, whereas women will more confront. (CL)

These coaches seem to be suggesting that conflict bothers women more than men. This difference may be explained by looking at gender differences in motives for participation as identified in the literature reviews. Namely, because females are more motivated by affiliative and social motives, it is important for them to have a sense of team harmony. Males, on the other hand, have stronger motives for achievement and status - - which can often be accomplished without team harmony. Therefore, it could be suggested that females tend to have more strife because they can't ignore conflict but rather need to address problems to achieve a sense of affiliation. This finding, however, contradicts earlier themes characterizing male athletes as having a strong team emphasis and female athletes as competitive with teammates. This notion is re-examined in the Discussion chapter.

Lastly, two coaches perceive females as dealing with conflict by communicating, more so than males, as reflected in the following quote:

When we are having trouble within the squad, it is usually lack of communication and the males probably don't talk about it as much as the females. In successfully dealing with it, I think both are just right straight up front and say 'this is baloney, this is what we need to do, why are we doing this - it takes away from our purpose'. (MJ)

The empirical literature on communication (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Wood, 1994), although not directly related to communication during conflict, supports this perception in that females have been found to dominate in the amount of verbal communication.

Team relationship. Based on their experiences in coaching male and female athletes, the coaches were asked if they perceive a difference in the team relationship amongst the females versus the team relationship amongst the males. One coach, in responding to the question, referred to the relationship *between* the two squads instead of amongst each squad. Consequently, his response was omitted from this analysis.

Four coaches (31%) have noticed no difference in the team relationships among the males and females and instead noted that if differences exist they are due to other factors such as team success and team leadership. As one coach noted:

Year to year it is different. Right now our men are probably less competitive with one another but really competitive and our women are probably more team-oriented. But in other years it is different. I think it depends on the leadership inside the team. (MJ)

The other nine coaches (69%) perceive a difference in the intrateam relationships of their females and males. More specifically, amongst the nine coaches who perceive a difference, the following differences were identified: six view females as competitive with each other and, therefore, tending to train alone, whereas males tend to train well together; two perceive males as more competitive with each other than the females; and one coach noted the women's team to be a more bonded group than the men's team.

The notion that females are competitive with teammates also emerged as a theme from the analysis of the characteristics of female athletes (see Table 4). Additionally, the conviction with which several of the coaches described this difference and the impact it has on their coaching attests to its strength and relevance. The words of two coaches reflects this female competitiveness with teammates.

You can group men fairly easily in sets of 3's, 4's, 5's and you can have seven women and you'd be fortunate if you have two people that will be running together. Rather than training together we are competing in the workout which is not the reason why we do the workout. (RG)

Elite women tend to do far more work alone and I don't have any great psychological insight into it . . . They are very competitive people and I think that they feel like if they were together with the other female they would be trying to establish that at that time I am better and faster than you. (CL)

Relatedly, another coach discussed the tendency of females to train alone, more so than males.

The men seem to just really be more of a team and a group - a group together - and those guys wouldn't miss training together. The ladies, it is really funny, they can attempt at doing that but they all want to do it themselves. They don't want to do what everybody else is doing. (JQ)

RG, who feels this to be one of the biggest differences between male and female athletes, offered a possible explanation as to why females are more competitive with teammates:

It goes back to how children are brought up. I really believe that boys learn to play games together and they win and lose, whereas little girls don't seem to. Little boys are competing, I think, consistently in that situation and I don't think little girls do the same.

Based on this suggestion, it may be that because of a lack of experience in competitive games, females have trouble separating social relationships from competition; they have

difficulty competing with friends, whereas males don't bring relationships into the competitive arena.

Interestingly, two coaches perceive males as being more competitive with teammates and tending to get 'caught up in the pecking order'. This perception, opposing that mentioned by six coaches who feel females are more competitive with teammates, implies that much more is impacting the difference than gender. While it is the case that more coaches feel females, more so than males, are competitive with teammates other factors obviously need to be taken into account - - it is not simply a gender difference.

Coach-athlete relationship. Coaches were asked to comment on any differences in their relationships with male athletes versus female athletes. A review of coach responses revealed a wide array of perceived differences regarding coach relationship with males and females. In general, four coaches (29%) perceive no difference in their relationship with males compared to females, whereas 10 coaches (71%) perceive differences to exist in coach-athlete relationships depending on whether the athlete is male or female.

While four coaches perceive no difference in their relationship with athletes based on athlete gender, they noted differences in their relationships due to individual athlete characteristics and to the stage of their own coaching career. For example, one coach commented:

You know, there are some athletes that I'm very close to and some athletes that we just don't have that much in common except for the athletic part. And so each person is different. Men and women - it doesn't make any difference at all. In that area, that is probably as different as each individual. (MJ)

Of the 10 coaches who perceived a difference in their relationships with male and female athletes, five offered no specific examples of differences or simply noted differences changing across their coaching career for males and females (i.e., more social with athletes

early in career). The other five coaches described specific differences in their relationships. Two of these coaches feel that because they are males they can understand and relate better to the male athlete - - their relationship is a little more casual. The other three coaches noted that different characteristics of male and female athletes (i.e., male independence, what females need from coach) necessitate different relationships . This is illustrated in the description provided by one coach.

With the gals, I've got to be more verbal and constantly encouraging them and telling them how well they are doing and not being negative and those kinds of things. Whereas, with the guys, you don't need the same type of feelings with them. In other words, you don't have to constantly. . . I mean, everyone needs to be stroked so to speak, but with the males you don't need to do it as often. (DM)

Interestingly, three of the coaches who perceive a difference in their relationship with male and female athletes believe this to be a shortcoming.

You know, like I said, there is going to be some individual considerations and part of that is just due to my sexuality. Like I said, it is easier for me to communicate to a man, I'm more familiar with his constitution. I'm less - - I'm going to try to be more sensitive, I guess, to a women's feelings than a guy and that is terrible. Boy, that is a real bias right there. (DWe)

Findings from the present investigation offers global support for findings from the review of empirical literature on leadership, which suggested that males and females differ in coaching style preferences (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; Chelladurai, et al., 1989; Terry, 1984; Terry & Howe, 1984), and the review of literature on coach behavior, which found males and females to also differ in their preference for certain coach behaviors (Barnett et al., 1992). Specifically, interviewed coaches noted differences in their relationships with males and females, with some coaches suggesting differences are due to athlete preferences.

Goals. Thirteen of the coaches were questioned whether they perceive a difference in the goals for a given race held by male and female athletes. Previous investigations related to this variable are those measuring achievement and goal orientations. The review of the scientific literature on achievement orientations revealed that both males and females are achievement oriented but differ in terms of their goals within the achievement setting (Gill, 1988). In terms of goal orientation, the review revealed a tendency for males to be oriented within sport toward outcome / winning and achievement and females to be oriented within sport toward personal goals and self-referenced success (Duda, 1986, 1989; Ewing, 1981).

In the present investigation, an analysis was conducted on coach responses regarding their perception of athletes goals. It was found that seven coaches (54%) perceive no difference in the race goals held by male and female athletes. Specific goals mentioned included winning (noted by one coach) and doing well (noted by three coaches) - - others did not note the goals of the athletes but simply stated that males and females were similar.

You know, I really don't think so. I mean, I am just trying to think this one through. No, I think that definitely #1 they are focused on achievement so I don't - and I'm not sure about secondary objectives - but in the race itself I think that they are both equally as interested in where they place and how well they run or throw or jump. (CL)

Six coaches (46%) perceive males and females as differing in race goals. One of these coaches feels the difference is that women tend to focus on beating teammates, whereas males have goals against opponents. This perception ties into the theme concerning the tendency of females to be competitive amongst each other. The other five coaches perceive that, in general, males emphasize winning and beating opponents and females emphasize running well or doing one's best - - often to please others. This difference is illustrated in the words of two coaches:

I think guys put winning - I don't know maybe it is just how high school coaches are - but that winning thing is a big deal to them. But if either one of them doesn't win they probably take it kind of hard if in their heart they thought they were going to. But I don't think women play it up as much as guys. Women seem to at least express doing your best as opposed to winning. Whereas guys somehow I think it is the other way around. (JQ)

I think initially guys probably have a preconceived idea of what they want to do or where they want to be and it has been my experience that with a lot of females they were pleased if the coach was pleased. Guys were a lot more concerned with 'I want to beat this guy and this guy. . .' where the girls were initially, you know, 'if you think I've run well I'll be very pleased with that'. (DWe)

This perception, held by five of the coaches, supports the noted findings garnered from the review of the empirical literature on goal orientation.

Interestingly, several coaches noted that both males and females are equally competitive - which also supports noted findings related to general achievement orientation - and feel equally bad when they don't run well. Given coach perceptions regarding gender differences on other psychological variables (i.e., confidence, anxiety) which suggested that males and females differ in outward expression but not necessarily actual levels, one wonders whether the same situation occurs in the case of goals. Males may express, even boast about, winning, whereas females may also want to win but are more modest and instead talk of doing their best.

Also related to the perception of gender difference in goal orientation is an earlier theme suggesting that prior to races coaches more often emphasize winning to the men's team and doing one's best to the women's team. One wonders which came first - - are coaches reinforcing goals already held by athletes or are the athletes adopting goals emphasized by coaches? The answer to this question could have important implications for coaches especially given that a performance goal orientation is posited to facilitate adaptive behavior patterns (Dweck & Elliot, 1983).

Emotions. A pervasive theme that emerged in various sections of the interviews related to gender differences in emotionality. So, although many coaches had already referred to this variable, they were asked to describe more specifically any gender differences they have noticed in expression of emotions. Thirteen of the fourteen coaches (93%) perceive males and females as expressing emotions differently, whereas one coach (7%) noted no differences. These coaches discussed two, somewhat inter-related, ways in which male and female athletes differ in their expression of emotions. Five of these coaches discussed how males and females express the same emotions differently. For example, two coaches made the following comments:

Males and females don't differ in emotions just the way that they express them. Let's take anger or joy - you're going to see each of these in competition - women are probably more prone to cry but big deal, you know, that expression may be different - and guys may be more boisterous or demonstrative. I don't think they react any different as athletes than the general population reacts in similar situations in terms of differences. (MJ)

There is not so much a difference in a level of frustration or disappointment but somewhat in the physical expression of the emotion. You are more likely to see some tears from the women; the men are going to turn it in a little bit. (JD)

Seven coaches focused more on differences in the athletes' tendency to express emotions. They perceive females as being expressive and open with their emotions, whereas males are less open and tend to hide their feelings. Because of the strength of coaches' perceptions of athlete emotions, several quotes are presented to reflect this finding.

Definitely they are emotionally different creatures. But I think the difference is more in the way that they demonstrate their emotions. Where females would probably be a little more honest about it the males would need to cover up more. . . like when the females win they generally seem like they enjoy it more than the guys, where the guys have to maintain a little bit of, I don't know, bravado about themselves. (DWe)



I think that females might be more demonstrative and maybe wear their emotions more on their sleeves. And the guys, who might get really mad, you might not see it and then it is gone sort of thing. I wouldn't say that is necessarily untrue as far as society is concerned. (LD)

Females are not bashful at all about making a tear drop and males have been taught through the years they can't hug their dad or give them a kiss because someone will think they are gay. . . . and that crying is for sissy's - those stereotypes are still around. That is why as I'm coaching I'll do high 5's but I'll also give them a hug. I want to show them there is nothing wrong with showing emotions. I wish I could get the guys to show the emotions they are ready to show. (DC)

A finding emerging from this perception is the notion that athletics and athlete behavior is a reflection of society. Coaches note in this and other sections that identified behaviors and characteristics of male and female athletes are similar to those seen in males and females in general, suggesting that different socialization processes for males and females impact their behavior both in and out of sport.

Two broad implications arise for coaches from the perception that male and female athletes express emotions differently. First, it could be suggested that coaches need to expect and accept different emotions from their athletes. Through socialization, males and females have been taught and reinforced to react and express themselves differently. For example, females have been taught that it is okay to cry, but in the competitive arena this expression can be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness. Similarly, males have often been socialized to express anger or frustration in a physical manner. One response is no better or worse than the other, they are just different means of expressing emotions that coaches need to expect and accept (within limits).

A second implication, mentioned in an earlier section, is that coaches need to be sure to look beyond the outward expression of emotion when interacting with the athlete. Both males and females have a tendency to express and suppress specific emotions. For instance, coaches noted that males tend to exude confidence but inside are probably a little unsure, whereas females tend to be honest about their doubts. Relatedly, coaches perceive

women as being competitive and wanting to win but not boasting or talking about winning. Based on this, coaches need to caution themselves against relying exclusively on outward expressions and behaviors when trying to understand male and female athletes. Additionally, coaches may need to work through barriers, especially those put up by males trying to hide feelings.

Sensitivity. Several different responses arose when coaches were asked to describe any differences they perceive between male and female athletes in sensitivity to comments or criticism. An analysis of the responses indicated that only one of the 14 coaches (7%) perceives no difference in male and female sensitivity or reaction to coach criticism or comment. Not surprisingly, this one coach was also the only one to perceive no gender difference in athlete expression of emotion.

Thirteen coaches (93%) perceive male and female athletes as differing in their sensitivity to coach criticism or as differing in how they react to this criticism. More specifically, eight of these coaches perceive female athletes as being more sensitive and tending to take criticism personally. Coach perception of female sensitivity often impacted how coaches would offer critique of races to females. As one coach commented:

Females have a tendency to take it more personally than the guys who seem to take it by and large as 'this is going to help me get better'. Females might have a tendency to look at it as 'he doesn't like me' sort of thing or 'I'm not a good person because I'm not doing well'. So, in offering criticisms or evaluations, I always, with females, will preface my comments. (LD)

Similarly, two other coaches noted the tendency of females to read into coach comments and to interpret criticisms as a personal affront:

I think on the men's side you can be critical without being so concerned about someone reading into what you are saying more than criticism of the race or practice. On the women's side, at times what you meant to say and the perception of what you said can be totally different. . . . For whatever reason,

constructive criticism is more perceived as 'he/she is saying something is wrong with me' rather than looking at it as I am trying to help the individual. (RG)

I think sometimes the females read into things a little bit more. They are a lot more sensitive than the guys. You always have to be careful to what you say because I have had women tell my assistant that 'coach is picking on me'. And I say 'I'm not picking on you, I'm picking on everybody' - - so, you have to be very careful. (KD)

Interestingly, one coach posited that males are less sensitive because they have been socialized to accept criticism.

I think that on a social basis, the males have been conditioned to be corrected, criticized, yelled at. I think society does this. If I came in and yelled at our young ladies, I might have a revolt but emotionally they would take that far more sensitively than if I was yelling at some guys. . . . But I think that it is maybe more of a social thing than it is a hereditary factor. (CL)

Five other coaches who perceive gender differences feel that, while both males and females are sensitive to criticism, the difference is in how they react to this criticism. Specifically, females *appear* more sensitive because they tend to express feelings and let coaches know when they have been hurt or offended, whereas males 'blow off' criticism or tend to not show they are hurt. This perception is reflected in the words of two coaches.

I would say the females are more sensitive but it might be that they just demonstrate their feelings more outwardly than the guys do. I think you can offend and hurt males just as easily and just as readily but they are not going to let it be known. (DWe)

I think females are sometimes more sensitive, yes, although I think that sometimes guys are maybe just as sensitive but they don't show it again. Because I was one of those skinny little runts when I was a kid and, you know, I tried not to let it show but it hurt inside - - whereas a girl might burst out in tears if you said the same thing to her. I think probably both of them are emotionally scarred a little bit. (JD)

Again, the theme permeating yet another psychological variable is the notion that males and females have similar internal feelings / emotions, but differ in the outward expression of these feelings and emotions. Therefore, while the outward behavior of male

and female athletes may indicate differences, it is suggested that they are more similar than different. In this case, five coaches perceive male and female athletes as being equally sensitive to criticism. However, females tend to express their hurt, whereas males tend to keep their feelings inside.

Reaction to poor performance. In an attempt to tap into athlete attributions, thirteen coaches were asked to describe any differences in how male and female athletes respond to poor performances. As is detailed, some coach responses related to the attributions athletes make, whereas others focused more on behavioral or emotional reactions of the athletes. An analysis of coach responses indicated that three coaches (23%) perceive no differences in the reactions of female and male athletes to a poor performance and 10 coaches (77%) perceive specific differences to exist.

Of the coaches who perceive a female-male difference, five discussed different attributions male and female athletes assign to poor performances. Specifically, three coaches perceive male athletes as having an excuse (external attribution) and female athletes as getting upset and blaming themselves (internal attribution). As one coach noted:

I think probably the female will have a tendency to take more blame on herself. And I think the males will be quicker to blame somebody else - the weather or the track or the mud or whatever it is. (DC)

Conversely, two coaches perceive female athletes as having an excuse (external attribution) and male athletes as tending to take personal responsibility for poor performances (internal attribution).

When men have a poor performance, I think the reaction to the poor performance is different than the reaction on the female side. . . . I think females are more apt to point a finger elsewhere - the poor performance is not what I have done it is something else outside of what I have done. The males - - I don't think all males would say 'yeah, it is my fault coach' but they are a little more . . . they will accept the fact that they have had a bad performance or they ran a poor race. (RG)

These responses of coaches offer opposing perceptions of attributions made by male and female athletes. Interestingly, the review of the empirical literature on causal attributions also offered no clearer understanding. From this summary of the literature, no clear trend arose in terms of female and male attributions for performance.

Five other coaches noted differences in terms of athlete emotional or behavioral reaction to poor performances. One of these coaches perceived that females deal with the frustration of poor racing by getting it out and crying and that males tend to turn their frustrations in. Alternately, the other four coaches noted that females tend to take poor performances personally and get upset inwardly, whereas males get outwardly upset, 'pissed off'. This distinction is illustrated in the following two quotes:

The men just get pissed off at themselves and get mad. . . whereas the women they take it very, very personal. And they tend to get - maybe they let themselves down and let the team down and let the coach down and they tend to dwell on it. The men get over it pretty quick; the women tend to dwell on it a little bit longer. (DM)

They [females] have a very emotional response. They are going to cry; they are going to apologize for letting the team down, for letting the coach down; they are going to do a lot more awfulizing than a male. I think a guy, after running a real bad race, he'll be emotional but he may be very angry but I think they are much tougher to diffuse. (GS)

Both the female and male behavioral and emotional reactions described by the coaches seem to reflect an internal attribution. The difference is in how the athletes emotionally deal with the attribution. Namely, it is suggested by more coaches that females tend to keep poor performances in, whereas males try to get poor performances out of their system - - one coach described the differences in terms of women reacting by sulking and men reacting by running extra miles. This perception appears to relate to the earlier theme concerning the tendency of females to feel they are letting others down which would help explain why women tend to dwell on it longer. A poor performance would seem to be that much more

devastating if not only has she run poorly, but in doing so she let all these other important people down.

Gender education. The primary intent of the interviews was to get coaches to reflect on and discuss their perceptions of male and female athletes. All of the coaches were able to not only discuss characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and their perception of differences between the two but also how some differences influence their behavior. However, coach knowledge regarding gender is but one aspect of the vast array of knowledge coaches hold that is relevant and necessary to their career as coaches. To attain a measure of the relative importance of knowledge of gender in sport, coaches were asked if they feel the issue of gender should be included in coach education programs.

An analysis of coach responses revealed that four coaches (29%) do not believe the issue of gender should be included in coach education, whereas 10 coaches (71%) feel the issue of gender is of great enough importance that it should be discussed, in some manner, in coach education programs or workshops.

More specifically, several unique reasons were provided by the four coaches for not including the issue of gender in coach education. Two coaches suggested the need to focus more on people education and not create prejudices by discussing gender differences. One coach commented:

I think the differences are exaggerated. Once you include them in coaching education you validate assumptions. And so I think coach education is real important but I think it has to do more with people education than gender education - - recognizing differences in personality types more than recognizing differences in gender. If you go out there with preconceptions you have really gone out with prejudices and it is real important to avoid those gender prejudices. (MJ)

Another coach noted that, because he has not seen any gender differences and feels he interacts the same with males and females, gender should not be an issue in coach

education. However, he did note that education programs should dispel myths regarding males and females that influence coach behavior and end up short-changing the athletes. As will be discussed, coaches who feel gender is an important issue for coach education noted one purpose of gender education would be to dispel these myths.

Lastly, one coach perceives that because differences are so subtle and not 100% across gender, it is not a relevant topic for coach education. Rather, he noted that through experience coaches will learn about differences in working with males and females.

From an analysis of the responses of the 10 coaches who believe the issue of gender should be included in coach education, two general reasons for its inclusion emerged. First, discussing gender and the developmental and socialization processes typical for males and females would serve to increase coach awareness and knowledge and provide a better understanding of the athletes they will be coaching. This is reflected in the thoughts of two coaches:

Even though most of what I have said is that I see more differences amongst individuals within groups as opposed to gender differences, I still think that because there are those differences they are things that coaches need to be more aware of. And while there may be a tendency for more females to react one way and males to react another way doesn't mean they will. But, still, that familiarity with the likelihood or the potential for certain types of behavior can only be helpful and coaches will be better equipped to deal with the athletes they are going to coach. (LD)

Yes, there are so many males coaching females and I really think that some of them aren't sensitive to their needs or to how they perform. . . .The women are different and I think they [coaches] need to be a little more tender to the majority of the women, but with some of them you don't have to be. But I really think that they should be more aware of the differences. (KD)

Another coach commented that, because coaches "wear so many different hats", to be effective a broad knowledge base is needed - - beyond understanding the physiology of training. Part of this knowledge base would include an understanding of males and females and how to relate to each.

The second reason for discussing gender in coach education that emerged from coach responses was that it would help dispel commonly held myths and stereotypes. This could be accomplished through education regarding the development and socialization of males and females as well as by combating myths head-on in the program. As one coach noted:

. . . discuss whether or not there actually are any gender differences especially from an emotional standpoint. I think more than anything else the course would talk about societal myths rather than gender differences. Because I think that there is the assumption that when it is really a tough situation that the male is going to be forceful and react positively where a female needs to be protected - - you know, that is a total myth. What is reality and what is fallacy I think is more what needs to be looked at. (CL)

It seems, therefore, that educating coaches about the development and socialization of male and female athletes would serve to increase their awareness of and sensitivity toward the athletes they will be coaching. This supports the suggestion of Gill (1994) when she commented that "an understanding of gender socialization provides the basis for understanding individual gender-related behavior in sport and exercise" (p. 219). Additionally, this knowledge would arm coaches with knowledge necessary to dispel myths and stereotypes.

Summary of coach perception of gender differences on variables. Specific psychological variables from the empirical and experiential sport science literature on which males and females have been found to differ were discussed with the interviewed coaches. They were asked to describe any differences they have noticed. An analysis across coaches on each of the variables was conducted and findings were discussed. Where applicable, an attempt was made to tie the present findings into those derived from the review of the literature.



### Additional Findings and Discussion

The majority of findings relevant to the purposes of the present investigation were discussed in relation to the various sections of the interview. However, additional findings arose from the investigation that are worthy of mention as they add insight to our understanding of gender in the sport setting. These additional findings, discussed below, include the influence of coach socialization, the case of the female coach - KD, and the case of Anson Dorrance.

Coach socialization. Although the intent of the investigation was to understand coach perception of characteristics of male and female athletes and its impact on coach behavior, it is apparent from the interviews that the coach's own gender and socialization history influences his or her perceptions and subsequent behavior. The coaches were never directly asked how they feel their own gender may exert an influence, but six coaches made direct reference to it. This suggests that behavior is a result of an intricate interplay between coach and athlete and that perception and behavior are influenced by, among other things, the gender and socialization history of each party.

Some of the coaches simply made reference to the possibility that their own gender and socialization may have an influence on their perception and behavior - - "some of the differences that I have brought up may be a socialization process of my own upbringing, too", whereas others went further and suggested it may be limiting as reflected in the following:

I feel badly, but I think I would feel the need to be a lot more delicate with the female. Where with a male I almost feel like I can be very blunt and lay it out on the table where with a female I would be delicate. And I have felt guilty about this over the years. I think it has got less to do with them than it does with me and what I feel most comfortable with. (DWe)

Maybe in this country, and because of the way I have been brought up, you treat females different. You're not as tough on them so you let them get away with certain things and you don't kick them in the pants. So, maybe we allow that - the coaches - maybe we allow them to take that role . . . maybe we have created

it. You know, I have only barked at the women's program once or twice that I can remember. (RG)

These coaches acknowledged that they are not just responding to the athlete and the athlete's needs but also to their own needs and comfort level. One coach noted that the chivalry he was taught to demonstrate toward women is evident in his coaching such that he has a difficult time yelling at females even if that is what is needed.

This finding has implications both for the interpretation of results and for coaches working with male and female athletes. As mentioned, when trying to understand and interpret coach perceptions and behavior, caution must be used. It would be erroneous to assume that only the athlete's gender comes into play. Rather, the coaches own gender and socialization history exerts an influence; an interactionist perspective is necessary. This finding also implies that coaches need to become aware of their own biases and how these biases may impact their behavior, especially behavior that may be limiting to the athlete.

The case of the female coach - KD. As noted previously, the responses of the one female coach, KD, were analyzed with the responses of the 13 male coaches because overall her responses did not stand out as unique. It seems important, however, to discuss any specific responses that may have been influenced by her own gender and socialization history. Additionally, responses that may have been expected to be different because of her gender, that were actually similar to the male coaches, are discussed.

The only seemingly major difference is that, unlike her male counterparts, KD perceives some of her male athletes as being open with their feelings and willing to discuss problems with her - - she was the only interviewed coach to note this characteristic of male athletes. Interestingly, she feels this is because her male athletes, who are predominantly minorities, have been raised by females (mom, grandma) and are therefore comfortable opening up to other females. She noted further that white, male athletes tend to be the most stubborn and protective with their feelings. In sum, KD perceives that being a female has

influenced the male athletes' tendency to be open and honest with their feelings, but also notes the influence of athlete race on this tendency. However, like the other coaches, she still perceives female athletes as being more emotional and emotionally expressive than males.

Another difference regards KD's perception of male athletes as being more competitive with each other than the female athletes - - she feels they battle to be the "top dog". Only one other coach shared this perception. Conversely, based on the perceptions of six male coaches, this theme emerged as characteristic of female athletes. One wonders if her own gender is influencing this athlete behavior. A possible interpretation, although only tentatively proposed, is that the male athletes are trying to please her and receive her attention because she is a female.

Few of KD's perceptions of female and male athletes were different from those of the male coaches, some of which may not have been expected. Specifically, she described female athletes as very coachable, emotional, and sensitive. Conversely, she perceives male athletes as feeling like they know it all, less emotional, and aggressive. Because of these different characteristics, KD notes she tends to approach the men in a more blunt, "in your face" manner. She feels this approach does not work with most females who instead need a more reassuring, positive approach. Interestingly, several male coaches also described a similar approach toward their male and female athletes. It should also be noted that, unlike several male coaches who discussed a camaraderie they share with male athletes, KD did not refer to any female camaraderie.

Lastly, KD was one of 10 coaches who believe the issue of gender should be included in coach education programs.

You know, there are so many males coaching women and I really think that some of them aren't sensitive to their needs or to how they perform. Some really don't realize when they talk about their weight how it affects women. And I know NCAA is doing a lot with eating disorders and, you know, it is really getting big

especially at Division I and most of those coaches are male coaches telling these gals they need to lose weight. You know, and some of them if they come up from the high school level, they are used to dealing with the guys and the women are different and I think they need to be a little more tender to the majority of the women, but with some of the women you don't have to be. But I really think that they should be more aware of the differences.

She seems to be suggesting that most male coaches are unfamiliar with a female's constitution and erroneously coach females as they do males. Instead, she feels that increasing coaches awareness of female athletes will facilitate coach-athlete interactions.

As demonstrated by this discussion of KD's responses, she has similar perceptions and interactions with male and female athletes as her male counterparts. Unfortunately, because of the dearth of experienced female coaches working with both male and female teams, she was the only female coach found that fit the criteria to be included in the interview and, therefore, this discussion should be taken very tentatively. Future research should attempt to assess more female coaches, possibly at the high school level where more females probably coach both males and females.

The special case of Anson Dorrance. The U.S. News and World Report article, reviewed in the experiential literature section, focused on UNC women's soccer coach Anson Dorrance and his perception of differences in coaching male and female athletes. While the article was influential in the conceptualization of the present investigation, it was felt that coach Dorrance may have more depth and insight to provide to the investigation as the article did not address a lot of details regarding Dorrance's views. Therefore, coach Dorrance was contacted and asked to further explain his perception of gender related differences and how they impact his coach behavior. Presented here are the perceptions of coach Dorrance addressing female coachability, the coach-athlete relationship, and athlete competitiveness as these add greater insight to findings from the present investigation.

Before discussing his perceptions, a little background information is essential to build his credibility. First, while the interviewed cross country coaches were deemed

experts in their sport, coach Dorrance would certainly be considered an expert soccer coach. He has led UNC's women's team to an unprecedented 10 consecutive NCAA Division I championships and has coached the USA women's national team. Second, coach Dorrance has admittedly tried to make himself an expert at understanding female athletes. When he first started coaching women (after having coached men), he approached them as he would the men because he naively thought men and women were supposed to be the same. However, he found that "treating them like men was helping us lose. So, we had to change - - I'm a pragmatist so we changed." He consumed scientific and popular literature on women and the feminist movement in an effort to better understand his athletes and facilitate his coaching ability. He now believes men and women think differently, feel differently and act differently. He stated, "we are different but not to worry because it doesn't mean we are unequal, but different." Lastly, it should be noted that Dorrance speaks across the country at coaching clinics with a popular topic being 'Differences in coaching male and female athletes'.

Paralleling the perception of coaches in the present investigation, Dorrance discussed the "unbelievable coachability" of female athletes. To explain why females are more coachable, he related a combination of factors.

One is because women want to please and men don't. The way you establish respect with men is by dominating them so the way you gain their respect is by sort of fighting through their challenge. The way you end up being effective with women is by winning them over with your personality not with your strength. And so women are a lot more coachable in that respect. I think another reason is I think that because women are fighting into the athletic field, maybe they don't have a confidence yet to feel their understanding is paramount.

Likewise, the interviewed coaches offered a similar explanation of this difference. Namely, females are coachable because they want to please the coach and because they are unsure of themselves in the competitive arena. Additionally, this perceived difference requires a different approach to effectively interact with male and female athletes as noted

by both the interviewed coaches and Dorrance. Interestingly, both Dorrance and the interviewed coaches noted that this will, unfortunately, probably change as women develop confidence about themselves in sport. Dorrance adds, "that would be tragic. Because the way it should evolve, in my opinion, is toward the way the women are. That would be healthier and more positive for athletics."

Coach Dorrance also discussed the importance women place on a strong relationship with the coach which has an affect on how he motivates the female athlete. He noted that a personal relationship with a male is not necessary to get him to play hard, whereas a female needs to be playing not only for personal goals but also for the coach. He believes it is essential, therefore, that each female feels she has a unique relationship with him. He suggested that this relationship is based on a social, academic, athletic and personal interest in her. Additionally, he noted:

And at all costs, she has to know that your relationship with her is not in jeopardy based on her athletic performance. In other words, you don't like her or respect her because she is a great player. You like her and respect her because of who she is and the way she treats people and all the other aspects of her character that she understands to be more critical than her athletic performance.

Relatedly, a theme that arose in the present investigation concerned the perception that female athletes require more from the coach than "technical" aspects of coaching; it is also important for them to have a relationship with the coach. As Dorrance noted, this characteristic has a profound impact on how he goes about motivating the female athlete. A strong coach-athlete relationship seems to be a prerequisite to motivate and influence the female athlete. Dorrance noted that this is what is most enjoyable for him about coaching women:

The women bring so much more of their lives and their personality into the team matrix and that for me is so much richer of an experience. They were so much more enjoyable because our connection went beyond athletics.

Lastly, Dorrance discussed his perspective into the competitiveness of female athletes similar to that mentioned by coaches in the present investigation. He perceives men as having a kind of natural competitive spirit, where they can compete with even their best friend. On the other hand, he noted that:

Women struggle competing against teammates. They bring in personal issues and what they perceive in competition is that you are sacrificing a personal relationship when you are competing and men don't bring any kind of personal relationship into the competitive arena.

Dorrance feels that, because of this, girls choose games that aren't confrontational such as hopscotch, whereas boys will choose games such as football that often involve direct confrontation and bickering. The youth sport sociology literature would support this perception. Specifically, it has been found that boys experience rewarding and supportive experiences that socialize them into sports. And, at a young age, boys tend to be involved in active, competitive team games, whereas girls are involved in simple, solitary, turn-taking games (Greendorfer, 1992). Interestingly, however, Dorrance is suggesting that children *choose* these games - - it was suggested by a coach in the investigation that children are socialized *into* those games by adults. Dorrance believes that:

If girls would get involved in that type of environment [confrontational], the first argument would cause the game to dissolve. Because these girls and women, I think, have this superior understanding that relationships are more important than the game itself and men don't consider relationships a factor in the game itself.

Dorrance's perception provides a possible explanation as to why females tend to be competitive with teammates and therefore train alone. It may be that because women value relationships, they have a difficult time putting it aside in the competitive arena for fear of jeopardizing the relationship. Knowing this, Dorrance structures the practice setting where

everything is evaluated and recorded so the athlete is competing against what is recorded and not directly against teammates.

As can be seen, the observations of coach Dorrance are similar to some of the perceptions of coaches from the present investigation. His discussions have added insight and aided in the interpretation of findings.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The previous chapter presented the results of this investigation in detail. Specifically, individual profiles of the 14 coaches were discussed and coach responses to specific questions were used to derive more general underlying themes. From these emerging themes, much was learned regarding coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and how such perceptions impact coach behaviors. A need exists, however, to discuss the finding from a more holistic perspective. That is, it is important to take a step back and discuss and interpret the findings from a broad framework. Specifically, this general discussion of the investigation and findings centers around the following five issues.

First, the study needs to be contextualized to provide a frame of reference when interpreting the findings. In taking a social-psychological perspective, it is posited that the social, historical, and temporal contexts have influenced the coaches' perceptions, behaviors and interpretations of gender differences in athletics - - these aspects of the context can not be separated from the investigation and findings. It is necessary, therefore, to describe various aspects of the context to fully understand the results.

Second, dominant findings are discussed. Specifically, major findings that emerged in various sections throughout the interviews are integrated and interpreted. Not only did common themes emerge, but several of these themes appear related as will be discussed.

Third, a discussion focusing on the science versus art of coaching is presented with differences between these two types of knowledge discussed. Furthermore, questions are raised regarding if and how this knowledge can be disseminated to coaches.

Fourth, implications from the investigation are forwarded. These include theoretical implications and practical implications for coaches, sport psychologists and others working with male and female athletes.

Lastly, the chapter concludes with a discussion of research limitations of this investigation. Future research directions to enhance our understanding of gender in sport are also forwarded.

### Contextualizing The Findings

One strength of qualitative inquiry is that findings and interpretations are placed in context (Patton, 1990). That is, because it is recognized that the investigative findings are influenced by the social, historical, and temporal context, these contexts are inseparable from the study. Therefore, before beginning a general discussion of the findings, it is essential to elucidate various aspects of the context that impact interpretations. Specifically, in the following sections, findings are placed in context within: (1) the setting in which the study was conducted; (2) the broad sociocultural context of sport in the 1990's and; (3) the philosophical perspective of the investigator which influenced analyses and interpretations.

Setting of the study. Because the focus of the study was to understand the influence of athlete gender in the sport setting, little, if any, discussion was given to other factors that might impact thoughts and behaviors in sport. In a sense, this investigation had a microscope on gender. However, it needs to be recognized that, when one takes a broader perspective, a plethora of factors exert an influence on athlete and coach perceptions and behaviors. In fact, without being asked, several coaches identified factors such as ability, success, coach age, and coach gender and socialization history as factors that influence athlete behavior and coach perception of athlete characteristics. For example, in this investigation 50% of the coaches perceive athlete confidence as being influenced by ability and success. Athletes who have greater ability and have experienced more success

are more confident than less able, less successful athletes. Not surprisingly, this finding supports the work of Bandura (1986) which suggests that performance accomplishments are the primary means of enhancing self-efficacy. For these coaches, self-confidence is not perceived to be impacted by gender although gender differences may be evidenced because of gender differences in ability or sport experience.

Taking a broader perspective within the study, it is also recognized that while the investigation focused on *different* characteristics of male and female athletes, it was noted by the coaches that males and females are more similar than different. Similarly, while the influence of specific athlete characteristics on coach behavior was discussed with an emphasis on how coaches interact *differently* with females and males, it is recognized that coach interaction with females and males tends to be more similar, with differences often being subtle in nature. For example, in response to the sport situations, coaches often noted that they would communicate the same idea to males and females but *how* it was communicated would differ (e.g., more blunt, direct with male athletes). This is not to suggest that because differences are small or subtle that they are trivial. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Yet, it must be kept in mind that gender is but one influence in a multitude of influences impacting differences amongst athletes and that more similarities than differences exist.

Contextualized in the 1990's. Second, findings and interpretations need to be situated in the historical sociocultural context of sport in the 1990's. A brief chronology and description of the history of women in sport is contained in Appendix A to facilitate an understanding of the contemporary sport environment. It serves to demonstrate the varied history of sport involvement for females and males, which undoubtedly influences gender related behaviors.

The influence of the historical and sociocultural contexts of sport was also perceived and discussed by many of the interviewed coaches. Most of them have been

involved in athletics for over 20 years and, thus, have witnessed the great changes that have occurred in sport, especially since the passage of Title IX in 1972. Some coaches noted the changing involvement of females in athletics:

I think that women athletes per se, the ones who have survived, want to be in athletics. And I say survived - the atmosphere is becoming more encouraging for women to participate - and I go back to the days when there was not women's sports at the college level. I went to school in the middle 60's and was coaching in the late 60's and early 70's and I remember when we first started teams for women. And so they have put up with more and consequently they tend to have a little higher commitment. (CL)

Women have had less opportunity competitively, historically in society. And so it is still kind of a new thing in our culture to have women competing with the same opportunities that men have. And maybe it is just still the newness of it that has women hungrier. And I'm one of those guys that has seen the whole transition happen. Because certainly when I was a collegiate competitor, there was zero, zip for women. . . So, having watched the birth and the genesis of this whole thing, it [opportunity for women] is by no means an old opportunity - it is still pretty fresh. (DWi)

Not only did coaches note the changing involvement of females in athletics, but they also note athlete characteristics and behaviors as being influenced by the sociocultural and historical contexts of sport. For example, several coaches tied the coachability of female athletes to their relative newness to the competitive sport arena, suggesting that because they are unsure of themselves in competitive sport, they look to the coach for guidance. Additionally, findings from the review of experiential literature suggest that female lack of experience in competitive sport, in comparison to males, is believed to affect behavior and emotions (Colfer, 1977; Richardson & Tandy, 1986).

The historical and sociocultural contexts of sport are important as they influenced coach and athlete perception and behavior. Ten years from now, with a different sociocultural sport environment, different perceptions and behaviors will likely be evidenced, thus making it necessary to couch this study in the proper historical and sociocultural context.

Contextualized within investigator philosophy. Lastly, a brief discussion of the investigator's philosophical approach to the study aids in contextualizing the investigation and interpretations. The research question guiding the investigation emanated from practical concerns. Namely, it was posited that an understanding of coach conceptualization of gender related behavior and how this impacts their behavior would hold practical implications for coaches and coach educators. Therefore, when analyzing and interpreting coach responses, a focus was on securing information with practical utility for coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists. However, while the utility of research findings was initially directed toward practical implications, theoretical implications were also deemed important. Both are discussed in a later section.

Additionally, the investigator approached the study from a social-psychological perspective in that socialization history and sociocultural environment were believed to be important factors in the study of gender. It was held that gender exerts a dynamic, rather than static, influence such that the perception of gender differences and its impact on behavior are best understood from an interactionist perspective. Therefore, coach perceptions and gender related behaviors that emerged in this investigation were believed to be influenced by various aspects of the context as well as individual characteristics and experiences of both the coach and athlete. These various influences were integrated within the findings and interpretations. Lastly, it is important to note that the study was not interpreted from a feminist perspective. While such a perspective may be informative (as discussed in a later section), it was not the view taken in this investigation.

### Discussion of Major Findings

Several content analyses were conducted on the information derived from the interviews with the 14 cross country coaches. Specifically, content analyses were conducted on descriptors dealing with coach perception of characteristics and behaviors of

female and male athletes, enjoyment and challenge of coaching males and females, coach response to specific sport situations, and coach perception of gender differences on psychological variables. From each of these analyses, numerous underlying themes emerged to enhance our understanding of gender in the sport setting.

As expected, common themes emerged across the content analyses, attesting to the strength of the themes. Additionally, several themes from across the various analyses, while not exactly alike, seemed to be related. It is these general, pervasive findings that are discussed in the ensuing sections. Specifically, discussion and interpretation of these major findings are divided into five sections: (1) emotions / expression of emotions; (2) relations / communication; (3) need for social validation of self; (4) eating disturbances / disorders; and (5) coach behavior toward male and female athletes.

Emotions / expressions of emotions. The notion that females and males are different emotionally was a pervasive theme that emerged throughout the interviews. As noted in the results, thirteen of the fourteen coaches discussed differences in emotion, with many suggesting this to be a major difference between males and females that also impacts coach behavior.

In general, discussion of emotion centered on two somewhat related ways in which coaches perceive female and male athletes to differ. First, coaches discussed gender related differences in the tendency to express or reveal emotions. Second, coaches discussed their perception that males and females tend to express the same emotion differently. These views are detailed below.

Throughout the interviews, coaches noted that while female and male athletes may appear, based on outward observation, to differ on certain variables or emotions, they probably don't differ in actual level of the emotion. The review of findings from the variables on which coaches were asked to describe gender related differences illustrates this notion (see Table 12). Specifically, in reference to differences in anxiety, confidence,

conflict, expression of emotion, sensitivity, and reaction to poor performance, several coaches noted that the difference is in the outward expression or display, not actual level, of these variables.

The tendency of males versus females to express or suppress emotions was not consistent across all variables. Rather, expression was dependent on the specific emotion. For example, eight of the coaches described females as appearing more anxious than males prior to competition but they all added that male and female athletes probably do not differ in actual level of anxiety. This supports the finding of Feltz (1988) in which females *reported* higher levels of anxiety, but no significant gender difference was evidenced on physiological measures of anxiety. Additionally, Gackenback (1982) has found that males tend to be less verbal about anxiety and self-report less stress than females. Thus, various sources suggest that females self-disclose anxiety to a greater extent than males. The same type of relationship held true for expression of emotions, sensitivity, and reaction to poor performance in that females are perceived as more overt and outwardly expressive than males. Conversely, males are perceived as being more overt or expressive than females in regards to confidence and dealing with team conflict. Additionally, a few coaches note this may also be the case with goals such that males express winning to a much greater extent than females, but that both males and females are concerned with winning.

This perception of the interviewed coaches provides further insight and understanding to the findings derived from the literature. Generally, coach perception of gender related differences in *outward expression* of psychological variables were congruent with findings from the scientific literature review (see Table 1). Together, the findings suggest that what athletes disclose on questionnaires parallels what they disclose behaviorally. However, coaches further qualified their perception by suggesting the difference may only be in expression not actual level. For example, the review of literature revealed that males tend to report higher confidence and less anxiety than females. In this

investigation, three coaches noted males only *appear* more confident and eight coaches noted females *appear* more anxious but that males and females are probably alike on these variables. Additionally, five coaches perceive males and females as both being sensitive but that females tend to display their sensitivity more than males. The information derived from coach interviews, then, supports and further explains the findings obtained from other sources.

While most coaches discussed emotions in reference to females and the challenge of dealing with female emotionality, a few coaches noted the challenge of breaking through the tough facade or lack of emotional expression by males. Their tendency to hide their feelings makes it difficult for coaches to "read" male athletes. While it is easy to assume all is under control by the outward behavior of males, closer assessment may reveal doubts. This may explain the finding of Hanson and Gould (1988) who found cross country coaches to be poor at assessing the anxiety levels of their athletes. If coaches are basing their assessment on outward behavior alone, it may be easy to misread because of the tendency to hide certain feelings, especially for male athletes. Further implications of this finding are discussed in this and later sections.

In addition to differences in overt expression, females and males are also perceived to differ in their expression of the same emotion. A common example provided by coaches to illustrate this difference was the tendency of females to cry and males to pound their fist or curse when frustrated or upset. Not surprisingly, and as noted by the coaches, these gender related differences in expression of emotions by athletes are no different than those displayed by males and females in society as the sport environment is but a microcosm of the broader society (Birrell, 1988). Athletes, therefore, are not immune to the societal influences that have been acting on individuals since early childhood. Summarizing this sentiment, two coaches noted:



Women are probably more prone to cry, but big deal. You know, that expression may be different and the guys may be more boisterous or more demonstrative but I think . . . I don't know if that is a societal characteristic or a gender characteristic. I don't think they react any different as athletes than the general population reacts in similar situations in terms of differences. (JD)

I definitely think a lot of this stuff we are talking about is a socialization process. It is cool and okay for a guy to be competitive but not necessarily a female. . . . But you can look at child development - a typical stereotype guy, guys play cowboys and Indians and army and capture the flag and stuff like that where, and again it is a generalization, but girls it is playing with dolls and teacups and all that other kind of stuff. (GS)

Different socialization processes lead to boys and girls being reinforced and rewarded for different gender-appropriate behaviors (Greendorfer, 1992), with some of these behavioral differences being evident in the sport setting. For example, in this investigation, coaches referred to the male display of "bravado" - the male athlete reflecting a tough, confident demeanor - when in actuality they may have numerous doubts and concerns. Conversely, the female is often socialized to exude modesty as reflected in her lower overt confidence in comparison to males.

Also related to the perception that males and females express the same emotion differently, several coaches talked of, early in their career, being "put off" by certain means of expression such as tears from a woman, whereas now such expression is "water off a duck's back". These coaches recognize that males and females just have different ways of expressing themselves. GS noted:

The hardest thing initially for me to deal with was to get used to the fact that a female athlete might tear up, might cry. . . . I just had to learn that, you know, not to get put off. I think a lot of males are put off by that. I seem to have naturally the ability to kind of just wait those things out and let things settle down and not be distracted or put off by that. It would be similar to, you know, guys like to cuss. I mean, if you get offended by that or get distracted by that you are going to have kind of a difficult time.

It seems, however, that some coaches are still a bit unsure of how to deal with the emotionality / sensitivity and means of expression of females. Several talked of being

evasive, carefully phrasing what needs to be communicated, or, in some cases, not even saying what needs to be said to females in comparison to their interactions with males.

This different interaction could be due to male coaches not being aware of, or comfortable with, female emotional reactions. Thus, they may tend to avoid or skirt around such situations. A greater awareness of male and female typical reactions could enhance coach understanding and acceptance of varied responses. Additionally, this situation could be due to the influence of coach socialization on his or her perceptions and behaviors - - a notion that was mentioned by several coaches. For instance, even though yelling at a female athlete may be called for in some situations, it may be that male coaches have difficulty with this because of how they were raised to behave toward females.

Relatedly, another potential explanation is that coaches are responding to gender stereotypes / biases rather than actual differences. It may be that because the coaches expect females to react more emotionally than males and they interpret these emotions as a sign of weakness, they interact cautiously with the females.

It seems that coach awareness of the tendency of male and female athletes to express the same emotion differently and to express or suppress certain emotions is essential to effectively coach males and females. Although no easy task, coaches need to not only be aware of gender differences in emotions but also need to "weed through" perceived gender differences and determine if and how differences should impact their coach behavior - - when should differences make a difference? Coaches also need to become aware of how their own socialization affects their perceptions and behavior.

Relations / communication. Another major finding, that was pervasive throughout coach perceptions of gender related characteristics and behaviors, concerns relationships and communication within the relationships. Specifically, coaches perceive gender related differences in their relationships with male versus female athletes and gender related differences in the relationships amongst the men's and women's teams.

As noted in the results, it seems at first glance that some of the findings from the present investigation contradict the findings from the literature review. Specifically, themes emerging from responses of the interviewed coaches suggest that females are more competitive with teammates, whereas males are perceived as having more of a team emphasis. Additionally, females are perceived as being more bothered by team conflict, whereas males seem more able to "blow off" problems or disagreements. However, the review of empirical and experiential literature found that males tend to be oriented toward winning and achievement and females tend to be oriented toward affiliation and personal performance goals (Gill, 1988; Gill et al, 1983; Gill & Dzewaltowski, 1988). Based on the finding of past research, it would be hypothesized that, contrary to findings of the present investigation, males would be more competitive with teammates because of their win orientation, whereas females, tending to hold an affiliation motive, would have a strong team emphasis.

In the following section, several possible interpretations are put forth to explain this contradiction. The interpretations offered are not suggested to provide a complete picture, but rather offer partial explanations. These interpretations are drawn from explanations provided by coaches, discussions with coach Dorrance, findings from the review of literature, and the investigator's tacit knowledge derived from interviewing the coaches and personal experience coaching male and female teams.

A possible explanation to the findings that females tend to be competitive with teammates yet score high on affiliation motivation could be that because females *do* value relationships they struggle competing with their teammates. As suggested by Dorrance, females may struggle competing with each other because they fear that in doing so they are putting the relationship in jeopardy - - they struggle finding a balance of competing with each other on the athletic field yet keeping their relationship intact.

This perceived gender related difference in the tendency to compete with teammates could also be affected by the varied sport socialization experienced by males and females. As previously noted, boys are socialized into competitive sports, whereas girls tend to be socialized into cooperative and turn-taking sports / games (Greendorfer, 1992). Therefore, while males are experienced in competing against each other, it is a relatively new experience for females. In fact, one coach noted that a possible explanations to account for female competitiveness against teammates may be the different socialization into sport for boys and girls, such that females have less experience in competitive games. It could be interpreted that because females value relationships they have a difficult time putting the relationship aside when competing, an activity they have not been socialized into to the same extent as males.

The notion that females place value on affiliation / relations may also explain why females *seem* to have more team conflict. As several coaches suggest, females are bothered by conflict and, thus, have to solve team problems or disagreements. Males, on the other hand, seem able to disregard or ignore any team conflicts. It could be precisely because females value relationships that they can not ignore problems but instead need to work to bring about some interpersonal harmony. Males, being more concerned with achievement, are not bothered by conflict because it does not impede progress toward their goal.

Coaches perceive female athletes to not only value relationships with other athletes, but themselves as well. The notion that females want and need more from the coach than just the "technical" aspects of coaching was a theme that emerged throughout the interviews, as reflected in the words of one coach:

I think there is a subtle difference, you know. And again, I think a lot has to do with the emotional ties I think that the coach has with the group. . . I've got to be more conscious of being more verbal with the women in order for me to have a good relationship with them, whereas I don't think it means that much with the guys. I've got to be more verbal and constantly encouraging them and telling

them how well they are doing and not being negative and those kinds of things. Whereas, with the guys, you don't need that same type of feelings with them. (DM)

Relatedly, one coach compared interacting with males as a day at the office - - just go in and get the job done. Interacting with females, however, requires more of a personal investment from him. This supports the results of an unpublished study by Smith and Smoll (1983) that assessed boys and girls perceptions of and preferences for coach behaviors. Based on the findings of this study, Barnett et al. (1992) suggested that the coach-athlete relationship seems to play a more salient role to female youths. Additionally, some of the experiential literature that was reviewed suggests that value placed on the coach-athlete relationship by the female athlete is a significant gender related difference (Sawula, 1972; Brooks, 1979; Geiger, 1994).

This finding may relate to the work of Chelladurai and colleagues (Chelladurai, 1980; Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989) regarding leadership which suggests that males tend to prefer an authoritative leadership style and females prefer a democratic leadership style. Additionally, Pratt and Eitzen (1989) found that coaches tend to be more autocratic and demanding toward male than female athletes. It seems that the different needs of female and male athletes from their coach requires a different leadership style. For females, who tend to value / need a relationship with the coach, a more democratic, interpersonal style may be appropriate. Conversely, a more autocratic style may be effective with males, who tend to have less of a need to develop a more personal relationship with the coach.

In sum, it may initially appear that intrateam competitiveness and team conflict, that were found to be characteristic of female athletes, contradict the finding from the literature reviews which found that females value relationships and are motivated by affiliation. However, this seeming contradiction can be cleared, as discussed above, by interpreting the female's strong emphasis on relationships as taking precedence over maintaining unity

purely for athletic pursuits. Based on such an interpretation, competing against teammates would create problems for females because it may infringe upon their relationship and, furthermore, team conflicts would become a priority that must be addressed.

Social validation of self. Several of the themes that emerged as characteristic of female athletes can be interpreted as being tied to their need for social validation or social acceptance. Specifically, female athletes' coachability, perception of others' expectations, and desire to please and not let others down can be interpreted as being influenced by their need for social approval or validation by significant others.

The notion that females tend to be coachable, in comparison to male athletes who often challenge the coach, emerged as a significant, discriminating characteristic of male and female athletes. Furthermore, one reason put forth to explain why females tend to be coachable is that, because of their desire to please the coach and not let him or her down, they do as told by the coach and are willing to put training in the coach's hands. Thus, these characteristics of female athletes seem to be correlated.

Pleasing others and striving to meet others' expectations, a theme descriptive of female athletes, can be viewed as one means for athletes to develop competence and validate themselves as athletes. Supporting this notion, one coach commented that a female athlete is happy with her performance if the coach is pleased. This would support the work of Harter (1985) which suggests that one source females use to develop competence is feedback from significant others (pleasing others being a source of positive feedback). Additionally, it was suggested by interviewed coaches that female athletes tend to feel bad about themselves after poor performances primarily because they have let others down - - a source of negative feedback.

This need for validation of self, that is met by pleasing others and meeting others' expectations, may be partially influenced by the relatively new status of females as competitive athletes. It could be posited that because females are adjusting to their

athleticism and trying to define themselves as competitive athletes, they look to others for validation. Conversely, males, who have long been involved in athletics and defined as competitive athletes, are comfortable as athletes and do not need to look to others for validation. Or, it could be that male athletes perceive the need for support from others as a sign of weakness, thus they assert their independence and self-sufficiency.

Additionally, females' affiliation motivation orientation and high value placed on relationships could also exert an influence on these characteristics. It makes intuitive sense that if an athlete is motivated toward affiliation, it will be important to please others (e.g., teammates, coach). In contrast, athletes who are motivated toward achievement will be less concerned with pleasing and not letting others down since this does not tie into their motive for participation.

As discussed, female athletes were characterized by the interviewed coaches as needing and wanting more from them than male athletes. Female athletes want one-on-one communication with the coach and for the coach to be invested in the relationship. In turn, it was commented that females also give back and share success with their coach, more so than males. Again, it makes intuitive sense to suggest that, if the coach is invested in coaching the female athlete, she would not only want to please him / her by doing well but would also probably feel she is letting the coach down if she runs poorly. On the other hand, the male athlete, who looks less to the coach for guidance and even challenges the training, may tend to feel he is performing on his own. Therefore, he has only his own expectations to meet and lets no one down but himself if he runs poorly. The female tendency to rely on her coach and want/need a relationship with her coach has important practical implications for coaches. For one, it suggests that coaches need to be careful in how they use the power and control readily handed to them by the female athlete. Coaches must be wary of abusing this control (Donnelly, 1993). Several other practical implications derived from this finding are presented in a later section.

This interpretation is based on the notion that these perceived characteristics of females relate to their need for validation of themselves in the sport environment. One wonders if, as females gain more experience and confidence in themselves as competitive athletes, this will change. Will athlete confidence and feelings of competence gained through experience negate the need for social validation? Or, are females socialized to seek approval from others - - a characteristic which permeates into the sport setting - - such that unless the socialization process changes, the need will not change?

Eating disturbances / disorders.

The escetic ethic, the boyishly feminine chic, the athletic ideal - are all at odds with her growth as a women. She learns that her maturing female body with its accompanying growth of soft flesh is to be dreaded; some thing she will constantly have to monitor, master, reduce - anorexia and bulimia are not unknown. (Duquin, p. 36).

Six of the 14 interviewed coaches discussed their perception of female athletes as tending to struggle with their weight which included sensitivity toward the issue of weight as well as an interpersonal struggle or preoccupation with weight management. In addition to comments from these coaches, several other sources suggest this is an area of concern. These include the efforts of the NCAA to educate coaches about eating disorder by means of a video (NCAA, 1989), statistics regarding the prevalence of eating disturbances in athletes (Rosen, McKeag, Hough, & Curley, 1986; Borgen & Corbin, 1987), and information derived from studies that attest to the problem (Gould, Jackson, & Finch, 1994).

There is no question that weight is a factor that affects running performance for male and female athletes - - both being too heavy and too light can negatively affect performance. However, for the female athlete, the maturation process typically results in an increased percentage of body fat, thus predisposing the female to weight gain. Unfortunately, it is often communicated to the athlete both verbally and nonverbally that



thinner means faster. Therefore, the highly motivated athlete will often go to extremes to control this element of performance. One coach noted:

Sometimes they become very obsessive in terms of their workouts and what they need to be successful and I guess a classic example there is - - we have had in the past - - is we do have women who try to improve their performance by doing some things nutrition-wise that we definitely disagree with. You know, in terms of getting into the situation of being anorexic or bulimic or whatever the case may be.  
(DM)

Female athletes seem to believe, or are led to believe, that a direct relationship exists between weight and performance such that less weight will result in faster times. It is easy to see how this belief could lead to inappropriate eating practices - - as eating (or not eating) is a relatively easy aspect of performance for the athlete to control.

Based on several factors, some of which are discussed below, it seems that female athletes constitute an "at-risk" group for developing disordered eating behaviors. One factor is the emphasis on low body fat to improve performance. Coaches who have daily team weigh-ins or who tell the struggling athlete to lose weight are implying a direct relationship between weight and performance which, undoubtedly, is perceived by the athlete. Also related to optimizing performance is the desire for thinness for aesthetic purposes. In sports such as gymnastics, ballet, and figure skating, form and physical appearance are salient factors that influence judges' ratings. It is no wonder, then, that committed athletes resort to pathogenic weight control practices to maintain an aesthetically appealing figure.

Another factor placing female athletes at risk is societal pressure and expectations; for women, "thin is in". Interestingly, a recent study of competitive swimmers found that concern about weight was more related to societal influence than to the demands of the sport (Dummer, Rosen, Heusner, Roberts, & Counsilman, 1987). Athletes may feel even more societal pressure than non-athletes to maintain an acceptable weight/shape because

they are "in the spotlight". During competition, they open themselves up to public scrutiny, with weight being a readily identifiable characteristic to critique. In addition, this societal pressure may be exacerbated by the female athlete's desire to please others and need for social acceptance.

Lastly, female athletes may be at risk because many of the psychological characteristics of individuals with eating disorders are also common characteristics of competitive athletes. In fact, several of these characteristics are correlated with success in athletics and are, therefore, fostered and reinforced in athletics. These characteristics include a high achievement orientation, perfectionism, a desire to please others, and a desire for control (Thompson, 1987). For the female athlete going through puberty, she may feel a lack of control over bodily changes, such as breast development and increased body fat, that are perceived to negatively affect performance. She may, however, try to control some of these changes via weight control techniques (Clark, 1991). This notion is supported by the work of Dummer and colleagues (1987) who found the incidence of pathogenic weight control practices to increase when girls reach menarche. In combination, then, it may be that our present societal ideals and sport beliefs facilitate the pursuit of an unhealthy body for the female athlete.

As noted, while the predisposition toward disordered eating may stem partly from characteristics of the athlete, the athletic environment also influences athlete behavior. It is posited, therefore, that enhanced coach knowledge of the issue of weight will aid in structuring an environment that facilitates a healthy approach toward weight management and will enable coaches to identify individuals with eating disturbances or a tendency toward such disorders. Several sport scientists have already recognized the significance of the issue and have issued guidelines for coaches to follow to prevent and deal with eating disturbances (Garner & Rosen, 1991; Thompson, 1987). Coach awareness and knowledge of eating disorders and the societal, psychological, and sociocultural factors that

may predispose one to an eating disturbance could serve as a base in the development of a personal coaching philosophy toward the issue of weight. This knowledge would aid in answering questions such as how much emphasis should be placed on weight as a factor affecting running performance. And, is coaching behavior concerned only with athletic performance or with this *person* and his or her long-term health.

Coach behavior toward female and male athletes. Given the differences in the themes that emerged from coach perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes, it may be expected that obvious differences in coach behavior toward males and females would be evidenced. In this investigation, however, coaches discussed more subtle differences - - these differences still being of great importance.

Most of the coaches suggested that, in some situations, they interact differently with female and male athletes. A review of these responses indicates that certain factors and athlete characteristics, more so than others, influence coach behavior in this regard. Based on responses across the 14 coaches, it seems that coach perception of specific female characteristics, namely sensitivity / emotionality, need for communication and relationship with the coach, and perception of expectations and desire to please others, creates the need for a different interaction with females in comparison to males. In regards to male athletes, coach perception of the tendency of male athletes to get off track and focus on and become ego-involved in winning influences coach behavior toward male athletes that differs from their behavior toward female athletes. Additionally, the coaches own socialization history seems to exert an influence on their behavior toward male and female athletes. Some of these more pervasive differences in coach behavior toward female and male athletes are discussed.

A major difference in coach interaction toward female and male athletes, that was evidenced in numerous situations, was the tendency for coaches to be blunt and confrontive

with male athletes. Conversely, with female athletes, coaches tended to take a more measured, indirect approach.

But on the guys side there is also the extra thing of being able to be more blunt and just say look - because they handle it better that way. . . . I think I would approach both of them basically the same way except I think you can be a lot more blunt, a lot more forceful with the guys than with the girls. (DM)

This supports the finding of Macdonald (1990) from the physical education teacher education literature review in which teachers were found to have a more strict approach toward male students and a more friendly, reinforcing approach toward the female students.

This different approach makes sense given the noted characteristics of male and female athletes. Specifically, it seems logical that coaches would be cautious in what and how things are communicated to the female athlete given that they perceive female athletes as tending to be emotional and sensitive to their approach. With male athletes, who are perceived as less emotional and as tending to get off track, coaches probably perceive that a more direct approach can be handled and is needed to keep males in line. Of concern, however, is the possibility that male athletes are also sensitive but tend not to show it. In fact, in this investigation, five coaches perceive males as being as sensitive as females but not displaying their sensitivity. Yet, coaches may be approaching male athletes as if they are not bothered by how something is communicated.

Coaches also discussed the tendency to interact differently by putting more pressure on male athletes and taking the pressure off female athletes. Given that some coaches perceive female athletes as feeling expectations and wanting to please others, a logical approach would be to try to alleviate some of the expectations the athletes perceive. This seems to be the case with some coaches such that in race preparation with female athletes their emphasis is that if you do your best you are successful. Somewhat contradictory,

however, is the tendency of some coaches to put pressure on male athletes and to emphasize the notion of winning. This is of potential concern because, first, as has already been discussed, males tend not to show emotions - - coaches may be assuming the male athletes can handle the pressure because the athletes do not show any doubts or concerns yet they may be very vulnerable inside.

Second, male athletes are perceived to be overly concerned with winning - - a focus coaches find to be a challenge to change. This perception supports reviewed goal orientation literature (Nicholls, 1984; Duda, 1989; Ewing, 1981) which suggests that males are oriented toward outcome goals, whereas females are oriented toward performance goals. Furthermore, it is suggested that a performance goal orientation leads to adaptive behavior patterns implying that such an orientation should be promoted with athletes. Yet, in race preparation, coaches often discuss and emphasize winning with the male athletes.

Not only do athlete characteristics influence coach behavior, but the coaches socialization history also impacts their behavior toward male and female athletes. Six coaches noted that differences in their approach toward male and female athletes may be due more to their own socialization than athlete characteristics. One coach commented:

I think the females have a tendency to react a little more emotionally. You know - - and this is a sexual bias - - since I am a man I can close my office door and I don't have any problem chewing a guy's tail and cussing him up one end and down the other. I would never do that to a female. (CL)

Unfortunately, it is difficult if not impossible to determine the strength of influence of coach socialization on behavior. However, to facilitate work with female and male athletes, it would seem important for coaches to be aware of the influence their own socialization may have on perceptions and behavior - - especially as it limits their effectiveness.

Coaches need to question: Am I responding in a way that is best for the individual athlete or am I reacting to my own stereotypes / biases?

### Specific findings

In addition to the above interpretation of the major findings from the investigation were numerous specific findings that were discussed throughout the results chapter. They are presented in Table 13 as it was felt a composite list of the findings would facilitate a better understanding of coaches' perceptions of gender in the sport setting.

Table 13

Summary of coach perceptions emerging from investigation.

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**\*Female athletes feel expectations of others and want to please others.**

It is important for females not to let others down - - such as coach, parents, and teammates - - so behavior tends to be directed toward pleasing others and meeting their expectations.

**\*Females want and need a relationship; communication with the coach.** They are perceived to want a unique relationship with the coach and look to him/her for guidance.

**\*Males tend to challenge coach training program.** Coaches related this characteristic to their experience in the competitive arena.

**\*Males "get off track" easily.** Coaches perceive that males need to be monitored regarding academics, running, partying.

**\*Females perceived as extremely coachable.** They tend to readily do as told by coach. Coaches related this characteristic to female desire to please them and to females newness to competitive sports.

**\*Males perceived as keeping feelings inside.** Males tend not to communicate as openly as females.

**\*Females tend to be emotionally expressive and sensitive.** Females are perceived to be more open with their thoughts and feelings and tend to let the coach know what they need.

**\*Females tend to be competitive with teammates.** Coaches suggest this characteristic may be related to newness to competitive arena and was also interpreted to be related to the value females place on relationships.

**\*Males focus on winning.** Males are perceived to be winning oriented more so than females who focus on performance goals.

**\*Females struggle with issue of weight; eating disturbances.** Additionally, many coaches are unsure of how to deal with this issue.

**\*Gender seems to play a role in the coach-athlete relationship.** Male coaches perceive a sense of camaraderie with male athletes which facilitates a "natural" relationship. Females are perceived to need more from the coach.

**\*Coaches perceive they can be blunt, "in the face" with male athletes and cautious, sensitive with females.** Perception that males can handle and need a direct, stern approach. Coaches tend to take a more measured, cautious approach with females who are perceived to be sensitive to coach behavior.

**\*Gender seems to play a role communication process.** Coaches tend to be more communicative with female athletes who are perceived as needing this from them.

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### Science Versus Art of Coaching

Effective coaching requires a thorough, well-grounded understanding of all aspects of the sport. This includes, but is not limited to, knowledge regarding physiology, psychology, biomechanics, nutrition, and interpersonal communication. Another aspect of this knowledge that is of interest in the present investigation is an understanding of male and female athletes and their tendencies to behave in certain ways. This breadth of knowledge encompasses the "science" of coaching; an understanding of factors that enter into athletic performance. This is analogous to the notion of declarative knowledge that is defined as domain-specific, factual content residing in long-term memory (Chi, 1981). Studies measuring the knowledge of expert teachers suggests that declarative knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient knowledge base for teachers.

Scientific knowledge alone won't necessarily lead to effective coaching. Also important is knowing when and how to apply the knowledge with each individual athlete - - the "art" of coaching. Concerning gender, the art of coaching would involve individualizing what is known about gender and characteristics of male and female athletes; knowing when and how gender related behaviors should influence coach behavior.

James "Doc" Counsilman, an internationally recognized swim coach, is known best for his scientific approach to coaching swimmers. Yet, he has discussed extensively the need to individualize this knowledge (Kimiecik & Gould, 1989). For example, he notes

that for most swimmers, setting performance goals is effective (knowledge also espoused in sport psychology). However, for a team oriented swimmer who lacks aggression, this type of goal would be ineffective so other goals are needed. He suggests coaches need to know when and how to individualize the scientific principles - - the "art of coaching" as he called it.

Related to gender, it could be suggested that because females tend to "bear a burden of expectation", a coach approach that alleviates some of this pressure would be effective. However, some female athletes may thrive under a little pressure so a different approach would be called for. The art of coaching would be knowing when and how to apply knowledge of gender related differences to the individual athlete. This aspect of coaching seems similar to Martens (1987) notion of tacit knowledge which he defines as an intuitive sense of things. He proposed that, as researchers, we need to begin to incorporate tacit knowledge as a way of knowing. Similarly, coaches' tacit or intuitive understanding of their athletes is a valid and important way of knowing. We need to try to tap into this knowledge to better understand gender, especially as it impacts coach behavior.

A question that comes to mind, that can not be easily answered, is whether or not the art of coaching can be taught. And, if it can be taught, how much improvement can be made in coaching effectiveness? One of the interviewed coaches commented that, when hiring assistant coaches, he is primarily looking for someone who can relate to the athletes. His belief is that it is easy to teach training principles, yet difficult to teach how to communicate and work effectively with athletes - - so he wants coaches who already possess these skills. He seems to be suggesting that the science of coaching is much easier taught than the art of coaching.

More specific to the issue of gender, one coach, when asked if gender should be included in coach education, commented that it is not something that can be taught. He added that because gender related characteristics are not "across the board" and often only



subtle, it is best learned on the job. Again, it seems the coach is suggesting that art of coaching is less tangible and therefore more difficult to teach. However, increased may minimize the amount of trial and error learning.

While the researcher does not have the answer of whether the art of coaching can be taught, a necessary prerequisite is scientific knowledge. Declarative knowledge related to gender such as an understanding of socialization processes, maturation processes, and historical and sociocultural sport contexts for males and females seems important if coaches are to be effective with their athletes. This knowledge would then be used as a source of information on which coaches can base their behavior and organize their experiential knowledge.

### Implications

As previously discussed, the initial interest in conducting the investigation was to garner knowledge regarding gender to facilitate the work of coaches, sport psychologist and others working with male and female athletes. In addition to these practical implications, theoretical / academic implications also arose from the investigation. Both theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Theoretical / academic implications. This investigation has much to contribute beyond the specific findings and interpretations. That is, implications can be drawn that have relevance to our theoretical understanding and academic study of gender in sport. Five theoretical implications are discussed in the ensuing section.

One implication, that has been mentioned by other researchers and is further confirmed in this investigation, is that it is time to move beyond asking whether or not female and male athletes differ. In this investigation, as well as in numerous others, it was found that males and females do differ on some psychological variables. Therefore, instead of continuing to ask if differences exist, we need to begin to ask questions such as

"why do females and males differ?" and "how do gender related differences impact thoughts and behaviors in the sport setting?" In our society, gender is a salient social category that impacts thoughts and behaviors. Our research and conceptualization of gender needs to focus on understanding the impact of gender in sport.

A second implication that arose based on comments of the interviewed coaches and suggestions of other researchers (Deaux & Major, 1987; Gill, 1992), concerns the need to continue to take a social-psychological perspective and incorporate social and historical contexts in our quests to answer these questions related to gender. In this investigation, coaches noted the influence athlete socialization, their own socialization, and the context of sport had on their gender-related perceptions and behaviors. It seems inappropriate, therefore, to study gender in isolation, separated from the social and historical contexts. Rather, because the influence of gender is affected by personal and environmental factors, a social-psychological approach is needed.

A third implication garnered from this investigation concerns the importance of adopting alternate ways of knowing. The typical means of understanding gender in sport has been to analyze athlete self-report on paper and pencil questionnaires and identify statistically significant differences. The present investigation varied from this in two ways. First, as has been promoted by Martens (1987), another source of knowledge was assessed to better understand gender in sport. Specifically, the perceptions of expert coaches were investigated as an alternate source of knowledge. Second, an alternate methodology that took a more holistic, interpretive approach was conducted in an attempt to understand gender in context. This use of diverse sources of knowledge and methodologies can provide greater strength to the findings via triangulation of source and methods (Patton, 1990) and can enhance our study of gender in sport. Triangulation occurred as several findings from the present investigation supported findings from past investigations, thus adding power to these findings. Furthermore, the use of alternate ways of knowing added

greater insight and understanding to past findings. In addition to verifying past findings, the insights emerging from the present investigation have advanced our knowledge of gender and taken it to another level (e.g., notion of different outward expression of emotions but same actual levels).

A fourth implication from the findings of the investigation concerns the variables being studied in gender research. The gender related variables that emerged as characteristic of male and female athletes are ones we know little about from past sport research. Prevalent differences identified by coaches, such as female sensitivity, female desire to please others, male challenges to the coach, and different expression of emotions, are variables that have not been investigated much in our research. The findings suggest, therefore, that we may need to broaden (or change) the variables we are studying in gender research. We need to begin to incorporate these variables into our study of gender and gender related behavior.

Lastly, as alluded to earlier, the research findings have implications regarding the methodologies employed to study gender related variables. It was found that different characteristics and behaviors of female and male athletes as well as differences in coach behavior toward males and females are very subtle in nature. This implies that the methods used to study gender related behavior need to be sensitive enough to detect these subtle differences.

Practical implications. Because most of the practical implications emerging from the investigation have been discussed in the Results chapter and elsewhere in this Discussion chapter, with the exception of a brief discussion of implications for coach education, they are presented only in table form. The practical implications, presented in no particular order, come directly from the investigation and are meant to serve as a tentative guide for coaches and others who will be working with male and female athletes.

Table 14

## Practical Implications for Coaching Male and Female Athletes.

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**\*Treat each athlete as an individual.** Respond to the individual needs and wants of each athlete as there is more variability between athletes than between males and females.

**\*Similarities outnumber the differences.** While males and females differ in many respects and may need to be approached differently in some situations, it needs to be recognized that they are more similar than different.

**\*Expect and accept different emotional reactions.** Male and female athletes are different emotionally and may react differently to the same situation.

**\*Need to look beyond outward expression.** Be careful when "reading athletes" as they may not show the emotions they are really feeling. Both males and females (but especially males) have a tendency to suppress certain emotions.

**\*Extra effort may be needed to break down barriers put up by male athletes.** Males tend not to openly communicate verbally or nonverbally - - coaches need to work at getting through their tough exterior.

**\*Females tend to value relationship with the coach.** They want and expect more from the coach than X's and O's of coaching and will express these desires - - Note: it is possible that males may also need more from the coach but just don't express it.

**\*Be careful not to abuse or misuse power with female athletes.** A female tendency to be very coachable and to want to please her coach gives power to the coach and exposes her to potential abuse.

**\*Coaches may need to carefully structure practices because of female difficulty in competing with teammates.** Try to eliminate head-to-head competitions between athletes and instead have females competing against clock or their own past performances.

**\*May need to emphasize performance goals to a greater extent with males.** Because males have a tendency to focus on winning, coaches need to stress personal performance goals to facilitate adaptive behavior.

**\*Attempt to take pressure off regarding expectations - -** this seems especially important for females as they tend to feel expectations of coach, parents, and others.

**\*Be aware that females may overwork in practice.** Because of female tendency to want to please, she may push too hard in a practice session to please the coach.

**\*Be aware of psychological effect of same racing distance from high school to college for females - -** they may feel pressure to be immediately competitive. The increase in distance for males provides a psychological crutch.

**\*Male and female athletes tend to race differently so different strategies may be necessary.** Males tend to be comfortable running in a pack, whereas women tend to be more comfortable racing single file - - possibly because of competitiveness factor.

**\*Athletics can be used as a vehicle for social change.** Coaches can model or facilitate behavior that goes against "gender socialization". For example, teach males it is okay to hug and teach females they can be aggressive athletes.

**\*Coach education can increase awareness of gender related differences and dispel myths.** Scientific knowledge of gender, while it may not always impact coach behavior, seems to be important to enhance coaches understanding of their male and female athletes.

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A brief discussion of implications for coaching education is in order as this was one impetus behind conducting this investigation. Ten of the 14 interviewed coaches believe the issue of gender is of great enough importance that it should be included in coaching education programs or workshops. The two primary reasons given for its inclusion are to increase coach awareness and knowledge of their athletes and to dispel myths and stereotypes. In contrast, two coaches suggested that discussing gender related differences will only create prejudices. It seems, then, that a fine line exists between discussing differences to increase awareness versus discussing gender and creating further differences. How can coaches find a balance - - where they are sensitive to differences yet not simply propagating a stereotype?

A possible answer to this difficult question comes from the expectancy literature (Horn, 1986), which suggests that coaches form expectations of their athletes based on such things as personal cues (i.e., gender) and performance information. These expectations influence both coach and athlete behavior. Expectations, however, are not necessarily harmful. In fact, *accurate* expectations can facilitate coach behavior and coach-athlete interactions. It could be suggested, then, that increased coach awareness of their male and female athletes will aid in the development of accurate coach expectations. A caution is that awareness and understanding should be flexible, not judgmental and, above all else, coaches need to respond to the individual.

### Research Limitations And Future Directions

This investigation was designed, in part, to correct some of the noted limitations of past research addressing gender in sport. However, limitations or weaknesses to the present investigation also exist. These include limitations related to the philosophical stance of the investigator, the methodology used to measure coach behavior, the use of one-time interviews, and both the researcher and peer reviewer being female. Each of these are explicated in the ensuing section. Lastly, future research directions are discussed.

Limits of philosophical stance. As noted, the investigative findings were interpreted and discussed from a practically-driven, nonfeminist perspective. It is recognized, however, that other perspectives could have been taken which would have discussed results from a different standpoint and would have arrived at different interpretations and implications. In a sense, different colored glasses would have been on when viewing and trying to make sense of the data. Given the focus on gender, a feminist perspective may be an approach others would have taken to understand and interpret the findings. Although this was not the perspective taken, it certainly would hold some merit.

Specifically, a feminist paradigm views gender as a socially and historically constructed set of power relations. From a feminist perspective, the findings may be approached with the goal of understanding if and how the present sport structure propagates male dominance over females. Additionally, such a perspective may call to question the adoption of the 'male model' of sport. Related to this, Hall (1990) noted "we use male experiences as our reference point and male behavior as our standards; we know females only in relation to men" (p. 231). Duquin (1987) critiqued the adoption of a male model when she suggested "integration holds for females the risk of losing alternative visions of what sport might be, of regressing to an outmoded and physically destructive system of reality, identity, and meaning" (p. 37). Based on this notion, a feminist

perspective may attempt to critically interpret the findings and challenge the adoption of a male model instead of developing an alternative sport structure.

Given some of the coach responses from the present investigation, such an approach may have some validity. An analysis of responses indicated, in fact, that coaches perceive females as becoming more like males and acquiring characteristics of the "male model". Coaches made reference to both positive and negative aspects of this change:

Well, I think with the socialization thing. . . . Number one, it has become more acceptable for women to become not only athletes but to be, you know, elite athletes, and be committed and work hard and I mean just the whole thing. I think people are less put off by seeing a woman sweat. Things that I see that are kind of frustrating are probably . . . well, they are starting to go the way the male athlete has gone, too. I think more of them are starting to take short-cuts and not be quite involve in academics. I see some socialization, too, that I think girls use profanity a lot more than they used to. (GS)

Yes, there is a thing [enjoy about coaching women] but it is changing and I predicted the change would occur and unfortunately it is. . . .One of the things I wish women would figure out is they don't have to go make all the mistakes that men have made. . . . By 10 years from now, this difference that I enjoy in guys versus girls I think is going to evolve away. (RM)

Based on comments such as those noted above, it seems a feminist perspective that critiques female integration within the male sport structure would be a valid approach to interpreting the coach responses.

While this was admittedly only a brief mention of points of discussion for a feminist approach, it is meant to highlight the limits of the perspective taken to analyze responses. Additionally, it serves to acknowledge the utility of other perspectives. While a feminist perspective could be applied, this discussion was not meant to suggest that the present approach was wrong but rather that multiple views are needed and are healthy for theoretical advancement.

Methodological limitations. In this investigation, it was posited that one way to measure coach behavior was to have coaches describe their response to specific sport

situations. One finding from the study, however, was that differences in coach approaches to female and male athletes are very subtle. As such, the methodology used to assess behavior was probably not sensitive enough to detect subtle differences in coach behavior or interaction with female and male athletes. For example, several coaches suggested that differences in their approach toward males and females were not so much what was said but how it was said - and it was difficult for coaches to put words to such abstract differences.

This limitation could be amended by using a different methodology to tap into coach behavior. An example of a more sensitive method would be to videotape coach interactions with male and female athletes. The video could then be analyzed to assess both what and how the coach communicates to female and male athletes. This type of measure would allow for subtle, nonverbal behaviors such as voice inflection, posture, physical contact, and facial expressions to be detected - - the subtle differences that may have been difficult for coaches in this investigation to discuss.

Limits of one-time interview. While the intent of the investigation was to "get into the heads" of the coaches to understand their perceptions, a one-time interview may have failed to completely capture this knowledge, although the researcher feels that a good rapport with the coaches facilitated disclosure. A single interview may not have been representative of coaches' knowledge and expertise as events and distractions on the day of the interview may have detracted from the information provided by the coach.

Additionally, the coach may not have been able to communicate all that is known or experienced because his or her behavior toward male and female athletes may be automatic rather than something that is conscious. Multiple interviews may provide time that is needed for coaches to bring to awareness automatic behavior that is often not carried out consciously. Also, it may allow time for the researcher to digest the information provided



and, in follow-up interviews, ask appropriate questions and probes based on the purposes of the investigation.

Female researchers limitation. Although it is unclear how the gender of the investigator and peer reviewer affected the research process, it seems important to note that both are female. Interviewed male coaches may not have revealed all of their perceptions of female athletes because the interviewer was female. It may be that a lack of “male camaraderie” or a hesitation to reveal certain perceptions may have inhibited complete disclosure. It is also possible that their socialization history as females, being different from the socialization process of males, may have influenced or biased their understanding. In fact, while auditing the results and interpretations, the peer reviewer commented that she found herself being easily drawn to differences with regard to females, especially those that confirmed her understanding of gender. While both of the researchers tried to remain true to coach perceptions, findings consistent with their beliefs may have been interpreted more favorable than those less consistent with their beliefs - - although great effort was made to avoid this through introspection, meticulous keeping of the reflexive journal, and regular peer reviewer-researcher discussions.

Future directions. While some of the findings from the present investigation validate findings from previous studies looking at gender differences, the use of a different methodology allowed the findings to be extended and greater insight to be made into our understanding of gender in sport. However, because of the exploratory nature of this investigation, the results are only tentative and need to be replicated. While practical implications of the study were discussed, they were posed only as suggestive guidelines - - further work is needed in the area to strengthen these guidelines. Five more specific directions for future research are discussed as these are posited to aid our theoretical and practical understanding of gender in sport.

1. As previously mentioned, the variables identified as characteristic of male and female athletes are variables that have yet to be studied much in sport research. That is, past research on gender in sport has not looked at variables such as emotionality, sensitivity, and expression - - variables that were significant to this investigation. Future research needs to investigate these variables to try to replicate and extend the present findings. It may be that not much is known about these variables because we are unsure of how to operationalize them or the tools to adequately measure these evasive variables may not have been considered acceptable methodologies (Martens, 1987). Efforts, therefore, may be best focused on conceptualizing and defining these terms.

2. A noted limitation of the present investigation was the lack of an adequate assessment of coach behavior toward female and male athletes in specific situations. Having coaches report their behavioral responses to specific situations did not seem to be sensitive enough to detect subtle differences in coach behavior. Several coaches noted that their approach was "basically the same" toward males and females, with only slight differences. Little description was provided, however, on the exact nature of these differences. While some coaches described being more blunt with males and supportive or reinforcing with females, greater specificity is needed to understand these differences. Future research, therefore, should attempt to uncover coach behavior using alternate methods. One such method, discussed previously, could be to videotape actual coach behavior and analyze it for verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

3. The present investigation assessed coach perception of characteristics and behavior of male and female athletes and its impact on coach behavior. Some of these findings were compared to characteristics of males and females obtained from past research using athlete self-report - - some similarities being evidenced. A possible future research

direction could be to integrate both perspectives by assessing and comparing coach perceptions and behaviors with the perceptions and behaviors of their male and female athletes. Such an approach would allow not only for actual coach behavior to be compared to athlete preferred coach behavior, but would also allow for comparison of coach perception of athlete characteristics with athlete self-report. This would provide a more complete assessment and analysis of the influence of gender in sport. One possible methodology could be to conduct an in-depth case study where the researcher spends a season with a combined sport program. He or she could observe and interview not only the coach and athletes but others involved with the teams such as athletic trainers, parents, and support personnel to gain in-depth insight and understanding into the influence of gender in the sport setting.

4. The focus of this investigation was on understanding the influence of athlete gender in the sport setting. To do so, an attempt was made to identify and understand coach perception of gender related characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and their impact on coach behavior. Influencing coach perception and behavior, however, is the coach's own gender and unique socialization history as a male or female. Unfortunately, because of the dearth of female collegiate cross country coaches working with both females and males, the influence of coach gender could not be closely investigated. A need exists for future research to investigate the influence of coach gender on behaviors and relationships in the sport setting. As found in a recent review of college coaches (NCAA gender-equity study, 1991), very few females coach men's programs so this population may not be best for such an analysis. It may be more fruitful to study high school or recreational sport coaches where more females may coach male participants.

5. In general, much of our research in sport and exercise has studied elite athletes. While we know quite a bit about this population, we, unfortunately, know relatively little about other populations of sport and exercise participants such as youths, high school athletes, and adults. A need exists to study a broader array of sport participants. This suggestion is in line with a future research direction put forth by Gill (1992) who suggested we need to look at a wider range of sport and exercise activities in our gender research. Studying gender related behaviors of less elite athletes may prove to be enlightening as several coaches noted that they perceive more gender related differences between less elite male and female athletes than between elite athletes; many of the coaches perceive that characteristics of elite female athletes are very similar to those of male athletes.

### Summary

The present investigation was conducted with two general purposes in mind. First, coach perceptions of psychological characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes were investigated. An open-ended interview guide was used to question collegiate cross country coaches and ascertain their perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of their male and female athletes. During the interviews, coaches were probed in-depth to understand the nature of any perceived gender related differences. Second, an attempt was made to try to understand how perceived differences influence coach behavior. Coaches were asked to describe how and why they may behave or interact differently with their male and female athletes.

Content analyses on the information derived from the interviews resulted in the emergence of numerous underlying themes. These themes represent specific athlete characteristics and behaviors and coach behaviors that were similar across several coaches. In addition to the emergent themes, the rich description provided by the interviewed coaches facilitated a better understanding of the influence of gender in sport as has been

discussed in detail in the Results and Discussion chapters. This investigation was able to shed much light on the influence of gender in sport. The findings offer a unique contribution to the literature in that several past findings, based on athlete self-report, were validated in this study that took a more holistic perspective using coach perceptions. This triangulation of sources adds great strength to the findings. Additionally, the findings and interpretations from this investigation have furthered our understanding of gender and raised questions to advance our study of gender. Lastly, the numerous practical implications garnered from the investigation can have an immediate impact on coaches and the implementation of coach education programs.

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## APPENDIX A

### Context Sensitivity

One theme or strategy of qualitative inquiry identified by Patton (1990) is context sensitivity where investigative findings are placed in a social, historical, and temporal context. Similarly, Bain (1989) suggests that qualitative inquiry gives meaning to events by placing them in the context of a broader sociocultural context or a theoretical context derived from previous research. Individuals are not thinking and behaving in isolation, but are impacted by numerous external factors. Therefore, it is believed that to understand the event or phenomenon being studied it is also essential to have an understanding of the sociocultural milieu in which the event occurs as such knowledge will influence the interpretation of findings. Elucidating the context will "couch" the phenomenon in a specific time and place and enhance interpretation. Hence, the present investigation can be better understood if the sociocultural context of the sport environment in which behavior is occurring is understood.

To contextualize the investigation of the influence of gender in the competitive sport environment, the history of male and female involvement in sport will be reviewed. Birrell (1987) has posited that as a result of different models of sport historically available to men and women, sports today is still experienced differently. It will be suggested in this review that although male and female sport worlds are more similar today than ever before, profound contextual differences exist which undoubtedly impact gender-related behavior. The sociocultural climate influences how sport is experienced which, in turn, influences beliefs, cognitions, and behaviors in the sport domain. Historical perspectives of sport involvement by Birrell (1987; 1988) and Cahn (1994) identify several key time periods: 1900 - 1960's; 1970's; 1980 - present day. Each time period delimits significant changes

/ events that have influenced the zeitgeist regarding sport and sport participation. These periods will be used in the following historical review related to gender and sport to understand the sociocultural context of contemporary sport for men and women.

### 1900 - 1960's: Exclusion and Separation

From the turn of the century through the 1960's, participation in sports increased dramatically for men while women were relegated to the sidelines. Birrell (1988) identified several factors that contributed to the exclusion of women from sports. These included the male medical establishment which identified physical exertion as dangerous to a women's health and reproductive system and the ideology of femininity which held sports to be 'unladylike'. Additionally, women physical educators, who supported noncompetitive activities but opposed competitive sports as espoused in the male model, aided in this exclusion. At a conference in 1923, they set an agenda of mass participation with a motto 'a game for every girl and every girl in a game' emphasising participation over competition. Thus, different values and purposes were held by the independent male and female sport systems. The female model emphasized participation and social interaction while the male model was based on competition and outcome. These two distinct models lasted for nearly 50 years.

### 1970's: Growth in opportunity and participation

The 1970's marked a period of significant change in the sport domain and is characterized by an explosion of female participation. Cahn (1994) suggests that "the transformation begun in the late 1960's has permanently altered the face of athletic culture and provided unprecedented opportunities for the millions of girls and women who have taken up sport in recent years" (p. 248). This change within sports was impacted greatly by the force of the women's movement in the broader society. Significant events within



the sport environment which affected participation included the formation of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women in 1971 (AIAW) and the passage of Title IX legislation in 1972.

The AIAW was formed from within the existing structure of women's sport in response to the call for competitive opportunities for female athletes. The organization was able to provide national competitions while still maintaining the basic elements of the women's model of sports. Focal elements of the female model, which grew out of a belief in mass participation and 'playdays', included fiscal responsibility, students' rights, and a belief in an educational sports system (Birrell, 1987). Conversely, the male model was structured along a professional model of sport and emphasized the generation of profit and an outcome orientation. Thus, in the 1970's, the AIAW served as the sole sponsor and advocate of intercollegiate sports for women while the NCAA was the chief sponsor of intercollegiate sports for men. Additionally, these two independent organizations represented different models of competitive sport.

The Educational Act of 1972 included a section on sex discrimination. This section, Title IX, forbid federally funded educational programs and activities from excluding individuals based on sex. The document, in theory, legally mandated equal sport opportunities for males and females. Taken together, the formation of the AIAW and passage of Title IX fostered massive growth in female participation in sports, an activity in which she had previously been denied access. Unfortunately, this growth did not continue but stalled several years later. Title IX was opposed by several institutions, including the NCAA, and legal action often did not follow failure to comply with the law. Thus, although sport opportunities for females, and subsequent participation rates, increased dramatically, problems lurked below the surface.

### 1980's - Today : Abiguity

The early 1980's is characterized by ambiguity over the place of women in sports. Although both the public and academic institutions expressed an interest in women's sports, this interest was not matched by support (Birrell, 1988). In 1981, after years of pressure, the AIAW lost control of national championships for women's sports to the NCAA against the pleas of AIAW leaders. Women's intercollegiate sports were incorporated within the traditional male model, which emphasized success and economic productivity, unlike the model developed by the AIAW. With this merger came a dramatic decline in the number of women coaches and administrators. Where over 90% of female college teams were previously coached by women, by 1984 only 50% were coached by women (Birrell, 1987). This change was postulated to adversely affect female athletes due to the fact that women structured their sport experiences in different ways and experienced sport differently than men yet were being forced into a male model of competitive sport (Birrell, 1988).

Given this brief historical review, what is the climate of the sport environment in 1994? In a recent article (Schrof, 1994), it is succinctly stated that "twenty-two years after the passage of the federal law known as Title IX - guaranteeing equal sporting opportunities for male and female students - women athletes are still second-class citizens in a man's world" (p. 51). This somewhat controversial statement is backed by supporting evidence: nearly twice as many males as females play high school and college sports; men receive twice as much athletic scholarship as women; measures such as equipment quality and budgets favor male athletes; and only one of 646 NCAA members meet equity standards. Thus, although women are freer than ever to enter the athletic domain and have more opportunities to do so, obstacles and challenges still exist that make sports a different experience for males and females. Some of these challenges and obstacles will be identified below.

One such challenge is the reality of being a "second class citizen" not only because of inequities in the availability of resources but because of the attitude held by some sectors of society. Laws, such as Title IX, can not change individual attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. It is suggested that policy changes require an attitude shift about women in sports but these are much slower to evolve. Critics of gender equity often claim that women lack interest in sports or they revive the century old beliefs that regard women who want to compete as unfeminine (Schrof, 1994). Such attitudes maintain the status of females as second class citizens in the sports world.

The male and female sport experience is also different due to differences in the availability of professional sport opportunities. Across sports, women have fewer professional sport opportunities and, opportunities that do exist, are rewarded with less pay. Relatedly, women have fewer opportunities within the sporting system in terms of coaching or administrative positions. Therefore, it could be argued that women experience sport differently than men because of the realization that their athletic experiences are unlikely to lead to a career in sports.

Cahn (1994) identified the sexual stigma issue as yet another challenge to women in sports. "The fear of lesbianism operates to police women's behavior within the world of sport. Female athletes and their supporters accurately perceive that acceptance and rewards depend on a willingness to prove their heterosexuality or deny their homosexuality" (p. 268). Thus, the feminine ideal from a century ago, although not as strong today, still lingers and impacts the sport experience. Along a similar vein, it could be suggested that for males the sport domain is perceived as an environment in which men acquire and assert masculine characteristics. Such beliefs undoubtedly influence decisions regarding participation and male behavior within the sport setting.

These identified challenges that seemingly differentiate the sport experience for men and women do not touch upon the different socialization histories of males and females in

our society. Eccles and Harold (1991) have suggested that, at a young age, strong gender differences exist in the importance children attach to sports and perceptions of their own ability in the physical domain. Specifically, in their research, it was found that young girls perceive themselves as less able in sport, in comparison to boys more so than would be predicted due to differences in physical proficiency. Additionally, girls place more value in other achievement domains than sport while boys place great value in sport. This socialization influence undoubtedly has a long-term impact on the individual by shaping thoughts and cognitions.

This brief historical review has shown that men and women have traveled different paths to lead to the present day sport environment. Sports has traditionally been a male domain and, in general, males have experienced few obstacles. From its inception, the male model of sport, which is the dominant model today, has been built around economic prosperity and a focus on winning. Females, on the other hand, have traveled a path fraught with obstacles, some of which still exist today. It has only been in the past 50 or so years that women have had the opportunity to participate in competitive sports. And it was only a little over a decade ago that women were incorporated into the male model of sports from their model which emphasized financial responsibility and the value of an educational sport system. Superficially, it may appear as if women and men experience similar sport worlds, but diverse histories still exert their influence. Some noted differences impacting the female sport experience include a second-class status in terms of resources as well as societal attitudes, fewer professional opportunities, a sexual stigma, and socialization history imparting different value and expectations in the sport setting.

It can be argued that men and women experience and live in different sport worlds. Additionally, men and women have different socialization histories that influences their experience of sport. It would seem, therefore, that the present context in which sport

occurs may differentially influence the cognitions and behavior of male and female individuals in the sport environment.

## APPENDIX B

### Individual Profiles

#### Individual Profile of DC

DC is a 49 year old male coach. At the time of the interview, he was the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a major Division I university. He has been coaching for 28 years at the junior high, high school and collegiate levels. He has coached both men and women for all of his 28 years of coaching. In fact, he helped initiate women's programs in the early 70's when he was a coach in high school and then in college. DC was a competitive athlete himself, having played four sports in high school and football and basketball in college. DC notices differences in his male and female athletes and feels that in some situations he interacts differently with them.

Early in the interview, DC was asked to describe or characterize his female athletes. He used the following words to characterize his females: very conscientious, very excitable and enthused about what they are doing or trying to do, academic minded in that they have a purpose in college more so than he has noticed for some of his male athletes. In other sections of the interview, he made mention of other characteristics that stand out in his mind in regards to his female athletes. He noted that females "like to have things explained, not to question the coach but to better understand". Because of this, he feels he spends more time with his females - they ask for it and require it and are also receptive to his help. He also made comments regarding the tendency of females to dwell on personal issues and also procrastinate when it comes to workouts.

DC finds that what he enjoys most about coaching women has changed over the years. Initially it was the fact that women were gung-ho and appreciative of things that were done for them because of the newness of competitive sports. Now, he finds that women want to win and get recognition and his enjoyment comes in trying to take them up to the next level of competition. The biggest challenge in coaching women is dealing with their emotional problems. They are more tender-hearted, get upset easier, and dwell on problems so he struggles keeping them together as a family and team.

Similarly, DC was asked to characterize or describe his male athletes. He described them in the following way: competitive, enthusiastic and good spirited, aggressive, and not as caring about academics as he would like them to be. He also noted that males "tend to think that they are more in charge of their tempers and know everything" and are therefore less receptive to help. In his approach, he finds he is often more aggressive with the men.

What he enjoys most about coaching men is their aggressiveness in that after a disappointment they bounce right back and go after it again - although on occasion it may be better to think about and learn from the situation. His biggest challenge in coaching men is in getting them to set realistic goals. DC finds that the expectations of men are often a little bit high so they have a tendency to go overboard with the goals they set for themselves.

DC feels male and female athletes are similar in a lot of respects. He discussed two similarities in particular: their desire to be a family and the pride they feel when successful.

Three sport scenarios were described to DC. For each one, he was asked to describe how he would respond if he was dealing with his men's team and his women's team. If the approach would be identical, he was asked to describe the response.

The first situation dealt with preparation for the conference championship. DC said he would use a similar approach for his males and females. He did note, however, that because he also talks to them individually in addition to team meetings, his approach may be different based on the individual but not whether they are male or female. For both teams, he has found from experience that talking too much the night before a race gets the athletes too revved up where they can't sleep and then hit rock bottom come race time. He finds it best to discuss the race early in the week to give them time to settle down and get "back to reality". Therefore, on race day, he just reviews last minute details with both males and females and then tailors specific comments to the individual.

The second situation dealt with a freshman who is frustrated with his/her performance. DC said he would probably respond the same with a male and female but did make the differentiation that females are usually more receptive to listening to him and getting help than males. DC's approach would be to sit down and give the athlete time to talk and explain his or her perception of the problem. He would be real honest with the athlete about why he or she might be struggling with running and would solicit help from the athlete's HS coach about what has helped in the past. Above all, DC feels the important thing is to give the athletes your time, listen, and let them talk.

In the last situation in which one of the athletes is having some personal problems, DC described a different response when interacting with a male and female. With a male athlete, he would use 'male-bonding' and try to relate to the athlete by saying he has been through it before in an effort to get them to open up. He couldn't do that with a female because he doesn't "have the female's heart - emotionally" and can't relate to their experiences. In addition to different coach response, he has found that a male and female athlete react differently to that situation. Males won't tell the coach quite as much or get into much depth and they also seem to get over problems and frustrations quicker. Women, in contrast, are more open but tend to dwell on the problems longer. DC feels that if he can develop a relationship with the athletes before a crisis hits, they will trust him more to help with the problem - male and female alike. So, even now with all the different support people available, he still wants athletes to come to him first to keep him involved in any problems or difficulties the athlete may be having and then he refers outside as necessary.

Numerous variables identified through the literature search that differentiated between male and female athletes were described to DC. He was asked to discuss any differences he has noticed on these variables.

DC feels females show their nervousness or **anxiety** more than males (outward expression) but is unsure whether there is actually a differences on the inside.

He feels the situation is similar regarding **self-confidence**. Women appear less assured of themselves - they are honest in their actions and will display worry and other emotions. Men give the appearance of being ready and self-assured but he feels that inside they may be full of self-doubt. Again, DC feels the outward expression is different but the inward feelings may be the same for males and females.

When **team conflicts** arise, DC has found that women tend to be more vocal to each other than the guys. They won't hesitate to tell another female things; they "go head up when there is a conflict". Men, on the other hand, just subtly mention it to the person if there is a problem or they will get a buddy to tell that person.

As a group, DC feels that the women are a more **bonded team** but he feels that comes from the winning they have experienced over the years. He seems to be suggesting that performance success has fostered greater team cohesion amongst the females. The men are becoming a more bonded team because in the last 4-5 years they have experienced some success. Additionally, he noted that the men tend to get a little more competitive in workouts instead of running in a controlled manner.

In terms of **goals** for a given race, he has found that both men and women want to do well but he does feel that their "definition of success is off just like all of society". He tried to get them to understand that you don't have to come in first to be successful.

DC's **coach-athlete relationship** differs across individual athletes but, in regards to gender, he feels he may spend more time with the women partly because they will open up and let him know what they need - there is no guesswork. The men often come across like they are in control so he assumes they are ready and don't need him. He actually sees this as a downfall and realizes he probably needs to be more observant with his men's team.

DC believes males and females differ in the **emotions** they express with the women being open about their feelings and the men tending to hide or not show their emotions and act real cool- - just like they've been taught over the years. DC makes an effort to show his males there is nothing wrong with showing emotion by not only high-fiving but hugging as well. He noted that he wished males would express the emotions that he knows they are feeling.

DC thinks both men and women get their feelings hurt (women maybe a little bit easier) and are **sensitive** to comments or criticism but the men tend to let it pass or say 'big deal' whereas the women hold a grudge about it for a couple of days. However, he still tries to treat them both the same way.

After a **poor performance**, DC has found that women tend to put more blame on themselves whereas the men will be quicker to blame others. But the women will more readily come to the coach and talk about it later. Interestingly, he feels that women will more easily drop out of a race if they are struggling by convincing themselves it is okay to do so. A male will still try to prove he is tough by finishing.

DC believes gender should be included in coaching education programs. He took it from the perspective that perhaps we need to dispel some myths or stereotypes as he sees coaches treating some athletes differently because they are male or female. He also feels there is a lot of patronizing of female athletes and an inability to accept women as athletes. The laws have helped but there is still a long way to go.

### Individual Profile of JD

JD is a 49 year old male coach. He is the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a major Division I university where he has held this position for 13 years. He has been coaching for 26 years, 16 of which he has coached both men and women. JD was a competitive athlete in college as well as a national calibre marathoner but describes himself as someone with not a lot of talent but a hard worker. JD stated early in the interview that he has never really looked at his athletes as male and female but instead he views them as people. However, he did note that he probably does some things differently with the two groups.

When asked what he enjoys most about coaching women, JD couldn't identify anything that stood out for women alone. Instead, he said he enjoys working with young people. His enjoyment comes from coaching the young males and females and seeing them work hard and develop as athletes and people (i.e., make a contribution to society). Similarly, he found the biggest challenge in coaching men and women to be the same. He finds that athletes' expectations often are too high and they want to do too much too soon in an effort to get to the next level. His challenge is keeping them on track and making sure they take it one step at a time.

JD was asked to think of his female athletes and to identify characteristics or behaviors that stand out in his mind as typifying some of the females he has coached. He described his females as highly internally motivated, perfectionistic, caring about one



another, academically intelligent and bright, and dedicated. He noted that some of these characteristics can be both their strength and their weakness in that they can be so highly motivated and dedicated that they don't know when to back off. Because of this, he and his assistant coaches make an effort to get the women to be realistic about where they are and what they need to do to take a step at a time and progress slowly, instead of feeling they need to get it all done today. In a later section of the interview, JD also characterized women as being more competitive with each other in races than with the other competitors. He finds he needs to address this issue often with his female athletes. Lastly, JD discussed eating disorders as being a problem on the women's team, although not to the extent that he feels it is an issue on other teams.

When asked to identify characteristics or behaviors of his male athletes, he said they are "pretty much the same" as those used to describe female athletes. He perceives his male athletes as being highly motivated, mentally tough, having a belief in themselves and what they can do, competitive, very intelligent, and inquisitive as to why they are doing things but once they know they will do it with no problems. JD noted that men and women are the same in a lot of respects and that bigger differences probably exist across individuals than gender. He also suggested that some of the differences are not so much gender based as differences in opportunities - JD identified a specific situation in which he interacts differently with his male and female teams. In preparation for races, he feels he can put a little more pressure on the men in the sense of laying down the facts about what they need to do to be competitive. He perceives men as being able to emotionally handle this type of pressure and expectation. Conversely, he finds it better not to put that kind of pressure on women and to concentrate instead on telling them to give the best effort they can give.

Three sport scenarios were related to JD. For each one he was asked to describe how he would respond to the situation with his female and his male athletes. If he felt he would behave similarly, he was asked to describe this behavior.

The first situation dealt with how he would prepare the teams for the conference championship. JD said his initial approach would probably be the same and would emphasize the team doing well together and the fact that it is a team performance. He stresses a team emphasis so individuals don't feel they need to carry the load. It is his belief that as a coach he should have little contact with them on race day. He is there to encourage but the race has been talked about all season and it is too late to cover anything new on race day. Plus, the athletes are edgy and jumpy so they probably wouldn't hear it anyway. Earlier in the interview, JD had referred to such a situation and noted that he puts more pressure on the men in terms of discussing what they need to do to be competitive, whereas with the women he talks about giving their best effort and doesn't focus on the competition.

In the second situation, a freshman athlete is struggling with his or her running and is growing frustrated - this negative attitude is further affecting his or her performance. JD said he tries to prepare both males and females for such a situation early in the recruiting process. He takes the pressure off by telling them he has no expectations for any freshman - he believes they already put enough pressure on themselves. Once the situation occurred, with both males and females, he would try to find things to praise them for and stay positive with them. He would emphasize doing your best and try not to make a big deal when they do real well or not so well so they will hopefully do the same. One difference in his approach is that he finds he sometimes needs to "get in the face and go after" the guys whereas he would never use such an approach with the females. He feels guys respond better to that approach.

In the last situation, in which an athlete is struggling with some personal problems, JD said he would definitely confront the athlete about the problem but how he confronted would depend on the person. He would want to handle it in some manner (i.e., giving

them time off from running, talking with them) because it is his belief that you can't separate personal problems from athletics. Your life is tied together so trouble in one area will carry over into other areas. To effectively help the athlete, he feels you need to know them and use what works, which will be different for different individuals.

In the last section of the interview, numerous variables were identified and JD was asked to discuss any male-female differences he has noticed on these variable.

He feels males and females do not differ in their **anxiety** or nervousness but he can notice the emotion more in the female. He believes this is because males have been conditioned to hold everything in, whereas it is okay for females to "wear it on their sleeves".

JD perceives no difference between males and females in their level of **confidence**. However, he feels that men and women who are running well and meeting their expectations are more confident and show their confidence more than those who are not running well. Performance success, therefore, seems to be the factor influencing self-confidence (self-efficacy) as opposed to being gender related.

Regarding dealing with **team conflict**, JD feels both his teams get along real well together - the women in particular offer support and strength to each other whenever anyone is having problems. If anything, he finds he need to get the men together to talk out differences more so than the women. Interestingly, he mentions that other coaches often talk about how cutting the women can be with each other but he has never noticed that - and is actually kind of amazed by it.

JD has found differences in **race goals** in that the men "put more stock in winning" than the women - he tries to help men understand that they aren't a failure if they don't win. Both, however, want to win and are disappointed when they don't win if they think they should have.

When athletes have a **poor performance**, JD doesn't perceive a difference in how a male and female would react.

JD feels females are sometimes more **sensitive** to comments such that the same comment wouldn't phase the male but may upset the female. However, he feels it could be that guys are equally sensitive but just don't show it. He reflected that he was a "skinny, little runt" of a child and was often hurt by comments but tried to keep it inside and not let it show.

In a similar vein, he noted that he feels males and females experience similar **emotions** but express them differently. He feels males tend to be a little more vocal and females cry or become withdrawn.

Lastly, JD feels his **coach-athlete relationship** now is probably fairly similar with the men and women - they are like his children. As a younger coach there was probably a difference because he could identify better with the men.

JD didn't directly answer the question of whether coaching education courses should address the issue of gender. He did state that we seem to be making too big of a deal about gender differences and should instead focus more on how to treat people. He feels his Christian upbringing influenced his belief in treating people the way they ought to be treated irrespective of race, gender, or whatever. In summary, he states that our country is making a mistake with the emphasis on gender equity and diversity training because it is dividing people up instead of bringing them together - - he feels we should be looking for the common and good things in people.

### Individual Profile of LD

LD is a male coach in his early 40's. He is the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large, private Division I university. LD has been coaching for 22 years - 10 years in high school and the past 12 years at the college level. During his entire 22 years of coaching, he has worked with both men and women. LD was a competitive athlete, participating in football and basketball. LD noted that once he started running he feels his personality changed somewhat and he was better able to associate with the athletes he was coaching. LD perceives some differences between his male and female athletes which necessitate a different interaction in certain situations.

LD was asked to identify what he enjoys most about working with female athletes. He said that he initially got involved in coaching women in 1974 because he felt that women were the athletes that most needed his help at that time and that he might be able to make an impact - which was one of the primary reasons he got involved in coaching. Additionally, he felt he had a "particular affinity to middle distance and distance runners, irrespective of sex". So, he was unable to identify a specific characteristic of women that he most enjoys. Instead, he identified several characteristics of both men and women middle distance and distance runners that he enjoys when coaching them. These characteristics include motivation, the tendency toward introversion, dedication, and commitment.

One of the most challenging and frustrating characteristic of females is their tendency to internalize poor performances and to take criticisms of the poor performances personally and to carry this with them. This is in contrast to males who demonstrate their upset or anger by cursing or throwing something and then are done with it. Because of the females' tendency to take things personally, LD finds that he is more careful in how he verbalizes criticism or performance evaluations.

LD feels that his natural or innate approach to coaching is more effective with women. However, he believes that at times he needs to approach the men differently. So the challenge in coaching men is to use a different approach so they will respond better. He finds that he sometimes treats the men like the women which may be a mistake in some situations (i.e., men tend to respond better when he is "shooting from the hip more").

LD was asked to identify common characteristics or behaviors of his female athletes that stand out in his mind. Being at an academically competitive university, he finds that the characteristics needed for them to be successful students are the same characteristics that contribute to athletic success. So, he feels many of the characteristics he perceives are similar for most students at the university. These characteristics include being accepting of challenge and adversity, self-reliant, committed to what they want to do and willing to work hard to achieve it, and focused on the task but able to shift focus to other tasks.

LD believes that characteristics that typify female athletes also typify male athletes because this is the type of student that is coming to the university. These include attributes such as high achieving, perfectionistic, demanding and expecting an awful lot from themselves. LD places an emphasis on fun and keeping sports light and low-key (for both men and women) because of the stressful academic environment and because it fits with his coaching philosophy. He wants sports to be a release from the stress of academics rather than yet another high stress environment for the athletes. Plus, going from one high stress environment to another will eventually break the athlete down.

Three different sport scenarios were related to LD. He was asked to describe how he would respond to the situation with his male and then his female athletes. If the response would be similar, he was asked to describe his response.

The first situation dealt with preparing the team for the conference championship. LD stated that he would deal with both the men and the women in the same way. He would stress that it is a team effort but the team is only as good as each individual. And the

most each individual can do is their very best. These same expectations would hold true whether it is a low-key meet or the NCAA championship. He would emphasize attempting to control everything that can be controlled and not worrying about things out of the athlete's control (i.e., other competitors). Lastly, LD talked about a competition planning sheets that he gives to both the men and women to get them to think about and prepare for the upcoming race. They have the option of talking it over with one of the coaches if they desire - - but, again, it would be the same for men and women.

In the second situation, a freshmen athlete is upset and frustrated because he or she is not performing as expected. LD feels he would deal with it the same regardless of the athlete being a male or a female. He also doesn't feel that there is a response that is more typical by a male or a female athlete but is instead a reflection of the level of confidence - which varies across individuals. One of the toughest adjustments for a freshman athlete is to go from being a front runner to a pack runner. He addresses this by "immersing them in the experience" and having the team involved in big races early on in the season so they can learn and adjust to pack running. The experience then becomes familiar and the athletes learn to respond better.

The last situation involved an athlete who is struggling with personal problems that is starting to affect his or her running performance. LD stated that his response would depend on the specifics of the situation and the individual but would probably not be affected by the gender of the athlete. LD indicated that he would talk one-to-one with the athlete and try to ask a lot of questions to get them to talk and open up to him; asking questions would give them a "license to unload". LD would take the position of a facilitator or conduit in that he would listen and direct them on how to deal with the problem but does not see himself as the solver of problems (probably to give the athletes some responsibility).

Numerous psychological variables identified through the literature were described to LD and he was asked to note if he perceives any gender differences on these variables. If so, he was asked to describe the differences.

LD perceives no difference between males and females in level of **anxiety** or nervousness. Additionally, he notes that, to him, level of anxiety is always a matter of confidence.

LD perceives no difference in **confidence**. He discussed a study he conducted which indicated that women were less confident than men but they fell within the same range.

In regard to team **conflict** or disagreement, LD has noticed a difference between men and women. He notes that men have a tendency to confront the other person, whereas women have a tendency to chatter amongst themselves.

When asked about the **team relationship**, LD suggested that team competitiveness varies based on the depth and quality of the team - which changes year to year with both men and women. If he has 10 strong runners, they will be fighting for team position and he has seen this on both sides.

One difference he discussed quite extensively is his perception that "men want to participate even if they are not going to play, whereas the women won't participate unless they are going to play". He sees this in the recruiting process where women will go to a weaker team so they can compete and because they are intimidated by a strong program; men want to be a part of a real good team and accept it as a challenge to try to run with them. He also notices this is the total number of kids coming out for the team. Men will come out for the team even if they can't go to meets, more so than the women.

LD feels both men and women are trying to achieve a level of success that exceeds where they are now and will both work hard towards that goal. As a coach, he stresses a

focus on yourself and doing the best you can. He feels that because he uses this approach with men and women, they don't differ in their **goals**.

He perceives his **coach-athlete** relationship as being different across individuals but not different based on gender.

LD perceives a difference in the **emotions** expressed. He described women as being more demonstrative and "wearing their emotions more on their sleeves", whereas he is often not able to notice the emotions from a guy - and then it is gone. But, he notes that he sees this in society in general.

As mentioned earlier, LD perceives women as being more **sensitive** to comments. They have a tendency to take things more personally where a female thinks she is not a good person because she is not running well. Conversely, guys tend to take criticisms as 'this is going to help me get better'. Therefore, LD is cautious about what he says to women and often tries to preface his comments by emphasizing that he is referring to her performance not her as a person.

Regarding athlete reaction to a **poor performance**, LD thinks athletes' reactions are unique to the individual and sees little gender difference. In his program, he emphasizes that you can control your performance but, along with that, comes a responsibility for your performance.

LD believes gender should be included as an issue in coaching education programs. He feels that although there are a lot of individual differences, there are still enough gender differences that coaches need to be aware of - such as tendencies to react one way or another. "The familiarity of the likelihood or the potential for certain types of behavior can only be helpful. And having a coach be more. . . better equipped to deal with the athletes they are going to coach".

LD's coaching philosophy seems to place a premium on having fun and trying to be the best that you can be. Individual effort and performance relative to oneself is stressed above all else. LD focuses on the individual and tries to tailor coaching to that individual.

#### Individual Profile of KD

KD is a female coach in her mid-30's who was a competitive distance runner in college. She is now the head cross country and track coach at a Division II university where she has held this position for 8 years. She has been involved in coaching for 14 years - all at the collegiate level - and has coached both men and women for 10 years. KD perceives differences in her male and female athletes. Additionally, she feels she interacts differently with the men and women because of these differences. But, she notes that she likes these differences. In fact, she left a Division I program where she was only the women's coach to take her present position so she could work with both men and women.

In reflecting on what she enjoys most about coaching women, KD said she likes working with them because they are very coachable and listen well. The most challenging aspect of coaching women comes in dealing with their emotions. With the men, she finds she enjoys their aggressiveness where if they are upset about something they will really go after it - which can be both good and bad depending on the situation. For KD, the most challenging aspect of coaching men is dealing with their know-it-all attitudes. She feels, therefore, that in her approach she must combat some of the men's attitude that they know everything.

KD was asked to discuss characteristics or behaviors that come to mind when thinking about her female athletes. She prefaced by stating that there is a lot of variability among her female athletes on specific psychological characteristics - especially confidence - because of the great variability in ability (some can run at the elite level where others are true beginners). Continuing, she described her females, in general, as very emotional

where if they do poorly they will often get upset and breakdown, very concerned about their weight, very competitive, and mentally strong. Because of the tendency to be more emotional, KD feels that with some of them she needs to be more tenderhearted and use a lot of positive reinforcement. She finds that, as a general rule, women respond better when she uses a more caring, tender type of touch in dealing with them.

KD was asked to do the same with her male athletes by describing characteristics or behaviors that typify the male athletes she has worked with over the years. She described them as aggressive, not as emotional as the female, very competitive, a little more determined to succeed, and a little arrogant and cocky. Like the females, she noted that confidence seems to be a function more of ability than gender with less talented athletes being less confident. Although individual differences exist, KD has found that men respond better to more of a "get-in-your-face" approach.

Three sport scenarios were related to KD. For each one, she was asked to describe how she would respond to the situation first with her female and then with her male athletes. If her response would be the same, she was asked to describe this response.

In the first situation, it is the morning of the conference championship and she is trying to prepare the two teams for the competition. KD described a similar approach to the male and female teams. She would emphasize a team concept in that everyone needs to run well together for the team to do well. In the pre-season, a sport psychologist works with the teams on keeping focused and relaxed in races - - she would re-emphasize some of these key points that they have worked on in practice. For those that have a tendency to tense up, she would remind them that it is "just a race" and to try to relax. In this situation, she finds that women probably get a little more nervous than men but there is a lot of individual variability.

The second situation deals with a freshman athlete who is upset and frustrated because he or she is struggling in races and not doing as well as anticipated. KD said she would respond to a male and female differently. With a male athlete, she would use a firmer hand, yell at him a bit and get in his face. She would try to get him to understand that this is not high school but a much higher level of competition. She would tell him he needs to try to achieve his individual goals and concentrate on himself rather than worry about everybody else. In this situation, KD perceives that women have a tendency to get down or upset and feels, therefore, that she needs to be reassuring that things will get better for the athlete. She would try to communicate the same thing to the female as the male but in a different manner, i.e. more positive and reassuring.

In the last situation, KD learns that an athlete on the team is having some personal problems. She was asked how she would handle this situation. KD described a similar approach with males and females. She has dealt with numerous personal problems and her approach is to communicate to the athletes that she is concerned about them from the perspective of a person not a coach. Additionally, she wants them to know that she is there for them if they need help; her door is always open. She tries to develop a good relationship with each athlete so when problems do arise they feel comfortable opening up to her. Actually, she has been surprised at how many guys open up and talk to her about problems. She has a lot of minorities on her team and believes that because most of the men were raised by mom and grandma they are comfortable confiding in a woman. She finds that her white, male athletes are probably the most stubborn in terms of disclosing personal issues. Another race related difference she discussed was that Hispanics initially show the least respect and acceptance of her as a female coach. She ties this into their tradition of the female being in the home taking care of the family.

A list of variables from the literature on which gender differences have been identified was developed. Each of these variables was described to KD and she was asked

to indicate if she has noticed a difference between males and females on the variable. If so, she was to describe the difference.

KD perceives women as being more nervous or **anxious** prior to competition but notes it could be that women just show it more than men. Because of this perceived difference, she uses more positive reinforcement with the women to get them pumped up or jokes around to keep their mind off of being nervous. With the men, she takes more of a "let's go out and do it" approach.

KD feels that men appear more **confident** - but described it as cockiness. (maybe an air of confidence or boastfulness)

KD perceives one of the biggest differences between men and women is in how they deal with team **conflict** or disagreement. Women tend to gossip behind each others' backs and dwell on it for a while, whereas the men will come right out with a problem, get it over with (yell, fight) and then forget about it.

Both the men's and women's teams are very **team** oriented but KD feels that her men, in general, have a tendency to be more competitive amongst each other - each trying to be the top dog.

KD perceives the **coach-athlete relationship** to be different with males and females and she feels it has to be (didn't expound). She noted further that because she deals with so many different people and personalities that she has a different relationship for different groups or individuals.

Regarding **goals** for a given race, KD perceives a lot of individual differences but feels it means a little bit more to guys to win - although to some of the girls it also means a lot. If both teams don't do what they are supposed to do, KD perceives that men take it harder because winning means more to them.

KD has noticed differences in the **emotions** men and women express. She gave the example of a bad race and stated that men get outwardly aggressive by cussing, yelling, or storming off. Women have a tendency to take the disappointment out on themselves by sulking and crying. Women, KD feels, will look for someone to comfort them where a male would not.

KD definitely feels that women are more **sensitive** to comments or criticisms than men. She perceives women as "reading into things a little more" so she finds that she has to be cautious in what she says. One issue in particular in which women are sensitive is weight. KD related an interesting story to illustrate female sensitivity. Her male captain was trying to get the women fired up for an upcoming race. The approach he used is one that works for him and for the men's team. The women's team got very upset because they perceived that he was telling them they were no good and didn't want to try - this is not what he meant to convey. She found this to be an example of not only female sensitivity and their tendency to read into things but also of the need to use a different approach at times.

Regarding reaction to **poor performances**, KD mentioned earlier in the interview that men become outwardly upset and aggressive, whereas women take their disappointment inward. She also suggested that women will come up with an excuse such as being tired or having stayed up too late. Men will more often come right out and say they ran like crap.

KD believes gender should be an issue in coaching education, especially for males coaching females. She feels some of these men are not as sensitive as they should be to the needs and wants of the female athlete. As an example, she noted that men often don't realize how talking about weight affects women.

### Individual Profile of RG

RG is a male coach in his mid-40's who was, at one time, a collegiate distance runner. He has been coaching for 22 years - 6 years in high school and 16 years at the same Division I university where he currently is the head men's and women's cross country and track coach. For 20 of the 22 years he has been involved in coaching, RG has coached both males and females. In globally assessing male and female athletes, RG perceives differences to exist and states, "without question", that he interacts differently with the men's and women's programs.

One of the things RG enjoys most about coaching women is their appreciation to him when they achieve success. He perceives his coach-athlete relationship to be different with men and women and feels one aspect is in the rewards given back to him from the female athlete - which is a positive experience for him.

On the flip side, a challenge in working with women is getting them to work as a group to achieve the same goal. RG makes the distinction that it is easier to get men to work together to achieve the same goal, whereas the women tend to want to work individually to achieve the same goal. This challenge that RG experiences with his women was mentioned on numerous occasions throughout the interview, indicating its significance. As an example, he talked about the different behavior of the two teams during workouts - he finds that he can group the men together fairly easily and they workout well together. However, it is difficult to group the women because they tend to get too competitive with each other - and often end up defeating the purpose of the workout. RG suggests this may occur because of how kids are raised. Little boys are constantly involved in competitive games where they learn to win and lose, whereas females aren't brought up in a competitive environment and therefore have less experience in competition.

RG feels that his personality is probably geared more toward the male than the female and thus it is a little easier for him to coach the men. He enjoys coaching men because he can be "more himself" and finds he doesn't need to be careful with what he says to the men, whereas with the women he chooses his words differently. The biggest challenge for RG in coaching men is helping them reach their ultimate potential as athletes and people, everything else about coaching men seems to flow pretty easily.

In discussing the characteristics and behaviors of female athletes that stand out in his mind, RG found it helpful to contrast males to females. He described the women as being less accepting of a poor performance. He finds they point the finger elsewhere - to a factor outside of themselves. He also feels that women "carry an emotional burden" of having to do their part for the team, where if the team does well but the athlete doesn't have personal success, she won't tie into the team success. Another characteristic of females is that their parents or high school coach stay involved in their collegiate career; "the umbilical cord is never cut" which can often make his job a little tougher. RG mentioned, again, the grouping situation during workouts where women get too competitive with each other and tend to work alone to achieve team goals. He questions whether this might occur because the female feels threatened by others who are running well. He feels this also extends into social situations in that the women are less close as a team outside of sport and are less tolerant of each other.

In other sections of the interview, RG notes several other characteristics of female athletes. He perceives that women feel that when they fail, they not only fail themselves but their parents, coach, and others as well - thus making it that much more important to do well; have a tough time accepting criticism in front of the team; and like to be approached individually and communicate a great deal with the coach - which he tries to do.

Most of the characteristics and behaviors identified by RG as typical of his male athletes are contrasts to those already mentioned regarding his female athletes. Specifically, RG perceives that the men are a close group both socially and athletically - he finds they



blend together well. Additionally, men don't seem threatened when a teammate is running well but, rather, hold the attitude that if a teammate is running well and I can hang in there with him, I'll also start running well. Relatedly, RG notes that men are often more tolerant of each others differences. Men also seems to be more accepting of a poor personal performance but are still able to tie into team success in this situation.

In terms of similarities between males and females, RG perceives the elite female athlete as having characteristics similar as those of the elite male athlete - i.e. desire to be successful, importance placed on achieving goals. (he actually seemed to be suggesting that elite women are like male athletes, not just elite males - - he mentioned elite female not crying often and expressing anger or disappointment similar to how a male athlete would). Interestingly, he notes that elite athletes are "not the easiest individuals to work with".

Three scenarios were described to RG and he was asked to discuss how he would respond to his males and females in the given situation. If his approach would be the same regardless of gender, he was asked to describe this response.

In preparation for the conference championship, RG would say the same general things to the men and the women but the approach would be different. He would approach the men as one big group and, at that time, discuss individual and team racing strategies. With the females, he would also emphasize individual and team racing strategies but he would talk to each individually separately. He finds they respond much better to an individual approach. One of the reasons for this difference in approach is that women want to communicate and often have questions for the coach. Because his response may not be applicable to others it is best to handle it individually. In a later section of the interview, RG recalled another difference in his pre-race approach. He noted that with a lot of the women he emphasizes doing one's best and what needs to be done to be most successful as a program. With the men's team, he emphasizes what needs to be done to win. So, the approaches differ in his emphasis on winning versus doing your best.

In dealing with a freshman who is struggling with his or her performance and getting upset and frustrated over it, RG described a similar approach for an elite male and female athlete. He said he would sit him or her down and discuss things that have changed for the athlete in the past 6 months but did not expound further. RG spent more time discussing the different reactions of a male and female to the situation. He feels men are more willing to accept and somewhat expect not to be as good as they were in high school but can look down the road and know that they will eventually get where they want to be. A female has a difficult time doing that. RG ties this difference into two factors: 1) the distance in XC races changes from high school to college for men but women's distances are the same - so men almost have a built in excuse not to run as well, and 2) because the men are a close unit and train well together they have a strong social support system, whereas the women train alone a lot, are not as close, and therefore have less of a social support system.

The third situation involved an athlete who is having personal problems. RG described a similar approach for a male and female athlete. He did note, however, that a female might have an issue she would rather discuss with another female, and therefore may not be very open with him. RG didn't go into much detail on his approach but said he would talk with the athlete and try to find out how he can help with the problem. In personal problems among teammates, RG finds that men will quickly get the problem over with and forget about it. He finds that with females the problems "probably never go away". He likes to bring the problem up with the athletes and have them discuss it but is not sure of the effectiveness of such an approach.

In the last section of the interview, specific psychological variables were described to RG and he was asked to indicate if he perceives a difference between males and females on the variable. If so, he was asked to explain the difference.

RG perceives females as being more **anxious** or nervous prior to competition. He feels this occurs because women don't have as much experience as men in the competitive arena.

RG feels that **confidence** is a function of ability level. He notes that it is difficult to get athletes to have confidence as a pack runner when they are used to winning high school races. He tries to instill confidence that they are going to run to the best of their ability as opposed to a confidence that they are going to win.

RG perceives that **team conflict** or disagreement is handled differently by men and women. Men may deal with the problem by shouting or physical means but when it is over it is truly over. Women, on the other hand, are less forgiving and the problem or conflict never seems to be over - there is always some little remark or look.

Regarding **team relationships**, RG characterized men as working together to achieve a common goal and characterized the women as working individually for a common goal.

RG feels men and women differ in the **emotions** they express with specific emotions or displays of emotions being more common in one gender over the other. For example, RG notes that it is rare for a male to cry, an expression of emotion that is more common to females.

RG perceives gender differences in **sensitivity** to comments or criticisms. With men, he can critique a race without being concerned about someone reading into what he is saying. He finds that women perceive criticism as an attack on them as a person not their performance. Therefore, he is more careful in what and how he says things. He also mentions weight as an example of an issue in which females are particularly sensitive.

He wasn't asked directly about his **coach-athlete relationship** with males and females, but in an earlier section he noted that his relationship is different.

RG had an interesting insight into his behavior toward men and women. He suggested that maybe he treats women different because of how he was brought up (i.e., to respect women) - - He finds that sometimes he is not as tough on females and lets them get away with certain things which he doesn't let males get away with. Because of his behavior, then, he may be perpetuating female behavior. i.e., letting a female mope after poor race instead of saying 'let's get beyond it' or kicking in the pants when needed. (13-14)

RG adamantly agreed with the notion that gender issues be included in coaching education. He feels that coaches should be educated about tendencies of males and females even though a lot of individual differences exist.

### Individual Profile of MJ

MJ is a 45 year old male coach. He has been coaching for 24 years, all at the college level. He initiated a women's program in 1978 and has been coaching both men and women ever since (16 years). Interestingly, he notes having been involved with women's sports during the change from AIAW and NAIA to NCAA. MJ has been involved in track since age 12 and competed in middle distance events throughout high school and college. In reflecting on his experiences in coaching, MJ feels he interacts differently with the men and women because they require it. He adds that he finds this enjoyable because it is a nice balance of interaction for him and "keeps things fresher".

For MJ, one of the most enjoyable aspects of coaching women is that they tend to be "honestly competitive" where they are free to be themselves. This is in contrast to men who MJ perceives as being caught up in "macho posturing" - putting up a tough facade. He also notes that, for whatever reason, he derives a little more enjoyment from coaching women but has probably been slightly more successful coaching the men. The challenge in

coaching women is dealing with the involvement and expectations of others. MJ feels that coaches and parents tend to hang on a little bit longer with females and some of their expectations of the female athlete can be positive but can also be very limiting for her. So, the athletes' perceptions of the expectations of others, who are involved in her running, presents a challenge for MJ.

The men present a different array of enjoyment and challenges. He enjoys the fact that with the men team building seems to be easy. They seem to be able to find their "collective focus" easier than the women. He also noted that he enjoys not having to watch his language with the men. The biggest challenge in coaching men is keeping their egos in line. He finds that when they do not dominate other people like they did in high school they have a tendency to question themselves, their training, and other things (even though they are now competing against others who were also high school superstars). He feels that they do not, therefore, deal real well with failure.

When MJ was asked to identify characteristics and behaviors of his male and female athletes, he discussed major characteristic that differentiated between the two. He feels that women place a great deal of trust in the coach. Once he develops a long-term trust relationship and open line of communication with the women, he can take risks in his approach to their training or be more innovative in things he has them doing. Conversely, he feels that men are "more tradition bound" in their approach to training which he finds very limiting. Although they may trust him, he still feels he can be less innovative and risky in his approach.

MJ seemed to shy away from making any more characterizations of his male and female athletes because of his belief that at the core male and female athletes are similar. He believes that, at the core, males and females are involved in sport for the same reason - - because it fulfills a need. MJ feels that the outward manifestations of male and female athletes may be different, but they aren't much different in origin or at their core. So, with male and female athletes, their posturing may be different, their observable behavior may be different, a coach's approach and reaction to them may be different, but their needs are the same and the end result or goal of the coach should be the same for men and women. Because of this belief, MJ feels he probably interacts differently with men and women, but not in substance.

Three sport scenarios were related to MJ. He was asked to describe his behavior first if the situations involved a male athlete, then if the situation involved a female athlete. If he would approach it the same with a male and female, he was asked to describe his response.

The first situation presented dealt with how he would prepare his teams for the upcoming conference championships. MJ said his approach would be the same. The first thing he would do is break down the race statistically in terms of how many points will be needed to win. He would then assign ranges of behavior such as the top group needs to place 2 in the top 10, 2 more in the next 10 and 1 in the top 30 - but doesn't indicate where a specific individual must place. He would also emphasize the need to keep a focus on what the team is going to do not what others are going to do. Lastly, MJ would have the athletes identify their strengths and weaknesses and then develop a race plan that plays to their strengths and the strengths of the team. Any differences in approach would probably be due to the personalities of the two groups and their needs and motivations as opposed to being due to gender.

In the second situation, a freshman athlete is struggling with running and is becoming upset and frustrated because of it. MJ stated that gender wouldn't play into how he would deal with the situation. In his approach to the athletes, he would try to help them uncover their motivations, what they want to accomplish, what exactly is frustrating them, . . . In doing so, he finds he often has to help define success for the athlete. He believes

people are involved to experience success but don't really know what success is or have a good measure of success. By getting athletes to understand their motives for participation and their needs, he can help them identify what success would be. Some of the motivations MJ mentioned include the need for achievement, status, belonging, approval, challenge, and a sense of fulfillment. It seems that MJ would try to get the athlete to view performance from a different perspective - not as winning and losing but as an activity that can fulfill their needs. So, they continue to be driven to excel by this desire to experience a sense of fulfillment.

The last situation concerns an athlete who is struggling with personal problems that is affecting his or her performance. MJ said his response would differ depending on the athlete and the strength of their relationship. His general approach would be to talk with the athlete and probe a bit to get him or her to open up and discuss the problem. If he has developed a strong, trusting relationship with the athlete, MJ said he would feel pretty comfortable being direct with the athlete regarding his perception of the situation. And, likewise, the athlete will feel comfortable disclosing as well. For some problems that may affect the coach-athlete relationship, he feels it best to direct the athlete to outside resources. MJ also notes that he tried to maintain a sense of perspective and a sense of humor in such situations.

The sport science literature assessing gender differences has identified numerous variables on which male and female athletes have been found to differ. These variables were described to MJ and he was asked to indicate if he has noticed any difference with his athletes. If so, he was asked to explain these differences.

MJ perceives that males and females manifest **anxiety** differently but doesn't feel they differ in terms of their actual level of anxiety. Specifically, he feels women are more open with their emotions, whereas males tend to frequently "lock up". Therefore, outwardly females may appear more anxious but inwardly there is probably little difference.

MJ has noticed no gender differences in level of **confidence** and instead believes confidence varies as a function of self-image. Of importance is MJ's comment that it is difficult to respond to some of the questions because he views each person as an individual and tries not to make comparisons based on gender.

In dealing with team **conflict or disagreement**, MJ perceives that men are usually less communicative with each other about the problem than the women. He finds this approach to be fairly unsuccessful. When the men and women are successful in dealing with team problems, it is because they have been up front and more concerned with getting back to their purpose and team goal.

MJ finds that the **relationships** within the women's team and the men's team varies year to year; he hasn't noticed any consistent gender differences. Rather, he feels the team relationships depend on the leadership inside the team which changes year to year.

Likewise, MJ finds that his **coach-athlete relationships** are not different based on the gender of the athlete. He feels that just as each athlete is different, his relationship with each athlete is also different.

MJ perceives no differences in the **goals** males and females hold for a given race (although he doesn't indicate what their goals are).

MJ feels males and females experience similar **emotions** but differ in how they express these emotions. MJ suggests that following a competition, for example, females are probably more prone to cry, whereas males may be more boisterous or demonstrative. To him, however, these differences are "no big deal" - - it is the same response seen in males and females in the general population. MJ wonders whether it is a societal characteristic or a true gender characteristic?

MJ perceives that males and females are both **sensitive** to comments or criticisms but how they internalize the criticism may differ. With different issues, he feels he assesses the benefits to the individual and to the team to decide when to make the comment. For example, with both males and females, he would never make a comment to the group regarding a person's weight or mental focus.

MJ sees little gender difference in how an athlete reacts to a **poor personal performance**. He feels it depends on the individual and how they have learned to deal with success and failure. As a coach, one thing he tries to teach his athletes to do is treat success and failure the same.

MJ feels that male-female differences are often exaggerated and that if we start discussing gender differences in coaching education program we will be providing coaches with preconceptions that may prejudice how they respond to male and female athletes. Instead of gender education, MJ believes we should focus on *people education* in which we begin to recognize the great diversity of people.

MJ acknowledges that personality and other differences exist between male and females (although he contends that motivations and needs are the similar), but says that we need to assess whether as coaches we are reacting to a stereotype or to the person.

MJ's philosophy or approach to coaching seems to place a trusting relationship at the foundation. This trust is not only between coach and athlete but also between athletes. He believes successful teams are greater than the sum of each individual - and it is greater because of bonds between individuals. He believes that needs and motivations underlie all behaviors so it is paramount for both the coach and athlete to understand his or her motivations and needs.

#### Individual Profile of CL

CL is a 51 year old male coach. He is the head coach of the men's and women's cross country and track programs at a medium size Division I university. He has been involved in coaching for 24 years, all at the collegiate level. For the last 12 years, he has coached both men and women. CL also has a doctorate in physical education, enabling him to teach at the university in addition to his coaching duties. CL was a collegiate middle distance runner but competed in a multitude of events, an experience which has helped greatly in his coaching.

CL finds that coaching women is oftentimes more satisfying because they give back more directly to the coach. He enjoys that women share their success so when they succeed he also succeeds. CL also enjoys the fact that women tend to communicate very openly - - they will let him know when they are happy or unhappy. One of the most challenging aspects of coaching women for CL deals with the emotional commitment that is needed. He finds that females want and expect him to give more of himself and to be emotionally involved in and understanding of what they are going through as athletes. With the men, he feels it is more like going to the office and getting the work done - he doesn't perceive the need for a strong emotional aspect.

CL was also asked to reflect on what he enjoys and finds most challenging about coaching male athletes. When male athletes are competing, he finds that, for whatever reason, they are most open and communicative - - he enjoys that he is able to experience with them more of an emotional involvement and be part of their effort to succeed. In this competitive environment, he feels men share more openly than they normally do. The challenge in coaching men comes with having to convince them that the training program and course they are on is headed in the right direction. He feels men have their own, often limited, opinions about training and workouts, whereas women tend to be more open and accepting of coaching decisions.

CL identified a variety of characteristics and behaviors common to his female athletes. He finds they are susceptible to chronic, overuse types of injuries so he makes an effort to watch their physical training and keep them slightly undertrained. Along with physical stress, he noted that he has to watch the emotional stress that he is placing on women or having them handle (although he doesn't go into any greater detail). CL also identified problems with anorexia, bulimia, and weight consciousness as characteristic of females. He perceives women as being more perceptive to his nonverbal behavior so he finds he has to be careful about what he is communicating nonverbally. He used the issue of weight as an example in that words may say one thing but a women will pick up on nonverbals which may be communicating "you're too heavy".

In other sections of the interview, CL discussed his perception of other relevant characteristics of female athletes. He finds they tend to have a higher commitment to sport and are more conscientious about academics than males. He also finds that women do an awful lot of their training on their own because in a group they tend to get too competitive and try to assert who is the dominant runner. Lastly, he noted that women seem to want to please the coach more than the men. For example, in workouts, he says he has gotten away from timing athletes because he felt that the women would often overwork in an attempt to please him.

CL also identified several characteristics or behaviors of male athletes that stand out in his mind. He finds that males have a greater tendency to get off track and become involved in other activities not conducive to running. Because of this tendency, he needs to monitor the male athlete a little more closely. CL doesn't have this difficulty with women and believes it is because they have struggled more to get to where they are (historically) and, therefore, tend to be more committed. CL perceives males as having more of their ego tied up into how well they perform. Their physical prowess and self-image are closely aligned with their race performance. More so with the men, then, CL emphasizes that the athletes focus on quality of effort rather than winning and losing.

With both male and female athletes, he senses a desire to win. In races, he feels they both respond to challenges and compete equally well. Similarly, he finds both males and females can be overwhelmed with expectations so he does what he can to take some of the pressure off of them.

Three different sport scenarios were described to CL. He was asked to explain how he would respond in the situation with his male athletes and then with his female athletes or to indicate how his response would differ for the two groups. If his response would be the same, he was asked to describe his response.

In the first situation, it is the morning of the conference championship in which the teams can do well if everybody runs well. CL was asked how he would approach the teams. CL indicated he would probably treat the two teams more similarly than different but a lot would depend on the individual personalities on each team. As an athlete, he liked to be left alone to prepare for what he needed to do in the race. He finds that he takes a similar approach with his athletes and places responsibility on the athlete in terms of preparation on the day of the race. He has found that if he talks too much about what might happen in the race, it tends to raise their anxiety levels. He does make an effort to "stroke" the individuals and emphasize putting forth a quality effort; just doing what they are capable of doing. This general approach would be the same for both men and women.

The second situation dealt with a freshman athlete who is frustrated and upset because he or she is not running up to expectations. CL said the message he would give would not differ based on gender. He noted that he has learned to counter this problem by educating the athlete early in the recruiting period. He tells them he has no expectations of them their freshman year - it is the year the university invests in them. They will have enough to adjust to that they don't need the additional pressure of having to perform. Once

the problem occurs, CL would sit down with the athlete and help them understand what the problem is and develop more realistic expectations. He also would communicate his confidence in them and his belief that things will turn around. In races, he would emphasize to the athlete that his or her role is to provide depth to the team, not to be the front runner - - he believes this is helpful in taking some of the pressure off the athlete. To increase their confidence, he would try to arrange for situations in which they have a chance to succeed. He also has gotten away from timing workouts which places pressure on the athlete to meet certain times. Instead, he focuses on quality of effort.

CL finds that women tend to experience this situation more often than the men. He feels this is because distance of collegiate races are comparable to those in high school so women have greater expectations regarding their performance. On the other hand, there is a big jump in race distance from high school to college for men so they have a "psychological crutch" to lean on or an explanation for lesser performances.

In the last situation, an athlete is having some personal problems that is affecting his or her running. CL indicated that if it was a gender specific problem he would probably handle it differently and may refer the athlete to someone else if he or she doesn't feel comfortable talking with him. He noted that for both men and women he would respond out of genuine concern but that certain situations would be dealt with differently. In his socialization history, CL said he was taught to be almost chivalrous toward women and so he feels more of a sense of responsibility for the women in his program. So if a female athlete was being harassed or bothered by someone he would react aggressively to the situation, more so than if it was a male athlete. CL said he would confront both a male and female athlete to discuss the problem. He also noted that anger is expressed and taken differently by male and female athletes (although he didn't indicate how they are different) so he often has to control his anger even though it may be an appropriate response.

Specific psychological variables were described to CL and he was asked to indicate his perception of gender differences on these variables.

CL doesn't perceive a difference in the actual level of **anxiety** or nervousness of male and female athletes. He notes that women tend to be more open and expressive of their emotions so from observation alone it appears as if women are more anxious.

CL feels there is no difference in the **confidence levels** of male and female athletes. However, outwardly women appear less confident because they tend to express more of their doubts and concerns, whereas men express what CL called "male bravado" or boasting of confidence. So, actual level of confidence is similar but women tend to down play while men tend to be boastful.

Regarding **conflict or disagreement**, CL perceives that women tend to confront the problem in a communicative way, whereas men tend to confront problems in a more physical manner.

CL perceives no difference in race **goals** and feels both men and women are focused on achievement and how well they will perform. Interestingly, he notes that the longer women are involved in athletics, the less gender differences there will be. Suggesting, perhaps, that differences are a function of experience.

CL feels he definitely has a different **coach-athlete relationship** with his males and females (which was co-erated by his wife in the background), although he didn't indicate how the relationships differed.

CL believes that both teams have a desire to get along well and have a strong **team relationship**. However, team-building with men and women is done a little differently. Women seem to build their bonds by confronting and voicing concerns when there are problems which usually resolves the problem and strengthens the team. Because of this tendency, CL said he buys into the Chinese symbol for war which is two women under one roof. Men tend to not do anything and are able to maintain a team relationship that

way. In an earlier section of the interview, CL discussed his perception that women tend to be more competitive amongst each other in workouts but didn't note if that competitiveness affects their team relationship.

Women tend to be more open and express their **emotions**, whereas men tend to defend their egos and be more closed. CL feels this may be because women have a stronger self-concept and don't feel the need to protect themselves.

CL believes that because men have been conditioned to be criticized and yelled at they tend to be less **sensitive** to such criticism than women. He doesn't yell at his women much because he perceives them as being far more sensitive than the guys, who he is more apt to yell at or correct. He notes that this difference is a social factor rather than a hereditary factor.

CL believes it is important to include the issue of gender in coaching education programs or courses. The course should address whether or not there are any psychological gender differences or if it is just myths we are holding onto and on which we base assumptions. So, he seems to be suggesting that the course should do two things - discuss gender differences and combat societal myths regarding gender differences. He notes that the course should also emphasize that the bottom line is to treat men and women fairly.

CL's guiding philosophy came out in a statement he made. He said "we need to approach it from the standpoint that we have athletics in high school and college for the education and growth and development of the individual and not whether they win and lose . . . . athletics is just a medium by which we learn about ourselves." This philosophy is evident in his coaching approach and behavior: his emphasis on quality of effort; his concern for the athlete as a person; and his belief in giving responsibility to the athlete to facilitate their growth.

### Individual Profile of RM

RM, a 47 year old male coach, is presently the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. He has been coaching for the past 26 years, the first 11 years at the high school level and the past 15 years at Division I. He has coached both males and females for the past 23 years.

Before getting into any specific interview questions, RM shared several things about himself that he believed would facilitate an understanding of later responses. He discussed in detail his philosophy and approach towards coaching, his mission as a coach and individuals who influenced this mission, and his educational background. Thus, RM felt that to understand his perceptions regarding male and female athletes it was necessary to understand him and 'where he came from'.

RM believes his doctoral training in sport psychology has a significant impact on his coaching and notes that "I am way more focused on developing an effective person and letting the person grow than I am with winning a race". In fact, he merely views sport as an avenue by which to teach characteristics and attributes that make people effective. He has found that the qualities that make people successful and effective in sport are the same qualities that make people successful in life - so he uses sport to teach these qualities. RM believes that the environment he creates and the way he approaches the athletes facilitates this learning. He discussed at length the safe, secure, supportive, non-threatening, caring environment he has created in which his athletes function - an environment that is built around concern for the individual not their performance. RM emphasized that this approach is the same for all athletes and that he tends not to operate from the perspective of there being gender differences on specific psychological characteristics.



In addition to his educational background, RM discussed the influence past coaches have had on the development of his coaching philosophy and approach. Two contrasting coaches had a significant impact on RM. He talked of Coach C. - a man who touched his life and the lives of other athletes in numerous ways. He spoke of him as a wonderful, caring man who instilled in him a love for sport. RM has modeled himself after Coach C and believes that he will be a success if he can touch just one person the way Coach C touched hundreds of kids. Another individual, Coach F., also had an impact but in a negative way. Coach F was highly successful (in terms of W-L) but used a negative approach - external force, humiliation, degradation - to motivate the high school kids. RM's experiences as an athlete of Coach F put him on a mission. He wanted to prove that there is another way to coach and to motivate kids and still be successful. RM believes he does just that in his unique approach to coaching.

RM's background and general philosophy help place his subsequent responses to specific interview questions in context. He strives to teach athletes how to be effective through the medium of sport. In his efforts, he makes no distinction between men and women and notes that if differences do exist they are socially learned. He seemed to be implying that in his approach he is attempting to undo some of these socially learned differences.

RM was asked to reflect on his 23 years of coaching females and discuss what he finds to be most enjoyable and most challenging in coaching them. He perceives females as being more receptive to coaching than males - they are willing to listen to the coach, take risks, and let him lead. Relatedly, he finds women tend to appreciate this attention and help from the coach. He notes, unfortunately, that this characteristic of women that he enjoys is changing as they become more like male athletes. In the past few years, he has seen a tendency for women to be a little less receptive and arrive as freshmen thinking they know everything. The biggest challenge RM faces with women is helping them deal with the issue of lesbianism. There seems to be a perception in our society that the high achieving female athlete is a lesbian - RM feels that many of his females are wary of this stereotyped. He believes that some of them even go out of their way to prove the label false. So, his challenge is to help the female athletes address the issue of their sexuality and deal with societal stereotypes.

As was done with the women, RM was asked to identify what he finds most enjoyable and most challenging about coaching male athletes. After some thought, RM decided that what he finds most enjoyable is being able to take a different approach with males and still be successful. A common approach he sees is coaches challenging the athlete's manhood to motivate them. Instead, he approaches them as a human being. He also likes coaching men because, through the medium of sport, he can teach them that it is okay to hug and cry and express emotions. Conversely, the biggest challenge is keeping the men headed in the right direction. He finds the typical 18 year old males to be less mature in their decision-making process and to place recreational activities and other diversions ahead of academics, more so than females. Actually, in the recruiting process, he sees males being more interested in trophies and campus social life, whereas females are concerned with quality of education and roles models.

RM was asked to discuss characteristics and behaviors that stand out in his mind regarding his female athletes. He used several words to describe them and noted that these characteristics are the same ones he would use to describe his male athletes. He used the words perceptive, willing, persistent, impatient, very appreciative, and fun to be with. RM goes as far as to suggest that he doesn't perceive any psychological or emotional differences between males and females and, furthermore, that he doesn't approach them differently. RM discussed his belief in Bandura's social learning theory as how behaviors

and characteristics are learned. So in his interactions, he is trying to change some gender specific behaviors and attributes by approaching them the same.

RM noted that he hears other coaches talk about women being emotional and crying more than males with the implication that they are less mentally tough. However, any tears he sees he views as an expression of trust as opposed to weakness or lack of control. In fact, he notes that the 5 toughest competitors he has ever coached are all women.

In earlier sections of the interview, RM did discuss a few characteristics on which he perceives male and female athletes to differ. He characterized females as being coachable - - i.e., receptive, willing to try new things and take risks. He characterized males as less disciplined and less mature in their decision-making process, in comparison to females.

Two sport scenarios were described to RM. For each one, he was asked to explain how he would approach a female athlete and how he would approach a male athlete in the given situation. If his approach would be the same, he was asked to describe his response.

In the first scenario, it is the morning of the conference championship and the team can do well if all individuals run well - RM is getting ready to approach the team to prepare them to run. RM described a similar approach to males and females. He indicated that from the time he starts recruiting the athletes he tells them that the goal is to have fun - "if we out fun them, we probably out run them". He would emphasize to the athletes that they are prepared for the challenge and would try to de-emphasize the hype surrounding the race. The two ideas he would stress are to have fun and to trust themselves and what they are capable of doing. Throughout the season, he has talked of raising the level of a normal performance and would discuss this notion again before the race - - where performances will naturally vary but the athlete should strive to raise the level of their normal or average performance but be prepared to take the good with the bad. RM would also make it clear to the athletes (as he has done throughout the season) that he will think no more or less of them based on the outcome of the race - their relationship is unconditional. Congruent with RM's philosophy, he added that every trip the team takes to compete is made into more than a race - they go sightseeing or do some other activity as a team. It is his belief that is all you have to define your life is how you do in the race, then the pressure is on to do well. So, he tries to provide something else in their life besides just running.

The second situation deals with a freshman athlete who is frustrated and upset because he or she is not performing as expected. RM noted that he would approach a male and female athlete similarly. In fact, RM has structured the environment to prevent such a situation. Early in the recruiting process, he explains to the athletes the difficult transition from high school to college and tries to prepare them for the level of competition they will face. In the first team meeting in the Fall, RM points out the number of high school state champions that are on just their team in an effort for the freshmen to "literally confront the reality" of the eliteness of collegiate athletics. He also makes an effort to develop a buddy system, pairing an upperclassman with a freshman. He encourages teammates to get to know each other as people not only as athletes. It is his belief that if he can create an environment where the athletes feel worthy and accepted independent of performance, they are then free to focus on personal achievement without pressure and expectation. This approach and philosophy is the same for both men and women.

RM indicated throughout the interview that he perceives few, if any, gender differences and that he approaches all athletes the same. Still, he was provided specific variables and asked to indicate if he perceives male and female athletes to differ on the variable.

RM does not think that males and females differ in **anxiety or nervousness** prior to competition.

Similarly, RM perceives no difference in their level of **confidence**.

RM finds that males and females deal with team **conflict** or disagreement differently - and he views both approaches as being equally ineffective. He feels men tend to get pissed off and eventually confront the person sometimes in a physical manner, whereas women keep things inside where they grow and fester - they are less likely to confront. He notes that males and females react differently because they have been socially rewarded to behave and react in different ways.

RM does not notice a difference in the **team relationships** amongst the women and the men.

RM feels that his **coach-athlete relationship** is the same with males and females. However, his relationship with the athletes is different now than it was 10 years ago. The type of relationships he has had with athletes has varied across his coaching career.

RM perceives no difference in athletes' **goals** for a given race.

RM doesn't see a big difference between males and females in the **emotions** they express. In fact, he feels it would be misleading to identify gender differences in expression. He says sports should be an arena where people are being taught the healthiness of expressing pain and hurt. However, he also notes that, although it is beginning to change, men have been socialized to think they can't express their emotions. (It is unclear if he truly doesn't perceive a difference or believes there shouldn't be a difference and in his approach tries to 'amend' the differences.)

RM perceives no gender difference in **sensitivity** to comment or criticism but does see a difference based on the length of coach-athlete experiences together. Freshman, who don't yet know or understand his approach may be more sensitive to his comments. Additionally, he notes that with both males and females he tries to be sensitive in his interaction because he believes both can be equally hurt by comments or coach behavior.

RM feels that if he is right regarding his perceptions of male and female athletes, then coach education should try to dispel all the myths surrounding gender differences and how these myths can hurt the athlete. He notes that he "hasn't found validation of significant differences by gender" that should change his goals and purposes or how he provides for the attainment of the athletes goals.

RM notes that the differences aren't gender related but society related (i.e., due to different socialization processes) and that we are trying to change society. Therefore, RM doesn't believe males and females should be approached differently but, rather, should be provided a "homogenized experience".

### Individual Profile of DM

DM, a male, is the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. He started coaching in 1965 at the high school level. He coached at this level for 2 years before taking a job at the collegiate level where he is presently in his 27th year at the same university (29 years total in coaching). He coaches both men and women for 4 years in the late 70's and early 80's before becoming head coach of the men. In 1990 the programs were combined so he has coached both men and women for a total of 9 years. DM was a middle distance runner at the same university at which he now coaches.

DM perceives personality as being the biggest difference between men and women, but in many situations has a hard time distinguishing between the two. He indicates, however, that these differences necessitate that he have almost two different personalities when working with the two teams. He finds the needs and the wants of men and women are, in many cases different, so he has to relate to them differently.

One of the most enjoyable aspect of coaching women is that they tend to be very coachable and disciplined. He feels the women absorbs everything he tells them and rely on him to a great extent. On the flip side, the biggest challenge deals with the emotional aspect necessary in coaching women. The women tend to need the coach to be personable and more verbal with them. He finds they need a lot more mental, emotional, positive reinforcement. This communication goes both ways - they expect him to communicate but also initiate a great deal of communication in terms of questions for him.

DM had a difficult time identifying a characteristic of males that he most enjoys because he really just enjoys working with runners - male and female alike. He noted that if forced to identify something, it would probably be that men tend to produce more quality performances and he tends to have more quality males than females. The challenge he faces with the men is making sure they are doing the things they should be doing. Because of NCAA time restrictions, it is up to the athlete to do a lot of the training on their own and DM finds that it is easier for men to blow off morning runs or other sessions.

DM was asked to identify characteristics or behaviors that typify his female athletes. He described them women as being very disciplined and dedicated and even having a tendency to overwork, going above and beyond what he tells them to do. He feels they sometimes become obsessive in terms of what they need to do to be successful. One area where this often becomes evident is in eating practices where they become anorexic or bulimic. He also feels they are more emotional than the men. Furthermore, DM perceives that they need a lot of positive, verbal reinforcement and motivation from him. This doesn't affect how he interacts with the women, but more how often he interacts. He finds he needs to spend more time with the female to sit down and talk or just "be there" for her. He also need to make sure he is providing reinforcement and encouragement that she is doing well. And when women don't run well, they have bad feelings because they have let down the team and the coach.

An interesting incident occurred related to the female athletes. After their female coach left to take another position, they went to him as the head coach and requested that the next coach he hires be a male. They felt the past coach was too soft on them and that a male coach would provide the discipline and strictness that they needed. DM had also perceived that at times she was trying to be their friend more than coach and noted that it is hard to discipline a friend.

Like he did with the females, DM was asked to identify psychological characteristics of his male athletes. He finds that with some of the male scholarship athletes, they will do the least work possible to maintain their scholarship to the point where he feels he is being used. Although this only occurs with some of the male athletes, it occurs more with the men than the women. He also characterized male athletes as very competitive, disciplined, less emotional and more self-motivated than women. DM feels, too, that the men don't need as much verbal communication as he feels the women require - this characteristic is what DM perceives as being the biggest difference between the genders. He suggests that this could be because the females view him as a father figure and therefore look to him to provide motivation and encouragement.

DM was described three sport scenarios and asked to explain how he would respond to the situation with males and then with females. If his response would be similar, he was asked to describe in detail this response.

In the first situation, it is the morning of the conference championship and the team can do well if all individuals run well. He was asked what he would say and emphasize with the team. DM indicated his approach wouldn't differ for the men and women. His general approach would be to emphasize what the team need to do to run well but tailors it for the men and the women based on the make-up of the teams. When this exact situation occurred a week ago, he emphasized to the men the need to meet the challenge of other

runners when they make a move. With the women, he emphasized the need for quality performances from runners 4, 5, and 6 in order for the team to do well - - and did so without putting undo pressure on these athletes.

The second situation dealt with a freshman athlete who is frustrated and upset because his or she is struggling with his or her performance. With any athlete, DM related that it is his philosophy to give them time to get adjusted and not to put any more pressure on them regarding performance because they are already dealing with enough. He would emphasize that all he cares about it that they work hard and do they things they should be doing. He would, however, have a talk with them if he felt they were doing things detrimental to performing well - - otherwise, he stays off their back. One problem he does have with freshman women is that often are starting puberty and have a tendency to put on weight. He finds he has a difficult time talking to women about this because it of the sensitivity of the issue. If a problem continues into their sophomore year, he would subtly suggest they see a nutritionist or some professional.

In the last situation, one of the athletes is struggling with a personal problem that is starting to affect his/he performance. DM indicated that what he says would be similar for a male and female but *how* he says something would probably be a little different. With both a male and a female, he would talk to them individually but the meeting would take a different tone. He tends to be more sympathetic with the female, whereas with males he feels he can be blunt and get down to the problem right away. DM gave the problem of weight gain as an example. He would be blunt with a man but feels he would create an emotional situation to take the same tone and approach with a woman.

Psychological variables were described to DM and he was asked to indicate if he perceived a difference between male and female athletes on these variables. If so, he was asked to describe the differences.

When asked if he perceives males and females to differ in pre-competition **anxiety**, DM stated that women tend to be more emotional and he can see their fear about what is going to take place. He perceives the men, in general, as seeming more serious and focused. After some thought, he noted that it probably has more to do with ability level with the less able being more nervous.

Similarly, DM perceives differences in **confidence** to be a function of ability rather than gender, with the better male and female athletes being more confident.

In cases of team **conflict** or disagreement, DM finds that women tend to be more team conscious and will let the coach or others know when a problem exists - and will even tell the coach if he is doing something wrong. The men, on the other hand, tend to keep problems to themselves and just go about doing their own thing.

DM doesn't perceive any differences in the **team relationship** in that neither are extremely competitive amongst each other. In XC, he feels that each individual seems to know their place on the team. In track, they are a little more competitive because each wants to be the best in a particular event.

DM feels the men and women have similar race **goals**. Both teams are very conscious of their importance to the team and want to run well so the team can do well.

DM perceives subtle differences in his **coach-athlete relationship** with males versus females. In his relationship with women, he needs to be verbal and communicative in a positive, encouraging manner. He doesn't feel the men need to be "stroked" as often in order to feel positive about themselves.

In terms of expression of **emotions**, DM feels women are "most definitely" more emotional and that this is one of the biggest gender differences. These emotions come out in a variety of situations. He notes, as an example, a female who was in tear the whole race but didn't know exactly why.

DM sees different reactions from men and women after a **poor performance**. In general, men get pissed off and mad at themselves but get over it fairly quick. Women take poor performances very personally and tend to dwell on them a lot longer than men. DM also finds that the women feel that not only have they let themselves down, but they have also let down the coach and the team. Because of this, he approaches males and females differently - he can be blunt with a male about his poor performance, whereas with a female he tries to talk about some positive aspect of the situation.

DM perceives females as being more **sensitive** to comments and feedback than men and therefore verbalizes and talks to them differently.

Not surprisingly, DM feels gender education should definitely be included in coaching education programs. He feels that there are enough differences between male and female athletes to make a difference.

### Individual Profile of JQ

JQ, a male coach, is the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. He has been involved in coaching for 29 years, 4 years at the high school level and 25 years at college Division I and II levels. He has coached both men and women for the past 12 years. JQ was a competitive decathlete in college and continued to train for several years after college with Olympic aspirations but was sidelined by injuries.

JQ finds coaching men and women equally enjoyable. He finds that they are excited about the sport and having fun which is his source of enjoyment. He noted that he would probably enjoy coaching any sport as long as the kids liked what they were doing and were having fun. In a somewhat joking manner, he suggested that he also enjoys the job security of coaching women. With gender equity, there is stability in coaching women, whereas men's programs are being cut.

In coaching women, JQ finds it a big challenge to help them balance being happy with discouragement. He perceives that women have a tendency to dwell on bad days and take them very seriously and, therefore, experience cycles of highs and lows. He finds it a challenge to keep them going after it and not getting too upset with poor performances.

JQ feels the biggest challenge in coaching males has changed over the years. One of his goals as a coach is to provide a positive experience for the athlete so they will want to stay involved in the sport, at some level, after college. He finds that too many men train and compete while in college but give it up after they graduate. So, the challenge for JQ is to facilitate the desire to want to stay involved in running if not competitively then recreationally.

JQ was asked to identify psychological characteristics and behaviors that stand out in his mind regarding his female athletes. In doing so, he found it necessary to compare men and women to try to identify contrasting characteristics. He had a difficult time with this because he said they seem to be more similar than different. He perceives "men and women as really approaching a lot of things in the same way". He still was able to identify some characteristics more common to females and some more common to males.

He finds that males and females will react differently to frustration or poor performances. Men will tend to get physical and pound his fist on something, whereas a female may cry. He has learned to take both reactions in stride because he realizes that the behavior is what each gender has been taught is acceptable. He also perceives that women are extremely motivated to run - he senses a true love of running with the women more so than the men. He noted that the women who don't enjoy running anymore or who are frustrated with lack of progress will face up to it and quit the team. Conversely, he finds that the men tend not to face up to it and he ends up having to cut them from the team.

The senses that some men may not enjoy running that much anymore but like being involved in a team so they stay with it. With women, it seems, just being part of the team isn't enough because they tend to quit when motivation declines or lack of performance success.

In a later section of the interview, JQ discussed his perception that women tend to take to heart being neglected. If he isn't spending the time a particular athlete that he is with others or that she want him to spend with her, she feels neglected. In such situations, he finds cliques develop amongst those who feel he is neglecting them.

Interestingly, JQ noted that in some situations he sees more of a difference between black women and white women than he does between men and women. He perceives black women as being cliquish and having to stick together because of the "social climate" of the town in which there are few blacks.

Three sport scenarios were described to JQ. He was asked to explain how he would respond to the situation if it involved his male athletes and then if it involved his female athletes. If his response would be the same, he was asked to describe how he would respond.

In the first situation, it is the morning of the conference championship and the team can do well if everyone run real well. He was asked what he would say and emphasize with the team. JQ indicated that he would approach the two teams similarly. Most importantly, he would emphasize having fun and doing the best that they are capable of doing. He would try to build their confidences by talking about how hard they have worked - which is probably harder than anybody else. In XC, because of the length of the races, he would play it down a bit to keep them from getting too excited and expending all their energy. JQ also makes an effort to take the pressure and expectations off the athletes by setting them up as underdogs, as reflected in his comments to them and to the press. JQ would take this general approach with both teams and also would try to talk to each athlete individually to go over specifics.

The second situation dealt with a freshman athlete who is frustrated and upset because of their running performance which isn't at the level they had expected. In this situation, JQ described a similar approach with a male and a female. He noted that this situation occurs often so he makes an effort to deal with it in the recruiting process. He tells the athletes he is not counting on them and may even red-shirt them and that the program is built around upperclassmen. He finds this approach actually motivated them to train harder in the summer to prove his wrong. His philosophy is 'you're doing fine no matter what you do' so all the pressure is off the athlete regarding coach expectations. The only gender difference JQ noted in this situation is that women seem to be more appreciative of him taking the pressure off them having to perform well immediately. (although not indicated, this may tie into the greater expectations women perceive because of similar race distance from high school to college.)

The last situation involved an athlete who is struggling with a personal problem which is now starting to affect their performance. JQ indicated he would probably deal with the problem differently for men and women but also noted there would be differences in his approach based on the individual. JQ would talk to the athlete privately and try to help the athlete with the problem. In a lot of cases it is necessary to give them a break from running to give them time to get things in order. In such a situation, he would approach the athlete from the standpoint that they will be giving a teammate a chance to step up but they will get their spot back when they are ready to return. He would emphasize that it best for the athlete and for the team for the athlete to take some time to deal with personal problems.

JQ talked quite a bit about his approach to athlete development. Both the men's and women's teams have a JV and a varsity squad. The JV squad is for underclassmen. They compete against Division II and II schools to provide them the opportunity to experience

success and compete with others at their level - plus have the chance to travel with the team and have fun racing.

Variables from the sport science literature on which male and female athletes differ were identified. Each of these psychological variables was described to JQ and he was asked to indicate if he perceives a gender difference. If so, he was to describe the difference.

JQ perceives that males and females differ in **anxiety** outwardly but not inwardly. He feels that nervousness is more evident or observable in women and that men are just as nervous but don't show it as much.

JQ feels there is no gender difference in **confidence** - "it is a total individual thing". He finds problems, for both men and women, who come in too confident because they have been told by others how great they are - these athletes tend to fall apart in races.

In terms of **conflict** or disagreement, JQ perceives a gender difference in that men will often involve the coach and women tend to choose up sides amongst each other.

JQ finds males and females differ in **goals** for a given race (especially kids right out of high school). He feels that winning tends to be important to males, whereas women more often express doing your best. However, both men and women take it hard if they don't win when in their heart they thought they would.

JQ suggested that his **coach-athlete relationship** is probably different with males and females but didn't indicate specifically how it differs. He did note that his relationships with the athletes has changed over the years. He used to be extremely close to his athletes because he was closer to their age, he was an assistant and therefore less threatening to the athletes, and he had more time. Now, he finds he spends a lot of time with the administrative aspects of coaching. Even now, he feels it is his assistants who really get to know the athletes - which he misses.

JQ perceives the **team relationship** to differ among the men and the women. He feels the men are more of a team in that they train together and are a close group. He finds that the women tend to do most of their training alone and do their own things instead of doing the training everybody is doing. JQ noted that he wish the women's team had a bond like the men.

JQ feels both men and women are **sensitive** to comments or criticisms but react differently to it. He finds that the men might be offended but wouldn't get carried away with it or say anything to him; it would be "like water off a duck's back". If women are offended by something he says, they will point it out to him and react to the offense.

JQ perceives differences in how men and women typically react to a **poor performance**. He finds that men will come up with an excuse, whereas he finds that women will get upset with themselves and maybe go off someplace and pout. It takes a couple of hours before a women stops feeling bad about herself and tries to understand what happened.

JQ feels that the issue of gender needs to be included in coaching education programs. He perceives that most coaches are doing the same thing training wise and what is truly important is "how you get along with the kids and what you get or draw out of the kids". He believes the discussion of gender may help coaches better understand the athletes they will be coaching. In fact, when hiring an assistant, he doesn't care what they know about the actual day to day training of runners because he feels that is relatively easy to teach someone. What he is concerned with is how they get along with the kids.

JQ philosophy as a coach is to provide the athletes with a positive, fun experience in which they develop and learn. He got into coaching because of his desire to help kids and to be an educator - and an avenue to do so was through sports. He also believes in treating everyone fairly - he says he regards blue-chippers and walk-ons the same.



### Individual Profile of GS

GS is a 50 year old male coach. At the time of the interview, he was the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. GS has been involved in coaching for 28 years, all at the Division I level. His knowledge of male and female athletes is based on 15 years of experience in coaching both programs. Interestingly, he spent 3 years in the mid 80's coaching just women but left that position because he wanted to get back to coaching both men and women. GS noted that he perceives differences between males and females and interacts differently with them because of the differences. GS was a collegiate thrower but early on in his coaching career got interested in coaching runners, which is now his primary coaching emphasis.

GS finds that what he enjoys most about coaching women is their coachability. He perceives them as being open and willing to be coach and to do the things that he asks of them. The biggest challenge in coaching women deals with the emotional aspect. GS feels that women hold their feelings closer to the surface and are more sensitive to how he approaches them. Therefore, he finds that he needs to "take a much more measured approach" and needs to watch his emotions to get the response he is looking for with the women. Ranting and raving with the men can be successful but to do the same with women creates a new set of problems.

While GS feels the need to take a measured approach with women, what he enjoys about coaching men is not having to take such a calculating, structured approach. He enjoys being able to just react and express his frustrations or emotions. GS also enjoys a sense of male camaraderie and sharing in terms of being able to joke or swear with the men. GS finds a couple of things challenging in coaching men. He feels the need to watch what they are doing more closely to make sure they are not only doing it but doing it right - because where women question if they are doing it right, men just do it. He also finds their "show-me" attitude to be challenging in that he has to prove to them why they need to do certain things.

GS was asked to describe psychological characteristics or behaviors that he perceives as typifying his female athletes. As mentioned previously, GS noted that women tend to be very coachable. He finds that in this willingness and openness to be coach, the women sometimes give up too much control to the coach. In some cases, he finds they are open and eager to be coached because of a desire to please the coach. In other cases, they are open and willing to be coached because they want to be good and will therefore do whatever you tell them to do. They ask a lot of questions to make sure they are doing exactly what he wants. GS also characterized women as being more emotional and likely to tear up as an expression of emotions. He has learned not to be "put off or distracted" by it and realize it is just their means of expression.

In other sections of the interview, GS discussed other characteristics and behaviors of his female athletes. He perceives women as putting an inordinate amount of pressure on themselves regarding performance expectations. His approach toward them, therefore, is designed to take some of that pressure off. GS also feels women's confidence in themselves is more tenuous than that of men.

GS characterized male athletes as being less willing to follow his directions where they question the relevance of workouts; they tend to be less coachable in comparison to females. And in some cases, he perceives them as being less dedicated than women. He also feels men tend to be stubborn in the sense of not showing their true emotions. He finds it is easier to misread a situation with men going strictly on outward appearance because of their tendency to hide how they are feeling. Not only do men tend to not show their feelings, but GS also characterized men as being less willing to talk about how they are feeling which he finds very frustrating.

A couple common characteristics that GS identified included the desire to be good and to train hard. He also perceives that both men and women love to compete. Years ago, when women were new to the competitive arena he feels this maybe wasn't the case, but now senses an enjoyment in competing.

GS was describe three different sport scenarios. For each one, he was asked to explain how he would respond to the situation with his male athletes and then with his female athletes. If the response would be similar, he was asked to describe the response.

The first situation dealt with how he would approach the team before the conference championship - what would he say and emphasize to prepare to team for the race. GS suggested that he would say similar things to the men and women but it would be said in a different way. The women tend have a fragile sense of self-confidence so he would design workouts early in the week to instill some confidence. In talking to them before the race, he would try to take the pressure off of them because they tend to put enough pressure on themselves. He would emphasize how well things have gone for the team and that is they run well things will go fine. He focuses on keeping an even keel and constantly trying to boost their confidence levels.

With the men, he feels he would use a similar approach in terms of building up their confidence but would probably challenge to stir up their competitiveness. He would discuss what they have to do in the race and get them fired up a bit. GS finds that confrontation, raising his voice, or trying to get athletes mad can work as a precompetition approach with the men but not with the women.

In the second situation, a freshman athlete is frustrated and upset because they are struggling with their running and not performing as they expected. GS described a general approach of sitting down with the athlete and laying things down in a calm, deliberate manner. He would help them understand the reality of how different the competition is at the college level than the high school level, but if they apply themselves they can develop. The only difference between a male and a female would be in how he would say these things. He would have a tendency to be a little more blunt and forceful with the male athletes because he perceives they are able to handle it better. He does state, however, that he would read the individual and respond in a way that was best for them.

In the last situation, an athlete on the team is having some personal problems that is starting to affect their running performance. GS noted that if it was a disciplinary problem, he would handle men and women the same - he would talk with them and be very blunt. With a more personal problem, he would talk to the athlete about it but would have to take a different approach with men and women because of differences in how they would react. He finds it easier to deal with these situations with women because of their willingness to be open and discuss their problems. He has a hard time getting the men to open up so he finds he needs to approach them a little differently.

From a review of the sport science literature, variable were identified on which male and female athletes have been found to differ. Each of these variables were described to GS and he was asked to indicate if he perceives a differences to exist between males and females. If so, he was asked to describe the difference.

GS perceives that women tend to be more **anxious** than men but feels it could just be that they show it more. Anxiety is more observable in women than men.

GS feels men are more **confident** than women. He adds that this is probably due to males having more experience in competitive activities than females. In our society, it is "cool and okay for a guy to be competitive but not necessarily for a female" so throughout childhood boys have been involved in competitive activities and are therefore more confident in their abilities.

GS "absolutely" feels there is a difference in how men and women deal with **conflict or disagreement**. He perceives that women hope the problem goes away

because they don't like to confront others and deal with it openly. So instead, they will talk amongst one another and let it fester for a long time. Men are more likely to confront and have it out, but whether it is resolved or not their will be "residual fallout" - it will be over and forgotten.

In terms of **goals**, GS perceives that men and women both think about winning. However, he feels competitiveness is more observable in men. In races, men will run in a pack and battle with each other, whereas women tend to run single file.

GS feels that the women's **team** is more competitive amongst each other than the men's team. He has to separate some women in workouts because they get too competitive. GS perceives that women worry too much about how others on the team are doing and have a tendency to compare teammates' performances to their own.

GS senses a difference in males and females and therefore relates to them differently. But although his **coach-athlete relationship** may be differently, he feels it is a good relationship for both. He also feels his relationship with the athletes has changed over the years because of his age and his status and that he tended to be closer to the athletes when he was younger.

In agreement with earlier comments, GS noted that women tend to be more **sensitive** to criticism than men.

Also in agreement with earlier discussions, GS said he perceives women as **expressing more emotions** than men.

In react to a poor performance, GS perceives that women become very emotional and tend to be upset because they feel they have let the team and coach down. Men are also emotional but express it as anger as opposed to inward blame. He also finds the anger is difficult to diffuse with the men, whereas the women cry and get it done with.

GS feels it is important to include gender issues in coaching education programs. He believes it is necessary for coaches to be sensitive to the differences. He suggested that a major gender difference that needs to be discussed is communication and the different languages men and women sometimes use - not only in the sport setting but in society in general.

An interesting note is GS's perceptions of the positive and negative changed due to women's increased involvement in competitive athletics. He feels a positive change is that it is more acceptable for women to be athletic and highly competitive. On the downside, he perceives female athletes more like males in some negative ways such as using more profanity, being less involved in academics, and doing some stupid things that male athletes have done.

### Individual Profile of DU

DU is a 32 years old male coach. He is presently the head men's and women's track and cross country coach at a private Division I university. He has been involved in coaching for 8 years, one year as a graduate assistant and 7 years as head coach at the same university. For the first several years of his coaching, he worked only with men, but for the past 3 years has coached both men and women. Since taking over the programs, he has had a role in developing them into regionally competitive teams, and is credited with "turning around" the women's program. DU ran competitively in college and continued training and racing for several years after his collegiate career ended. Based on DU's experience as a coach and his interactions with male and female athletes as an athlete himself, he feels there is "definitely a difference".

DU was asked to reflect on his experiences in coaching men and women and identify what he most enjoys about coaching women. DU was unable to identify one thing in particular and instead noted that he doesn't enjoy coaching either men or women more

than the other. He derives great enjoyment from coaching both teams. In fact, he suggests that coaching both men and women has simply doubled his satisfaction.

DU was also asked to identify what he perceives to be the most challenging aspect of coaching males and of coaching females. With his male athletes, DU noted that he doesn't find anything to be too challenging in coaching males, at least nothing more so than with the women. The biggest challenge in coaching women is to get them motivated to train in the off-season and to do some of the morning and weekend runs.

DU spent some time discussing the background of the women's team as he feels this has a strong influence on his perceptions of the female athletes. He feels it important to understand the context because some of the things he identifies as gender differences may be related more to the different levels of the men's and women's programs. Before he took over the women's program 3 years ago, they weren't a very serious or competitive group. Few trained in the off-season or on the weekends and they did little extra to help their performances. While they have greatly improved both in attitude and actual performance, the men have been at a higher level for a longer period of time. Therefore, DU is not sure if differences he has noticed are a function of gender or ability and experience.

DU was asked to discuss psychological characteristics and behaviors that stand out in his mind regarding his female athletes. In many of the characteristics he identified, he also noted how the characteristic affects how he interacts with the women.

He described female athletes as being competitive against their own teammates. In both practices and competitions, females tend to want to maintain their spot on the team. He suggested that a female would rather be first on the team and third in the race than second on the team and second in the race. DU feels it is very important to control this intra-team competitiveness. He has made an extra effort to get the women to think more team-oriented and worry less about beating each other and more about helping each other. For instance, a team rule is that you can never pass a teammate without saying something encouraging to her.

DU characterized females as being sensitive, more so than the males. With all athletes he uses a positive approach to coaching but feels this is even more important with women - he doesn't feel negativism works at all. Relatedly, DU also feels women have a tendency to take things personally where if he criticized their race they would take it as an attack on them. In his interaction, then, he tries to keep constructive criticism at a minimum and reword comments in a positive manner. Furthermore, he described women as having a lot of faith in the coach but also being fairly dependent on the coach. For instance, when he has them set goals, he finds women look to him to set their goals. He feels they may be either less sure of what they want or hesitate to state it and therefore look for him to state it first.

DU described male athletes as being fairly independent. Where women look to him for guidance and to set goals, men tend to set their own and often don't even want to share the goals with him. He also finds men to be fairly self-sufficient with their training. He can just give them a range for mileage and they know themselves well enough to adjust their training accordingly. In regards to both workouts and race plans, DU described men as having a tendency to challenge what he says. He needs to convince them of what he has told them to do.

DU perceives the males and females as being similar in a lot of respects. The biggest similarity he has noticed is the desire to succeed. They all want to do their best and achieve personal success.

Three sport scenarios were related to DU. He was asked to describe how he would respond in the situation with male and then with female athletes. If his response would be similar, he was asked to describe this response.

The first situation dealt with how he would prepare the team for the upcoming conference championship - what would he say and emphasize to the team. DU described a similar approach with both the men's and women's team. His primary objective would be to get their confidences up. In the meeting, therefore, he would focus on reminding them how well they have been running and how well workouts have gone and would convince them of how much better they are than the competition. Interestingly, DU notes that although he uses a similar approach, the two meetings tend to take on different tones. He finds the men's meetings are very serious, whereas in the women's meetings there is a lot of joking around - which he feels might be their attempt to relieve some stress.

In the second situation, a freshman athlete is upset and frustrated because his or her performance is not at the level anticipated. DU described a similar response whether it would be a male or female athlete. He actually prepares for such a situation in the recruiting process. He tries to take any pressure off by telling them he doesn't have expectations for freshmen athletes. He views the first year as a learning experience for the athlete. If the situation occurred, he would talk to them and try to help them understand they aren't going to win every weekend. He would also help them to use the frustration to motivate them to work hard and try to improve as an individual. Although DU would respond similarly to males and females, he perceives a difference in how the athlete responds. He feels females tend to take it harder and feel they are letting the team and themselves down. Instead of taking a logical approach to why she may not be winning, a female will tend to perceive it as a personal failure.

The last situation dealt with an athlete on the team who is struggling with a personal problem that is affecting his or her performance. He would approach a male and female in a similar manner (DU was referring to how he would approach them if it was right before a competition). His approach would be to talk with them and try to get them to separate their personal life from their racing. Depending on the problem, he may talk about how there are some situations that can't be controlled and to just go out and do the best they can. He noted that women tend to have a tougher time separating their personal life from racing, where a bad grade or boyfriend problems will negatively affect their performance.

Variables identified as evidencing a gender difference were described to DU. He was asked to describe difference between male and female athletes on these variables.

DU perceives that women tend to get a little more **nervous or anxious** than the men although there is a lot of individual difference.

DU feels the men are generally more **confident** than the women but notes that they have a reason to be more confident because they have experienced more success. He thinks his perception is unique to the situation and it is not really a male-female difference. He has noticed that in easier meets women are just as confident as the men.

DU perceives that men and women deal with team **conflict** or disagreement differently. Men tend to be able to blow it off, sometimes without even dealing with it, whereas conflict bothers women so they can't let it go unresolved. They will work at resolving the conflict because of the negative affect it has on them - and they can't just forget about it.

In regards to **goals** for a given race, DU perceives that women tend to have goals against their teammates (where they want to finish on the team), whereas men have goals against their opponents.

As mentioned earlier, DU feels the women's **team** is more competitive amongst each other than the men's team, in both workouts and races. He has made a special effort the curb this tendency via team rules and special team meetings.

DU feels his **coach-athlete relationship** is a little different with the males and the females (more because of the athlete's doing). He feels the males' independence influences how close they are to him and how much they rely on him. Men tend to

challenge what he says and not "totally look up to" him. On the other hand, he perceives that the females look to him as the coach and leader and therefore place a lot of faith in what he says and depend on him more than the men.

DU feels that males and females express **emotions** differently. For example, he noted that men tend to get angry and women depressed when they run a bad race.

As mentioned earlier, DU perceived that men and women react differently to a **poor performance**. Women take it personally and get upset inwardly, i.e., they tend to take it out on themselves, whereas the men get upset outwardly, i.e., demonstrates anger.

DU doesn't think gender issues should be included in coaching education programs. He feels that because gender differences are subtle and are not "100% across the board", they should not be taught to coaches. Rather, they will learn these things on the job through their experiences with the athletes. Because he feels the differences he notices and the affect it has on his interaction may not be true on another team, DU isn't sure educating on gender would be beneficial.

### Individual Profile of DWe

DWe is a male coach in his mid 40's who was a middle distance runner in college. He is presently the men's and women's head cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. He has been a coach for 20 years - two years at the high school level and 18 years at the collegiate level. DWe has coached both men and women for the past 15 years, prior to which he worked just with men. Based on his experiences coaching men and women, DWe perceived differences to exist. He feels this has an impact not so much on what he says but how he conveys the message.

DWe finds that what he enjoys most about coaching the men and the women is the same. He feels that the dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm demonstrated by the athletes brings him great enjoyment. Also, the success both teams have experienced over the years has added to the pleasure.

However, he finds the biggest challenge in coaching to be different for the men and women. In coaching men, it is a challenge for him to get them "headed down the right road". DWe perceives that because men have been involved in athletics for so long, they tend to take some things for granted. Therefore, getting the men to focus and commit to one thing has proved to be challenging. The challenge with coaching the women is helping them deal with some of the additional challenges he perceives they face, i.e., the challenges imposed by our culture, development, and maturation.

DWe was asked to identify and describe some psychological characteristics and behaviors that stand out in his mind regarding his female athletes. In contrasting females with males, DWe finds females to have a greater commitment to the sport and to take their athletics very seriously. Relatedly, he perceives women as being less distracted by college life and being away from home. In general, the women are better students than the men. DWe also characterized female athletes as being accepting of things he as the coach promotes. He feels they are eager to do what he tells them to become better athletes - they seemed to appreciate their eliteness. He also feels women are eager to do what he tells them to do to please him. Another characteristic that DWe identified is that women tend to "bear a greater burden of expectations" and feeling the need to please parents and others. In a later section, DWe suggested that women will sometimes run, and continue running, for others. He perceives that even if it is not enjoyable for them, they don't want to quit for fear of letting others down.

Where women are accepting of things he promoted, he feels men are maybe a little rebellious and less accepting of things on face value. They will often put more credence in someone else before him. DWe feels that for males it seems to be important to fit in and be

a part of the team. He has seen men do things out of character in an effort to fit in and be accepted by peers. Relatedly, DWe characterized males as often struggling with not being the star (as in high school) or an athletic standout. Because of this, he emphasizes to the athletes the need to focus on being the best you can be and not worry so much about how you compare to others.

DWe feels that the male and female athletes grow more similar after being exposed to college athletics. He notes that the pressure, expectations, anxiety, and their mind set regarding competition becomes more similar as their careers develop.

Three sport scenarios were described to DWe. For each one, he was asked to explain how he would respond if the scenario involved female athletes and then how he would respond with males. If his response would be similar, he was asked to describe this response.

The first situation dealt with how he would approach the team prior to the conference championship - what would he say and emphasize. DWe indicated that regarding race strategy preparation, his approach would be similar for the men and women. In terms of psychological preparation, he would have a tendency to approach them differently - but also depending somewhat on the make-up of the team. To illustrate such a difference, he described how he recently approached the two teams. With the women, he discussed his experiences in seeing his newborn child for the first time and how proud he was. He recalled feeling "100% perfectly content" and in no way was he comparing his child to any other newborns. He then made the analogy that each athlete needs to run the best they are capable of and no matter how it works out, they need to own their race and be content and appreciative - - like he was with his child.

DWe felt a similar approach wouldn't work with the men. Instead, he reviewed old race results with them and discussed what they would need to do to produce a winning performance - what he labeled a more "traditional" means of preparation.

In the second situation, a freshman athlete is upset and frustrated because they are not performing as well as he or she expected. DWe described a similar approach with males and females. He finds this situation often occurs because athletes' self-worth and their perception of what others think of them is closely tied to performance - so when they are not performing well, they feel poorly about themselves. DWe would talk to the athlete privately in his office and discuss what he calls "athletic evolution". He would suggest to the athlete that they are probably trying to speed up the process and evolve too quickly. He would try to get them to appreciate their ability and understand where they are at this stage of their career. He would also help the athlete develop a healthier perspective on competition, their expectations, and the expectations of others. DWe did note that women tend to feel a great burden to please others and are therefore may struggle more when they are not performing well.

The last situation involved an athlete who is struggling with a personal problem that is starting to effect his or her running. DWe described a different approach with males and females. Interestingly, he noted that difference in approach is due to him and how he is comfortable dealing with it - something he often feels bad about. Therefore, he is not necessary responding as the athlete needs but as he needs. DWe indicated that he would be more delicate in his approach to the female because he sometimes feels he is invading their privacy. He would "beat around the bush" when talking to them and get them to bring up the problem. With a male, he would be blunt and lay things out on the table - and feels comfortable doing so.

Variable identified as evidencing a gender difference were described to DWe. For each one, he was asked to indicate if he perceives a difference to exist between men and women and, if so, to explain the difference.

DWe perceives no difference in **anxiety or nervousness**.

DWe indicated that women tend to be content with themselves - and he views contentment as part of **confidence**.

DWe finds that women tend to deal with **conflict** indirectly by forming alliances with others who feel as they do, whereas men are more direct with their differences. They either disregard the person or are blunt in dealing with the conflict.

DWe feels that early in the athlete's career, there is a difference in **goals** men and women have for races. The men tend to have an idea where they want to place and are concerned with beating others. On the other hand, women tend to want to run well and please the coach. He feels that over time his emphasis on doing the best you can and appreciating your own ability influences more similar goals for men and women.

DWe perceives that he has a different **coach-athlete relationship** with males and females - and views it as a shortcoming! He described his relationship with males as being more casual because he is also male, whereas he characterized his relationship with women as more proper and professional.

Regarding **team relationships**, the only difference DWe noted is that men tend to "cut on each other" but not in a malicious way - because of this, he likes to keep the teams distinct. In an earlier section, he also noted that men tend to get caught up in the pecking order of the team.

DWe feels that males and females differ in the way they demonstrate their **emotions**. The women tend to be honest and open about how they feels. Men, on the other hand, tend to cover up their emotions - he feels they try to maintain male "bravado".

DWe finds that women appear to be more **sensitive** to comments and criticism but feels it could just be that they demonstrate their emotions more than men. He feels men are just as hurt by criticism but would react differently - and maybe try to hurt back. Because of this difference, DWe tries to be more a bit more diplomatic in giving feedback to women, whereas he finds he is more quick to lay it on the line with the men.

DWe had a difficult time deciding if men and women react differently to a **poor** performance. After recalling specific examples, he said that women are often at a loss to explain their performance and men usually come up with a reason for their poor performance but the validity of the reason is often questionable.

DWe feels the issue of gender should be included in coaching educations but noted that he hasn't always felt that way. He feels men and women are similar physiologically so the same principles of training can be used. However, he feels there are differences - such as those due to our culture - and that "those differences are a major factor that needs to be considered".

### Individual Profile of DWi

DWi, a male coach, has been involved in coaching for 25 years. He was a graduate assistant for a years, then spent 10 years coaching boys and girls at the high school level. He has been coaching at the collegiate level now for 14 years. In total, he has coached both males and females for 19 years - the rest of the years he worked just with males. He is now the head men's and women's cross country and track coach at a large Division I university. DWi was a collegiate athlete, racing anywhere from 800m. up to the 10k. He indicated he has always had a love for the sport and took it upon himself to learn about all the track events by going to clinics, reading, and watching those who excelled in a particular event. He feels this motivation has influenced his ability and desire to build a complete track program.

In his years of coaching women, DWi finds that what he enjoys most is their deep commitment. He senses that women have a better understanding of commitment and are often more deeply committed than the men. On the flip side, the biggest challenge he faces



in coaching women is that they tend to demand more of his attention. He jokingly noted that sometimes just maintaining his sanity with the women is his toughest challenge - - but added that he can't imagine not coaching either gender.

DWi reflected on his experiences in coaching men and noted that what he tends to enjoy most is the camaraderie that he shares with the men. Being male himself, he feels he can relate better to males and can understand their experiences, whereas he often can't understand the female experience. The challenge in coaching men is trying to develop and nurture the concept of self-improvement as opposed to winning. He finds that for men winning tends to be more important than personal improvement so he is constantly trying to get them to focus on themselves and the effort they put forth. He feels society may influence men in this direction more so than the women - as exemplified in the desire to "climb the corporate ladder".

DWi was asked to identify psychological characteristics and behaviors that stand out in his mind regarding his female athletes. He was able to identify several characteristics of women and often discussed it in relation to men. He noted that women tend to be more emotionally and psychologically mature than the male athletes, especially as freshmen. As an example, he noted that women tend to be more sexually responsible than the men. He also feels they are well focused. Conversely, he perceives women as being less socially mature than the men - they are less involved in social functions, partying, . . . He feels it may simply be because there are more social opportunities for the men. He also characterized women as more nutritionally conscious - in a later section he also discussed the incidence of eating disorders among women. He senses that women are a little "hungrier" but feels it is because of the newness of the competitive opportunity that they want to take advantage of.

Because DWi contrasted men and women to identify characteristics that are typical of his females, he noted that the reverse is often characteristic of the men. He described men as being less emotionally and psychologically mature and less sexually responsible than women. He also feels they tend to be more inclined socialize and are therefore often less focused. Because of this tendency, he finds he has more disciplinary problems with the men. He added this may occur because men sometimes take for granted the athletic opportunities they have. Historically, men have had the opportunities for a long time while it is a relatively recent experience for the women.

Similarities between males and females that DWi mentioned include physiological responses to training and their competitive nature.

Three sport scenarios were described to DWi. For each one, he was asked to explain how he would respond if the situation involved females and if it involved males. If he would respond the same, he was asked to describe this response.

In the first situation, it is the morning of the conference championship and he needs to prepare the team for the race. He was asked how he would approach each team and what he would emphasize. DWi noted that he would respond the same to both teams. He would take a philosophical approach and discuss with the athletes that this is an opportunity to let their excellence emerge, to overcome their self-limiting beliefs, and to experience personal growth. He would try to help them put the race in perspective - it is an opportunity and, regardless of what happens, the sun will come up tomorrow. With both men and women, the emphasis would be on personal effort and the need for maximum effort by each individual for the team to do well. He would also emphasize that not only is it an opportunity for personal growth, but it is also an opportunity to share with teammates.

The second situation dealt with a freshman athlete who is upset and frustrated because he or she is not performing as well as they expected. DWi said he would respond the same for both a male and female but did note that it tends to occur more often with males. He feels men struggle more early on because they are less physically mature and

need time to develop their strength, whereas the women seem to be more competitive their freshman year. DWi would talk with the athlete and try to help them change his or her focus. He would tell them they are upset because they are inappropriately focused on place or final outcome instead of on personal improvement. DWi would also educate the athlete that they are creating their attitude and outlook - it is their decision whether it is positive or negative. So, he would try to emphasize that they control the situation and can decide what attitude or perspective to hold. All of this would be framed in a positive approach - with stroking and reinforcement as needed.

In the last situation, DWi gets word that one of his athletes is having some personal problems that is starting to effect their running. DWi would discuss the problem with the athlete, but noted that male and female athletes tend to respond differently. He finds that women tend to come in and express and share their problems with him. With males, he often has to "dig" quite a bit to uncover the problem. He also finds he needs to approach them differently because men don't like to admit that they need help and will often deny that a problem exists, whereas women tend to be more open to support and assistance. DWi notes this a result of the different socialization processes for men and women.

A review of the sport science literature revealed several variables on which male and female athletes have been found to differ. Each of these variables were described to DWi. He was asked to indicate if he has perceived a difference between males and females and, if so, to describe the differences.

DWi feels males and females differ in **anxiety** or nervousness and also feels this difference changes over time. As freshmen, DWi perceives women to be more nervous than men because women are typically more productive early on and therefore have higher expectations of themselves. He perceives that as upperclassmen, the males' expectations are higher and they tend to also be more anxious, whereas the women have learned how to deal with it.

DWi feels that freshman typically base their **confidence** on accomplishment - because of this he finds women, who are more successful early, tend to be more confident than the men. This difference disappears as their definition of confidence changes to a knowing you are going to do your best.

In regards to **conflict** or disagreement, DWi perceives a gender difference. He feels that women are more prone to get into spats, scream at each other, and get it over with - there tends to be a lot of strife amongst the women but they deal with problems. The men will often keep problems inside and let it stew until it becomes a major blow-up. He feels the differences are due to different socializations processes.

DWi perceives that women express **emotion** more than men. He also noted that sometimes men have difficulty expressing emotions and expressing them in a positive fashion (i.e., anger, frustration).

When asked if he perceives a difference in **relationships** on the women's team and the men's team, DWi's response was directed at the relationship between the teams not within the teams. He noted that the relationship is influenced by the coaches and how they address the teams. DWi feels he has been successful in his effort to create a family and have respect amongst individuals.

DWi feels women are more **sensitive** and react more emotionally than men. However, differences in how he gives criticism to males and females is due more to what he is comfortable doing than because of athlete characteristics. He says he can cuss and "chew out" a guy but he is not comfortable doing that to a female.

DWi perceives that after a **poor performance**, men and women experience the same frustrations or disappointment but differ in how they express that emotion. DWi feels that females have a tendency to get it out (i.e., crying) and get over it, whereas males turn their feelings in and hold them until they have another shot at running.

Regarding his **coach-athlete relationships**, DWi doesn't find it to be much different for males and females. The only difference is that it is a little easier for him to communicate with a male because they share the same gender and he finds he tends to be more sensitive to a woman's feelings. With both genders, however, he emphasizes self-improvement and is 100% honest and open with them.

DWi definitely feels that the issue of gender should be included in coaching education programs. He notes that he had little in his background to prepare him for coaching different genders so he had a very innocent approach to dealing with the sexes. He believes, therefore, that it is a very appropriate subject to address in the professional preparation of coaches. "I mean, you wear a lot of different hats as a coach and you better know a hell of a lot more than just the physiology involved".

DW seems to take a philosophical approach to coaching - - he believes the human spirit is the source of human motivation and talks to athletes about looking into their inner spirit. Interestingly, he also talked about himself as a teacher - he views his role as more than a coach but as a person who educates and enhances the athletes' lives.

## APPENDIX C

## Coach Interview Guide

Before we get started, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this project as I know your time is valuable. As we discussed last time we talked, I am a doctoral student in sport psychology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. In addition, I'm the head men's and women's cross country coach at the university. At the time you agreed to participate in the study, I told you about this project and what your participation would entail. You also should have received in the mail a copy of the questions I'll be asking you today. Did you get the interview guide in the mail? Good. Now, let me take a minute to briefly recap the purposes of this project.

My primary objective is to understand **psychological, social, and emotional** characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and how they may impact the coaching process. To do so, I am interviewing a number of coaches, such as yourself, with experience in coaching both male and female runners. I am asking each of you to describe to me your experiences in coaching males and females. So, once we get into the interview, I'll simply be asking you questions about **your** experiences and **your** understanding of male and female athletes. As we go through the interview, please stop me if you have any questions and take your time in thinking about and responding to the questions. I'll be tape recording this interview but as I mentioned previously, everything you tell me will be kept confidential.

**COACH DEMOGRAPHICS**

To begin, I want to get a little background information on you:

1. How long have you been involved in coaching?
2. At what level (high school, college, youth)?
3. What position have you held at these coaching jobs?
4. How many years have you coached college-aged males? females? both?
5. What do you enjoy most about coaching females? males?
6. What is the most challenging aspect of coaching females? males?
7. What are your experiences as a competitive athlete?

**SECTION 1 (Coach Perception of Athletes):**

During the interview, what I want to do is get you to tell me about your perceptions of your male and female athletes and how certain characteristics and behaviors may affect your coaching.

[For example, if you believe one gender is more confident, I want to understand how this affects your coaching behavior/approach? Or conversely, if you feel you are more demanding with one team than the other, I want to understand WHY - what is causing you to behave differently?]

Before beginning, let me give you a more specific overview of what we will be discussing.

**OVERVIEW:**

There are three primary things I'd like to accomplish in this interview:

**\*First**, I want you to tell me or describe to me your perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of your male and female athletes and how these affect how you coach the athletes.

**\* Second**, I am going to describe specific coaching situations and have you identify how you would respond to these situations with first your male and then your female athletes.

**\*Third**, I am going to identify specific variables or characteristics of athletes and let you describe any gender differences you have noticed on these variables.

**Does all this make sense?** Do you have any questions before we begin?

- A. **Okay, tell me about coaching your female athletes? What characteristics and behaviors have you noticed?**
- B. **How about coaching your male athletes? What characteristics and behaviors have you noticed?**
- C. **In coaching both male and female athletes, what differences in psychological characteristics and behaviors have you observed?**

**\* Probes (when trying to think of differences):**

In trying to identify differences you have noticed, it may help to think of different aspects of coaching or different sport situations such as:

\*during practice

\*during competitions

\*team conflicts

- D. **You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_ as being a difference between male and female athletes. Does this difference affect how you coach / approach your male and female athletes? How?**

(Repeat for each identified difference)

- E. **How are your male and female athletes similar?**

## **SECTION 2 (Coaching Situations)**

In the next section, what I am going to do is identify three specific sport situation. I want you to put yourself in the situation and describe to me how you would respond / behave with male athletes. I'll then ask you to describe your behavior with female athletes. If the situation or a similar situation has occurred to you, think back to that time and describe to me how you responded. If it has not occurred, tell me how you think you would respond. There is no hidden meaning behind these questions. I just believe it will be helpful in my attempt to understand how you behave toward male and female athletes in different situations. Do you have any questions before we begin? (reverse order for male and female).

1. It is the morning of the Conference championship. The men's teams is in contention for the title but your top 5 runners all need to run well to win the championship. How do you approach the men's team and individual male athletes to prepare them for the race? What do you say? What do you emphasize?

(repeat for females)

2. A freshman, who was a 2-time state champion in high school, is struggling to make the top 5 on your team. He is frustrated and upset because he is used to being the #1 runner. His negative attitude is now starting to affect his performance. Although it is not realistic for him to be the #1 runner, you feel he should be running better than he is. How do you handle the situation? What do you say?

(repeat for females)

3. Through some of the athletes on the team, you get word that one of your athletes is having some personal problems. Before practice, you have the opportunity to ask him into your office to talk to him in private. How do you handle the situation? What do you say / do? How will the male athletes respond?

(repeat for females)



**SECTION 3 (Variables from Literature):**

You've been able to identify several areas in which you have noticed male and female athletes seem to differ and how it affects your coaching. The information you have provided me so far will be extremely valuable - thanks for your honesty.

Most of what is known about gender differences is based on results from questionnaires filled out by males and females that measure one variable. A lot of different studies measuring the same variable have had conflicting results. What I want to do now is identify some of the variables that have been studied and get you to tell me if you feel or have observed your male and female athletes to differ in these areas. Again, your response should be based on your experiences - because it has or has not been identified in research doesn't necessarily mean the differences operate in the 'real world'.

Please be honest and tell me if you don't feel differences exist.

**\*Where differences are noted, probe as to if and how this difference may affect coaching behavior.**

1. Do you feel male and females differ in **anxiety** or nervousness prior to competition? Does it make a difference if it is a big or small race?
2. Do you perceive differences in **confidence** levels?
3. Do male and female athletes differ in how they **deal with conflict or disagreement**?

**Probes: Is there a difference in **aggression-either physical or verbal** ?**

4. Do you feel males and females have different **motives / goals** for a given race?
5. Do you have a different **coach-athlete relationship** with males and females? **Describe.**
6. What is the **team relationship** like among the female athletes and the male athletes?

**Probes:** are males or females more team vs. individual oriented? are they competitive among themselves?

7. Do males and females differ in the **emotions they express**?

**Probes:** in defeat? in victory? anger? competitiveness?

8. Are males or females different in **sensitivity to comments**? feedback? criticism?
9. When a male (female) runs a poor race, what **reasons or excuses does he give for his performance**? Or when he (she) runs a great race - what are reasons for running well?

### CONCLUSION

Before we finish, I have a **concluding question** to ask you:

**\*\*Do you think the issue of gender differences should be included in Coaching Education programs? What specifically would be of most importance?**

## APPENDIX D

### Modified Interview Guide

Before we get started, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this project as I know your time is valuable. As we discussed last time we talked, I am a doctoral student in sport psychology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. In addition, I'm the head men's and women's cross country coach at the university. At the time you agreed to participate in the study, I told you about this project and what your participation would entail. You also should have received in the mail a copy of the questions I'll be asking you today. Did you get the interview guide in the mail? Good. Now, let me take a minute to briefly recap the purposes of this project.

My primary objective is to understand **psychological, social, and emotional** characteristics and behaviors of male and female athletes and how they may impact the coaching process. To do so, I am interviewing a number of coaches, such as yourself, with experience in coaching both male and female runners. I am asking each of you to describe to me your experiences in coaching males and females. So, once we get into the interview, I'll simply be asking you questions about **your** experiences and **your** understanding of male and female athletes. As we go through the interview, please stop me if you have any questions and take your time in thinking about and responding to the questions. I'll be tape recording this interview but as I mentioned previously, everything you tell me will be kept confidential.

### Coach Demographics

To begin, I want to get a little background information on you:

1. How long have you been involved in coaching?
2. At what level (high school, college, youth)?
3. What position have you held at these coaching jobs?
4. How many years have you coached college-aged males? females? both?
5. About how many female athletes have you coached in your career? male?
6. What do you enjoy most about coaching females? males?
- 7.. What is the most challenging aspect of coaching females? males?
8. What are your experiences as a competitive athlete? who was your coach?

**SECTION 1 (Coach Perception of Athletes):**

During the interview, what I want to do is get you to tell me about your perceptions of your male and female athletes and how certain characteristics and behaviors of your athletes may affect your coaching. Before beginning, let me give you a more specific overview of what we will be discussing.

**OVERVIEW:**

There are three primary things I'd like to accomplish in this interview:

**\*First**, I want you to tell me or describe to me your perceptions of characteristics and behaviors of your male and female athletes and how these affect how you coach the athletes.

**\* Second**, I am going to describe specific coaching situations and have you identify how you would respond to these situations with first your male and then your female athletes.

**\*Third**, I am going to identify specific variables or characteristics of athletes and let you describe any gender differences you have noticed on these variables.

**Does all this make sense? Do you have any questions before we begin?**

- A. Okay, tell me about coaching your female athletes? What characteristics and behaviors stand out in your mind?**
  
- B. How about coaching your male athletes? What characteristics and behaviors have you noticed?**
  
- C. In coaching both male and female athletes, what differences in psychological characteristics and behaviors have you observed?**
  
- D. Why do you think this difference exists?**
  
- E. You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_ as being a difference between male and female athletes. Does this difference affect how you coach / approach your male and female athletes? How?**

(Repeat for each identified difference)

- F. How are your male and female athletes similar?**

## SECTION 2 (Coaching Situations)

In the next section, what I am going to do is identify three specific sport situation. I want you to put yourself in the situation and describe to me how you would respond / behave with male athletes. I'll then ask you to describe your behavior with female athletes. If the situation or a similar situation has occurred to you, think back to that time and describe to me how you responded. If it has not occurred, tell me how you think you would respond. There is no hidden meaning behind these questions. I just think it will be helpful in my attempt to understand how you behave toward males and females in different situations. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. It is the morning of the Conference championship. The men's teams is in contention for the title but your top 5 runners all need to run well to win the championship. How do you approach the men's team and individual male athletes to prepare them for the race? What do you say? What do you emphasize?

(repeat for females)

2. A freshman, who was a 2-time state champion in high school, is struggling to make the top 5 on your team. He is frustrated and upset because he is used to being the #1 runner. His negative attitude is now starting to affect his performance. Although it is not realistic for him to be the #1 runner, you feel he should be running better than he is. How do you handle the situation? What do you say?

(repeat for females)

3. Through some of the athletes on the team, you get word that one of your athletes is having some personal problems. Before practice, you have the opportunity to ask him into your office to talk to him in private. How do you handle the situation? What do you say / do? How will the male athletes respond?

(repeat for females)

## APPENDIX E

### Peer Reviewer Background Information

The individual who served as peer reviewer in this investigation was, at the time of the study, a 28 year old female in her second year in the PhD program in Sport Psychology at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. She has a BA in Psychology from Furman University and obtained an MS degree in Sport Psychology from UNCG in 1992.

Her first experience in qualitative research was in an adjunct role in a two year project studying burnout in junior elite tennis players. While she did not have a primary role in the investigation, she sat in on numerous sessions to get a feel for the qualitative research process. She has also read several books on qualitative research that have addressed both the philosophy undergirding qualitative inquiry as well as qualitative methodologies. Furthermore, while the investigation was being conducted, she was taking a graduate course entitled "Case Study" which further enhanced her understanding of qualitative inquiry.

In addition to her academic background, the peer reviewer brought to the study a strong athletic background encompassing experiences as an athlete, coach, and teacher. Specifically, she was a competitive golfer at Furman University, a national calibre women's golf program, and for the past three years has been an assistant coach for the women's golf team at UNCG. In addition, she is a certified Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) teaching professional and teaches private as well as group golf lessons. This background facilitated an understanding of and insight into the world of collegiate athletics of the present investigation.