Running head: ATHLETE OBEDIENCE

# Professors and Coaches: Who Has More Authority?

Kelly C. Niccum

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLES

# ABSTRACT

## PROFESSORS AND COACHES: WHO HAS MORE AUTHORITY?

by Kelly C. Niccum

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

05/08/2010

Research shows that people will obey authority when that authority has aided to their success in the past. Research is lacking when investigating the impact of authority on college students. Specifically, researchers have yet to study obedience to authority in both the athletic and academic setting. The current research looks to add to this arena of study. In particular, the current study hypothesizes that (a) athletes are more likely to obey the authority of a coach than non-athletes and (b) coaches have more authority over their athletes than professors have over their students. To test these hypotheses, a two-part study was developed. For Part I, 56 participants were surveyed using a 3(rule: severe, moderate, low) X 3(punishment: severe, moderate, low) X 2(participants: athletes and nonathletes) within-subject design. In Part II, 86 participants were surveyed using a 3(rule: severe, moderate, low) X 3(punishment: severe, moderate, low) X 2(setting: athletic and academic) within-subject design. Overall, results indicated that athletes were more likely to obey if they deemed the punishment fit the infraction. In addition athletic departments are viewed differently than the academic department. In the athletic department, participants are more likely to obey and less likely to question or complain; in the academic department they are less likely to obey and more likely to question and complain.

Athlete Obedience: When a Coach Pushes Too Far

Athletes are a unique subculture in society. They go through extreme lengths in order to perform well either for their team or on an individual basis. Their job requires daily workouts for cardio, practice in the given sport for at least three hours, and the following of a balanced diet in order to maintain proper energy and a healthy weight. The motivation of an athlete may be either intrinsic or extrinsic, but in either case it seems that a coach has an extra say-so in that motivation. The threat of being expelled from a team is enough motivation to make an athlete perform just about any task asked of them. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes students towards authority in athletics or academics and whether or not students would obey punishment for rule infractions.

*Sports*

When referring to the activities in this project, sports are competitive activities with formal rules that require some type of physical exertion or complex physical skills. Sports are important to society because they keep things operating smoothly. In fact, many sociologists use the functionalist theory to show how social systems operate when they are efficient. Sports are efficient for society for the following reasons: they socialize people to learn and accept cultural values; they help promote relationships between people; they motivate people to work together in achieving goals; and they protect the system from possible negative outside influences (Coakley, 2004).

Research based on the aforementioned functionalist theory states that there are three factors related to participation in sports: abilities and characteristics; the influence of significant others, such as teachers, siblings, parents, and friends; and the availability to play and have success in sports. Research also finds that decision making about sport participation is an on-

going process. Once an athlete decides to play a sport, their decision is never final until they decide to no-longer play. As social conditions change, decisions do as well. Also, as people continue to play sports, their reasons for why they started to play differ from the reasons why they are currently playing (Coakley, 2004).

In a study headed by Chris Stevenson (1990), researchers interviewed twenty-nine international elite athletes. They found that there were two processes to becoming such a high level athlete. First, there was a process of introduction and involvement. In this period of time the children receive support from home as they try out different sports. Eventually, they choose a particular sport based on their predicted potential success in that sport and how much they feel connected to the other people involved in the sport. Furthermore, the next process of developing a commitment to the sport starts. This process occurs when the athletes form relationships with their teammates and establish personal identities and reputations as athletes in their sports. It is important to know that these processes do not occur automatically. Rather, as the athletes continue to improve in the sport they also realize the opportunity to play could be lost, and therefore work harder to impress those that support them (Coakley, 2004).

*Factors Involving Participation*

Money is a great extrinsic motivator. When an athlete is doing what they love, and get *paid*, that pay is enough motivation to keep an athlete working. Many young athletes often have dreams of being a professional athlete, but sadly the odds of these dreams becoming reality are quite slim. This is especially difficult for collegiate athletes who have come so far already. In 2002 the odds of a high school football player making a college team were about 17 to 1. However, the odds for the very same player to make a professional team right out of high school

were about 1,222 to 1. Unfortunately, the odds of making a professional team with college experience are still only 68 to 1 (Coakley, 2004).

In order to increase the odds of making a professional team, all aspects of the athlete have to be perceived as high. Therefore, it should be of no surprise that the coach of an athlete would have great authority over this type of player. If the end goal is to secure a professional career, it is less likely that an athlete would question the coach's authority, especially if that coach has been instrumental in their careers.

Research has examined the amount of obedience an athlete follows under their coach. Damon (1977) has suggested that there are three developmental levels that children's views of legitimacy of authority and obedience go through. Level 0 is when the child submits to the authority in order to have something in return, such as a self-want granted. For example, when a child is asked why he or she obeyed, the response might be "because he's my daddy." Level 1 is reached when the child perceives the authority figure as possessing special talents (strengths) or skills that the child does not have themselves. An example of a level 1 response might be "because I will get in trouble if I do not do this." Level 2 is finally met when the child perceives the authority figure as more experienced in the situation, which makes them seem like a better leader. An example of a level 2 response might be "because they have been doing this for years and they know what they are talking about" (Rainey, Santilli, & Fallon, 1992).

Although large levels of conceptions on authority figures begin to develop and change throughout childhood, they are also changing and developing at a reasonable rate into early adulthood. Research has been conducted to view the conceptions of athletes towards the authority of sports officials. These researchers took 80 male baseball players and put them into four different groups based on the following ages: 6-9, 10-13, 14-17, and 18-22. Individually,

the athletes came in for a structured interview, where they were first given a shorter form of Furth's Inventory of Piaget's Developmental Tasks to assess their cognitive development. Following the form, the athlete listened to a tape recording of a scenario about an imagined conflict they could possibly have with an umpire. After listening to the tapes the participants were asked a series of questions about the conflict. Results found that with age came sophistication, and therefore the answers to the questions mirrored earlier work on different levels of authority and obedience (Rainey et al., 1992). For the purpose of this study, the research would like to investigate the attitudes of students towards athletic coaches and their authority.

## Methods

### *Subjects and Design*

Fifty-six undergraduate students enrolled in introduction to psychology courses participated in this study and received course credit. The experiment was a 3(rule: severe, moderate, low) X 3(punishment: severe, moderate, low) X 2(participants: athletes and nonathletes) within-subject design. The researcher was interested in how likely the participant would be to obey a punishment given in a scenario dependent on the rule infraction.

### *Materials*

A two-part survey was used in the data collection portion of this study. The first part included demographics and asked a series of questions involving gender, ethnicity, whether they play a sport at the University, if they are a walk-on or scholarship athlete, and any experience they have had with an unfair coach. The second section had 9 questions based on a rule infraction and a punishment. The questions were counterbalanced with the level of rule infraction, and level of punishment. Students were given a series of questions after each scenario that were rated on a 7 point scale (where 1 was less likely and 7 was most likely), which included

the following: appropriateness of punishment, verbally questioning the punishment, complaining to teammates, and following through with the punishment.

*Procedure*

Sign-up sheets were placed outside of the psychology classrooms for introductory to psychology students. On the day the participant signed up for, they were instructed to meet in the classroom written on the sign-up sheet at a certain time. After the participants had completed the correct forms, they completed the two-part survey. The participants were then instructed to flip their surveys over when they were done, so that the researcher could pick them up individually. Once everybody was finished, the researcher debriefed the participants as a group and signed their cards so they could receive course credit.

## Results

Several repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted for each of the dependent variables measured. The first repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the participants view of the appropriateness of the punishment for the corresponding rule violation. Results indicated that there was a significant main effect of punishment [$F(2, 96) = 23.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$, Power = .99]. Post hoc analysis indicated that all three types of punishment differ from each other with trash pickup perceived as the most inappropriate and push-ups perceived as the most appropriate punishment. In addition, there was a significant interaction [$F(4, 192) = 7.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$, Power = .99]. Specifically, push-ups were perceived as the most appropriate punishment followed by running a mile and picking up trash for all rule infractions except for cutting class. In particular for the rule infraction of cutting class, the most appropriate punishment was running a mile followed by push-ups and picking up trash.

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the participants' willingness to vocally question the punishment. Results indicated that there was a significant main effect of punishment [$F(2, 96) = 22.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, Power = .99]. Post hoc analysis indicated that all three types of punishment differ from each other with participants' to more likely question vocally picking-up trash to either running a mile or doing push-ups.

In addition, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the participants' willingness to complain to their teammates. Results indicated that there was a significant main effect of punishment [$F(2, 96) = 15.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, Power = .99]. Post hoc analysis indicated that all three types of punishment differ from each other with participants' to more likely complain to teammates about picking-up trash to either running a mile or doing push-ups.

Finally, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the participants' willingness to go through with the punishment given the rule infraction. Results indicated that there was a significant main effect of punishment [$F(2, 96) = 23.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, Power = .99]. Post hoc analysis indicated that all three types of punishment differ from each other with participants more likely to obey doing push-ups over running a mile or picking up trash. In addition, there was a marginally significant interaction [$F(4, 192) = 2.45$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$, Power = .69]. Specifically, push-ups were more likely to be obeyed followed by running a mile and picking up trash for all rule infractions. However, for cutting class the gap between push-ups and running a mile was far narrower than for either of the remaining two rule infractions.

## Discussion

The researcher hypothesized that athletes would be more likely to comply in all aspects of the survey than nonathletes. This hypothesis was not proven due to a small number of athletes

surveyed, however the study did provide significant outcomes that can and will be used for future research.

*Appropriateness*

Results indicated that push-ups were viewed as the most appropriate punishment, followed by running a mile, then picking up trash for all rule infractions except for skipping class. Push-ups were clearly the easiest punishment out of the three, so possibly the participants viewed that as being the one that they could most likely complete. Not everybody is capable of running an extra mile after practice, and certainly picking up trash at 4:00 in the morning followed by conditioning would be extremely exhausting. It is possible that the participants viewed them as "which one would I be most likely to succeed at completing" rather than "would this be appropriate given the rule infraction".

*Vocalizing and Complaining*

Results in this area indicated that participants would be more likely to vocally question, or complain to their teammates about picking up trash to either running a mile or doing push-ups. A possible explanation for this is that it is more of a mental challenge than a physical challenge. Waking up at the given hour to pick-up trash, followed by the physical exhaustion of conditioning would be a pretty extreme punishment. Participants were likely to have viewed this as something unethical and irrational, as well as something that does not enhance training. Whereas stopping for a minute to do push-ups or staying an extra 10 minutes to run another mile is consistent with training.

*Obedience*

Results in this section indicated that participants were more likely to go through with doing push-ups than running a mile or picking up trash. Specifically, push-ups were more likely

to be obeyed followed by running a mile and picking up trash for all rule infractions. For cutting class, however, the gap between push-ups and running a mile was much more narrow than for the remaining infractions. It is possible that the participants, again, viewed doing push-ups as something that was consistent with athletic participation. It is also interesting that running an extra mile doesn't seem as bad for cutting class as it does for arriving five-minutes late for practice or for violating the no-cussing rule. Here, depending on the athletic standing of the participant, class might be weighed much more heavily than the other two rules, and therefore participants would feel more guilt by not following it and feel they should punish themselves more harshly for doing so.

*Limitations*

Limitations in this study included the small amount of athletes that participated in the survey. It was noted after putting in the data that there were only four student-athletes that took the survey, which played a huge role in the proposed hypothesis. Also, the only athletic status taken into account was at a collegiate level. This was a limitation since there were only four collegiate athletes that took the survey. Rather, the study should have recorded whether the remaining participants had *ever* been involved in sports. In addition, this survey only focused on the athletic arena. Although this is an interesting area of study, the results should be compared to the other dominant arena of participation that exists in student's lives; the academic arena.

Based on the limitations, a second study was proposed. First, the second study sought to address the major limitation problem in the earlier study. The second study moved the questioning from just collegiate athletes to those who participated in sports at the high school level level. Next, the second study also evaluated the difference between athletic and academic

settings. In theory, the same weight should be given to both environments given the aforementioned research on obedience.

Little research has been done on athletes and obedience in either the athletic or academic setting. Studies show that high school athletes generally have more positive attitudes towards school, high grade point averages, less absences, and more interest in furthering their academic careers than non-athletes (Barber et al., 2001). To compliment this, athletes with poor academic performances and disciplinary records either decide they no longer with to belong to the sport, or are cut from the team. Especially during season, athletes are closely monitored by coaches and parents, which gives them more structure than the average student (Coakley, 2009).

In a recent survey (Wolverton, 2008), athletes reported that they spend nearly 40 hours a week on their sports, and the majority indicated that they spent less time than this on their academics. For athletes on teams where academic support is strong, the balance between grades and performance is more equal. The athletes who hold this equal weight have the following: past experiences that held academics at a high standard; support for academics from social networks; sights set on career opportunities after graduation; and social experiences and relationships that build confidence out of the sport (Coakley, 2009).

Coakley (1997) argues that the "hierarchical authority structures" are seen as normal in sports. This means that athletes are expected to be obedient to their coaches and should meet all of their expectations in regards to behavior, motivation, etc. He also points out that coaches can shame, humiliate, and derogate their athletes, and that they should respond by being tougher competitors (Stevenson, 1997).

# Methods

## *Subjects and Design*

A total of 86 participants took part in the study. Of those, 55 (64%) were female and 31 (36%) were male. The participants represented several ethnic groups including: 22 (38.1%) African American, 25 (29.1%) Caucasian, 19 (22.1%) Native American, 5 (5.8%) Hispanic, and 4 (4.7%) fell into other ethnic groups. The large majority of participants had been a part of a sports team in either high school or college (66.3%). The experiment was a 3(rule: severe, moderate, low) X 3(punishment: severe, moderate, low) X 2(setting: athletic and academic) within-subject design.

## *Materials*

A two-part survey was used in the data collection portion of this study. The first part included demographics and asked a series of questions involving gender, ethnicity, whether they play a sport at the University, or if they played a sport in high school. The second section had 18 questions based on a rule infraction and a punishment. The questions were counterbalanced with the setting, level of rule infraction, and level of punishment. Students were given a series of questions after each scenario that were rated on a 7 point scale (where 1 was less likely and 7 was most likely), which included the following: appropriateness of punishment, verbally questioning the punishment, complaining to teammates, and following through with the punishment.

## *Procedure*

Sign-up sheets were placed outside of the psychology classrooms for introductory to psychology students. On the day the participant signed up for, they were instructed to meet in the classroom written on the sign-up sheet at a certain time. After the participants had completed

the correct forms, they completed the two-part survey. The participants were then instructed to flip their surveys over when they were done, so that the researcher could pick them up individually. Once everybody was finished, the researcher debriefed the participants as a group and signed their cards so they could receive course credit.

## Results

As indicated earlier, following each of the scenarios, the same four questions were asked about the participant's belief in their own behavior. In order to determine the outcome of the study, several repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted on the data. Specifically, repeated measures ANOVA were conducted for each of the dependent variables collected in the four questions: appropriateness of punishment, verbal questioning of punishment, complaining about punishment, and follow through of punishment.

### *Appropriateness*

A repeated measures ANOVA was collected on the dependent variable of appropriateness of punishment. The results indicated significant main effects for each of the three independent variables. Specifically, results showed a main effect of appropriateness of punishment for the independent variable of rule [$F$ (2, 164) = 34.41, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$, Power = .99]. In this case, the appropriateness of punishment increased with the type of broken rule with cussing having the lowest level of perceived appropriateness followed by missing class and getting a DUI with the highest level of perceived appropriateness. Furthermore, the results indicated a main effect of appropriateness of punishment for the independent variable of punishment [$F$ (2, 164) = 27.91, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, Power = .99]. In particular, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director was seen as the most appropriate as compared with the other punishments of academic or athletic probation and removal from class or team.

Lastly, the results showed a main effect of appropriateness of punishment for the independent variable of setting [$F$ (1, 82) = 76.83, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .48$, Power = .99]. Interestingly, participants viewed punishment as being most appropriate in athletic settings as opposed to academic settings.

In addition to the three reported main effects, several interactions were found to be significant. First the results indicated a significant interaction for the independent variables of rule and punishment [$F$ (4, 328) = 27.11, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, Power = .99]. Here, results showed that as the punishment of probation was different from the other two depending on the rule. Specifically, the punishment of probation was seen as less appropriate for the rules of cussing and missing class as compared with the other punishments. However, the punishment of probation was seen as most appropriate for the rule of receiving a DUI as compared with the other punishments.

There was also a significant interaction for the dependent variables of rule and setting [$F$ (2, 164) = 30.40, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$, Power = .99]. Specifically, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the appropriateness of the punishment increased for the athletic setting. However, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the appropriateness of the punishment remained relatively low for the academic setting. Moreover, a significant interaction was found for the dependent variables of punishment and setting [$F$ (2, 164) = 24.86, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .23$, Power = .99]. In particular, as the severity of the punishment increased, the appropriateness of the punishment remained lower in the academic setting as compared to the athletic setting. This was especially true in the first rule punishment, which was seen as very appropriate in the athletic setting as opposed to being very inappropriate in the academic setting.

Lastly, the results showed a significant interaction for all three independent variables [$F$ (4, 328) = 25.33, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$, Power = .99]. Overall, the appropriateness of the punishments in the academic setting was lower regardless of the broken rule or punishment enforced. The data showed the same trend for all rule breaks and punishments except for the rule of DUI. The rule of a DUI resulted in the academic setting showing low levels of appropriateness in seeing the provost as compared to other rules. This was the opposite of the athletic setting, which indicated seeing the athletic director as the most appropriate punishment for this rule as compared with the other punishments.

*Verbal Questioning*

A repeated measures ANOVA was collected on the dependent variable of verbally questioning the punishment. The results indicated significant main effects for each of the three independent variables. Specifically, results showed a main effect of verbally questioning the punishment for the independent variable of rule [$F$ (2, 164) = 13.89, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$, Power = .99]. In this case, the amount verbal questioning would decrease with the severity of the broken rule. Furthermore, the results indicated a main effect of verbal questioning the punishment for the independent variable of punishment [$F$ (2, 164) = 18.80, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$, Power = .99]. In particular, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director would be least likely to be verbally questioned when compared with the other punishments of academic or athletic probation and removal from class or team. Lastly, the results showed a main effect of complaining about the punishment for the independent variable of setting [$F$ (1, 82) = 45.56, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .36$, Power = .99]. Here, participants would be more likely to verbally question a punishment in an academic setting as opposed to an athletic setting.

In addition to the three reported main effects, several interactions were found to be significant. First the results indicated a significant interaction for the independent variables of rule and punishment [$F$ (4, 328) = 31.68, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .28$, Power = .99]. Here, the results showed a relationship between the severity of the broken rule and the severity of the punishment. Specifically, as the severity of the rule increased, the level of verbal questioning decreased for each punishment. However, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director was consistently questioned about at a constant rate.

There was also a significant interaction for the dependent variables of rule and setting [$F$ (2, 164) = 22.10, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$, Power = .99]. Specifically, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the verbal questioning of the punishment decreased for the athletic setting. However, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the verbal questioning of the punishment remained relatively high for the academic setting. Moreover, a significant interaction was found for the dependent variables of punishment and setting [$F$ (2, 164) = 28.49, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$, Power = .99]. In particular, as the severity of the punishment increased, the verbal questioning of the punishment remained higher in the academic setting as compared to the athletic setting.

Lastly, the results showed a significant interaction for all three independent variables [$F$ (4, 328) = 10.63, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$, Power = .99]. Overall, verbal questioning of the punishments in the academic setting were higher regardless of the broken rule or punishment enforced. The data showed the same trend for all rule breaks and punishments except for the rule of DUI. The rule of a DUI resulted in the academic setting showing the highest level of verbal questioning with seeing the provost as compared to other rules. This was the opposite of the

athletic setting, which indicated seeing the athletic director as least verbally questioned punishment for this rule as compared with the other punishments.

*Complaining*

A repeated measures ANOVA was collected on the dependent variable of complaining about the punishment to others. The results indicated significant main effects for each of the three independent variables. Specifically, results showed a main effect of complaining about the punishment for the independent variable of rule [$F$ (2, 166) = 24.03, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, Power = .99]. In this case, the amount of complaining would decrease with the severity of the broken rule. Furthermore, the results indicated a main effect of complaining about the punishment for the independent variable of punishment [$F$ (2, 166) = 3.99, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$, Power = .71]. In particular, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director would be complained about the least as compared with the other punishments of academic or athletic probation and removal from class or team. Lastly, the results showed a main effect of complaining about the punishment for the independent variable of setting [$F$ (1, 83) = 12.52, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$, Power = .94]. Here, participants viewed would complain most about a punishment in an academic setting as opposed to an athletic setting.

In addition to the three reported main effects, several interactions were found to be significant. First the results indicated a significant interaction for the independent variables of rule and punishment [$F$ (4, 332) = 14.79, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$, Power = .99]. Here, the results showed a relationship between the severity of the broken rule and the severity of the punishment. Specifically, as the severity of the rule increased, the level of complaining about the punishment decreased for each punishment. However, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director was consistently complained about at a high rate.

There was also a significant interaction for the dependent variables of rule and setting [$F$ (2, 166) = 19.72, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$, Power = .99]. Specifically, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the complaining about the punishment decreased for the athletic setting. However, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the complaining about the punishment remained relatively high for the academic setting. Moreover, a significant interaction was found for the dependent variables of punishment and setting [$F$ (2, 166) = 14.82, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$, Power = .99]. In particular, as the severity of the punishment increased, the complaining about the punishment remained higher in the academic setting as compared to the athletic setting. However, although the academic setting showed greater levels of complaining, the athletic setting showed higher levels of complaining for the punishment of removal from the team.

Lastly, the results showed a significant interaction for all three independent variables [$F$ (4, 332) = 8.64, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, Power = .99]. Overall, the complaining about the punishments in the academic setting were higher regardless of the broken rule or punishment enforced. The data showed the same trend for all rule breaks and punishments except for the rule of DUI. The rule of a DUI resulted in the academic setting showing the highest level of complaining in seeing the provost as compared to other rules. This was the opposite of the athletic setting, which indicated seeing the athletic director as least complained about punishment for this rule as compared with the other punishments.

*Obeying the Punishment*

A repeated measures ANOVA was collected on the dependent variable of obeying the punishment. The results indicated significant main effects for each of the three independent variables. Specifically, results showed a main effect of obeying the punishment for the independent variable of rule [$F$ (2, 166) = 4.86, $p < .009$, $\eta^2 = .06$, Power = .80]. In this case, the

level of obeying would increase with the severity of the broken rule. Furthermore, the results indicated a main effect of obeying the punishment for the independent variable of punishment [$F$ (2, 166) = 47.78, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .37$, Power = .99]. In particular, the punishment of meeting with the Provost or Athletic Director would most likely be obeyed as compared with the other punishments of academic or athletic probation and removal from class or team. Lastly, the results showed a main effect of obeying the punishment for the independent variable of setting [$F$ (1, 83) = 72.01, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .47$, Power = .94]. Here, participants viewed would be most likely to obey the punishment in an athletic setting as opposed to an academic setting.

In addition to the three reported main effects, several interactions were found to be significant. First the results indicated a significant interaction for the independent variables of rule and punishment [$F$ (4, 332) = 23.96, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, Power = .99]. Here, the results showed a relationship between the severity of the broken rule and the severity of the punishment. Specifically, the data indicated that for the punishments of meeting with the provost/athletic director and removal from the class/team the level of obeying varied consistently with the severity of the rule infraction. However, for the punishment of probation from the class/team, the participants were less likely to obey regardless of the rule.

There was also a significant interaction for the dependent variables of rule and setting [$F$ (2, 166) = 15.11, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$, Power = .99]. Specifically, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the level of obeying the punishment increased for the athletic setting. However, as the severity of the rule infraction increased, the level of obeying the punishment remained relatively low for the academic setting. Moreover, a significant interaction was found for the dependent variables of punishment and setting [$F$ (2, 166) = 25.92, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$,

Power = .99]. In particular, as the severity of the punishment increased, the level of obeying the punishment remained higher in the athletic setting as compared to the academic setting.

Lastly, the results showed a significant interaction for all three independent variables [$F(4, 332) = 12.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$, Power = .99]. Overall, the level of obeying the punishments in the academic setting was lower regardless of the broken rule or punishment enforced. The data showed the same trend for all rule breaks and punishments except for the rule of DUI. The rule of a DUI resulted in the academic setting showing the lowest level of obeying in seeing the provost as compared to other rules. This was the opposite of the athletic setting, which indicated seeing the athletic director as most obeyed punishment for this rule as compared with the other punishments.

## Discussion

The researcher hypothesized that the students would give more weight to the authority of the athletic setting than of the academic setting. The resulting data proved the hypothesis and, according to responses, the athletic setting is viewed differently than the academic setting.

### *Appropriateness and Obedience*

Results indicated that in the athletic setting students are more likely to obey the punishment and feel that it is appropriate for the rule. On the other hand, students reported that they are less likely to obey the punishment and feel it is appropriate for the rule in the academic setting. This could be because it is generally accepted to receive these types of punishments in the athletic setting, but rare to receive punishments like these in an academic setting. If an athlete receives a DUI it would seem more appropriate for them to speak with the athletic director, as their actions effect the whole team. Whereas in the academic setting, if a student receives a DUI it typically only affects themselves rather than the whole class, therefore it would

seem less likely that they would pay a visit to the provost. In addition, athletes are much more recognized on campus than the average student, especially in highly commercialized universities. When they get in trouble, the spotlight is put on them and they now misrepresent the entire university, rather than just their team or even just themselves. Therefore, it should seem more appropriate for these punishments to occur in the eyes of the athlete rather than the eyes of the average student.

*Vocalizing and Complaining*

Results in this section indicated that participants would be less likely to verbally question and complain about the punishment in the athletic setting. In the academic setting, however, participants reported that they would be more likely to verbally question and complain about the punishment. This goes to show that authority figures in the athletic setting receive more respect than authority figures in the academic setting. It is a personal decision to refuse the punishment, however it is disrespectful to question and complain about the punishment. This could be due to the fact that coaches are often stereotyped as hard-nosed authoritarians, whereas professors are not usually viewed as having these same characteristics. It is possible that the students are fearful in the athletic setting, but not as much in the academic setting, which is why they view the two so differently.

*Comparing*

Overall, results indicated that the academic setting is viewed differently than the athletic setting. If a student is given both academic and athletic funding through scholarships, one would think that they would hold the same weight in both the athletic and academic settings. However, as the results show this is not the case. Students consistently showed that the athletic setting is given more respect than the academic setting. It is also important to note that the athletic

director throughout is given more respect than the provost. Further research should be conducted to examine what is causing these different viewpoints, and what could be done in the future to help professors gain more respect from their students.

*Limitations*

One limitation in this study is that the researcher has no knowledge if the students surveyed were getting any academic or athletic scholarships. This would be helpful to know because then a comparison could be done in students receiving funding and students who are paying for their own education. It would be interesting to know if students receiving scholarships in both settings hold a little more equal weight to both settings than those receiving no funding or funding in only one setting.

# Tables

## 1.0

1. You arrive 5 minutes late to full-team practice. As a result of your tardiness, your coach insists that you run an extra mile after the team gets done with conditioning for the day.
   Please circle the appropriate number for the following questions, with one being the least and seven being the most.

   a. How appropriate do you think this punishment is? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   b. How likely would you be to vocally question this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   c. How likely would you be to complain to your teammates about this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   d. How likely would you be to go through with this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. You get caught by your coach not attending one or more classes on a given day. As a result, you are instructed to be at the field (or gym) to pick up trash at 4:00 am, followed by conditioning.
   Please circle the appropriate number for the following questions, with one being the least and seven being the most.

   a. How appropriate do you think this punishment is? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   b. How likely would you be to vocally question this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   c. How likely would you be to complain to your teammates about this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   d. How likely would you be to go through with this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. There is a strict no-cussing policy understood by the team. You get caught cussing out of frustration, and as a result you must do ten push-ups in front of the coach.
   Please circle the appropriate number for the following questions, with one being the least and seven being the most.

   a. How appropriate do you think this punishment is? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   b. How likely would you be to vocally question this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   c. How likely would you be to complain to your teammates about this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   d. How likely would you be to go through with this punishment? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Demographics

8. How old are you? ___
9. What is your gender? Male / Female
10. What is your ethnicity?
    A. White
    B. African-American
    C. Native-American
    D. Asian-American
    E. Other
11. Are you a current **scholarship** athlete at UNCP? Yes / No
12. Are you a current **walk-on** athlete at UNCP? Yes / No
13. What varsity sport do you play at UNCP? ___
14. Have you ever gone through with a coach's punishment that you thought was unfair? If so, please provide an example (does not have to be at UNCP). _____
15. Have you ever gone through with a coach's punishment that you thought was beyond your ability? If so, please provide an example (does not have to be at UNCP). _____

# References

Barber, B. L., Jacquelynne S. Eccles, and M. R. Stone. 2001. Whatever happened to the jock, the brain, and the princess? Young adult pathways linked to adolescent activity involvement and social identity. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 16, 5: 429–455.

Coakley, J. (2004). *Sports in society: Issues & controversies.* New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Coakley, J. (2009). *Sports in society: Issues & controversies.* New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Damon, W. *The Social World of the Child*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Rainey, D. W., Santilli, N. R., Fallon, K. (1992). Development of athletes' conceptions of sport officials' authority. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 14(4).* 394-404.

Stevenson, C. 1999. Becoming an elite international athlete: Making decisions about identity. In J. Coakley & P. Donnelly, eds., *Inside Sports* (pp. 86-95). London: Routledge.

Wolverton, B., 2008. Athletes' hours renew debate over college sports. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54, 20. http://chronicle.com/weekly/v54/i20/20a00101.htm.