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The Glass Closet: Perceptions of Homosexuality in Intercollegiate Sport

Jordan Bass

Robin Hardin

Elizabeth A. Taylor

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Abstract

A mixed-methods approach was used to examine the perceptions and prevalence of open homosexuality in intercollegiate sport in the United States. University-hosted biographies of NCAA Bowl Championship Series (BCS) head coaches were coded to determine the frequency of head coaches listing a wife, husband, and same-sex partner (Calhoun, LaVoi, & Johnson, 2011). These findings were paired with interviews of five college coaches exploring their feelings toward the culture surrounding homosexuality, by players, coaches, and administrators, at their university. Only one coach of more than 1,000 was identified as having a same-sex partner in university-sponsored coaching biographies. Interview findings revealed collegiate athletics is not as accepting to homosexuality even though societal acceptance is increasing.

Keywords: *gender, homosexuality, coaching biographies, institutional policy, coaching, college sport*

Jordan Bass is an assistant professor and the executive director of the Laboratory for the Study of Sport Management at the University of Kansas.

Robin Hardin is a professor in the Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies at the University of Tennessee.

Elizabeth A. Taylor is a doctoral student in the Sport Management program in the Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies at the University of Tennessee.

Please send correspondence to Jordan Bass, jrbass@ku.edu

"*Soon enough, she found herself living in a glass closet.*" (Fagan, 2013, para. 20)

ESPN writer Kate Fagan used these words to describe women's basketball player Brittney Griner during her time at Baylor University. After being selected in the WNBA draft, Griner revealed school officials had instructed her to not publicly discuss her sexuality even though she told head coach Kim Mulkey she was gay while she was being recruited (Fagan, 2013). To some, Griner's situation was unique because she attended and played at a private institution with a policy addressing homosexuality in the student handbook. In many ways, however, her identity battle is part of a larger phenomenon where university administrators are increasingly balancing free expression and a changing culture. Princeton Survey Research Associates reported in July 2013 that 55% of respondents believed same-sex couples should be allowed to legally marry. That number was 27% in 1996 (Page, 2013). The delicacy of this balance is heightened in a college sports landscape where administrators and coaches are consistently competing with other institutions and entertainment options for, among other things, athletes, fundraising dollars, and community support. Griner's situation also harkens back to what West and Zimmerman (1987) referred to as "doing" gender:

> …the "doing" of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine "natures" (p. 126).

Griner was participating in an arena, sport, which Goffman (1977) identified as an "institutionalized framework" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137) for the expression of manliness. Yet, Griner stated she felt compelled in middle school to "fit in, dressing like the other girls, dating boys, but she was a collage of mismatched pieces, built from images she thought others wanted to see" (Fagan, 2013, para. 6). By high school and college, Griner was a star basketball player who wore "men's sneakers, oversize jeans, and a baggy shirt, try(ing) the stud label on for size" (Fagan, 2013, para. 7). Even so, she "couldn't be all the way out" (Fagan, 2013, para. 5) at Baylor because of the fear of repercussions from fans and society at large.

Further, discrimination based on sexuality has garnered widespread attention in this decade. For example, in November of 2013 the University of Connecticut women's basketball team spoke out against discrimination of lesbian and bisexual athletes in women's sports (Associated Press, 2013). Their statement was part of a larger campaign created by two former college women's basketball players to draw attention to sexual orientation discrimination. Connecticut was the first team featured in a video supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT); the University of North Carolina women's lacrosse team has also filmed a video for the "Br(ache the Silence" campaign.

Purpose of the Study

As the topic of homosexuality in college sport transitions into the national narrative, a mixed-methods framework was used to examine homosexuality in regard to collegiate coaches. First, the prevalence of homosexuality in collegiate coaches' official university biographies was investigated. Next, interviews were utilized to gauge coaches' viewpoints on the acceptance of homosexuality in collegiate sport. University-sponsored coaching biographies of head coaches of all varsity sports at Bowl Championship Series (BCS) schools were inspected to explore how coaches' families were identified and described. Among other aspects, this research examined the relationship status in the official university biography of collegiate coaches. Five coaches were then interviewed within collegiate athletics, three men and two women, to assess the degree to which they believed coaches and athletes could express their sexuality at the institution and within their community. The research questions guiding the study were (1) How was family structure presented in official university coaching biographies, and (2) What were coaches opinions concerning open homosexuality by coaches and student-athletes? The questions were addressed by analyzing official university coaching biographies posted to university websites and interviewing five collegiate coaches.

Theoretical Framework

College basketball coach Cindy Russo brought attention to the issue of homophobia in college athletics and in particular women's college basketball with her comments in November 2014 (Kaufman, 2014). Russo, who has coached at the NCAA level for approximately 40 years said great strides have been made in the acceptance of lesbians and gays in sports but homophobia is still present in college sports. There has only been one openly gay NCAA Division I women's basketball coach and that was Sherri Murrell who had a picture of her partner and twin daughters in the 2009 Portland State women's basketball media guide (Kaufman, 2014). Homophobia has been used against coaches in recruiting and at times has forced coaches to not be openly gay. This is turn leads to a cycle of coaches entering the profession to not be openly gay because the prevailing opinion has been to not discuss sexuality (Kaufman, 2014). This scenario provided the basis of the theoretical framework to guide the current study in regards to how coaches present their relationship status and the presence of sexual prejudice in college sports.

Framing

Framing theory provided the foundation for examining the coaching biographies. Framing can be defined as the process of selecting elements of reality and arranging them to highlight their connections, therefore shaping the media consumer's interpretations by presenting only a piece of the full representation of an event, issue, or idea (Entman, 2007; Riechert, 1996). Framing can also be viewed as placing information in context as such so certain elements of the issue

would get more attention from a person (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Framing can be applied to coaching biographies in that coaching achievements will be certainly be highlighted but marital and family status are also chosen to be presented in a particular way. Examining the coaching biographies provides partial insight into how coaches, athletic departments, and sport communication professionals are choosing to present the personal side of the coach.

The use of any sort of language or descriptors is not the only thing that influences opinion about a person or, in this case, a coach, but it can be one of the many factors involved (Auslander & Gold, 1999; Pate & Hardin, 2013). Personal experience, use of the media, external events, opinion leaders, and interpersonal communication all influence the effect of media on public opinion (Baran & Davis, 1995; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; McQuail, 1994; McQuail & Windahl, 1993; Severin & Tankard, 1992). This examination will provide insight into the language used to describe something that is not considered a traditional relationship (i.e., husband and wife), or if the notion of nontraditional relationships are even mentioned.

Examining coaching biographies was especially timely, as college coaches and administrators have used their biographies as a space to first publicly declare their sexual orientation. Rutgers athletic director Julie Hermann used the university website to publicly confirm she is gay in 2013. The last sentence of her biography identifies her partner and son (McMurphy, 2013). Further, Portland State women's basketball coach Sherri Murrell became known as "the only publicly gay coach in Division I women's basketball" (Bachman, 2011, para. 3) when a family photo of her and her partner holding their twin children was uploaded to her coaching biography (Borde, 2010). Murrell's biography was unique, as open declarations of homosexuality are scarce in the intercollegiate sports empire. As we detail later, the family atmosphere is often sold during the recruiting of high school student-athletes, and the coaching biography is a place where recruits and their families can determine the marital and family status of coaches. Previously, Calhoun, LaVoi, and Johnson (2011) examined NCAA head coaching biographies and found "a near absence of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered coaches, suggesting that digital content (is)…plagued by homophobia is overt and subtle ways" (p. 300).

Sexual Prejudice

Sexual prejudice within the sport industry. Future sport and fitness professionals hold more negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians than for other minority groups (Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, & Shultz, 2006). Although it is important to note that participants further along in their educational tenure held more positive attitudes and gave more positive evaluations than those students who were just beginning their tenure, many of the future sport and fitness professional held negative attitudes toward sexual minorities (Gill et. al., 2006). Gender may play a role in prejudice against sexual minorities. Cunningham, Sartore, and McCullough (2010) found that men rate sexual minorities as poorer candi-

dates for jobs than they did heterosexuals, while there was no significant difference when women rated applicants. This sexual prejudice can negatively affect opportunities for those individuals who identify as being LGBT. In addition, when these negative attitudes are openly expressed, individuals in the sexual minority can feel pressure to suppress their real sexual identities. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athletes may feel pressure to downplay their sexual orientation or portray heterosexual characteristics (Anderson, 2002; Kauer & Krane, 2006). Athletes who identify as LGBT may also use their athletic ability in attempts to gain acceptance from their teammates and deemphasize their sexual orientation (Gough, 2007). This then leads to the notion of not revealing a sexual orientation that is not considered "acceptable."

Knowing that sport may be an unsupportive arena for gay, lesbian, or transgendered persons, Melton and Cunningham (2014a) sought to explore the experiences of sport industry employees who identify as being LGBT. They found that although all participants identified as being LGBT, it was not the most important aspect of their work or social life, and most of the participants expressed high levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall life satisfaction (Melton & Cunningham, 2014a). Participants expressed a desire for coworkers to see them as a multidimensional person, and to not overemphasize their sexual orientation (Melton & Cunningham, 2014a). Scholars have taken a wide range of approaches to examine perceptions of homosexuality in sport (and intercollegiate sport). The focus of the current study is on intercollegiate sport and used a combination of secondary data and interviews to conduct further investigations of the perceptions of homosexuality.

Literature Review

Homophobia

A precise percentage is difficult to find because of varying definitions, differing data collection methods, and stigma attached with identifying as homosexual, bisexual, or transgender. Research has found that approximately 3.5% or 9 million residents of the United States population identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender in 2013 (LGBT; Gates, 2013). This percentage has nearly doubled during the past 20 years, possibly due to an increasing acceptance of the LGBT lifestyle (Gates, 2013).

Acceptance of the LGBT lifestyle may be on the rise, but there are, however, many individuals in the United States and around the world who are homophobic. Homophobia is defined as an intense hatred or fear of homosexuals or homosexuality (homophobia, n.d.). This hatred or fear leads to harassment and violence toward LGBT individuals, plus anxiety and isolation for this minority group and has been the source of great conflict throughout history (Demers, 2006; Lenskyj, 1991). Even though homophobia has been shown to exist in numerous facets of life for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (e.g., the

workplace, religious organizations, social settings) there is one setting where these individuals may receive the highest amount of scrutiny: sport (Goffman, 1977). The global sport industry is worth billions of dollars, and professional athletes can be seen nearly 24 hours a day though television, websites, social media, traditional print media and radio (Pedersen, Miloch, & Laucella, 2007; Schultz, 2011). Sport is introduced at an early age in the United States as recreational and competitive opportunities begin through national organizations such as YMCA and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), and countless municipality park and recreation opportunities (Coakley, 2009). These opportunities continue throughout high school and into college either through competitive, recreational, or intramural activities. There is no escaping sport in American society either through participation, fandom, or consumption (Coakley, 2009).

Homophobia and Athletes. Male athletes learn from an early age that they are supposed to exhibit the highest levels of masculinity possible, and if they are unable to prove their heterosexual status, they are targets for ridicule (Messner, 1992). It is not uncommon for a man to be mocked with a homophobic slur such as "queer," regardless of his sexuality, if he is uninterested or performs poorly in sport, especially during his youth years (Gough, 2007). On the other hand, women who achieve large amounts of athletic success often have their heterosexuality called into question. Based on societal norms, women are supposed to exhibit characteristics that are traditionally thought of as feminine (e.g., emotional, empathetic, needy). Successful female athletes often exhibit characteristics that would be considered more masculine (e.g., strong, active, forceful), causing them to be classified as lesbian, regardless of their sexual orientation. It becomes even more oppressing for those athletes who actually are gay, secretively or openly. Openly gay athletes report such challenges as using sport as a distraction from sexuality, suppressing "inner" gay feelings during sport participation, and coming out to a team (Gough, 2007). Although these young gay athletes may have never been interested in sport, they felt peer and parental pressure to join teams, attend practices, and travel to games, all the while having to suppress their innermost feelings in order to be accepted by their teammates and coaches (Gough, 2007).

Many girls drop out sport or attempt to not show their athletic prowess because they do not want to receive this stigmatized label of being a lesbian (Demers, 2006). These female athletes may also opt to participate in "female appropriate sports," such as gymnastics or figure skating, even if they lack interest simply because they do not wish to be subjected to ridicule from family, friends, and fans. Female athletes often find themselves in a confusing and conflicting world when they participate in sport. Based on societal views, participating in sport means doing masculine, and therefore females who participate in sport are faced with a discrepancy between their gender, or femininity, and their love for sport (Dworkin, 2001; McGrath & Chananie-Hill, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Although the public often perceives female athletes to be gay, it isn't always easy for these athletes to be openly gay. However, research has shown that openly

lesbian female athletes experience greater acceptance from other female athletes (e.g., teammates) than do male athletes (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Anderson (2011) found that openly gay high school and university athletes did not fear coming out in the same to the same degree as athletes had in previous studies. In the past, athletes were fearful of physical hostility, marginalization, or social exclusion, but the athletes in Anderson's study did not fear this would happen on or off the court as a result from sharing their sexuality with teammates (Anderson, 2011). Shang, Liao, and Gill (2012) found that for Taiwanese female athletes, positive experiences with sexual minorities (e.g., gay or lesbian athletes) were associated with a more positive attitude toward gay and lesbian athletes. Even though heterosexual females may accept their homosexual team members, they often want to keep the homosexual status of these team members quiet in order to help protect the image and reputation of the team (Demers, 2006).

The announcement of a homosexual team member may increase the stereotype that all female athletes are lesbians, and may create animosity between teammates. Many teammates may react in an accepting manner when a lesbian comes out, though a few may respond in negative ways. Lesbians may appear more masculine than other female athletes, so there is concern that a masculine appearing female athlete may cause the entire team to be labeled as lesbian (Hekma, 1998). Some researchers report that team members may refuse to share a room with a lesbian teammate on a road trip while others feel uncomfortable changing in front of her in the locker room (Demers, 2006). As straight female athletes attempt to prove their femininity while simultaneously performing at high levels athletically, lesbian athletes often attempt to hide their sexuality so they can continue to participate in sport without criticism beyond the (perceived) normal speculation. These lesbian athletes use survival strategies such as "live with your secret" and "be as invisible as possible" to remain in the closet about their secret on the playing field (Demers, 2006). Female athletes of color report being generally accepted for certain identities, such as race and gender, while receiving blatant prejudice due to their sexual orientation (Melton & Cunningham, 2013). Although these female athletes received social support from their teammates, a change from previous research, participants still felt that they had to conceal their sexual identity around coaches (Melton & Cunningham, 2013).

Research on female homosexuality and sport examines how many female athletes break societal gender norms and exhibit masculinity instead of femininity, but research on homosexuality and male sport revolves around suspicions that are raised when a boy shows no interest in playing sports. It is considered normal, even desirable, for a boy to participate in several sports, especially those sports that exhibit the highest levels of masculinity in the United States. Men are often automatically considered heterosexual if they participate in athletics, and sport participation is associated with the development of male athlete's manliness (Demers, 2006). Male student-athletes were found to have more negative attitudes

toward gay men and lesbian athletes than did female student-athletes (Roper & Halloran, 2007). In addition to being an undesirable label in male athletics, many gay men do not come out to teammates because of the manner in which male athletes communicate in the locker room. Scholarly articles and popular press articles draw attention to the tremendously homophobic language used by male athletes and coaches behind the closed doors of the locker room and practice (Bryant, 2013; Demers, 2006; Kluwe, 2013; Mullen, 2013). Kevin Grayson, an openly gay collegiate and professional football player told media he kept his sexuality a secret because he did not want to be focused on in that way, and that if you are an athlete, you want to be an athlete, not a gay athlete (Sieczkowski, 2013). Grayson also reported witnessing homophobia in the football locker room at all levels throughout his career, and believes there are gay players in the National Football League (Sieczkowski, 2013). Other male athletes have recently began to come out as well, including National Football League prospect Michael Sam, the National Basketball League's Jason Collins, and former Middle Tennessee State kicker Alan Gendreau (Sieczkowski, 2013). Arizona State's Chip Sarafin openly admitted he was gay prior to the 2014 season becoming the first active NCAA player to be open about his or her homosexuality (Haller & Finnerty, 2014).

Homophobia and coaches. Homophobia in sport not only impacts athletes. Coaches and athletic administrators are also affected. However, studies about homosexuality in female sport, male sport, and coaching are very different. The words "female athlete" and "lesbian" are often used in the same sentence (Demers, 2006). This is because women who achieve high levels of success in the sports realm break societal norms of feminism and delicateness that are expected of all women (Kolnes, 1995). These female athletes exhibit such qualities as strength at levels deemed only acceptable for men and are therefore criticized for not being feminine enough. This criticism often leads to an automatic label of lesbian, which causes many straight female athletes to believe they have to prove they are not homosexual (Demers, 2006). Athletes have been found to overemphasize their femininity and mask their athletic identity in an effort to avoid discrimination, which often comes in the form of the lesbian label (Wellman & Blinde, 1997). Female athletes may try to show their femininity off the field or court through their physical appearance, wearing make-up and dressing in "feminine" clothing (e.g., dresses, skirts, floral prints; Knight & Giuliano, 2003). These females athletes who have their sexuality called into question may attempt to showcase their heterosexual status through the media. They may agree to pose in photo shoots portraying them performing traditional feminine jobs (e.g., cooking, cleaning, shopping) or with their heterosexual family, including children if they have any, instead of photo shoots that highlight their athletic ability, strength, or masculinity, even if that aids in their athletic success (Lenskyj, 2012).

Homophobia in the Sporting Narrative

The examination of the media portrayals of homosexual professional diver Greg Louganis, heterosexual professional basketball player Magic Johnson, and heterosexual professional boxer Tommy Morrison was a foundational research project in examining homophobia in the media. Although Louganis, Johnson, and Morrison are all athletes, they are looked at differently. Johnson, a stand-out professional basketball player, and Morrison, a professional boxer, participate in sports that portray their masculinity. In order to achieve the type of success experienced by Johnson, an athlete must demonstrate the highest levels of masculinity through strength, power, and athleticism. Similar to Johnson, Morrison participated in a sport characterized by power and domination of another athlete. Contrarily, Louganis participated in diving, a sport requiring grace and flexibility, characteristics often associated with "female appropriate" sports. Johnson's and Morrison's self-proclaimed heterosexual "promiscuous" behavior is often the norm under the hegemonic masculinity of male sport, in contrast to Louganis's openly gay sexuality.

Wachs and Dworkin (1997; 1998) examined the media coverage of the announcements in which they confirmed they were HIV positive. Johnson and Morrison were often framed as heroes for living with such a terrible illness, tragic figures and victims because they contracted HIV through their sexual encounters with women. It was the women with whom they had sexual encounters fault for giving them this virus. Louganis was portrayed as a carrier because of his sexuality. Nowhere in the articles about Johnson's or Morrison's announcement does it discuss the possibility they infected any of the many women they slept with, but almost all of the articles on Louganis express concern for the "community" over his blood in the water incident, despite the extremely slim change of spreading the disease that way (Wachs & Dworkin, 1997).

It is not just homophobia from teammates and coaches that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athletes have to be bothered by however, they must also worry about the media and fans as well. This issue is well documented by looking at media coverage of homosexual athletes. Hughson and Free (2011) examined the homophobic language used in England's tabloid press in regards to the coverage of homosexual professional soccer players. There was a campaign to fight homophobia, but the language used by the tabloid press presented seemed to not take the campaign seriously. Homophobic language was also present in posts to football message boards by fans (Kian, Clavio, Vincent, & Shaw, 2011). Kian and Anderson's (2009) examination of professional basketball player John Amaechi's announcement he was gay found sport writers called for more acceptance of the gays within sport but there was some homophobic language used. Hardin, Keuhn, Jones, Genovese, and Balaji (2009) also found the print articles covering Amaechi to be more progressive and acceptance but there was still an underlying tone of homophobia. Knight and Giuliano (2009) found athletes who were clearly iden-

tified as heterosexual were perceived more favorably by media consumers than athletes with an ambiguous sexual orientation.

Homophobia in Collegiate Coaching

Some sport organizations (e.g., university athletic departments) try to avoid talking about LGBT athletes and coaches in their sport or sport organization because it could affect public relationships, sponsorships, recruitment, and the image of women in sport (Demers, 2006). Being openly homosexual can have extremely negative consequences on coaches (e.g., trouble landing and keeping a job, difficulties recruiting athletes) which leads these coaches to keep their sexuality a secret from other coaches and administrators as well as their players (Lenskyj, 1991). In addition, power influences employees' willingness to vocally support LGBT equality. Employees with low status positions within the athletic department are more hesitant to voice support for LGBT equality than those with high power positions (Melton & Cunningham, 2014b). Baylor University does not allow openly gay men and women to serve on the faculty, and in 2004 an openly gay male athlete was stripped of his athletic scholarship (Waldron, 2013). Collegiate football player Jamie Kuntz argues that he was removed from the team for kissing his boyfriend at an away game (MacPherson, 2012). The kiss was witnessed by another player who reportedly told the coaches. North Dakota State College of Sciences head coach Chuck Parson told Kuntz he was being removed from the team because he had lied to coaches about the kiss, not because of his sexuality, but Kuntz and his family remain skeptical (MacPherson, 2012).

Similarly, Baylor head women's basketball coach Kim Mulkey has been accused of advising her athletes not to discuss their sexuality in public because it may hurt recruiting (Grasgreen, 2013). It is not just being an openly gay coach that is thought to harm recruiting of the best players, having gay players on the team is also thought to decrease the chances of securing top recruits. Baylor is not the only university where coaches stress the importance of keeping players' and coaches' personal lives quiet during recruiting visits along with showing that the team has positive morals and wholesome values. Iowa State women's basketball players claim their head coach, Bill Fennelly, continually reinforces the notion that keeping personal lives quiet and mentioning the "family-oriented" values of the team is critical during recruiting visits (Cyphers & Fagan, 2011). Fennelly claims he pushes the team's familial spirit because that is what he has to sell, not to silence any lesbian athletes or coaches (Cyphers & Fagan, 2011).

While some coaches attempt to hide the homosexuality of current players and coaches to preserve a wholesome, family image for recruits, Rene Portland, longtime Pennsylvania State University head women's basketball coach, has been accused of not allowing homosexual players on her team (Voepel, 2007). Portland, who coached at Penn State from 1980 to 2007, openly did not want lesbian players on her team, and this policy received national media attention in 1986 and again in 1991 (Voepel, 2007). "I will not have it in my program," Portland said in 1986

to the *Chicago Sun-Times* when discussing homosexuality on her basketball team (Buzinski, 2011). Penn State required Portland to attend sensitivity training about homosexuality and homophobia, but many do not think she changed, because a number of former players surfaced, claiming Portland discriminated against them, and even removed them from the team on the basis of their sexuality (Voepel, 2007). Her eventual resignation came on the heels of a lawsuit by former player Jen Harris who had the support of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (Buzinski, 2011). An internal review found Portland created an hostile environment based on Harris' perceived sexual orientation. The lawsuit was settled under confidential terms (Lieber, 2006; Penn State coach, ex-player reach settlement, 2007).

Kathy Marpe, who closeted her homosexuality while coaching at the University of San Diego for many years, was certain a number of recruits were steered away from her program by allegation and innuendo about her sexuality (Cyphers & Fagan, 2011). Marpe said coaches use phrases such as the school has an "unhealthy" or "not family-friendly" climate to describe programs where the coaches or players are thought to be lesbian (Cyphers & Fagan, 2011). Straight female and male coaches use these negative recruiting tactics to show parents that they will not "corrupt" their daughters (i.e., turn them into lesbians). Similar to how young girls may quit sport because they do not want to deal with the stigma of being labeled a lesbian, the previous literature lends one to believe that elite level openly lesbian and gay athletes may not pursue a coaching career because they do not want to deal with the intolerance.

Methodology

Examination of Coaching Biographies

An examination of coaching biographies was performed to identify each coach's relationship status based on the biography posted on the official athletic website of each university. Five conferences participating in Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision were used in the data collection: 1) Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), 2) Big Ten, 3) Big Twelve, 4) Pac-12, and 5) Southeastern (SEC). These conferences were comprised of 62 member institutions. We chose the conferences because they compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics and are likely to sponsor the most number of sports based on their revenue and commitment to intercollegiate athletics. In all, coding was conducted for 1,052 coaches. This does not represent the total of number of teams because some coaches coached more than one team (i.e., combined men's and women's track and field teams and swimming and diving teams). There was also no coaching information available for some teams and this could have been due to transition of the coaching staff or a vacancy in the position. Coding was conducted for sport, gender of the sport, coach gender, marital status, and children (see Table 1). Marital status was coded into five categories: (1) married, (2) partner, (3) engaged, (4) widow, and (5) no mention.

There is debate as to what actually constitutes marriage in whether it has to be comprised of only a man and woman (Nastich, 2003). There are many arguments that marriage can consist of same-sex couples as well be comprised by more than two people (Jorgenson, 2013; Oppenheimer, Oliveira, & Blumenthal, 2014). The U.S. Census Bureau (2013) reported more than 640,000 same-sex couple households in 2010, which is approximately 1% of U.S. population. For the purposes of this study, marriage was defined as "between a man and women" which is the language used by 31 states and two territories as of July 2014 to define marriage for legal purposes (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). The authors acknowledge this definition is not universally accepted, as in fact 19 states allow for same-sex marriage of July 2014, and the Supreme Court recently recognized same-sex marriage on the federal level (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). Biographies were coded for married when language such as husband, wife, and married was used. All the biographies coded for married consisted of a man and woman. This was determined based on traditional gender assigned names and pictures on webpages (Chen, Gallagher, & Girod, 2014). This was also used a coding method based on Rutgers athletic director Julie Herrmann official biography. She is openly a lesbian and lives in a state (New Jersey) where same-sex marriage is legal, but her biography identifies her partner not wife or spouse (Julie Hermann, n.d.). Biographies were coded as engaged or partner when those words were used and widow when a spouse's death was mentioned. Biographies were coded as no mention when there were there was information or description of any type of marital status.

In all, just more than 72% of the coaches were men. Similarly, 72% of the coaches listed they were married and 68% listed children in their profile. With regard to homosexuality, only one NCAA Division Football Bowl Subdivision coach listed a same-sex partner on her coaching biography, or less than 1%. The same number of coaches, one, listed their marital status as engaged or widowed (see Tables 2 and 3). One is actually less than the number found by Calhoun et al. (2011), as they found two coaches listed a same-sex partner.

There is a significant difference in coaches based on gender as 72.8% of coaches were men and 27.2% of coaches were women ($\chi^2 = 210.21$, $p \leq .000$). Marital status and children greatly differ based on gender. An overwhelming amount of male coaches, just under 82%, identified themselves as being married and only 47.4% of female coaches indicated they were married ($\chi^2 = 121.98$, $p \leq .000$). These results are in contrast to the national average for individuals between 35 and 59 years old where 66% of women and 70% of men are married (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Similarly, more than three-fourths of male coaches, 77%, listed children on their biography and only 44.5% of female coaches listed children in their biography ($\chi^2 = 98.10$, $p \leq .000$). Having children was coded with no consideration to marital status.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of NCAA Division I BCS Head Coaching Biographies (Male and Female)

	ACC	Big 10	Big 12	Pac 12	SEC	Total
Coaches	247	249	136	212	206	1050
Team Gender						
Male	40.5	44.2	37.5	37.3	35	39.2
Female	46.6	47.8	51.5	52.4	52.9	39.9
Both	11.3	6.8	9.6	9	11.2	9.5
Co-Ed	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.4	1	1.3
Coach Gender						
Male	75.6	70.5	72.8	69.3	75.6	72.8
Female	24.4	29.5	27.2	30.7	24.4	27.2
Marital Status						
Married	70.1	72.4	76.5	66	78.7	72.5
No Mention	29.5	27.2	23.5	34	20.8	27.2
Partner	4	0	0	0	0	0.1
Engaged	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.1
Widow	0	0.4	0	0	0	0.1
Children						
Yes	69.7	66.9	72.8	62.2	70.8	68.3
No	30.3	33.1	27.2	37.8	39.2	31.7

Note. All numbers are in percentages except for Coaches which is the actual count. Coaches were coded as coaching both males and females if they were identified as the head coach or director, i.e., a coach identified as Director of Track & Field. Sports coded as Co-Ed were pistol, rifle, sailing, and skiing.

Coaches' Perceptions of Homosexuality in Women's Sports

An utter lack of same-sex partners in collegiate coaching biographies leads to many questions including why they are not listed and what are coaches' views about open homosexuality in college sports not only among coaches but student-athletes. While we can make many assumptions about the reasons behind the dearth of mentions of homosexuality in biographies, researchers have failed to examine the perceptions of collegiate coaches on sexuality in biographies. Thus, five coaches were interviewed to begin to preliminary explore the attitudes toward homosexuality in collegiate sport in general, and specifically in coaching biographies. Institutional Review Approval was gained, and a sample of three male and two female coaches were interviewed. The subjects were coaches from whom the researchers had a prior relationship due to the sensitive nature of the information gathered and the trust needed to respond freely.

Interviews are often used to research controversial and sensitive topics (i.e. binge drinking (Jayne, Holloway, & Valentine, 2006); the sex industry (Hubbard, Boydell, Crofts, Prior, & Searle, 2013); climate change (Demeritt, 2012). Same-sex relationships are controversial based on the differences in state laws and the emotions that can be triggered within people when the topic is discussed. It is difficult to research controversial and sensitive topics, and care must be given "to en-

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Male NCAA Division I BCS Head Coaching Biographies

	ACC	Big 10	Big 12	Pac 12	SEC	Total
Coaches	177	172	99	133	155	736
Team Gender						
Male	53.1	61	51.5	51.1	46.5	54
Female	30.5	29.1	35.4	35.3	38.1	33.3
Both	14.1	8.7	12.1	11.3	14.8	12.2
Co-Ed	2.3	1.2	1	2.3	0.6	1.5
Marital Status						
Married	78	84.2	82.8	80	84.9	81.9
No Mention	22	15.8	17.2	20	15.1	18.1
Partner	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engaged	0	0	0	0	0	0
Widow	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children						
Yes	77.4	78.2	80.8	73.8	76.3	77.2
No	22.6	21.8	19.2	26.2	23.7	22.8

Note. All numbers are in percentages except for Coaches, which is the actual count. Coaches were coded as coaching both males and females if they were identified as the head coach or director (i.e., a coach identified as Director of Track & Field). Sports coded as Co-Ed were pistol, rifle, sailing, and skiing.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Female NCAA Division I BCS Head Coaching Biographies

	ACC	Big 10	Big 12	Pac 12	SEC	Total
Coaches	57	72	37	59	50	275
Team Gender						
Male	0	1.4	0	0	0	0.4
Female	96.5	94.4	94.6	94.9	98	95.6
Both	3.5	2.8	5.1	5.1	0	2.9
Co-Ed	0	1.4	0	0	2	1.1
Marital Status						
Married	45.6	44.4	59.5	34.5	60	47.4
No Mention	52.6	54.2	40.5	65.5	38	51.5
Partner	1.8	0	0	0	0	0.4
Engaged	0	0	0	0	2	0.4
Widow	0	1.4	0	0	0	0.4
Children						
Yes	45.6	40.3	51.4	36.2	54	44.5
No	54.4	59.7	48.6	63.8	46	55.5

Note. All numbers are in percentages except for Coaches, which is the actual count. Coaches were coded as coaching both males and females if they were identified as the head coach or director (i.e., a coach identified as Director of Track & Field). Sports coded as Co-Ed were pistol, rifle, sailing, and skiing.

able interviewees to speak freely about their feelings and opinions without feeling threatened … by the research situation" (Naylor, Maye, Ilbery, Enticott, & Kirwan, 2014, p. 292). Interviewing requires not only respondents who are knowledgeable about the topic but are also willing to discuss it (Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2011). Identifying subjects willing to discuss the issue of homosexuality in college athletics is challenging, which is why it was determined to only approach coaches with whom the researchers had a pre-existing relationship. This was the driving reason why only five respondents were used in the study. It has been shown having as few as five respondents does lead to valid and informative research. Sutherland et al. (2014) had six respondents in their examination of female athletes and emotional pain and self-compassion. Owton, Bond, and Todd (2014) had five subjects in their research examining the expectations of novice sport psychology consultants. Mosewich, Crocker, and Kowalski (2014) also only had five participants in their research in regard to managing injuries and setbacks in elite women athletes. The respondents in the current study had competency to discuss the issue and also willingness based on the pre-existing relationship with the researchers. The sample size was appropriate for the purpose of this study as insight into the issue of homosexuality could be gained as saturation was not the primary purpose of the study (Flick, 2011; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Morse, 1994; Romney, Batchelder, & Weller, 1986).

Description of Coaches

BCS Level: Two of the coaches in our sample were members of a NCAA Division I athletic department that competed in a BCS conference. Mary has been a head coach for more than 20 years at the same institution in the South. She is White, between 55 and 65 years old, and coaches softball. James is an assistant tennis coach for less than five years at the Division I level in the South. He has a head coach at more than one non-Division I university. He is White, between 30 and 40 years old, and coaches tennis.

Junior College Level: One male and one female coach in the sample were coaches at junior colleges in the Midwest. Sara was a head coach for less than five years in volleyball and played at the same school she is now coaching. This was her first head coaching position after serving as an assistant at another similar institution. She is White and between 25 and 35 years old. Mike was a head softball coach. This was also his first head-coaching job after serving in an athletic administration position. He is White and between 30 and 40 years old.

Division II Level: The fifth coach in the sample was a head coach at a NCAA Division II institution in North. For Shane, this was his first head coaching position after serving an assistant at another university. He is White, coaches tennis, and is between 25 and 35 years old.

Four of the five were head coaches, while one was the lead assistant coach. Coaches were granted confidentiality through pseudonyms and were only asked to identify demographic information and the level of sport they coached. Two

of coaches were members of NCAA Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision athletic departments, two were junior college coaches, and one was a NCAA Division II coach. The interviews were semi-structured and, in line with previously mentioned literature (i.e., Fagan, 2013; Lenskyj, 2012) and recent events in college athletics, explored three major topics: (1) public discussions of homosexuality, (2) recruiting openly gay athletes, and (3) homosexuality in coaching biographies. Gratton and Jones (2004) described semi-structured interviews as "…a standard set of questions, or schedule. However, the researcher adopts a flexible approach to data collection, and can alter the sequence of questions or probe for more information with subsidiary questions" (p. 141). Qualitative interviews are grounded in discussion, with importance placed on the researcher to ask questions and listen, and participants to respond (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The open-ended format of the interview questions allowed for participants to put into words their perceptions, emotions, and feelings in an elaborate manner. Semi-structured interviews also allow for follow up questions based on the responses of the participants.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted during the summer months to best accommodate the coaches' schedules. Author One spent between 15 to 25 minutes interviewing each coach individually. Author One transcribed the responses and the results are presented largely in the form of verbatims. Due to the limited sample size, generalizability was the not the goal of the analysis. Instead, open coding was utilized, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Corbin and Strauss (1990) described open coding as such:

> event/action/interaction … are compared [and] conceptually labeled. … conceptually similar ones are group together to form categories and subcategories…[This] enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias. Fracturing the data forces examination of preconceived notions and ideas by judging these against the data themselves. (p. 423)

After the interviews were transcribed, the coaches were emailed a copy of the transcript to ensure their responses were represented accurately and for member-checking. Member-checking is a technique used to allow respondents to review the interview transcripts to ensure the participants' responses were transcribed accurately (Andrew et al., 2011). This is one aspect of data validation process (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Dean and Whyte (1978) suggested interviews focusing on sensitive information should strive for validity through (1) stressing the confidentiality of the responses with the interviewees and (2) asking a wide range of questions that generally speak to one overarching topic to achieve within-interview triangulation. As previously noted, only coaches Author One had a prior relationship were interviewed to improve trust and confidentially. Additionally, questions were

asked to provide a fuller picture of the coaches' perceptions of homosexuality in women's sports. The questions asked included the following:

- If you have had homosexual players on your roster, did you give them direction or instruction on publicly discussing their sexual preference? Why or why not?
- Did the athletic or university administration ever discuss how sexuality of players should be handled or presented publicly?
- If an athlete you were recruiting told you he or she were openly gay, would you have any reservations about bringing the athlete into your program? Into the school/athletic department? Into the community?
- How do you believe your administration would receive a coach asking to have his or her partner listed on the coaching bio? How would the fan base react?
- What reasons could you see for the lack of partners listed on coaching bios?

The interviews were based on the framework of sexual prejudice. Sexual prejudice occurs when those individuals who do not possess characteristics similar to dominant group members (in sport: White, able-bodied, heterosexual men) have their perspectives marginalized and even silenced. In this context, identifying as being LGBT can be considered a sexual stigma, which is an unwelcomed characteristic, especially in the sport industry (Herek, 2009). This sexual stigma causes those individuals who identify as a sexual minority to be relegated to an inferior status compared to those individuals who identify as heterosexual. Sexual prejudice can appear at the institutional level (i.e., heterosexism) or individual level (i.e., sexual prejudice; Herek, 2009). Negative attitudes are expressed toward an individual based on their sexual orientation when the stigma manifests on an individual level (Herek, 2009).

Results

Three themes emerged from the interviews. The first theme was in regard to coaches not openly expressing homosexuality in coaching biographies and was labeled Fear of Consequences. The second theme was in regard to publicly discussing homosexuality with the student-athletes or recruits. Coaches simply did not discuss or appear to want to discuss; this theme was labeled Don't Ask, Don't Tell. The third theme that emerged was in regard to welcoming opening gay student-athletes. The universities and coaches would be welcoming but with some caution and was labeled Acceptance with Hesitation. Each of the three themes are described in detail with comments of the respondents.

Fear of Consequences

A topic explored through the interviews was the listing of same-sex partners in coaching biographies which was spurned by the results in the analysis of the

coaching biographies. Shane, a Division II head coach, believed a coach listing a same-sex partner would not be a problem at his institution or within the community. However, each of the other four coaches stated doing so would cause a stir in the athletic department, fund-raising base, and community. Mary surmised the administration would not "care outwardly," but that it would bother them at an individual level. James and Mike both simply stated they did not believe the administration would allow a coach to list a same sex partner on a coaching biography. Similarly, Sara believed the administration risked losing donors and revenue by allowing coaches to list their partners in their biography:

> If a coach were to prefer a same-sex partner I do not believe (he or she) would show it. With being a religious based university that relies on churches and (religious) alumni to provide the finances for our school to survive we could risk a financial loss. Losing those relationships and monies could force administration to get involved. I've seen it happen at other (religious) schools.

James echoed some of those same sentiments when asked why there is a lack of partners listed on coaching biographies. He believed coaches might not publicly announce their sexuality because they are "afraid to lose (their) job, afraid to lose fans, afraid to lose boosters and potentially a lot of money."

He also stated coaches fear being openly gay will hurt them in recruiting. He likened it to players who would not want to play for a woman coach except "you cannot hide the fact that you are a guy or girl but you can always try to hide your sexual orientation." Similarly, Mary noted she had seen cases where coaches had tried to use other coaches' sexuality against them in recruiting. Sara believed that the fear of recruiting implications was especially true at a religious-based school, because coaches were often competing against other religious-based programs for recruits. Finally, Mike stated that he could not see an openly gay coach being employed at his school because someone in his administration told him "the last thing you want to be known as is a gay team."

As noted in the verbatims, the coaches interviewed believed administration discomfort, fear of financial loss, and recruiting consequences were the main reasons coaches did not publicly acknowledge their same-sex partners in their biographies. Restated, the fear of retribution, whether it be financially or personally, was cited as the underlying issue or barrier preventing coaches from listing their same-sex partners on their coaching biography.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell

Each coach discussed at length the extent to which they gave instructions to their players on publicly discussing their sexual preference. Both Mike and Sara coached at private religious junior colleges. They both believed the setting in which their teams operated impacted the topics, especially homosexuality, that

could be discussed in the open. Mike surmised that during his coaching tenure he had only had one gay athlete he knew of but that "the actual number, in all likelihood, is higher, but I'm aware of just one." Sara stated she had seen players explore their sexuality when she was playing and that the religious beliefs of her school may limit the amount of players that publicly announce their homosexuality while they are enrolled:

> I do not have any [sport] players that I am aware of that are homosexual. I would say that [my sport] is one sport where it is a rarity among the other women sports. I would not give them any direction on publicly discussing their sexual preference because it is their life decision. If it is a part of their maturity process to help them improve their quality of life, I am all for it. Coming from a [religious] school I would say that from the past most players come out in a later stage in life than when they are 18 or 19 at a JUCO. Players are scared of being judged by their religious peers but have talked about it with coaches. When I was a player, I was aware of girls exploring their homosexuality and truly battled it in this type of atmosphere.

Mary stated she never needed to discuss open homosexuality with her teams because she never asked about player sexuality, and during her decades of coaching she only had one openly homosexual athlete. James and Shane professed similar sentiments. Shane stated he was not concerned with his players' sexuality, as it had nothing to do with their standing as a student-athlete. James said he did not want to intrude on the personal lives of his players, but he does give general directions about interacting in the public space that is college athletics:

> I do believe that in the past I have coached players who are homosexual. To be 100% honest, I have never approached the situation and always felt that they should come to me and I should not intrude in their personal life. As a coach, I will get involved or ask questions about a player's personal life if I feel it is distracting them from performing. I also felt that I was open enough that they would feel comfortable approaching me if there were issues. I have never given directions to any of my players when it comes to what to say to people about their relationships other than to let them know that when you are an athlete in the NCAA, many want to know what you do in your personal life. When you sign a letter of intent, you also unfortunately give up sometimes your personal space.

In all, the coaches interviewed had never been put in the position where they were forced to discuss open declarations of homosexuality with their players. Further, none of them had a concrete plan or general idea for what policies they would

enact if they coached a player who wanted to publicly declare she was gay. Finally, none of the coaches had discussed sexuality with their teams or given direction to individual players on disclosing their sexual preference to university, community, or public at large.

Acceptance with Hesitation

Griner told Baylor head coach Kim Mulkey she was openly gay when Mulkey was recruiting her in high school (Fagan, 2013). Since Mulkey has refused to comment on Griner's comments, it can be inferred that Mulkey felt comfortable bringing Griner into the Baylor (and Waco, Texas) community as long as she did not publicly reveal that she was homosexual. The five coaches in the sample were asked how comfortable they would be recruiting an openly gay woman to the team, athletic department, and community.

James, an assistant coach in a Southern state, posited he would be fine with bringing a gay athlete into his team but would be worried how the conservative-leaning university and community would treat the athlete. Mary and Shane both stated they would have no reservations about inviting a homosexual player to their teams and the university and community would not mistreat them. Sara believed the sport that she coached would cause her to be hesitant about recruiting an openly gay woman. She stated she had not had interaction or seen homosexual players in her sport, but was sure it had happened in past. She surmised that as long as clear boundaries were set, it would not be a problem within the team.

Mike, a head coach at a religious-based school, suggested that previous experiences had led him to have reservations about recruiting homosexual athletes. He stated that if the athlete was openly gay, it might cause issues within the institution and community:

> For me, the operative word here is 'openly.' In this case, I would have reservations in the recruiting process. The institution I work for is supportive of gay and lesbian students and faculty and staff in the 'individual' sense. By this I mean there are several gay faculty and staff members, and many students, of course, but the 'official' stance of the college is conservative leaning. What would happen if a gay faculty member I know would come out? I can't say for sure, but my guess is there would be outside constituent pressure to let that person go. An openly gay student could face scrutiny as well. They would not be asked to leave campus, but would be subject to added attention. I think a candid conversation about this would be needed before I'd add an openly gay athlete to the roster. In the past, I've been asked by our (university) president not to pursue an assistant coach, a very highly qualified one, who had expressed interest in helping with the program because she was in a relationship with another women. A few days later, however, I was told by my supervisor that he would 'never again shy away from hiring a gay applicant.' I can't say for sure, but I be-

lieve he was told, again, by the big man, in the past to not hire someone who was gay.

As with publicly discussing homosexuality while playing for the university, the coaches indicated that setting was an important factor when establishing policies for recruiting openly gay women. For Sara, this means the sport that she coaches while Mike is concerned with the university, alumni, and community base in which his team sits.

Discussion

The examination only begins to explore perceptions of open homosexuality. The introductory secondary data analysis suggests that either coaches or administrators or both are not yet comfortable listing same-sex partners on university-sponsored coaching biographies, as evidenced by the fact that only one of more than 1,000 head coaches at the highest level of college coaching listed a partner on their coaching biography, as opposed to more than 70% of coaches who listed they were in a traditional marriage. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau reported more than 640,000 same-sex couple households, which is approximately 1% of U.S. households, but the percentage for the coaches in this study is less than one-tenth of 1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The one coach who listed a same-sex partner was Jennifer Averill of Wake Forest University. Averill has had a widely successful career leading Wake Forest to three consecutive national titles (2002–2004) and nine straight semifinal appearances (2000–2008) in field hockey. In the Calhoun et al. (2011) study, Averill and a male softball coach were the only two that listed a same-sex partner (as of the end of 2013, the softball coach is now an assistant at a different institution). Averill is a coach in a low-profile sport and has been highly successful. The lack of overall attention to the sport does not draw attention to Averill listing a same-sex partner in her biography. This would perhaps be different in a high-profile sport and more athletically prominent university.

Framing theory's foundation is the selective selection, emphasis, or exclusion of information (Gitlin, 1980). The interviews and coaching biography analysis reveal the notion of promoting a family atmosphere is important as coaching biographies identified coaches who were married and those who had children. Creating a family atmosphere is important in recruiting as coaches are being entrusted by parents to care for their children, and coaches often discuss being surrogate parents for student-athletes (Rowland, 2014; Shadid, 2014). An intriguing finding, though, in regard to framing is the exclusion of information, and in this case, coaches who were not in traditional husband-wife relationship. This invokes a don't ask, don't tell type of atmosphere. The interview responses also support this, as coaches admit they do not discuss sexual orientation and do not know the sexual orientation of their student-athletes. Four of the five coaches also said listing a same-sex relationship in a coaching biography would create some sort of

controversy with the athletic department, fans, and other stakeholders. Griner's situation falls directly into this situation. She was basically told not to reveal her sexual orientation while at Baylor. The idea of excluding information in regard to homosexuality is an attempt to conform to what is considered a traditional family (e.g., mother, father, children, as opposed to a mother, mother, children). Some parents or potential student-athletes may not be comfortable in being an environment that is unfamiliar to them. This may be particularly true for recruits with religious beliefs that are not supportive of same-sex couples. The transition to college is difficult for student-athletes, and adding another twist to the transition (a homosexual coach) may be something a student-athlete does not want to be part of the adjustment.

The interviews also highlighted that, in this sample, athletic department and university administrators have differing views of open homosexuality. These results preliminarily support previous work from scholars such as Demers (2006) and Kolnes (1995), as the coaches interviewed described numerous hesitancies they would have if an athlete or coach wished to be openly gay at their university. Although the percentage of coaches who reported having a same-sex partner in their coaching biographies was less than that of the general population, the data may not accurately reflect those coaches who made no mention of their marital status in their biographies. Even if more coaches wanted to be open about their sexuality, all but one of the coaches indicated that their athletic departments would have a problem listing a same sex partner in their coaching biography. Sexual prejudice does seem to be perceived by coaches as they are hesitant to openly admit if they are homosexual for fear of repercussions. Coaches referenced a possible loss of donations and revenue, in addition to creating controversy within the department, fund-raising base, and community as reasons why the athletic administration would be hesitant to allow coaches to be openly homosexual. Lenskyj (1991) discussed the difficulties openly gay and lesbian coaches face with regards to landing and keeping jobs as well as recruiting athletes, showing that athletic departments may not have come as far as the general population during the past 20 years.

All of the coaches interviewed for this study professed that they had either an open communication policy with their team (i.e., open discussion of issues that impacted the operations of the team, especially homosexuality), or had never inquired about a player's sexuality outright. Both coaches who spoke of having an open communication policy did state they had limited interaction with athletes who were openly gay, but believed the actual number of homosexual athletes that had passed through their team was probably higher than what they knew about it. James stated that he had never discussed sexuality with his players because he felt it has nothing to do with their standing as a student-athlete. Similarly, another indicated he did not want to intrude on their personal lives. Coaches at universities such as Baylor and Iowa State have been accused of advising athletes on discussing their sexuality with the public, namely recruits (Cyphers & Fagan, 2011;

Grasgreen, 2013). Furthermore, coaches like Rene Portland, from Pennsylvania State University, have been said to have a policy that does not allow homosexual players on her team.

Sport and the "Family Atmosphere"

The coaching biographies and interviews also add further evidence to discussions of the "work-family interface" (Dixon & Bruening, 2007, p. 377) in coaching circles. Dixon and Bruening (2007) found coaches who worked within the hegemonic model of the typical workplace were successful while "coaching mothers certainly felt the organizational/structural constraints of long hours, extensive travel, and 'face time'" (p. 399). Male coaches were married and had children at a higher rate than their peers in the general population in coaching biographies examined. On the contrary, female coaches were married and had children at a lower rate.

The rate of female coaches married and having children fits with the work-family conflict detailed by Bruening and Dixon (2007), who noted "some athletic directors did not welcome children in the office even in cases of emergencies" (2007, p. 471). Female coaches often feel forced to choose between being a mother or a coach (Dixon & Bruening, 2007), and male coaches are often expected to devote every waking minute to their profession while their wife raises the family (Pleck, 1977). In this way, coaching is still reflective of the "traditional division of labor between partners" (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991, p. 60). Similarly, coaches and administrators use code words to signify there are not homosexuals on their staff or team. Cyphers and Fagan (2011) observed women's basketball coaches using "family-oriented" and "wholesome values" to describe their programs to recruits. Those words were meant emphasize the program had a head coach in a traditional marriage and straight assistants. As Mike, the softball coach in our sample, stated, "the last thing you want to be known as is a 'gay team.'" Further, Cyphers and Fagan (2011) noted over 50% of the women's basketball players they surveyed stated sexual orientation was "an underlying topic of conversation with college recruiters" (para. 4).

Student-athletes are also forced to juggle competing roles when participating in intercollegiate athletics. As Griner detailed, she was expected to keep her personal life separate from her athletic pursuits at Baylor. In the same way that Adler and Adler (1991) found college athletes "learned that there were strains and pulls between the demands of their various roles and the time and leeway they had to act within them" (p. 120), Griner and other athletes who do not embody the values of the perceived "family" atmosphere of college sports are forced to hide their true identity when representing the university. As multiple coaches in our sample stated (namely Sara and James), they do not ask their players about their sexuality. In many ways, this "don't ask, don't tell" policy further enforces heteronormative beliefs as players are expected to act like the rest of their teammates and separate their personal lives from their athletic careers. In this way, the attributes and feel-

ings of the athlete are prioritized over the identity of the individual person. Even when athletes do come out to their teammates (such as Michael Sam at the University of Missouri), the revelation is kept secret as to not subject the individual and teammates to the scrutiny attached to an openly gay athlete (Branch, 2014).

The idea of sexual prejudice seems to be alive and well in college athletics. There is hesitation among coaches to openly admit if they are homosexual as evident by the interview responses and the information in the coaching biographies. Framing theory not only addresses what is included in information but also what is not included. The examination of more than 1,000 coaching biographies revealing only one openly gay coach is peculiar, as this is not representative of the national average. This information coupled with the interviews shows there is a don't ask, don't tell atmosphere in college athletics. This creates an unwelcoming environment for gay student-athletes and may deter someone from competing in college athletics. The same is true for coaches as they may choose not to pursue a career in coaching because of the sexual prejudice that is present.

Limitations and Future Research

The sample was a convenience sample due to the sensitive nature of the questions and the comfort level the participants would need to feel to answer the questions honestly and trust their anonymity would be protected. The quantitative descriptors were used as justification for the interviews and cannot stand alone as evidence of homophobia or fear of open sexuality. The culture against homosexuality, while changing, still restricts the amount and frequency of homosexual coaches who become openly gay. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint which coaches did not list partners in their biographies because they are not in relationships and which did not list partners because of fear of retribution. This is an issue that warrants further research. There can only be a comparison to the numbers of population statistics, which have the same inherent flaws. It cannot be determined if it is the coaches or the administrators who are not comfortable with having a same-sex partner listed on an athletic coaching biography. Restated, it is unclear if it is an individual or institutional decision.

Further, as states continue to legalize same-sex marriages and unions, it will be worthwhile to examine if the lack of partners in coaching biographies continues. While the number of coaches listing same-sex partners actually decreased from the previous study of biographies (Calhoun et al., 2011), one may expect the number to increase if homosexuality continues to become more socially acceptable nationwide. In all, the avenues for future research are plentiful. Interviewing openly homosexual coaches and administrators would eliminate some of the ambiguity in the interview responses received. Future research should focus on interviewing homosexual coaches to examine their thoughts on including their relationship status in biographies and if their sexual orientation has been an issue in career progression, coaching, or recruiting. Similarly, in-depth interviews and observations of the reception that openly gay coaches and athletes receive in their

campus communities would add greater context to the homosexuality in college athletics literature. Future research should also focus on coaches of differing ethnicities as well as an examination of coaches from different regions of the country. There is still little known about perceptions of homosexuality in college athletics, but this research can serve as a foundation to understanding the issue more fully.

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