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Coaches' Perceptions of Athlete Leadership on Female Teams

Samantha Engel

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COACHES' PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETE LEADERSHIP ON FEMALE TEAMS

BY

SAMANTHA ENGEL

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To the Dean of the School of Human Performance and Leisure Sciences:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Samantha Engel entitled "Athlete Leadership: Coaches' Definitions, Criteria, and Expectations". I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology.

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Dr. Lauren S. Tashman, Thesis Committee Chair

We, members of the thesis committee,
have examined this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

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Chair, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences

Accepted:

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Dean, School of Human
Performance and Leisure Sciences

ABSTRACT

Research examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership is scarce. Most research regarding athlete leadership has examined specific components, such as social, psychological, and ability characteristics, both informal and formal roles and functions of athlete leaders, and team captains specifically (Crozier, Loughead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Moran & Weiss, 2006). Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, and Caron (2012) expanded the literature by examining coaches' perceptions regarding athlete leadership. However, their investigation solely focused on male ice hockey coaches. Thus, the purpose of this study was to extend Bucci et al.'s (2012) findings by examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership on female teams. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with coaches of collegiate female team sports. The results provide a broader understanding of athlete leadership by exploring coaches' definitions and conceptions of leadership, approaches to identifying and selecting athlete leaders, expectations for athlete leaders, approaches to developing athlete leaders, and proposed keys to athlete leaders' success. Practical implications are discussed for coaches, athletes, as well as mental performance consultants.

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And finally, I would like to dedicate my thesis in memory of Dr. Gualberto Cremades. Thank you for your guidance and support during my time at Barry and may you rest in peace.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Following in the wake of the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup, Carli Lloyd emerged as the unquestioned leader of the United States of America's Women's National Soccer Team (Anastasia, 2015). Lloyd is well known for her relentless work ethic, her physical conditioning, and her unending determination to reach her full potential. Lloyd does not shy away from the "big moments"; instead she rises to the occasion and calls herself a warrior on the field (Anastasia, 2015). Morgan Brian, currently the youngest player on the Women's National Team, idolizes Lloyd as a leader and mentor. She praises how Lloyd leads the team in the way she plays and the mentality she brings to every workout session, practice, and game (Anastasia, 2015).

How does one rise to being the captain of a National Team? Lloyd attributes her success to the growing pains she experienced throughout her career. She claims her talent took her as far as it could, but then she had to mature, become a better thinker on the field, and be more physically fit (Anastasia, 2015). Seeking what great leaders had done before her, Lloyd studied the likes of Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretsky, and Diego Maradona. James Galanis, Lloyd's trainer, raved about how Lloyd is a student of the game; she learned how a championship athlete thinks as well as how to thrive under pressure (Anastasia, 2015). Lloyd led the United States to a five to two victory over Japan with the first ever hat trick in a World Cup Final (Vecsey, 2015).

How do we develop more leaders like Lloyd? Too often, leaders on teams are chosen by their perceived talent and position rather than the quality of their leadership skills (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). Loughead et al. (2006) suggested 95 percent of team leaders (e.g., formal leaders, captains) and 81 percent of peer leaders (e.g., informal

leaders) are regular starters for their teams. Athlete leaders were also selected based on their tenure on the team, specifically having at least three years on the team (Crozier, Loughead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). In addition, Glenn and Horn (1993) suggested that athletes who play in central positions were rated higher in leadership ability by teammates and coaches than non-central field positions. So, does an athlete become a leader as a result of being placed in a central position? Or is an athlete already a leader and is put in a central position because of his or her existing leadership skills?

Thus, the idea of whether a leader is born or made has been a topic of discussion in leadership research (Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Unlike the nature of debates to take one side or the other, Gould et al. (2013) found that a majority of coaches (9/10) reported that leaders are both born and made. Half of the coaches indicated that they disagreed that anyone could be made into leaders. Two optimistic coaches said yes, leaders can be made while three noted that anyone could be made into a leader, but only if the individual possessed some natural ability (Gould et al., 2013). Early leadership research suggested that leaders possess stable innate traits that they were born with. Intelligence, assertiveness, and self-confidence are among the traits leaders possessed that would emerge in any given situation (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Behavioral approaches to athlete leadership emphasize the behaviors the leader demonstrates in order to develop the quality of the relationship between the leader and his or her followers. Additionally, leaders exhibit behaviors that enhance task-related aspects of the group including defining rules or explaining procedural methods (Cox, 2012; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Behaviors are more readily able to be changed as long as the individual is willing, thus supporting that leaders could be made (Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

Traditionally, leadership in sport research has focused on coaches and coaching behaviors (Amorose & Horn, 2000; Chelladurai, 1984; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Horn et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2010; Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Coaches have the executive authority and are responsible and accountable for the final decisions made in regard to team matters including strategies, tactics, and team personnel (Loughead et al., 2006). Coaches are also expected to participate in motivating players, giving feedback, establishing interpersonal relationships, and directing the team confidently (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Most importantly, Weinberg and Gould (2015) explain in order to be most effective, leaders in sport should provide maximum opportunities for success and ensure that individual success supports team success.

Recently, there has been an increased focus on athletes as leaders on a team; thus, leadership development has been a hot topic. Athlete leadership has been defined as an athlete occupying a formal or informal role on a team who influences a group of team members to achieve a common goal (Loughead et al. 2006). Athlete leaders have been found to influence several aspects of group dynamic including team member attributes, team structure, cohesion, team processes, individual outcomes, team outcomes, and leadership behaviors (Crozier et al., 2013; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). For example, athlete leaders influence team structure by helping establish role clarity, group norms, and group status amongst team members. As a result, team members understand the responsibilities associated with their role, the expectations of how to behave in order to help the team succeed, and the status of the team member within the team (Crozier et al., 2013).

Given that athlete leaders, both formal and informal, play an important role in group dynamics and therefore group performance, it is essential for those leaders to have the necessary

skills to effectively lead and not solely be selected purely because of their sport ability, position on the field, and/or tenure on the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). Most commonly, the coach is considered the one responsible for developing his or her athlete leaders on a team. In youth sport, coaches are proactive in teaching leadership to their players (Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013). However, at the collegiate level too often athletes do not receive enough guidance or instruction (Voight, 2012). In order to develop athlete leaders, we must first develop a more universal understanding of athlete leadership including coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership.

Statement of the Problem

Research in sport leadership has primarily focused on athletes' perceptions of coach leadership (Chelladurai, 1984; Murray, Mann, & Mead, 2010; Rowold, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). However, recently more researchers have begun to examine a range of factors surrounding athlete leadership including the extent of influence, athletes' perceptions, and psychological predictors (Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, & Caron, 2012; Crozier et al., 2013; Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Loughead et al., 2006; Moran & Weiss, 2006; Price & Weiss, 2011; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). Loughead and Hardy (2005) compared coach and peer leadership behaviors in sport. Results indicated that coaches and peer leaders serve as two sources of leadership with two different functions on a given team. For example, coaches demonstrated greater amounts of training and instruction and autocratic behaviors while peer leaders engaged in social support, positive feedback, and democratic decision-making behaviors. Since most research has been on athletes' perceptions of leadership,

a more thorough examination of athlete leadership behavior is justified (Loughead & Hardy, 2005).

Moran and Weiss (2006) sought to replicate Glenn and Horn's (1993) study examining relationships between peer leadership and social, psychological, and ability characteristics. Self-ratings, teammate ratings, and coach-ratings were employed to measure the relationships between leadership and characteristics. Athletic ability was found to be a single criterion of peer leadership status for female adolescents. Thus, the researchers suggested that future research should examine the reasons as to why this may be through investigation of coaches' definitions and criteria of effective athlete leadership and selection methods. In addition, Bucci et al. (2012) examined ice hockey coaches' perceptions of the factors that influence athlete leadership. The results revealed the manner in which coaches selected and developed athlete leaders on their teams and furthermore, highlighted coaches' strategies to develop a strong coach-athlete relationship and responsibilities of their athlete leaders. However, Bucci et al. (2012) conducted research solely with coaches of male ice hockey players and as a result suggested future research be conducted with coaches of female athletes. Additionally, Bucci et al. (2012) suggested expanding the research to include other team sports beyond hockey because the nature of other team sports is different, including factors such as the number of athletes on the team and duration of the season.

At this time, athlete leadership has been examined from coaches and peer perspectives but with a narrow focus on social, psychological, and ability characteristics, roles and functions of athlete leaders both informal and formal, and on team captains (Crozier et al., 2013; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Gould et al., 2013; Loughead et al. 2006; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Moran & Weiss, 2006). Bucci et al. (2012) began to expand the literature by examining coaches'

perceptions from a broader approach. Beyond Bucci et al.'s (2012) study, research has not given coaches an opportunity to give information on the bigger picture of how they perceive athlete leadership. Additionally, definitions of athlete leadership, criteria for selecting athlete leaders, and expectations of athlete leadership have not been thoroughly examined enough to be generalizable to most sports, levels, or age. As a result, further research is needed to create a foundation of athlete leadership from an assortment of variables including nature of the sport, gender, coaches' perspectives, athletes' perspectives, level of competition, age of athletes, and many more. Thus, the current study focused on taking a first step to extend the literature in this area by examining female collegiate team sport coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership with a broader approach.

Purpose of the Study

In order to expand upon the athlete leadership literature and gain an understanding of what coaches want to see in their athlete leaders, the purpose of this study was to examine coaches' definitions, criteria, and expectations of athlete leadership. By examining commonalities among coaches' definitions, criteria, and expectations of athlete leadership, coaches, performance enhancement consultants, and athletic departments can create leadership programs, seminars, or workshops to further develop and enhance athlete leadership.

Research Question

The research question for this study is: What are coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership on female team sports?

Assumptions

The following assumptions were applicable to this study:

1. The researcher was understood by all when asking interview questions.

2. Coaches have important insight regarding the nature of athlete leadership.
3. The coaches invited to participate will have clear information about their ideas regarding athlete leadership and be able to conceptualize their ideas.
4. Coaches utilized athlete leaders on their teams and identified criteria for selecting athlete leaders and expectations of the identified athlete leaders.
5. The coaches invited to participate were able to honestly and accurately communicate their ideas to the researcher.

Limitations

The following were limitations to this study:

1. A self-report bias could have existed among participants who agree to interview with the researcher which may influence results. Coaches could have discussed their ideal ideas of athlete leadership rather than the reality of their perceptions of or experiences with athlete leadership.
2. Given that the current study was a qualitative investigation, the results of the study may not be generalizable to all athlete leaders.
3. The present study focused on collegiate team sports in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, NCAA Junior Colleges, and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Therefore, the results of the study may not be generalizable to all collegiate level female sports.
4. The present study also focused on coaches who are currently coaching female collegiate team sports. Thus, the results may not be similar to a study examining male collegiate team sports.

5. Coaches were required to have a minimum 3 years of head coaching experience with female collegiate team sports and thus results may not apply to coaches with greater or lesser years of experience.

Delimitations

This study had the following delimitations:

1. The coaches invited to participate in the study were selected from National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, NCAA Junior Colleges, and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) teams with a minimum of 3 years of head coaching experience with female team sports. An exception was made for assistant coaches with a minimum of 3 years of head coaching experience with female team sports even though they held an assistant coach position of a female team.
2. Participants were 18 years or older to participate; however, given the above requirement, coaches were expected to be 25 years or older.
3. Participants regionally coached anywhere within the United States, but were able to arrange an interview with the researcher via in-person, phone, or Skype.
4. In addition, participants coached interactive team sports, or sports that involve three or more members working together to achieve a common goal. Examples of interactive team sports include soccer, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, and softball.

Operational Definitions

Leadership: Leadership is defined as the interaction among members of a group that initiates and maintains improved expectations and competence of the group overall to problem-solve or achieve common goals (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Athlete Leadership: Although athlete leadership has not been universally defined, the following definition will be used in this study; "an athlete occupying a formal or informal role within a team who influences a group of team members to achieve a common goal" (Loughead et al., 2006, p. 144).

Interactive Team Sport: Team sports that require team members to interact with one another. Interactive team sports include and are not limited to soccer, football, volleyball, basketball, rugby, and lacrosse (Cox, 2012).

Transactional Leadership: Leaders clearly outline tasks and how the followers should perform them. Followers under transactional leadership agree to complete tasks in exchange for external motivations including recognition or rewards (Avolio, 1999; Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011).

Transformational Leadership: Relying on the ability of the leader to inspire followers to go beyond expected levels of commitment and contribution, a transformational leader emphasizes task-related values and strong commitment to a mission (Rowold, 2006 Vidic & Burton, 2011). Leading by example helps the leader promote trust and respect of followers (Bucic, Robinson, & Ramburuth, 2009).

Laissez-Faire Leadership: A passive approach to leadership, laissez-faire leadership is defined as a lack of leadership where non-leadership behaviors are demonstrated (Rowold, 2006).

Autocratic Leadership: The leader alone makes decisions for the team and emphasizes personal authority (Chelladurai, 1990; Vincer & Loughead, 2010).

Democratic Leadership: The leader includes group, or team, members in the decision-making process regarding group goals, practice methods, and game tactics and strategies (Chelladurai, 1990; Vincer & Loughead, 2010).

Authentic Leadership: Leaders are humble, open, and build trust through an ethical and moral framework. Emphasis is on guiding followers to worthy objectives and on follower development. Self-awareness, self-acceptance, and always seeking improvement are keys to successful authentic leadership (Gardner et al., 2005; Whitehead, 2009).

Servant Leadership: Focus of the leader is on the followers and their needs. Emphasis is placed on serving the followers through vision, empathy, open communication, problem-solving, and developing future leaders by modeling of skills and provided opportunities for followers to enhance their leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011; Vidic & Burton, 2011).

Formal Role: Also known as a prescribed role, formal athlete leaders are appointed to a leadership position by the coach or team, e.g. a team captain that has been named by the coach or voted on by the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b).

Informal Role: Otherwise known as an emergent role, informal athlete leaders emerge as a leader based on interactions with teammates but have no formal leadership position on the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b).

Task Function Leader: The athlete leader in charge on the field that helps the team focus on their goals. The task leader may also help in tactical decision-making, as well as, giving tactical advice to teammates during a game (Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b).

Social Function Leader: The athlete leader who leads off the field by managing the team atmosphere. Ideally, social leaders will promote good relations among teammates and help to handle any conflicts off the field. This athlete is also a good listener and trusted by teammates (Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b).

External Function Leader: Another athlete leader off the field, the external leader is a liaison between the team and others outside of the team. This athlete represents the team at media

events, meetings, and conferences, as well as, communicate guidelines created by club management (Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b).

Motivational Function Leader: A leader on the field, the motivational leader motivates and encourages teammates to go to any extreme and steers the teams' emotions on the field into the right direction to perform optimally. This leader can also "put the heart" back into discouraged players (Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b).

Significance

Previous research has suggested that athlete leaders are chosen based on sport ability, position on the field, and tenure on the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). As a result, developing leadership skills of athletes may prove difficult for mental performance consultants and athletic departments because it is difficult to understand what coaches are looking for in athlete leaders beyond ability, position, and tenure. Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Petlichkoff (1987) identified that coaches believed that athlete leadership behaviors are an important factor of success. By examining coaches' definitions, criteria, and expectations of athlete leadership, the present study contributes to the foundation of understanding athlete leadership from multiple perspectives (i.e., coaches versus athlete ideas regarding athlete leaders) and variables (i.e., gender, age, level of competition). Additionally, a deeper understanding of athlete leadership in general emerges so coaches and athletes alike know what to look for and how to develop athlete leaders. From there, there is future potential to build leadership development programs, seminars, or workshops for athletes to improve leadership skills.

Currently, athlete leadership research has primarily been done quantitatively. Because of this, a qualitative methodological approach was used to create a more comprehensive picture of coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. Results aid mental performance consultants and

athletic departments in developing athletes' leadership skills based on what coaches are looking for in their athlete leaders. In addition, current athlete leaders or athletes looking to step into a leadership role have a deeper understanding of what coaches overall look for in an athlete leader.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the literature and research related to athlete leadership. Specifically, the following topics are reviewed and discussed: (a) leadership definitions, (b) leadership approaches and models, (c) classification of leadership in terms of styles, roles, and functions, (d) athlete leadership research, (e) developing athlete leadership, and (f) perceptions of athlete leadership. Relevant literature related to the six aforementioned topic areas is presented to provide a means of understanding the nature of athlete leadership, concluding with the purpose of the proposed study.

Leadership Definitions

In order to examine the nature of leadership, it is first necessary to understand how the concept is defined. Written accounts of leadership reach as far back as the emergence of civilization. The Egyptians demonstrated concepts of leaders and followers through hieroglyphics. The *Instruction of Ptahhotep*, written in 2300 B.C.E, described three qualities of the pharaoh as "authoritative utterance is in thy mouth, perception is in thy heart, and thy tongue is the shrine of justice" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 3). In the sixth century B.C.E, Chinese classics suggests advice to leaders about their responsibilities to the people. Further, Confucius suggested leaders to set a moral example and to utilize rewards and punishments for teaching right and wrong (Bass & Bass, 2008). Historical written accounts are filled with other examples of leadership philosophy from Greek philosophers to Renaissance thinkers. Modern study of leadership began in 1904 with Terman's investigation of the psychology and development of leadership. Shortly after, researchers began examining charismatic leadership, analyzed the biographies of leaders, classified roles in small groups, and classified traits of importance to

leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008). In the 1920s, leadership was defined as impressing the leader's will on the followers to induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation. By the 1960s, leadership was defined as the ability to influence in order to move others in a shared direction. Bass and Bass (2008) defines effective leadership as the interaction among group members that initiates and maintains improved expectations and competence of the group to solve problems or achieve goals. However, Bass and Bass (2008) does note that there are many definitions of leadership both broad and narrow and that the definition should depend on the purposes to be served.

More recently, Northouse (2015) conceptualized leadership as consisting of four components: process, influence, groups, and common goals. Leadership as a process suggests that it is not a specific trait or characteristic that an individual possesses but rather a transaction between leader and followers in which the leader affects and is affected by his or her followers. Leadership then involves influence whereby the effectiveness of the leader is determined by his or her ability to affect his or her followers. Thus, leadership occurs in a group context where the leader influences a group of individuals, small or large. Ultimately, the aim of leadership is to influence the group to reach the common goals they are attempting to achieve. Collectively, leadership is then defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2015, p.7).

Other definitions of leadership have also emphasized the interaction between leaders and followers and have included various other components, such as motivating others, having a sense of vision or mission for the group, and generating optimism and trust (Bennis, 2007; Eberly, Johnson, Hernandez, & Avolio, 2013; Vroom & Jago, 2007). In the sport context, Weinberg and Gould (2015) also made reference to additional dimensions of leadership, such as making

decisions, motivating participants, giving feedback, establishing interpersonal relationships, and directing the group or team confidently. According to Weinberg and Gould (2015), effective leaders in sport try to provide maximum opportunities for success and ensure individual success aids in team success.

Based on Northouse's (2015) definition of leadership, Loughead, Hardy, and Eys (2006) stated leadership on athletic teams is available to anyone. They proposed that leadership on teams is not limited to those individuals assigned to specific leadership positions (i.e., formal leaders), such as a coach or team captain, but is open to informal leaders who emerge through interactions with teammates. Thus, Loughead et al. (2006) defined athlete leadership as an athlete occupying a formal or informal role on a team who influences a group of team members to achieve a common goal. According to Crozier, Loughead, and Munroe-Chandler (2013), on an interactive sport team, athletes ideally desire 85% of the roster to be composed of both formal and informal athlete leaders. These formal and informal athlete leaders influenced several group dynamic constructs including team member attributes, team structure, cohesion, team processes, individual outcomes, team outcomes, and leadership behaviors. Therefore, it is clear that athlete leaders play vital roles on teams, impact them in diverse ways.

Leadership Approaches and Models

Throughout the years, several approaches (i.e., trait, behavioral, situational, and interactional) emerged and evolved in an attempt to understand the nature of leadership. Further, several models were developed to provide a means for understanding the factors that affect leadership as well as the role it plays. The models that will be discussed include the contingency model, cognitive-mediational model of sport leadership, and the multidimensional model of sport leadership.

Approaches. In order to study leadership, researchers have used several approaches. The trait approach emerged in the 1920s when researchers perceived leadership in business and industry as innate traits individuals were born with (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). It was argued that leaders possessed stable traits, such as intelligence, assertiveness, or self-confidence. Also known as the "great man" theory of leadership, researchers believed these stable traits would emerge in any situation (Cox, 2012). The trait approach began to lose popularity at the end of World War II when a review of trait research suggested only a handful of personality traits were consistent across leaders (Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

The focus of leadership research shifted shortly after onto behaviors of effective leaders (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Two categories of behaviors emerged related to group effectiveness: consideration structure and initiating structure (Cox, 2012; Murray et al., 2010; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Consideration structure refers to the behaviors that a leader demonstrates that focus on enhancing the quality of the relationship between the leader and his or her followers. Key consideration behaviors include those related to the development of mutual trust, friendship, mutual respect, and attention to the feelings and ideas of others. Leaders with high consideration demonstrate effective communication and rapport with others (Murray et al., 2010). Initiating structure refers to the behaviors the leader enacts in order that focus on task-related aspects of the group. For example, behaviors such as setting up and defining rules, clarifying the relationship between the leader and subordinates, outlining channels of communication, identifying procedural methods, and delineating well-defined patterns of organization to achieve goals and objectives are all categorized under initiating structure (Cox, 2012; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Leaders with high initiating behaviors are active in directing group activities, communicating, scheduling, and experimenting with new ideas (Murray et al., 2010).

In the context of sport, the use of the behavioral approach has continued to be extensively used. During the reign of John Wooden, a highly decorated National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I basketball championship coach, Gallimore and Tharp (2004) examined the infamous coach's behavior. After close observation and event recording for thirty hours total, the majority of the behaviors Wooden were forms instruction giving (i.e., what to do, how to do it). Intensity and effort were also communicated to athletes often. The least prevalent but still present behaviors were statements of displeasure, or scolding, and praising and encouraging. However, whenever Wooden would demonstrate his behaviors, they rarely lasted more than five seconds but each demonstration was very clear and memorable (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004). Other research has replicated similar results with other successful coaches demonstrating positive, supportive feedback and technical, corrective feedback (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999; Côté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995).

Although research studying the behaviors of leaders continues, inconsistencies in the research suggests leadership cannot be defined solely by traits or behaviors; due to this, the emergence of the situational approach occurred (Murray et al., 2010). As leadership research progressed, researchers began to consider factors that made each leadership situation unique. Thus, focus shifted away from the traits and behaviors of the leaders onto the characteristics of the situation the leaders were faced with. Characteristics of followers, the organizational structure, the environment, and the demands of the situation were factors suggested to be taken into consideration in a situational specific approach because each one plays a role in making the situation unique (Cox, 2012; Murray et al., 2010).

The situational approach has furthered researchers' understanding of leadership because it showed that factors beyond those related to the leader him or herself affect the nature and

impact of leadership, however few modern researchers use it as a framework. Previous research demonstrated that personality traits alone do not describe effective leaders nor does a behavioral or situational approach. Thus, in an effort to demonstrate the importance of considering factors related to the leader and the situation, researchers proposed an interactional approach (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Stemming from research in industry and general psychology, an interactional approach has important implications in sport settings (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). For example, effective leadership styles and behavior should fit the specific situations and the athletes involved in the situation. Horn, Bloom, Berglund, and Packard (2011) found that athletes with high somatic trait anxiety and high self-determined motivation preferred coaches who demonstrated more democratic leadership styles and who provided high amounts of training, social support, and both positive and informational feedback.

Models. Several models of leadership have been developed to provide a means for identifying and understanding the factors that affect leadership and the impact that it has on a team. These include Fiedler's (1978) contingency model of leadership, Smoll and Smith's (1989) cognitive-mediational model of leadership, and Chelladurai's (1990) multidimensional model of sport leadership (Cox, 2012; Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

Fiedler's contingency model of leadership proposes that both personality traits and the dynamics of the situation play a role in determining the effectiveness of the leader (Cox, 2012; Fielder, 1978). According to Fiedler, there are two types of leaders: relationship-motivated or task-motivated. Relationship-motivated leaders are concerned with the rapport he or she has with his or her followers whereas task-motivated leaders focus on getting his or her followers to accomplish the task at hand. According to the contingency model, the leader's approach may be effective in one situation, but not in another. The favorableness of the situation (i.e., how much

the situation gives the leader control and influence over the environment based on his or her personality style) will ultimately determine the leader's ability to effectively lead the group (Cox, 2012). Therefore, it is suggested that effective leadership is the result of the leader determining how to adapt his or her personality to the particular leadership situation he or she is in. Fiedler (1978) argued a task motivated leader would be more effective in an environment that is either very favorable or unfavorable while a relationship motivated leader would be more effective in a moderately favorable environment (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). For example, Weinberg and Gould (2015) suggested that coaches should be flexible in their leadership style by tailoring their approach to the demands of the situation. Coaches who may feel more comfortable in one type of style than another should seek out situations best suited for their style to be more effective. For example, in considering the skill level of the athletes on is coaching, highly skilled athletes tend to be more task motivated so a relationship motivated coach may be better suited for these athletes. In contrast, less skilled athletes may need more consistent instruction and feedback, thus a task motivated coach may be more appropriate for these athletes. This does not suggest that less skilled athletes are not seeking a relationship with their coach or that task oriented athletes do not need instruction or feedback; it is simply about what is more important for the coach to emphasize (Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

In the context of sport, research focused on interactions between coaches (leaders) and athletes (followers) in sport situations. Based on Fiedler's contingency model in sport is the cases of coaches Pete Carroll, John Calipari, and Rick Pitino are examples of application to a situation-specific approach (Murray et al., 2010). All three coaches made public transitions from intercollegiate basketball to the professional basketball ranks. They experienced success, but not the same level of success at both levels. The contingency model suggests that Carroll, Calipari,

and Pitino's coaching styles, based on their personalities and needs, were better suited for intercollegiate athletics than that of the professional coaching ranks (Murray et al., 2010).

Smoll and Smith's (1989) cognitive-mediational model of leadership emphasizes the interaction between situational, cognitive, behavioral, and individual difference variables (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Smoll and Smith (1989) contend that a true leadership model cannot only be compromised of situation factors and overt behaviors; but in addition, cognitive processes and individual differences (personality) mediate the relationship between antecedents, leader behaviors, and outcomes (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). In this model, it is proposed that both personal (e.g., gender or age) and situational (e.g., level of competition or type of sport) factors interact to determine one's leadership style and approach. In addition, the model also suggests that leader behaviors are not only a reflection of the leader's personal characteristics and the factors related to the situation, but also are mediated by the meaning athletes attribute to the leader's behavior. Therefore, both personal and situational factors also affect the perceptions of the followers. Thus, the entire leadership process (i.e., outcomes of the leadership) is affected by situational factors and the individual differences (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). The cognitive-mediation model has only been used in coach leadership research and has not been modified or revised yet for athlete leadership.

Chelladurai's multidimensional model of leadership (1990) proposes that leadership effectiveness will depend on the characteristics of athletes and the constraints of the situation. Athlete satisfaction and performance are considered results of the interaction between prescribed leader behavior (i.e., parameters of the leader's position), preferred leader behavior (i.e., team member preferences), and actual leader behavior (i.e., what the leader does in a particular situation). Situational characteristics (e.g., team goals, norms), leader characteristics (e.g.,

experience of leader, personality, leadership style), and team member characteristics (e.g., gender, ability) are antecedent factors that influence the prescribed, preferred, and actual leader behaviors (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Chelladurai (1990) hypothesized consequences based on the congruence of leader behavior. If athletes' preferred leader behaviors are incongruent to prescribed behaviors and actual behaviors of the coach, optimal performance will occur without athlete satisfaction. In contrast, if preferred and actual behaviors are different than prescribed behaviors, optimal athlete satisfaction may occur without optimal performance. For optimal performance and optimal athlete satisfaction all three leader behaviors have to be in congruence (Weinberg & Gould, 2015). For example, preferred behaviors of the athletes may for the coach to socialize with players after the game, but instead the coach leaves without speaking to anyone may cause lower satisfaction in athletes but does not affect the performance of the athletes. There is an incongruence between preferred and actual behaviors that lower athlete satisfaction as a result.

Measuring and Assessing Leadership. Measuring and assessing leadership has primary occurred through quantitative measures of leadership behaviors (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Smoll & Smith, 1989). To quantify leadership behaviors, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) based off the multidimensional model of sport leadership to measure five dimensions of leader behaviors including training and instruction, democratic, autocratic, social support, and positive feedback. Recently a revised version was developed, but until more data is collected on the revised edition Chelladurai suggests using the original scale. The majority of research using the LSS scale has been on coaches' leadership behavior with only a handful of studies on athlete leadership (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998;

Kozub & Pease, 2001; Loughead & Hardy, 2005). Regardless of the focus of research using the LSS, support is overall strong for Chelladurai's multidimensional model of sport leadership.

In order to effectively measure actual behavior of coaches in natural field settings quantitatively, the Coach Behavior Assessment System was developed. Through the development of the assessment, two types of behaviors emerged: reactive behaviors and spontaneous behaviors. Reactive behaviors occur in response to a specific player's behavior including desirable performance, mistakes, and misbehavior. Spontaneous behaviors are initiated by the coach and are game related or game irrelevant (Cox, 2012; Smoll & Smith, 1989; Weinberg & Gould, 2015).

More recently, there has been an additional of qualitative methods to learn more about perceptions of effective leadership behaviors in both coaches and athletes (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, and Salmela, 1998; Crozier et al., 2013; Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013). Qualitative analysis allows a more detailed account of the experiences the coaches and athletes have in regards to leadership (Creswell, 2013).

Classification of Leadership

As the various approaches and models suggest, leadership is a complex phenomenon. Thus, additional attempts to understand it and the role it plays on individual and team performance lead researchers to classify leadership in terms of style, roles, and functions. Styles categorize behaviors demonstrated by those in leadership positions and situations. Roles focus on the classification of whether an athlete is given a title or not. Leadership functions describe the athlete leader's focus on and off the field. The following sections will focus on the research examining and classifying leadership styles, roles, and functions in an athletic team context.

Leadership Styles. At this time, there is no universal set of leadership styles widely accepted across the leadership literature. In sport, research on leadership styles has primarily examined coach leadership styles (Chelladurai, 1984; Murray et al., 2010; Rowold, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Traditionally, one common set of leadership styles that is discussed in the sport context includes transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire styles (Bucic, Robinson, & Ramburuth, 2010; Cotterhill, 2013; Cox, 2012; Murray et al., 2010; Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011). Additionally, Chelladurai (1984) emphasized two styles (i.e., autocratic and democratic) that categorize leaders based on their approach to decision making. More recently, two other styles have emerged, authentic leadership and servant leadership; but further research is needed to examine the prevalence of these styles have in the sport context (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Burton & Peachey, 2013).

Burns (1978) identified the first distinctions of differing roles and influences of leaders at various organizational levels in business. Bass (1985) followed with the first separation of transformational and transactional leadership styles. The primary difference between transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire stems from motivation. Transactional leadership is built on the use of extrinsic motivations of rewards and praise in exchange for optimal performance (Bucic et al., 2010; Vidic & Burton, 2011). Transactional leaders clearly outline expectations and procedures for performing tasks. In addition, these leaders are active in monitoring followers' progress and taking correcting measures if necessary (Avolio, 1999; Rowold, 2006). In contrast, transformational leaders attempt to capitalize on intrinsic motivation by inspiring followers to go above and beyond expected levels of commitment and contribution (Rowold, 2006). Followers are intrinsically motivated to look beyond their own interests and toward the interests that will most benefit the group; emphasis is on shared values and a strong

commitment to the vision for the group (Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011). Transformational leaders encourage followers to view tasks or challenges from new perspectives, are typically enthusiastic and charismatic, and have a strong ability to inspire others to give extra effort, persist with tasks, and be determined to achieve results (Vidic & Burton, 2011). Bucic et al. (2009) examined the effect a team leader's leadership style has on team-member learning in organizations. Specifically, a qualitative case-study design was used to examine the effects of transformational, transactional, and an additional ambidextrous style (i.e., a leader capable of selecting appropriate transformational and transactional leadership behaviors specific to the situation), on team members. Results indicated that the leader's style is imperative to team learning and performance. Consistent with the interactive approach to leadership, the ambidextrous style demonstrated the most positive leadership association and encouraged learning among teams. In addition, results suggested a positive relationship between transactional leadership and feedback learning and a relationship between transformational leadership and feed-forward learning processes (Bucic et al., 2009). The positive relationship between transactional leadership and feedback learning is a result of the leader institutionalizing systems, structures, routines, and practices that the team members engage in. Inspiration, empowering, and intellectually stimulating behaviors all play a role in a leader's ability to encourage search, experimentation, risk-taking, and innovation by individual team members in the transformational and feed-forward learning process. Additionally, individual team members need to feel valued in order to create the feed-forward process (Bucic et al, 2009). Bucic et al. (2009) suggest research to continue examining leadership and leadership styles' influence on team learning in more contexts.

Laissez-faire leadership is considered an avoidance, or absence, of leadership behaviors. Laissez-faire leaders exhibit nonleadership behaviors and prompt the lowest levels of motivation of followers (Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011). Rowold (2006) sought to determine the range and effectiveness of coaches' leadership styles. In a martial arts setting, students of the sensei (N = 186) participated using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) assessing transformational, transactional, and nonleadership scale regarding how closely the participants' coaches displayed the identified behaviors. Results suggested that transactional leadership was significantly related to leaders' effectiveness. Specifically, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (attributed and behavior) factor in most to effective leadership. Furthermore, transformational leadership positively influenced outcomes of leaders' behaviors. Thus, because transformational leadership is a positive influence and is highly effective, the researchers suggest coaches may benefit from incorporating transformational leadership behaviors into their coaching style to most optimize their role. However, future research needs to examine the results in a team sport context to further support the results (Rowold, 2006).

Derived from the multidimensional model of leadership, autocratic and democratic styles focus on the manner in which the leader makes decisions (Chelladurai, 1990). Autocratic leaders make decisions alone and emphasize his or her personal authority while democratic leaders include group members in the decision-making process. Autocratic style coaches tend to separate themselves from athletes in order to establish their authority and position as the coach (Turman & Schrodt, 2004). Democratic coaches, on the other hand, fosters participation of the athletes on the team by making decisions with or with suggestions made by the athletes; athletes appreciate being heard and having input implemented (Turman & Schrodt, 2004).

Most decisions in sports involve those related to group goals, practice methods, and game tactics and strategies (Chelladurai, 1990; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). As with other leadership styles, most research examining autocratic versus democratic styles has been conducted about the coaching leadership preferences of athletes (Amorose & Horn, 2000; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Horn et al., 2011; Witte, 2011). Using the framework of self-determination theory that poses the notion the three psychological needs driving human behavior and motivation are autonomy, relatedness, and competence, several studies specifically examined the relationship between athletes' intrinsic motivation and their perceptions of coaching behaviors (Amorose & Horn, 2000; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Horn et al., 2011). Amorose and Horn's (2000) results indicated that athletes with higher intrinsic motivation perceived their coaches to emphasize training and instruction with democratic leadership behaviors. In contrast, Amorose and Horn (2000) suggested coaches with high autocratic behavior could likely undermine athletes' intrinsic motivation because an autocratic style does not facilitate athletes' perception of self-determination. There was also a presence of gender differences in the results suggesting that females perceive a democratic style to be more important in fostering their intrinsic motivation (Amorose & Horn, 2000). Furthermore, Hollembeak and Amorose (2005) also found support for athletes' preference for democratic coaching. Specifically, they found that democratic behaviors positively impacted autonomy and intrinsic motivation of the athletes; meanwhile, autocratic behaviors had the opposite effect. Results also indicated autocratic behaviors have a significantly negative relationship with feelings of relatedness (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005). Since the results indicate a majority of coaching behaviors impacting intrinsic motivation, specifically decision making styles, the researchers suggest coaches to focus on this area. By choosing to demonstrate more democratic leadership behaviors including factoring in

athletes' choices and suggestions, coaches may develop more intrinsically motivated athletes (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005).

More recently, Horn et al. (2011) examined the relationship between collegiate athletes' psychological characteristics (e.g. anxiety) with their preferences for coaching behaviors. Results indicated athletes high in self-determined forms of motivation and somatic trait anxiety preferred coaches with a democratic leadership style of behaviors who gives positive and information feedback. Conversely, highly amotivated athletes (i.e., those with a lack of motivation) preferred an autocratic leadership style coach who gave high amounts of punishment-oriented feedback (Horn et al., 2011). At the Division III level, Witte (2011) examined varsity student-athletes (N = 1,859) athletes' preferences for coaching styles and the differences between gender and nature of the athletes' sport (i.e., team or individual). Results indicated males most preferred autocratic coaching behaviors, which contradicts females' preferences of democratic leadership styles (Amorose & Horn, 2000). Results also indicated individual sport athletes preferred democratic leadership from their coaches whereas team sport athletes preferred an autocratic leadership style (Witte, 2011). Since much of the research has focused on coaching behaviors, Vincer and Loughead (2010) examined the influence of athlete leadership behaviors on perceptions of team cohesion. Varsity and club athletes (N = 312) completed the Group Environment Questionnaire and Leadership Scale for Sports to assess cohesion and athlete leadership behaviors. There are four dimensions of cohesion include individual attractions to the group-task, individual attractions to the group-social, group integration-task, and group integration-social (Vincer & Loughead, 2010). The first dimension, individual attraction to the group-task, assesses an individual team member's feelings about his or her personal involvement with the group's task, goals, and productivity. The second dimension, individual attractions to the group-social,

measures an individual's feelings about his or her acceptance and social interactions within the group. The third dimension, group integration-task dimension, assesses team member's feelings about the similarity and closeness overall within the team regarding the group's task. The fourth dimension, group integration-social, measures team member's feelings about the similarity and closeness of the group regarding social matters related to the team (Vincer & Loughead, 2010). Results indicated autocratic behaviors were negatively associated with all four of the dimensions of cohesion while democratic behaviors were positively related to attraction to the group with a task focus (Vincer & Loughead, 2010). Moreover, the research suggests that athletes' demonstrations of autocratic and democratic leadership behaviors influences perceptions of task and social cohesion. These results partially support the notion that specific behaviors of an athlete leader can contribute to team member's perceptions of cohesion in sport. Thus, practical implications for sport psychology consultants and coaches include implementing an educational program for athlete leaders to learn how to foster effective leadership behaviors and decision-making styles so that athletes can learn how much their behaviors influence the team environment including cohesion (Vincer & Loughead, 2010).

Emerging from the positive psychology movement, another leadership style termed authentic leadership represents the idea that developing as a leader occurs over the course of a lifetime and require high levels commitment and effort (Murray et al., 2010). Murray et al., (2010) suggested at the foundation of an authentic leader is an increased understanding of the authentic self; emphasis is also on the positive influence garnered by authentic leaders. Whitehead (2009) defined authentic leaders as those who are self-aware, humble, always seeking improvement, are aware of who they are leading, and care for the welfare of others. An authentic leader also facilitates trust through an ethical and moral framework and is committed to success

of the organization within social values (Whitehead, 2009). In sport, authentic leadership is in the process of being conceptualized with coaches. In order for coaches to positively influence their athletes and teams, increasing their awareness and understanding of their own values, beliefs, and goals is key to successfully leading authentically (Murray et al., 2010). Although prominent sport psychology researchers propose the idea of authentic leadership, research has not thoroughly been conducted to further support this claim or the place of authentic leadership in sport (Murray et al., 2010).

A final, yet less prominent, style is servant leadership in which a people-centered approach is used to serve the needs of others and develop future leaders (Burton & Peachey, 2013; Vidic & Burton, 2011). Servant leaders use vision, empathy, open communication, and problem-solving similar to transformational and transactional leadership styles; but unlike transformational and transactional leadership styles, servant leadership is focused on the needs of the followers and not the needs of the organization (van Dierendonk, 2011). Leaders also model skills and provide opportunities for the followers to develop their leadership styles and skills (Dillon, 2000). In servant leadership the interaction between the leader and followers is most important. The emphasis is on the leader's ability to be attentive to the needs of his or her followers, show concern for his or her followers, and nurture the needs of his or her followers (Burton & Peachey, 2013). In sport, most of the research has focused on coaches as servant leaders. Athletes with a servant leadership style coach experienced higher motivation, higher satisfaction with the leader, and performed more optimally than other athletes guided by other leadership styles (Hammermeister et al., 2008: Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008).

Leadership Roles. Regardless of the style a leader uses or emphasizes, leaders in sport serve important roles on a team. With regards to the athlete leaders on the team, leadership can

be classified into two roles: formal and informal. Formal leaders, or prescribed leaders, are athletes on an athletic team given a title or particular role by the coach or team, such as a team captain (Crozier et al., 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010). The manner in which these athlete leaders are prescribed their roles will likely depend on the leader's style. For example, an autocratic style coach would name the captains while a democratic style coach might allow the team to vote or have a say in the selection. Traditionally, research on athlete leadership regarding formal roles has examined the role of team captain; most importantly, the duties of the team captain (Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b; Mosher, 1979). Team captains are primarily expected to be a role model on and off the field including in school, act as a liaison between coach and team, lead logistical activities including warm-up and stretches, and organize team events and activities (Gould et al., 2013; Mosher, 1979). Other duties include supporting, encouraging, and teammates as well as reinforcing rules and consequences (Gould et al., 2013).

Informal leaders, also known as emergent or peer leaders, emerge as leaders through interactions with teammates (Crozier et al., 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010). Although most research has been done on formal leaders in sport, there is evidence from business and industry settings that informal peer leaders play an important role in group settings. For example, Wheelan and Johnston (1996) found that informal leaders had an impact on the group's activities, influenced the group's culture, and influenced the group's processes and structure. Pescosolido (2002) also suggested that informal leaders can assist members of the group in the process of making sense of vague instructions. For example, in sport, a coach may give unclear instructions to the team about what he or she wanted the team to do; an informal peer leader may be the individual who clarifies this information for the rest of

the team. Thus, it is important to consider informal peer leaders as another contributor to effective team functioning. Supporting this claim, Loughead and Hardy (2005) and Loughead et al. (2006) found that team captains as well as other teammates were identified as sources of leadership on teams. Glenn and Horn (1993) suggested teams should only have one or two team leaders. However, Crozier et al. (2013) found that eighty-five percent of athletes on a given team should be in a leadership position, whether formal (19%) or informal (66%).

Leadership Functions. Beyond the classification of an athlete leader as formal or informal, it is also important to examine the functions that the leaders serve with respect to the individuals on the team as well as the team as a whole. Role differentiation theory suggests leaders can occupy various roles, called functions in athlete leadership, within a group context (Bales, 1950). Bales (1950) stated that leaders could be separated into two distinct categories: leaders concerned with tasks (i.e., instrumental orientation) and leaders concerned with relationships and morale among group members (i.e., expressive orientation). Traditionally, role differentiation suggests leaders cannot be concerned both with instrumental and expressive orientations at the same time, but instead leaders can only be focused on one area or the other. For example, a leader focused on the task (instrumental) with a close deadline may struggle to be concerned with the feelings and group morale (expressive) because they are focused on successfully completing the task on time.

In the sport context, Rees (1983) examined basketball players' leadership preferences based on Bales' instrumental and expressive orientations. The teams were asked to fill out questionnaires at three various points throughout the season. Results suggested that the basketball players preferred leaders on the team who scored high in both instrumental (task) and expressive (social) orientations, which is contrary to Bales' (1950) suggestion that leaders could

only be focused on one orientation or the other. Building from Rees' (1983) research, Rees and Segal (1984) examined football players across two functions of athlete leaders at the collegiate level. Findings indicated that all of the task leaders were starters and social leaders were split evenly between starters and non-starters. Results also indicated that task leaders were seen across sophomore, junior, and senior players while social leaders primarily were found in the senior class. In addition, players on the team who contributed to team cohesion and were also considered better players could not be labeled as instrumental or expressive alone (Rees & Segal, 1984). Given that there was a significant overlap with regards to the functions that the various team leaders serve, Bales' (1950) claim that leaders can only focus on one type of function at a time was not supported (Rees & Segal, 1984).

According to Loughead et al. (2006) athlete leaders primarily serve two functions on a team; a task function to help the team achieve team goals and a social function to facilitate healthy relationships among teammates. Mosher (1979) suggested an additional function (typically for those in the team captain role) of representing the team for external functions, such as meetings, press conferences, and other media events. Seeking to support this claim, Loughead et al. (2006) examined characteristics of peer and team leaders across leadership functions including task, social, and external functions in a sample of athletes from 13 interactive team sports (N = 258). Results indicated that peer and team leaders (e.g. team captains), demonstrated task, social, and external functions within a team environment. Additionally, a significant amount of task, social, and external functions were demonstrated by formal, title-holding team captains who were also regular starters for the team (Loughead et al., 2006). Team captains who are also starters primarily serve a task function on athletic teams but also serve the external function because they are more likely to perform successfully (Loughead et al., 2006). Consistent

with Mosher (1979), Loughead et al. (2006) validates that an external function does exist for athlete leaders. These athletes facilitate communication with personnel outside of the team (Fransen et al., 2014b). Fransen et al. (2014b) further supported the presence of an external function but found that this was perceived as the least important of the functions an athlete leader serves.

Fransen et al. (2014b) proposed a fourth function that represents interpersonal interactions that occur on the field. Derived from previous research, coaches and athletes have expressed the importance of motivating and cheering throughout the game. In order for athlete leadership to be successful, studies suggest that on-field motivating and encouraging behaviors are crucial (Cotterhill, 2013; Dupuis et al., 2006). With the lack of empirical evidence to support a motivation function in athlete leadership, Fransen et al. (2014b) hypothesized that a motivation function would emerge as a distinct role alongside task, social, and external functions. Results from an investigation of team sport athletes (N = 3,193) and coaches (N=1, 258) indicated the motivation function of an athlete leader to be equally present on teams alongside task and social functions. In addition, motivation was perceived as the second most important leadership function behind the task leadership function (Fransen et al., 2014b).

In athlete leadership research, leadership functions have been suggested to be important to facilitate optimal team functioning (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Rees & Segal, 1984). Although the four functions have been demonstrated as distinct, there has been support for athletes fulfilling more than one function. One athlete leader is not limited to performing one function but not another, contrary to Bales' (1950) claim that leaders could only be concerned with task or social functions (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Rees & Segal, 1984). However, Fransen et al. (2014b) found that only 18.8% of the athlete leaders in

their study engaged in two leadership functions. Overall, the distribution of leadership functions appears to be spread out across the team including both formal and informal roles within a team (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006).

Athlete Leadership Research

Research examining factors, relationships, and influence of athlete leadership is on the rise (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Moran & Weiss, 2006; Price & Weiss, 2011; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). One study that emerged early in athlete leadership research, Glenn and Horn (1993) sought to identify personal and psychological characteristics of emergent, or informal, team leaders and leadership behaviors in female sport teams. High school female soccer players (N = 106) ranging ages 14 to 18 years completed several scales to assess perceived competence, global self-worth, competitive anxiety, actual soccer competence, and centrality of athlete's position on the field. Results revealed athletes who were high in perceived soccer competence, femininity, and masculinity rated themselves higher in leadership ability than players who scored lower on the same characteristics. An unlikely result indicated that high competitive trait anxiety was positively related with peer ratings of leadership effectiveness. This finding suggests that peers may perceive behaviors related to competitive trait anxiety as a demonstration of concern about team performance and intensity of commitment to the team. In addition, coaches' ratings of athletes' leadership tendencies were primarily related with actual skill competence of the player. However, when coaches rated the psychological characteristics of the player, a low correlation exists suggesting that coaches do not consider psychological characteristics when they assess leadership abilities. Thus, suggesting coaches may choose team leaders based on ability (Glenn & Horn, 1993). The study also supports the hypothesis that athletes who predominantly play in centrally located positions would more likely be seen as a leader than

other non-centrally located positions. Moran and Weiss (2006) replicated and extended Glenn and Horn's (1993) study with similar results. Moran and Weiss (2006) extended the research to male soccer players but replicated the female portion of the study. For female athletes, the study replicated Glenn and Horn's (1993) study for measurement of peer leadership and predictor variables that overlapped in both studies (ability, perceived competence, instrumentality, and expressiveness). Furthermore, results regarding males peer leadership vastly differed than females. Teammate and coaches' ratings were highly correlated, implying overlap between teammate and coaches' estimates of peer leadership. Athletic ability was the primary correlate of coaches' ratings of peer leadership among males, identical to the results of female athletes (Moran & Weiss, 2006).

Also similar to Glenn and Horn's (1993) study, Price and Weiss (2011) examined peer leadership in sport through a transformational leadership theory approach. Continuing with female adolescent soccer players (N = 191), relationships between personal characteristics, peer leadership behaviors, and team outcomes were examined. Results revealed that peer leaders were characterized by high perceived soccer competence, peer acceptance, behavioral conduct, and intrinsic motivation. This suggests that athletes look for peers who are confident in their soccer abilities, are liked by others, prefer challenging tasks to easy ones, and act in behaviorally appropriate ways. Additionally, effective peer leadership was associated with players who reported greater task and social cohesion and collective efficacy. Particularly, peer leadership behaviors contribute to team functioning through beliefs of how well members get along, their ability to accomplish goals, and efficacy to be successful (Price & Weiss, 2006). Implications for coaches include being more aware of team members who are confident in their abilities, exhibit prosocial behaviors, and are liked by teammates because these characteristics have been

demonstrated to be qualities of peer leaders identified by teammates. Coaches can also facilitate leadership opportunities because team members, including leaders, can promote positive group outcomes in attaining goals, working efficiently, and achieving team harmony (Price & Weiss, 2006). As coaches seek to facilitate and create leadership opportunities for their players, coaches need to consider how they wish to develop their athlete leaders.

Development of Athlete Leadership

Gould, Voelker, and Griffes (2013) claim that leadership is not always proactively developed in youth athletes, including for captains. Voelker, Gould, and Crawford (2011) also indicated that when examining the experience of high school sport captains, the athletes felt neither adequately prepared or trained to fill the role of a captain. Specifically, athletes described how their coaches were not sufficiently communicating the roles and responsibilities involved in being a captain, as well as, not teaching the leadership skills necessary for effective leadership. As a result, it could also be suggested that leadership is also under developed at the collegiate level if the athletes do not already possess the skills that are underdeveloped in youth. Additionally, examining the role of the coach, including mentoring and the coach-athlete relationship, in athlete leadership development provides insight on the influence coaches have in foster development of their athlete leaders.

Mentoring Athletes. Mentoring, historically, has been widely used in educational and corporate settings (Merriam, 1983; Miller, Samela, & Kerr, 2002). Merrian (1983) described mentoring as a nonfamiliar and nonromantic relationship that develops between a young, less experienced adult, and a more experienced adult. A mentor's duties include supporting, counseling, and guiding the mentee within a chosen context (Merrian, 1983). Mentoring in sport can be seen most often in three relationships: coach-coach, coach-athlete, and athlete-athlete and

is important in developing athlete leaders (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Miller et al., 2002).

Mentoring in sport has become more important in coaching development programs (Bloom et al., 1998). Bloom et al. (1998) sought to examine mentoring experiences in team sport coaches (N = 21) with respect to the experiences of being a mentee as well as a mentor. Results indicated that most coaches were mentored during their athletic careers and as young coaches. The mentoring experience provided priceless knowledge and information that helped develop personal coaching philosophies. Once the mentored coaches reached a level of "expertise" in their sport, they then began to mentor athletes and younger coaches (Bloom et al., 1998). Mentoring relationships require a level of trust that allows such development to occur for the mentee. Although mentoring in sport exists, there appears to be no formalized process of relationship initiation that occurs. Coaches suggested that they were at the right place, at the right time when the initiation of the mentoring relationship occurred (Bloom et al., 1998).

Extending research of mentoring relationships in sport, Miller et al. (2002) investigated university athletic coaches' perceptions of the role mentoring has in sport. Coaches (N = 8) were asked open-ended questions and data was analyzed bottom-down. Results suggested that coaches saw mentoring as an important aspect of their professional duties. They believed they had a positive impact on the growth and development of their athletes through a mentoring role (Miller et al., 2002). Similar to research in education and corporate settings, mentors in sport serve career functions, or building skills of the mentee that would advance his or her development, and psychological functions, or building the mentee's sense of competence, intimacy, identity, and effectiveness through listening, praise, and counseling (Millet et al., 2002). The positive influence of a coach mentor can strengthen the coach-athlete relationship.

Coach-Athlete Relationship. Coaches are in contact with their athletes on a daily basis. Because of this, coaches potentially have a strong influential role in athlete development varying on the relationship existing between the coach and athlete. The interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is influenced by emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of both parties (Jowett, 2006). The coach-athlete relationship does not only influence performance, but it can also influence an athletes' physical and psychological development (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Jowett (2005) suggested that the coach-athlete relationship can help athletes when faced with various forms of adversity such as an injury, burnout, or career termination. To further investigate the coach-athlete relationship, two models have emerged: 3 + 1 Cs Model and the COMPASS Model (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

The 3 + 1 Cs Model proposed by Jowett and Cockerill (2003) focuses on four constructs including closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation that defines the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. Closeness reflects the intimacy of the relationship between the athlete and coach. Commitment describes the intention between the coach and athlete to build and maintain the relationship which can be demonstrated by making sacrifices, communicating honestly, and offering understanding. Complementarity refers to cooperative interactions between coach and athlete. The additional (i.e.,+ 1) C in the model, co-orientation reflects the influence of situational (e.g., motivational climate, group cohesion) and individual (e.g., confidence, self-esteem) characteristics (Jowett, 2006). Choi, Cho, and Huh (2013) investigated the association between the perceived coach-athlete relationship and the athletes' basic psychological needs (i.e., competence, relatedness, autonomy). Previous research suggested the three basic psychological needs influence the relationship between the coach-athlete relationship and motivation, but few studies have examined the relationship perspective. Using self-

determination theory as a framework, Korean collegiate athletes (N = 328) completed the Korean versions of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire and Basic Psychological Needs Questionnaire. Results overall indicated that the coach-athlete relationship is related to the athletes' basic psychological needs. More specifically, commitment and closeness were significantly correlated with competence and autonomy. Similarly, complementarity correlated with competence and relatedness. Choi, Cho, and Huh (2013) concluded the more athletes perceived the relationship as positive and favorable, the more their basic psychological needs were satisfied.

The 3 + 1 Cs model primarily focuses on relationship quality between coach and athlete; because of this Rhind and Jowett (2010) sought to extend the focus onto the maintenance strategies of the coach-athlete relationship. The COMPASS model proposes seven strategies for maintaining and enhancing the coach-athlete relationship, including: conflict management, openness, motivation, positivity, advice, support, and social networks (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Conflict management reflects proactive and reactive strategies of expectations, consequences of unmet expectations, and cooperation when discussing conflict. A proactive approach involves taking steps to clarify expectations and avoid conflict, while a reactive approach involves cooperation during the discussion of the disagreements between coach and athlete. One participant recommended having a discussion early on in the coach-athlete relationship to have an understanding what to expect from one another from the beginning (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Openness denotes the willingness to share one's feelings in non-sport communication (e.g., discussing concerns not directly related to training or competition), talking about anything (e.g., making it clear the coach/athlete can discuss any topic), and other awareness (e.g., making an attempt to feel how the other is feeling) (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Motivation strategies indicate

an individual's motivation to work or continue working with athletes and coaches. Four emerging themes of importance was demonstrating effort in training and competition, attempts to motivate others, attempts to make interactions enjoyable, and showing the ability to make the relationship successful (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Positivity involved being adaptable and changing one's behavior to suit the preferences of the coach or athlete, showing good sportspersonship, and positively dealing with events outside of the coach or athlete's sport (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Advice strategies involves giving one's opinion on problems encounter by the coach or athlete, as well as, receiving feedback positively and openly. Advice could be found in sport communication directly related to training or competition, reward feedback praising the other party, and giving constructive feedback with opinions and instructions designed to help improve and not criticize (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Demonstrating support portrays that the athlete or coach is committed to the coach-athlete relationship through assurance, showing sport-specific support, and showing personal support (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). The seventh strategy, social networks is described as spending social time with the coach or athlete, as well as other mutual friends off the field, track, or court (Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

Rhind and Jowett (2010) suggested that the use of these seven strategies would have a positive effect on the quality of the relationship. In addition, the absence of these strategies would suggest a negative effect on the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. The COMPASS model complements the 3 + 1 Cs model by providing strategies to help maintain closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). In terms of a coach-athlete leader relationship, it is likely that the role of mentoring, the quality of coach-athlete relationship, and strategies used to enhance and maintain the relationship influence the development of athlete leadership. However, research needs to further investigate the role of the

coach-athlete relationship in athlete leadership development, as well as, the role of mentoring in fostering leadership development.

Fostering Development. Gould et al. (2013) examined best coaching practices for developing team captains. Interviews were conducted with coaches known and acknowledged for their ability to develop leadership in their captains. Coaches were asked what experiences and strategies athletes can use to be prepared for a leadership role and coaches explained how important sport experiences were because of the life lessons learned in those situations. Coaches also suggested the importance of encouraging athletes to learn from others and to follow good examples of leadership in general (Gould et al., 2013). When asked to describe how they prepare captains for their leadership role, the majority of coaches reported that they had developed a strong channel of communication with their athlete leader; communicating expectations of the athlete leaders was most important. Strong, open communication can strengthen the coach-athlete relationship and further support a mentoring role a coach with the athlete to foster leadership development. The majority of coaches reported that providing feedback and reinforcement about the captain's leadership behaviors was useful in enhancing their relationship (Gould et al., 2013).

Suggestions from these coaches is useful for athlete leaders to consider and for other coaches to consider the role they play in how they foster athlete leadership development. However, because it is not generalizable to all coaches fostering athlete leaders, it is important to consider what is considered effective athlete leadership before considering how to foster athlete leadership development. Thus, understanding perceptions from both coaches and athletes of athlete leadership is important when beginning to develop a cohesive understanding of what coaches and athletes alike look for in athlete leaders.

Perceptions of Athlete Leadership

Most research has focused on athletes' perceptions of coach leadership (Amorose & Horn, 2000; Chelladurai, 1984; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005; Horn et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2010; Rowold, 2006; Vidic & Burton, 2011; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). Recently, research has begun to shift to understanding coaches' and athletes' perceptions of athlete leadership (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010; Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, & Caron, 2012). Dupuis et al. (2006) sought to identify and investigate leadership behaviors exhibited by formal athlete leaders, specifically team captains. Six former male ice hockey captains were interviewed using a semi-structured method. Results revealed three primary categories of importance: interpersonal characteristics and experiences, verbal interactions, and carrying out task behaviors. Consistent with leadership roles of the team captain, the findings supported the duties expected of team captains (Gould et al., 2013; Fransen et al., 2014b; Mosher, 1979). Similarly, Holmes et al. (2010) examined college athletes' perceptions of formal and informal leaders. Mixed gender focus groups (N = 33) were used to qualitatively gain perspective on perceived athlete leaders. Results indicated both men and women agree that team leaders should be vocal and trustworthy, lead by example, be a good role model, and possess good interpersonal skills. For female athletes, being vocal, sensitive, and having good interpersonal skills were most important while male athletes preferred athlete leaders who were trustworthy and had experience (Holmes et al., 2010). Although results were not differentiated between formal and informal, they support Dupuis et al.'s (2006) results interpersonal characteristics and experiences are important in athlete leaders.

Coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership provide an additional dimension to athlete leadership research. Bucci et al. (2012) sought to identify ice hockey coaches' perceptions of

factors that influence athlete leadership. Six high level ice hockey coaches participated in a semi-structured open-ended interview to gain insight into how coaches selected and developed their athlete leaders, how they fostered the athlete-coach relationship, and the responsibilities of their athlete leaders. Results indicated an important role of the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches explained that holding coach-athlete leader meetings to discuss the team's climate and how individuals and the team objectives more strongly be achieved as necessary. In addition, coaches preferred to gather information from more than one athlete leader (Bucci et al., 2012). Coaches did not specify an exact number of leaders representing the team, but several suggested every team member influenced the team by the individual's work ethic and interactions with others. Coaches also expanded on the importance of leaders to be a role model on and off the ice. On the ice, work ethic, leading by example, and following the coaches' instructions were required of athlete leaders. Off the ice, generosity, honesty, taking care of teammates, and setting the right example were discussed by coaches. Coaches particularly looked for athlete leaders that genuinely cared for other teammates' well-being (Bucci et al., 2012). One limitation to the study is that this particular study only investigated male ice hockey coaches. Further research needs to examine other sports and add in female coaches' perspectives (Bucci et al., 2012). This may be due to the nature of the sport being different in terms of season duration and how many members are on the team. Female coaches were not invited to participate in Bucci et al.'s (2012) study and results may indicate gender differences in perceptions of athlete leadership in terms of definitions, criteria, and expectations. Additionally, coaches of female teams were not included and may offer more insight and exploit further gender differences in perceptions of athlete leadership. More variables need to be investigated in order to create a more generalizable and

universal definition of athlete leadership, criteria for identifying athlete leaders, and expectations of athlete leaders.

Summary

The studies included in this literature review highlight the lack of a universal definition of athlete leadership. Additionally, general criteria used to identify athlete leaders and clearly outlined expectations for athlete leaders have not been thoroughly examined enough to generalize to most athletes. Definitions and identification cannot greatly be achieved numerically. Thus, qualitative inquiry, employing a semi-structured interview approach, offers great potential to attend to the complexity of the research topic (Galletta, 2012). It allows the participants to describe what they are looking for in detail and give examples relevant to the discussion. The results of the present study provide important insight to apply to athlete leadership research. Specifically, examining female collegiate team sport coaches' perceptions regarding general leadership, coaches' approaches to identifying and selecting athlete leaders, coaches' expectations for athlete leaders, coaches' approaches to develop athlete leaders, and keys to athlete leaders' success. The following chapter, chapter 3, describes the method used to examine coaches' perceptions athlete leadership.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership at the collegiate athletic level on female teams. As a qualitative study, this research attempted to provide an in-depth understanding of the nature of athlete leadership utilizing the perspectives of coaches of interactive collegiate sport teams. This research investigated athlete leadership in collegiate female team sports. The following chapter provides a description of the methodology, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques.

Methodology

This study was conducted using a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interviews have previously been used to study leadership in sport (Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2012; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to examine the complexity of the research topic while participants were able to describe their responses at length and in vivid detail (Galletta, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). When using semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepared a number of questions in advance and planned to ask follow-up questions based on the information the participants provide (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Questions were open-ended in order for the participants to narrate their experience. Pre-made questions are theoretically driven by research in the area of interest with follow-up and probing questions for clarification or further details (Galletta, 2012). There are two versions of probing questions relevant to the study the researcher can ask: clarification and meaning making (Galletta, 2012). Clarification questions ensure the accuracy of the interpretation of data by asking the participant to provide more details. Generating meaning with the participant brings the

interview below surface level information and deeper into the meaning the participant places on the narrative he or she is giving (Galletta, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews begin with broad questions and are composed of three segments that progressively narrows further in on the research topic (Galletta, 2012). The opening segment of the interview began with rapport building between the researcher and participant. Broad questions created openings for the participant to speak from his or her experience and it was important for the researcher to take note of meaningful information to return to for more exploration later in the interview (Galletta, 2012). The middle segment portion of the interview narrowed the focus on the questions more specifically on the research topic and ensures the research topic was being adequately explored (Galletta, 2012). In this segment, it was important to loop back, when appropriate, to the participant's narrative material and relate it back to the specific questions. Probing questions were also extended beyond clarification purposes, but further into meaning on the part of the participant in regard to the research topic (Galletta, 2012). The final segment allowed an opportunity to return to specific points of the participant's narrative that need to be further explored through clarification, meaning making, and critical reflection questions. Specifically, as the interview came to a close, the researcher looked for opportunities to explore any contradictions given by the participant, return to stories or metaphors that needed more information, or posed theoretically driven questions for the participant to reflect on and consider (Galletta, 2012). The researcher then worked toward a sense of wrapping up and indicated to the participant the interview was coming to a close. Participants were asked for any final thoughts or points they may have. Finally, the participant was thanked and emphasized for his or her contribution to the research (Galletta, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews are not without limitations. These types of interviews rely on the ability of the researcher to probe and open up areas the participant may not have directly addressed while also reading body language, facial expression, and tone of voice of the participant. Most researchers will ask "anything else?" to gauge whether the participant has more information to continue giving (Galletta, 2012). The researcher must take note of details, events, observations, insights, and emotions that are relevant to the topic and that may be important to return to later in the interview when it is relevant to pre-made questions being asked. However, the researcher must also be weary of allowing the narrative to develop and hold back questions until enough information has been strongly explored in the opening segment (Galletta, 2012). It was important to realize when to and when not to interrupt the participant as he or she responded.

Following a social constructivist framework, the researcher was seeking to further understand the world in which she lives and works in the field of sport psychology (Creswell, 2013). Since little research has examined athlete leadership from coaches' perspectives, the intention was to build from the ground up inductively in search of a pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). This allowed a methodological philosophical assumption, which is characterized as inductive and emerging. Creswell (2013) described that it can be shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data. Research questions may be altered in the process in order to better understand the problem being researched. Data collection methodology was altered with the updated procedures when the researcher altered the participant criteria (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

Participants of this study consisted of collegiate coaches (N = 10) that met the proposed criteria. The researcher continued to interview participants until themes became saturated or

responses to the pre-prepared questions became redundant across participants and no new themes emerged (Creswell, 2013). The number of participants can range from ten to sixty in order to fully saturate information (Creswell, 2013). Participants must have three years coaching experience at the collegiate level as head coach of a women's team sport. Coaches do not currently have to be head coach but must have been head coach for a minimum of three years at some point and currently coaching as an assistant. This was to ensure coaches have a strong enough vision for an athlete leader on a sport team. Coaches must also coach a women's team sport at a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, NCAA Junior Colleges, and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) college or university. Team sport athlete leaders and individual sport athlete leaders may have different roles due to the nature of the environment of the sport. Potential gender differences could alter the emerging themes; thus this study will focus on coaches of women's team sports. Coaches were interviewed until saturation occurred of emerging themes (Creswell, 2013).

Data Collection

Procedure. The researcher began by piloting the interview guide with participants similar to the criteria, if not meeting the criteria in order to see if the interview guide needed to be altered before data collection began. The researcher then examines athletic department websites in order to find the initial wave of participants that met the proposed criteria; specifically, the researcher searched athletic websites to read coaches' profiles and initiated contact with the coaches' contact information provided on the website. Participants that met the criteria were invited through email and phone to participate in the study; voluntary participants scheduled the interview with the researcher. Purposeful sampling was used in this study and

participants were asked for any referrals they may have for other coaches meeting the criteria to participate, also known as snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013). The researcher also posted on social media outlets and sent a call out for participants on listservs relevant to the participant criteria. Prior to the interview, consent and confidentiality of the participant was explained and there was time for any questions. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. However, participants were given the option to waive confidentiality if they do not mind being identified for the purpose to strengthen the study with the ability to be recognized by readers. Interviews were conducted individually with each participant in person, over the phone, or through Skype. Interviews were primarily conducted in person, as that is the researcher's preference. When it was not a viable option, the next best option was the use of Skype for the interview. Skype allowed for the researcher to see the participant, which allowed the researcher to gauge the participant's responses in terms of whether the participant paused to think or finished the question. Phone interviews were a last resort if in-person and Skype were not an option.

The interviews were guided by open-ended and probing questions. Open-ended questions created space for the participants to narrate their experiences and allowed the researcher to deliberately and carefully selected questions related to the research topic (Galletta, 2012). Follow-up and probing questions listed on the interview guide were not asked when the participant answered them without the prompt. Additionally, when the researcher felt the participant had already answered a pre-prepared question, the researcher skipped the question or asked the participant "I felt like you addressed this earlier, but is there anything you would like to add?" in order to ensure the participant had answered the question to the fullest. It is structured in accordance to Galletta's (2012) suggestion for interview structure by starting broad and

narrowing in on the research topic of definitions, criteria, and expectations of athlete leadership. Questions began with asking the participant to give a brief history of his or her playing experience and how he or she got involved with coaching. As the interview progressed, the participants were asked about their definitions of athlete leadership, criteria they consider when they select athlete leaders on the team, and expectations they have of their athlete leaders. Using a less structured interview format allowed flexibility for the researcher to use appropriate follow-up questions based on the participant's answer in order to gain clarification (Creswell, 2013; Galletta, 2012). Interviews lasted twenty to ninety minutes. Each interview was recorded with a digital recorder to ensure that all the information was captured. Each recording was transcribed verbatim onto a Microsoft Office Word document on a password protected computer. Once the interview was transcribed, the participant was sent a copy to validate the accuracy of the data. Recordings and transcriptions will be kept for five years in a designated locked cabinet. Electronic files are held in a password-protected folder on the researcher's laptop and USB drive. The researcher continued interviewing coaches until saturation was reached for developing themes (Creswell, 2013). Coaches were contacted for a follow-up interview if a new theme emerges and expansion of details was desired by the researcher (Galletta, 2012).

As described above, the participant and researcher discussed consent, confidentiality, and whether or not the participant wished to be identified for the purposes of the study in the initial meeting. Any follow-up interview was conducted only to strengthen the discussion of an emerging theme. There was no deception involved in this study from the researcher. Participants were able to drop out at any time without consequence. The participants were not offered compensation for participation. The researcher did not share personal experience with topic of interest with any participants.

Exploring researcher bias. Creswell (2013) suggests the researcher is a key instrument when conducting a research study. Researchers must possess the skills necessary to build rapport with participants, implement the use of active listening, and locate and place hold on information given by the participant that the researcher wants to return to later for elaboration of details (Creswell, 2013; Galletta, 2012). As the primary instrument, the researcher extends questions and pursues important ideas in the participants' responses, probes and clarifies particular statements, and encourages information relating to the topic or redirects the participant when he or she gets off topic (Galetta, 2012). It is important for the researcher to have a level of reflexivity regarding what occurs during the interview between the researcher and participant (Galletta, 2012). The researcher was exposed to collegiate coaches on a daily basis and there was potential to know at least one participant in the study prior to collecting data. This, however, evoked feelings of rapport, comfort, and trust with a participant, which is essential in conducting case study research, which led to the participant being more willing to provide information (Creswell, 2013).

Prior to the study, the researcher reported any bias or preconceived ideas about possible responses from participants and outcomes of the study. Given the nature of semi-structured interviews, interactions between participant and researcher had the potential to produce misconceptions of meaning and intent (Galletta, 2012). No interview went without interference, such as a misplaced probe, expression of emotion in response to what the participant says, or exploration of a theme that is emerging but may not be most relevant to the study (Galletta, 2012). Thus, reflexivity was an important part of the research process. The researcher must examine the research activities closely as well as examine the relationship between the researcher and the participants in order to locate potential interference. Interference could

potentially alter data and interpretation and it was important for the researcher to remain vigilant throughout the entire process by anticipating ways in which the research method or ethics were compromised. Identifying biases was especially important when conducting research in an environment they were familiar with as the researcher was for this study. The researcher closely examined transcriptions of interviews for any leading questions used as a follow-up or probing question that strayed too far from the interview guide.

Instrumentation. Following Galletta's (2012) semi-structured interview suggestions, an interview guide was created for the present study by the researcher (Appendix A). The interview guide consists of three segments. The opening segment of questions asks participants to share their playing history, how they got into coaching, and coaching philosophies to open discussions and build rapport with participants. The middle segment will ask participants about their leadership beliefs including definitions of athlete leadership and criteria for identifying and selecting athlete leaders. Furthermore, participants will be asked to share expectations they have of their athlete leaders. The final segment will consist of a summary question to link the topic of study and review answers given by the participant, as well as, concluding questions to give the participant an opportunity to provide any additional comments they may feel are relevant to the study.

The interview guide and questions were modeled after Gould, Voelker, and Griffes' (2013) study examining best coaching practices for team captain development as well as Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, and Caron's (2012) study examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. Both studies were used as models because both studies exemplify a strong tie to the research topic and semi-structured interview procedures. To extend the findings of these two

studies and this line of research, the researcher added questions more closely geared to the research question.

Prior to data collections, the researcher conducted pilot interviews to test the interview guide. According to Samson (2004) and Yin (2009), pilot testing allows the researcher to refine the data collection procedure, develop and adjust the interview questions, assess the degree of researcher bias, and collect background information. Pilot interviews were conducted with a convenient sample that is similar to the participant's criteria for selection.

Data Analysis

Developing Themes. In qualitative research, data analysis coincides with data collection. After each interview, the researcher completed a post interview reflection and began to establish emerging thematic patterns (Galletta, 2012). Analysis in qualitative research of the data consists of five steps (Creswell, 2013). First, the data collected will be prepared through organization. This consists of transcribing initial interviews and any follow-up interviews with the participants. Second, data will be read making notes and forming initial coding, or categories of information using in-vivo coding. Third, the coded information will be described in context. Fourth, the codes or categories will be analyzed to establish themes or patterns. Fifth, the data will be interpreted through direct interpretation to develop naturalistic generalizations of what was "learned" (Creswell, 2013).

Within and across interviews, the researcher examined resulting thematic patterns from the participant's data relevant to the research question (Galletta, 2012). The researcher interpreted and reported coaches' definitions, criteria, and expectations of athlete leadership The use of quotes was utilized to support the researcher's interpretations and descriptions of athlete leadership to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2013).

Validity and Reliability. Qualitative research is often under scrutiny for being described on the notion of the researcher's interpretation. Qualitative researchers attempt to provide an accurate representation of findings through employing several verification procedures (Creswell, 2013). During the interviews, according to semi-structured interview procedures, probing allowed for the researcher to clarify information, which was important for ensuring accuracy of the data. A researcher asked a participant to elaborate or give further details in order to offer additional insight or clarify meaning (Galletta, 2012). Following the interviews, the participants were given a copy of the interview transcription and asked to verify the accuracy of the information they provided as portrayed in writing (Galletta, 2012). Additionally, peer reviewers or debriefers were also used to provide an external check of the research (Creswell, 2013). Peer debriefers played the role of "devil's advocate" in order to keep the researcher honest. The researcher was asked difficult questions about the methods, meanings, and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). Finally, in presenting the results of the research, rich descriptions and direct quotations from participants were used to convey the findings to readers. Readers have a greater understanding of what coaches expect of athlete leaders on their teams. Utilizing these strategies, the reliability and validity of the research is strengthened.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Opening Segment

1. Can you tell me about your playing experience?
    a. Primary sports played
    b. Levels achieved playing
    c. Past leadership roles
2. Can you describe your coaching experience and career progression for me?
    a. How you got into coaching
    b. Starting age
    c. Years experience coaching, genders coached, different age groups/ability levels
3. Can you describe to me your coaching philosophy?

Middle Segment

4. How would you define leadership in sport?
5. How would you define leadership in coaching?
6. How do you think someone becomes a leader (in sport)?
    a. Are leaders born or made?
    b. Can anyone be made into a leader?
7. How would you describe your leadership style?
8. How would you define athlete leadership?
    a. What types of leaders do you want to have or have on your team? (i.e., Team/Captain, Peer)
9. How do you develop athlete leaders?
10. How do you think your leadership style influences the type of leader you look for?
11. What criteria do you use to identify and select athlete leaders on your team?
    a. What do you look for in an athlete leader?
    b. What characteristics do you look for? - Age, past leadership roles, leading by example, leader potential, skill level, experience/tenure, starting status, bringing team together
    c. What factors, if any, affect this from year to year?
        i. Vision about team's potential, personalities of the team, etc.
12. What do you expect of your athlete leaders?
    a. Captains, Peer Leaders
    b. What specific duties, roles, requirements do they have?
13. Looking back on your most successful season, what impact/role did your leader have?
14. Looking back on your worst season, what impact/role did your leaders have?
15. Explain the worst athlete leaders you have coached and what went wrong.
16. Explain the best athlete leaders you have coached and what went well.

Final Segment

17. What impact do athlete leaders have on team and team performances?
    a. Significance/Strength of impact
    b. Examples
18. From your experience, what makes an athlete leader most effective?
19. We've talked a lot about athlete leadership, is there anything we haven't covered and/or anything additional you would like to add or discuss?

CHAPTER IV

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CHAPTER V

MANUSCRIPT

Athlete Leadership: How Coaches Select, Identify, and Develop Leaders on Female Teams

Samantha Engel

Barry University

Research examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership is scarce. Most research regarding athlete leadership has examined specific components, such as social, psychological, and ability characteristics, both informal and formal roles and functions of athlete leaders, and team captains specifically (Crozier, Loughead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2013; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Moran & Weiss, 2006). Looking to expand the literature, Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, and Caron (2012) examined coaches' perceptions regarding athlete leadership. However, their investigation solely focused on male ice hockey coaches. Thus, the purpose of this study was to extend Bucci et al.'s (2012) findings by examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership on female teams. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with coaches of collegiate female team sports. The results provide a broader understanding of athlete leadership by exploring coaches' definitions and conceptions of leadership, approaches to identifying and selecting athlete leaders, expectations for athlete leaders, approaches to developing athlete leaders, and proposed keys to athlete leaders' success. Practical implications are discussed for coaches, athletes, as well as mental performance consultants.

Research in sport leadership has primarily focused on athletes' perceptions of coach leadership (Chelladurai, 1984; Murray, Mann, & Mead, 2010; Rowold, 2006; Weinberg & Gould, 2015). However, recently more researchers have begun to examine a range of factors surrounding athlete leadership including the extent of their influence, athletes' perceptions, and psychological predictors (Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, & Caron, 2012; Crozier, Loughead, & Munroe-Chandler, 2013; Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Fransen et al., 2014a; Fransen et al., 2014b; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Loughead et al., 2006; Moran & Weiss, 2006; Price & Weiss, 2011; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). Additionally, comparisons have been made between coach and athlete leadership. For example, Loughead and Hardy (2005) found that coaches and peer leaders serve as two sources of leadership with two different functions on a given team. Coaches demonstrate greater amounts of training and instruction as well as autocratic behaviors while peer leaders engage in social support, positive feedback, and democratic decision-making behaviors. Since most research has been on athletes' perceptions of leadership, a more thorough examination of athlete leadership behavior is justified (Loughead & Hardy, 2005).

Athlete leadership has been defined as an athlete occupying a formal or informal role on a team who influences a group of team members to achieve a common goal (Loughead et al., 2006). Athlete leaders have been found to influence several aspects of group dynamic including team member attributes, team structure, cohesion, team processes, individual outcomes, team outcomes, and leadership behaviors (Crozier et al., 2013; Vincer & Loughead, 2010). For example, athlete leaders influence team structure by helping establish role clarity, group norms, and group status amongst team members (Crozier et al., 2013). As a result, team members

understand the responsibilities associated with their role, the expectations of how to behave to help the team succeed, and the status of the team member within the team (Crozier et al., 2013).

Several studies have suggested athlete leaders are often chosen based on their perceived talent and position rather than the quality of their leadership skills (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Loughead et al., 2006). Loughead et al. (2006) suggested 95 percent of team leaders (e.g., formal leaders, captains) and 81 percent of peer leaders (e.g., informal leaders) are regular starters for their teams. Athlete leaders were also selected based on their tenure on the team, specifically having at least three years on the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). Also, Glenn and Horn (1993) suggested that athletes who play in central positions were rated higher in leadership ability by teammates and coaches than non-central field positions. So the question becomes, does an athlete get put into a leadership position as a result of playing in a central position? Or is an athlete put in a central position because of his or her leadership skills?

According to Loughead et al. (2006) athlete leaders primarily serve two functions on a team; a task function to help the team achieve team goals and a social function to facilitate healthy relationships among teammates. Mosher (1979) suggested an additional function (typically for those in the team captain role) of representing the team for external functions, such as meetings, press conferences, and other media events. Seeking to support this claim, Loughead et al. (2006) examined characteristics of peer and team leaders across leadership functions including task, social, and external functions in a sample of athletes from 13 interactive team sports (N = 258). Results indicated that both peer and team leaders (e.g., team captains) demonstrated task, social, and external functions within a team environment. Additionally, a significant amount of task, social, and external functions were demonstrated by formal, title-holding team captains who were also regular starters for the team (Loughead et al., 2006). Team

captains who are also starters primarily serve a task function on athletic teams but also serve the external function because they are more likely to perform successfully (Loughead et al., 2006). Consistent with Mosher (1979), Loughead et al. (2006) validated that an external function does exist for athlete leaders. These athletes facilitate communication with personnel outside of the team (Fransen et al., 2014b). Fransen et al. (2014b) further supported the presence of an external function but found that this was perceived as the least important of the functions an athlete leader serves.

Fransen et al. (2014b) proposed a fourth function that represents interpersonal interactions that occur on the field. Derived from previous research, coaches and athletes have expressed the importance of motivating and cheering throughout the game. In order for athlete leadership to be successful, studies suggest that on-field motivating and encouraging behaviors are crucial (Cotterhill, 2013; Dupuis et al., 2006). With the lack of empirical evidence to support a motivation function in athlete leadership, Fransen et al. (2014b) hypothesized that a motivation function would emerge as a distinct role alongside task, social, and external functions. Results from an investigation of team sport athletes (N = 3,193) and coaches (N = 1, 258) indicated the motivation function of an athlete leader to be equally present on teams alongside task and social functions. In addition, motivation was perceived as the second most important leadership function behind the task leadership function (Fransen et al., 2014b).

In athlete leadership research, leadership functions have been suggested to be important to facilitate optimal team functioning (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Rees & Segal, 1984). Although the four functions have been demonstrated as distinct, there has been support for athletes fulfilling more than one function. An athlete leader is not limited to performing one function but not another, contrary to Bales' (1950) claim that leaders could only

be concerned with task or social functions (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006; Rees & Segal, 1984). However, Fransen et al. (2014b) found that only 18.8% of the athlete leaders in their study engaged in two leadership functions. Overall, the distribution of leadership functions appears to be spread out across the team including both formal and informal roles within a team (Fransen et al., 2014b; Loughead et al., 2006).

Given that athlete leaders, both formal and informal, play an important role in group dynamics and therefore group performance, it is essential for those leaders to have the necessary skills to effectively lead and not solely be selected purely because of their sport ability, position on the field, and/or tenure on the team (Crozier et al., 2013; Loughead et al., 2006). Most commonly, the coach is considered the one responsible for developing his or her athlete leaders on a team. In youth sport, coaches are proactive in teaching leadership to their players (Gould et al., 2013). However, at the collegiate level too often athletes do not receive enough guidance or instruction on how to be leaders (Voight, 2012). Moran and Weiss (2006) sought to replicate Glenn and Horn's (1993) study examining relationships between peer leadership and social, psychological, and ability characteristics. Self-ratings, teammate ratings, and coach-ratings were employed to measure the relationships between leadership and characteristics. Athletic ability was found to be a single criterion of peer leadership status for female adolescents. Thus, the researchers suggested that future research should examine the reasons as to why this may be through investigation of coaches' definitions and criteria of effective athlete leadership and selection methods.

In order to develop athlete leaders, a more universal understanding of athlete leadership including coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership must firstly occur. Accordingly, Bucci et al. (2012) examined ice hockey coaches' perceptions of the factors that influence athlete leadership.

Six high level ice hockey coaches participated in a semi-structured, open-ended interview to gain insight into how coaches selected and developed their athlete leaders, how they fostered the athlete-coach relationship, and the responsibilities of their athlete leaders. Results indicated an important role of the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches explained the importance of coach-athlete leader meetings to discuss the team's climate and how individuals and team objectives could more strongly be achieved through working together. In addition, coaches preferred to gather information from more than one athlete leader (Bucci et al., 2012).

Coaches did not specify an exact number of leaders representing the team, but several suggested every team member influenced the team by the individual's work ethic and interactions with others. Coaches also expanded on the importance of leaders being a role model on and off the ice. On the ice, work ethic, leading by example, and following the coaches' instructions were required of athlete leaders. Off the ice, the coaches mentioned expecting leaders to exhibit generosity and honesty, take care of their teammates, and set the right example. The coaches particularly looked for athlete leaders who genuinely cared for their teammates' well-being (Bucci et al., 2012). However, Bucci et al. (2012) only examined the perspectives of coaches of male ice hockey players and as a result suggested future research be conducted with coaches of female athletes. Additionally, they suggested expanding the research to include other team sports beyond hockey because the nature of other team sports is different, including factors such as the number of athletes on the team and duration of the season.

At this time, athlete leadership has been examined from coaches and peer perspectives but with a narrow focus on social, psychological, and ability characteristics, informal and formal roles and functions of athlete leaders, and on team captains (Crozier et al., 2013; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Gould et al., 2013; Loughead et al. 2006; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Moran & Weiss,

2006). Bucci et al. (2012) began to expand the literature by examining coaches' perceptions from a broader approach. Beyond Bucci et al.'s (2012) study, research has not given coaches an opportunity to provide insight into their perspectives of and experiences with female athlete leadership. Additionally, their definitions of athlete leadership, criteria for selecting athlete leaders, and expectations of athlete leadership have not been thoroughly examined. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to examine coaches' perspectives on athlete leadership in female collegiate teams.

METHOD

The present study was conducted using a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interviews have previously been used to study leadership in sport (Gould, Voelker, & Griffes, 2012; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to examine the complexity of the research topic while participants were able to describe their responses at length and in vivid detail (Galletta, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Participants

Participants consisted of collegiate coaches (N = 10; see Table 1) who met the inclusion criteria, including: a minimum of three years' head coach experience at the collegiate level and currently working with a collegiate women's team sport (e.g., soccer, softball, ice hockey). Coaches did not have to currently be a head coach, but must currently be coaching at the collegiate level and have previously at some point been head coach for a minimum of three years. This was to ensure coaches have a strong enough vision for an athlete leader on a sport team.

Coaches in the study were employed at collegiate institutions from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association

(NJCAA), and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Ages ranged from 31-60+ with head coaching experience ranging from 3.5 to 35 years. Participants were head coaches of Women's Soccer, Women's Ice Hockey, Women's Volleyball, and Softball.

Table 1
Coach Demographic Information

Name	Age Range	Gender	Sport	Collegiate Level	Total Years' Experience Head Coach	Total Years in Current Position
C1	51-55	Female	W. Soccer	NCAA DI	26	22
Coach Utter	51-55	Male	W. Ice Hockey	NCAA DIII	19	9
C3	31-35	Female	W. Soccer	NCAA DII	3.5	3.5
Coach Rich	60+	Male	W. Soccer	NJCAA	35	20
Coach DeMarsh	41-45	Male	W. Soccer	NCAA DIII	14	14
C6	36-40	Female	W. Softball	NCAA DII	11	11
C7	31-35	Female	W. Soccer	NAIA	6	6
Coach Rayfield	51-55	Female	W. Soccer	NCAA DI	22	14.5
C9	36-40	Male	W. Soccer	NCAA DII	14	10
C10	36-40	Female	W. Volleyball	NCAA DII	13	.5

Instrumentation

Following Galletta's (2012) semi-structured interview suggestions, an interview guide was created (Appendix A) that consisted of three segments. The opening segment of questions asked participants to share their playing history, how they got into coaching, and coaching philosophies to open discussions and build rapport with participants. The middle segment asked participants about their leadership beliefs including definitions of athlete leadership and criteria for identifying and selecting athlete leaders. Furthermore, participants were asked to share

expectations they have of their athlete leaders. The final segment consisted of a summary question to link the topic of study and review answers given by the participant, as well as, concluding questions to give the participant an opportunity to provide any additional comments they may have felt were relevant to the study. The interview guide and questions were modeled after Gould, Voelker, and Griffes' (2013) study examining best coaching practices for team captain development as well as Bucci et al.'s (2012) study examining coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. To extend the findings of these two studies and this line of research, the researcher added questions more closely geared to the research question.

Procedure

The researcher began by piloting the interview guide with participants similar to the criteria, if not meeting the criteria, in order to see whether the interview guide needed to be altered before data collection began. Prior to the study, the researcher participated in a bracketing interview in order to avoid potential bias or preconceived ideas about possible responses from participants and outcomes of the study. The researcher was exposed to collegiate coaches on a daily basis and there was potential to know at least one participant in the study prior to collecting data. This, however, evoked feelings of rapport, comfort, and trust with the participant, which is essential in conducting case study research, which led to the participant being more willing to provide information (Creswell, 2013). In order to begin to identify participants, the researcher then examined athletic department websites in order to find the initial wave of participants that met the proposed criteria; specifically, the researcher searched athletic websites to read coaches' profiles and initiated contact with the coaches' using contact information provided on the websites. Participants who met the criteria were invited through email and phone to participate in the study; those who volunteered to participate subsequently scheduled the interview with the

researcher. Purposeful sampling was used in this study along with snowball sampling in which participants were asked for any referrals for other coaches meeting the criteria to participate (Creswell, 2013). The researcher also posted on social media outlets and sent a call out for participants on listservs relevant to the participation criteria. Prior to the interview, consent and confidentiality of the participant was explained and there was time for any questions. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. However, participants were given the option to waive confidentiality if they did not mind being identified for the purpose of strengthening the study with the ability to be recognized by readers. Four coaches elected to waive confidentiality and allow his or her name to be used in the study. Interviews were conducted individually with each participant in person, over the phone, or through Skype.

Utilizing a less structured interview format allowed flexibility for the researcher to use appropriate follow-up questions based on the participant's answers in order to gain clarification (Creswell, 2013; Galletta, 2012). Each interview was recorded with a digital recorder and then was transcribed verbatim. Following the interviews, the participants were given a copy of the interview transcription and asked to verify the accuracy of the information they provided as portrayed in writing (Galletta, 2012). As described above, in the initial meeting, the participant and researcher discussed consent, confidentiality, and whether or not the participant wished to be identified for the purposes of the study. Interviews lasted from thirty to ninety minutes. Participants were not offered compensation and were allowed to drop out at any time without consequence.

Data Analysis

After each interview, the researcher completed a post interview reflection and began to establish emerging thematic patterns (Galletta, 2012). Analysis of the data collected consisted of

five steps (Creswell, 2013). First, the data collected was prepared through organization. This consisted of transcribing initial interviews and any follow-up interviews with the participants. Second, data was read making notes and forming initial coding, or categories of information using in-vivo coding. Third, the coded information was described in context. Fourth, the codes or categories were analyzed to establish themes or patterns. Fifth, the data was interpreted through direct interpretation to develop naturalistic generalizations of what was "learned" (Creswell, 2013).

Within and across interviews, the researcher examined resulting thematic patterns from the participant's data relevant to the research question (Galletta, 2012). The researcher interpreted and reported coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. Direct quotes were utilized to support the researcher's interpretations and descriptions of athlete leadership to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2013). Finally, when presenting the results of the research, rich descriptions and direct quotations from participants were used to portray the findings to readers.

RESULTS

The purpose of the present study was to examine coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership on female teams. The interviews engaged the coaches in exploring leadership, sharing their approaches to identifying and selecting athlete leaders, discussing their expectations for athlete leaders, providing their thoughts on developing athlete leaders, and highlighting their views on the keys to athlete leaders' success. From the ten interviews conducted, five areas of athlete leadership were illuminated. The five major themes that emerged included components of athlete leadership, identifying and selecting athlete leaders, expectations of athlete leaders, developing athlete leaders, and keys to athlete leaders' success (see Figure 1).

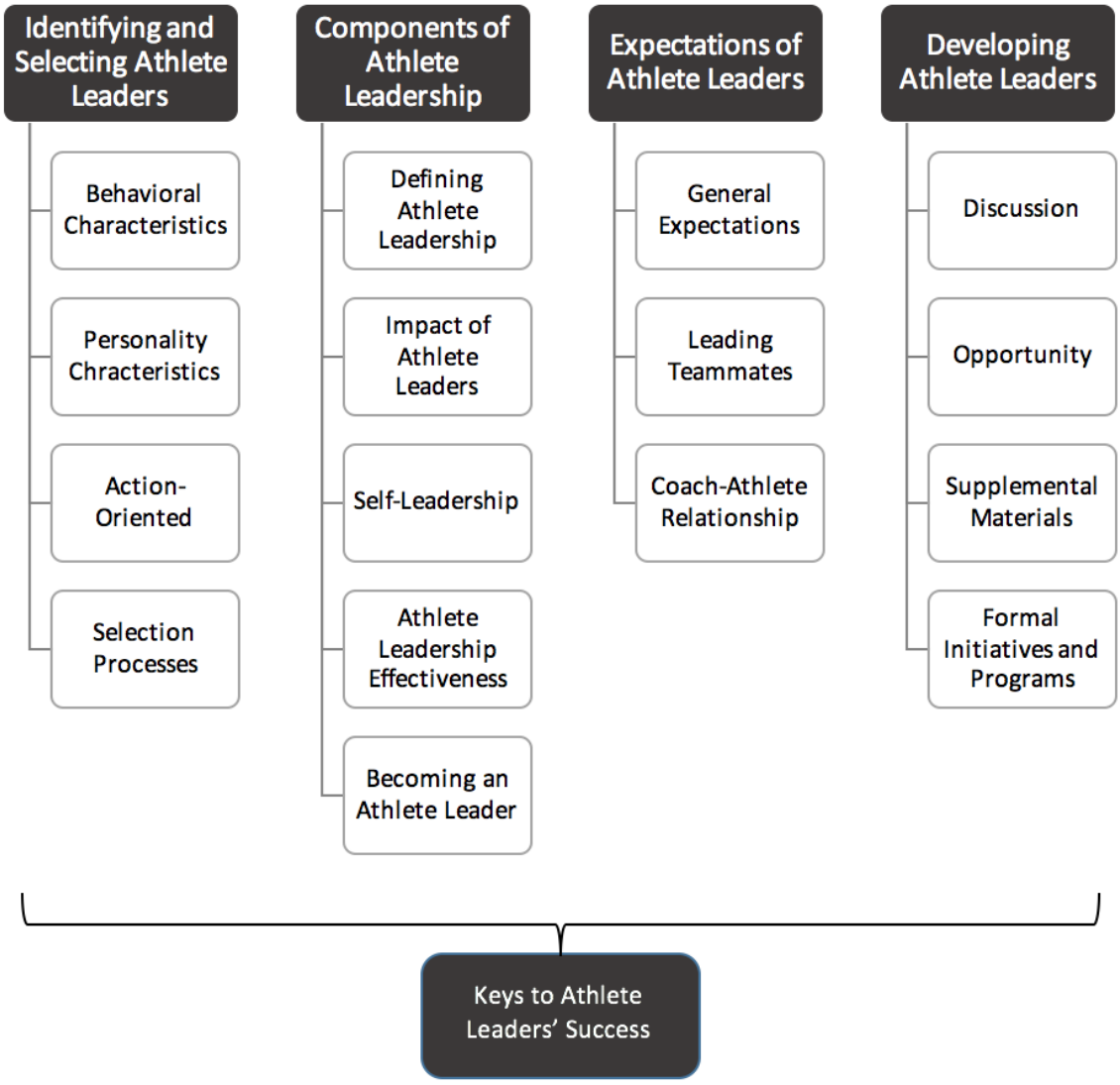

Figure 1. Thematic Representation of Athlete Leadership

Identifying and Selecting Athlete Leaders

When asked about how they identify leaders, some coaches had ideal leaders in mind that they would like to have each year on the team. For example, DeMarsh explained:

> I like three different kinds of leaders. I like one kind of leader that is willing to say the tough things and say what needs to be said. I like one other kind of leader who is more of an encouraging leader, who is the mom of the team who can put their arm around their shoulder and you know kind of pep you up. And then I like the doer, and the doer is the

leader that doesn't say too much. They are quiet but when they get on the field or when they get in a situation, they do the right thing. Their actions speak louder than words. Other coaches seemed to have a more general view on identifying leaders. For example, one coach stated, "there's all different types of leaders and you have to just pay attention to what at the time is best for that group of players and that changes every year in college soccer" (C1). C10 agreed describing that "not every year is the same, there's not the same team dynamics. It's what the team needs that year." Regardless of their view on the type of leaders they were looking for, the coaches described both characteristics (behavioral and personality) and action-oriented behaviors that they look for in their athlete leaders.

Behavioral Characteristics. When it comes to identifying potential leaders, coaches described observing players "to see who has influence and what type of influence they have" (C6). Rayfield explained that even if the athlete is not influencing teammates the way a coach may want, "you understand that they have other leadership qualities in terms of being able to impact people and you want to make sure that the impact and that influence is headed in the right direction." This can be done through development, as C9 described: "if it's a kid you feel you can instruct, maybe mold, then maybe that's somebody you continue to work with and build into that position."

Several coaches discussed the importance of identifying athlete leaders who align themselves with the team culture that has been created by the coach. For example, one coach stated, "Every program is a little different but obviously I want leaders that align themselves with my beliefs and that are not always fighting with what I'm trying to convey" (C7). Coaches are also looking for "leaders that don't think it's a burden to be in that role" (C3) and "leaders who are strong and consistent" (Rayfield). Thus, along with buy-in to the culture and leader role,

consistency is potentially one of the most critical elements in identifying an athlete leader. "I want the type of leaders that will model the behavior they want from their teammates and that are consistent in that behavior. That's the number one thing" (C10). From the coaches' perspectives, athlete leaders are more credible when "their verbal message is consistent with their actions" because "consistency creates an enormous amount of respect from the athletes around them" (Rayfield).

Thus, athletes who exhibit behaviors that demonstrate their alignment with the culture, influence on their teammates, consistency, and ability to garner respect are important components for identifying potential leaders. In addition to behavioral characteristics, the coaches also described personality characteristics they thought important for identifying athlete leaders on their teams.

Personality Characteristics. In identifying leaders, several coaches mentioned various personality characteristics that are ideal in leaders including and not limited to selflessness, humble, hard-working, encouraging/supportive, passionate, driven, confident, positive, open-minded, and willing. Overall character is important to coaches and the previously mentioned characteristics are important because if you are "a great example at the top and the people are being selfless about what they are doing and how they are doing it, then people tend to follow that" (C9). The coaches also discussed that they look for athletes who are self-aware about their personalities and stay true to who they are. For example, one coach stated: "I want leaders to be leaders freely and naturally" (C3). Additionally, the coaches mentioned the importance of staying true to oneself. For example, in describing the worst athlete leaders experienced over her career, C1 described "all of a sudden they think their personality needs to be changed to be a leader…so they act a lot different than what they would normally would be like so they get out

of character, it makes them not credible." Athletes emerging into leadership positions who alter their personalities to fit the role "struggle the most" (C1). Rayfield reiterated the point of leading naturally through your personality:

> I usually try to communicate to those leaders, you have to lead from the person who you are. None of us will be exactly the same and you know I certainly lead from a fairly analytical standpoint because I am an analytical person, not necessarily an emotional one. And I think there are some people who lead by, from a very much more emotional place and much less analytical place. But it's the shared leadership entity that allows us to actually be really effective leaders because we can all lead from our own personalities (Rayfield).

Thus, according to the coaches, they look to identify athletes who exhibit specific personality characteristics and are able to remain true to those characteristics, but also look to fill particular leadership roles based on the personalities of their athletes. For example, considering DeMarsh's previously discussed view on the three ideal leadership positions, an athlete whose personality is a better fit for the doer role (i.e., leader by example) would not effectively fulfill the encouraging mother figure leadership role.

Action-Oriented. In addition to behavioral and personality characteristics, coaches also look for athletes who are action-oriented. According to the coaches, leading by example is one of the easiest ways to earn respect. "In the end it is, as an athlete, as a peer, how can I influence behaviors? So those athletes who lead by example… they influence someone else's behavior for the example they set… they act the way they expect others to act" (Rayfield). The athletes who are action-oriented demonstrate commitment to the program and team, make strong decisions on and off the field, and are pro-active. "I think they do a good job showing everybody what success

looks like on the field, what hard work looks like" (C7). Several coaches mentioned being a positive role model including "positive body language" (DeMarsh). Additionally, the choices they make play a key role in leading by example. The "right things on the field and the right things off the field are being an example because you can't be a good leader on the field if you are making poor choices off the field" (C6). C10 looks for leaders who "are not an off the court risk. They're strong academically, they don't make social decisions that are counter to what we want done" (C10). C7 explained "we always have the freedom of our choice, but we are not free from the consequences." Choices play a key role in athlete leaders leading by example and the best athlete leaders "are purposeful and intentional with their actions" (C7).

Selection Processes. With their criteria in mind, the coaches each had different approaches to selecting athlete leaders. Some coaches select who they wish to be captain based on the criteria they specifically look for while others leave it to the athletes to decide and some meet halfway by working together to select the leaders. C1's program has a leadership council where each member of the council has a specific area they are in charge of including "soccer IQ…communications role…academic role…events role" to name a few. For example, the events role is "someone who's in charge of team building and planning events that help with team bonding" (C1). These players go through a process to be voted onto the council:

> They nominate each other and they can also nominate themselves and they have to accept a nomination or not. Then they write a statement and after they write their statement, the on the leadership council (C1).

C1 believes "when coach picks them solely on what the coach feels would be good for the team, you may be missing the boat." Again, coaches spend less time with the players than other

teammates do, “you don’t know what their interaction is like” (C1). Utter uses a similar process that is run:

> like a political campaign. I tell the players: these are the criteria I’m looking for in a captain, for a leader. Then I try to get some of their feedback, what they’re looking for and then from that we decide ‘these are the qualities we are looking for in a leader, we want you folks to select the people who fit this description’ and from there, what my assistant coach and I hope to do is to…we hope that they come up with the same person that we come up with to the people who fill up those criteria, and from there we select captains.

C7 currently selects his captains but “in the past years it was a deal where I picked one and we voted on the other.” He explained “I don’t know why we went away from the voting part of it, it seemed to yield pretty good results…I think our culture changed a little bit in the middle of my time here…I wanted to be able to hand select the culture that I had built with the kids that I picked.” Each coach had a rationale behind how athlete leaders are selected, but within the selection process several coaches mentioned the importance of outlining what is expected of their athlete leaders.

Components of Athlete Leadership

A large portion of the interviews were dedicated to exploring several aspects of leadership including definitions, facets related directly to athlete leadership, and the manner in which an athlete becomes a leader. In addition, coaches enhanced their perspectives in these areas with examples of the best and worst athlete leaders they have encountered thus far in their careers.

Defining Athlete Leadership. To first understand the nature of leadership through coaches' eyes, the participants were asked at the outset of the interview to define leadership in sport, leadership in coaching, and athlete leadership. In response, the coaches alluded to the complexity of leadership by stating that there are "many different elements" (Utter) and "leadership in sport comes in all different shapes and sizes and forms" (C1). A majority of the coaches agreed leadership is similar but specific to the particular context (i.e., sport in general, coach leadership, athlete leadership). C10 stated leadership "manifests in several ways" but the key component for any leader is that "leadership only requires people to follow." As a general definition, Rayfield described leadership as "the ability to influence peoples' behaviors, peoples' actions." However, when considering leadership in the role of coach, she described it as the "ability to influence behavior consistent with the values you set for your culture and for your program." Leadership in coaching includes "taking the responsibility for your players and ensuring that each player/team member experiences success in whatever their particular role happens to be on the team" (Rich). Similarly, several coaches spoke of athlete leadership not being entirely different from coaching leadership beyond the role and duties related to the role. "There's an organizational leadership piece to it. You have a leadership role based on your title, based on your role" (Rayfield). Athlete leaders take on "an extra role within the team" (C3). The athlete leaders can "really enforce those not necessary rules but those cultural habits within that program" (C7).

Impact of Athlete Leaders. Several coaches described how athlete leaders have the most contact with their teammates outside the sport context, in addition to time spent in the sport context, thus have the most potential to influence on one another.

> Leaders have access to them twenty-four seven. I only have access to them at practice and then if they show up at my office…I'm not with them on Saturday night, I'm not with them on Friday night, I'm not with them on those nights that require proper action and good decisions (C7).

According to the coaches, the athlete leaders on their teams have the most access to the rest of the team and by default have the most opportunity for influence, particularly outside of the sport. As previously stated, athlete leaders have a key role in influencing teammates' behaviors and actions and have a significant impact on the team and team performances. Rich described "the teams we have had function as a direct result of their leaders." Athlete leaders are significant in "deciding the positive and negative" (Utter), "put perspective to things" (C6), in reference to teammates not receiving the playing time they desire, set "the tone for the rules" (C7), and "when things aren't going well, how they handle themselves and how they react becomes very important" (C1).

Self-Leadership. Handling, managing, or leading yourself as an athlete leader is an important part to being able to influence and invest in others. "If you can manage yourself at the highest level, you can help somebody else manage themselves" (C6). "If they're doing a good job leading themselves, then they're going to be much more consistent when they are put in a position to lead others" (Rayfield). For example, Rayfield described her best athlete leaders as follows:

> They demand from themselves as much as they demand from anyone else. And I think that's critical that the standards they put on themselves are higher or as high as anybody else that they are leading and so again that creates an enormous amount of respect from people that they're trying to lead and then that makes them effective leaders.

Athlete Leader Effectiveness. By effectively self-leading, athlete leaders gain respect not only from their coaches, but also importantly from their teammates. Respect from teammates allows the athlete leader "to have the influence you want them to have" (Rayfield) and respect outside the sport is considered more important than playing ability (C3). Thus, according to the participants, respect for others, coaches and players alike, is an important factor impacting the effectiveness of an athlete leader.

Additionally, being able to withstand the challenges that come with the role of leader is also seen as an important component of athlete leadership effectiveness. For example, several coaches expressed the possibility of athlete leaders becoming unpopular or "ostracized by teammates for being a leader" (DeMarsh). C1 explained:

> I'd say one of the big things is they're able to say the tough thing to their teammates and not worry about being liked or not liked. They make the tough decision or say the things someone may not want to hear and they understand how to confront problems and solve problems as opposed to avoid them.

DeMarsh emphasized that athlete leaders "who can accept the responsibility of doing the right thing and not be too worried about being judged or ostracized" have social courage, a key component to what he looks for in athletes and in leadership overall. In some cases, "it's those informal leaders that can sometimes tip the scales away from the formal leaders that the coaches identified" (C10). As formal leaders, getting informal leaders on board is important in effectively leading. When it comes to effectiveness "some will be more successful than others" (C3) and "certain personality types are probably going to be more effective than others" (DeMarsh).

Additionally, the relationship with a co-leader is very important in the effectiveness of athlete leaders. Having multiple leaders on the team can be challenging, but how the leaders

work together is important. C10's best experience with multiple leaders involved two well-connected teammates:

> I think the best part of the leaders that year were, they were very well connected to each other. I always have at least two, sometimes I have three captains based on what the team needed. But the two captains that we had that year were very connected to each other so had each other's backs in every regard. And they also really understood each other's strengths and weaknesses because they were well connected to one another. So one was always going to be the positive 'Come on guys this is awesome' and then the other one was the one that could be 'hey, this ain't good enough, we need to do better'… could be that disciplined voice for us. And because they balanced each other so well, they were also immensely respected by the team.

The need to be connected, understand one another's strengths and weaknesses, and be on the same page are key components to an effective team of leaders.

Becoming an Athlete Leader. During the interviews, the coaches were also asked to discuss their perspectives on how athletes become leaders. Several coaches agreed, "anyone will lead at something" (C9). However, "I do think there are some people that prefer to be in a leadership position and others that prefer and are more suited to be first followers" (C1). C10 described one becoming a leader through "their natural role on the team. There are positions in every single sport that because of the nature of their position, they're in charge of things." However, when it comes to a leadership role on a team, "first they have to be willing and then have to be able" (C3). An athlete may show potential as a young freshman or sophomore, but several coaches mentioned how "leadership takes time…leadership requires a lot of

experience…by the time someone becomes a junior or senior, they can be captain because they have seen more and they understand how to deal with different situations" (DeMarsh).

Utter described "I think that they only become a leader when they decide that they want to invest in somebody else besides themselves. I think that they want to serve somebody beside themselves." Thus, according to the coaches, athlete leaders invested in others and with a desire to serve went "above and beyond just for the greater good of that team" (C3). Many of the coaches expressed that athletes need help with developing leadership skills (C1). For example, Rich stated, "leaders can be developed by exposure to those people that possess those qualities, thereby learning what is expected". The coaches viewed development of leadership skills, described later on, as a key part in athletes becoming strong leaders; however, Rayfield suggested that there is not "one path to becoming a leader".

Expectations of Athlete Leaders

General Expectations. When asked about expectations coaches have for their athlete leaders, they wanted these athletes to be "a person of their word…that they follow through" (C1). As individuals, coaches expect their athlete leaders to "continuously get better, even try to improve, even when it's hard for them" (C6). Coaches want selflessness, honesty, and "for her to be out of her comfort zone" (C6) in order to learn from both success and failure.

When it comes to the program as a whole, Utter expects his leaders to "invest in the program, and by investment I mean that they're sharing the vision, they're sharing the desire for our program, where we want to go." With that investment comes the right attitude supporting the coaching staff; "they always need to support and encourage what the coaching staff is doing, to create an attitude of buy-in in the team" (DeMarsh). Rich gives his athlete leaders a list of core values so they can "live it and talk about it every day" and lead by example through these core

values. Leading by example aids in creating buy-in and leaders are expected "not to just be the leaders themselves but to empower other people to lead and help" (C1). Additionally, coaches expect athletes to demonstrate commitment to the program by showing up to pre-season fit and attend as many team events as possible (including community service and other non-mandatory events put on by the coaches, team, or university).

Leading Teammates. Beyond general individual and team expectations, the coaches discussed specific expectations with regards to how they wanted their athlete leaders to lead their teammates. Rayfield explained "to be an effective leader I think you have to invest in and have a relationship with the people you're trying to lead." Similarly, Rich branched off with the expectation for leaders "to know the team and be able to identify with every player" and to be "positive role models for everyone." When it comes to supporting teammates, "I want leaders that like to listen to their teammates. I like leaders to make sure their teammates know that they are there for them; they are not there just to preach to them and dictate to them" (C7). Coaches expect athlete leaders to "make it more of a WE and not an I" (C9) atmosphere. C7 expressed how he felt his "leaders have done a great job at building that family culture" which is ideal considering the amount of time the athletes spend together. C6 expressed "I don't care if they're best friends off the field, they have to like each other on the field." However, ideally athlete leaders will be liked through follow-through, relationships created with teammates, consistency, leading by example, and being a positive role model.

Coach-Athlete Relationship. As important as the athlete-athlete relationship is, the coach-athlete relationship is also essential not only for effective leadership but also team success. Thus, the coaches also discussed their expectations with regards to how their athletes interact with them. For example, several coaches hold weekly meetings with their captains and primary

leaders on the team expect their leaders to be in contact over the summer months, especially for Fall sport athletes, in order to have an open "line of communication" (Rayfield). Coaches also expect leaders to be trustworthy so "you can bounce an idea off that leader and know that it is going to stay there and the idea becomes the positive for the program or if the idea is not a useful one that it just stays in that room" (C7). C7 also emphasized "I always say we have each other's backs so I always tell our players that I have their back and I ask them to have my back." Thus, developing relationships with both coaches and players alike is a key expectation and component of effective athlete leadership.

Developing Athlete Leaders

Regarding development of athlete leaders, coaches expressed the realization of needing to take the time to develop leaders.

> It was early in my coaching career that I recognized that I, my second year as a head coach, had two phenomenal senior leaders that I probably took for granted. And then the next couple of years we really struggled in that regard. I kind of had an ah-ha moment that it's not natural for everybody and it doesn't, you can't just put them in place and expect them to know what to do. So then I started very intentionally kind of looking at how I could develop that within them (C10).

Four subthemes of development emerged throughout the interviews including discussion, opportunity, supplemental materials, and formal initiatives and programs.

Discussion. Several coaches mentioned leadership requires experience and takes time, so when coaches were asked how they develop their athlete leaders, the most prominent answer was to "talk to them, obviously" (C7). Whether the athlete leader comes into the office willingly, pulls coach aside after practice, or calls coach, the communication between coach and athlete

leader is of utmost importance. Individual meetings with leaders can include "go[ing] over situations, we show films" (C9), "telling them what you're looking for" (C7), and "a lot of questioning and answering" (DeMarsh). C1 emphasized:

> To have individual discussions with them and make sure they know they're in a comfortable environment, to be vulnerable with you when they have trouble or even if they've not done a great job leading – to be able to teach them lessons through that.

Opportunity. Additionally, the coaches aim to give their athletes opportunities to lead in order to help them develop. "We develop athlete leaders by trying to give them leadership opportunities that grow with them as they grow as leaders and give them more and more responsibilities as they show their ability to lead" (Rayfield). This may include "captaining a small team that we have in our spring season" (Rayfield), "organize team events outside of practice" (DeMarsh) or "some of the decision making to see what their choices are going to be…pick where we want to eat; what are they going to do – pick their favorite thing they like but the entire team hates it?" (C6). This gives the athlete leaders an opportunity to be selfless and demonstrate being more team minded. "Giving people roles and responsibilities helps empower them to do and lead the way they see fit" (C1).

Supplemental Materials. Some coaches also used supplemental materials (e.g., books, films, YouTube videos) to help educate and teach athlete leaders. Additionally, evaluations are also used to provide helpful feedback. For example, DeMarsh holds "end of season reviews" where "I do an evaluation about my captains and part of the evaluation is about their leadership and their ability to be a captain" (DeMarsh). These evaluations are used as a learning tool for improvements as well as for the athlete leaders to see areas where they are successful to build confidence.

Formal Initiatives and Programs. Finally, the coaches also discussed the development of initiatives and programs that are offered at their universities and colleges. For example, one university hosts a leadership program run by Jeff Janssen, one of the most elite athlete leadership development programs in the country, where he comes to the university four times a year teaching athletes leadership skills. Two other universities have created leadership academies or leadership retreats for athlete leaders to learn leadership skills. Additionally, two coaches from the same university work with CC-AASP Mental Performance Consultants through the Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology Graduate Program at their university.

Keys to Athlete Leaders' Success

Coaches were asked to conclude their interviews with thoughts on what makes an athlete leader most effective. Several coaches emphasized consistent, communicative, and selfless. Consistency includes "being consistent with their words and actions" (C1) as previously mentioned. Consistency in leadership is "not something you turn on and off. It's not something you have just in the big games, it's something that has to be there throughout the year, throughout the trainings, throughout everything. When I'm not there, they should be leading" (C3). Communicative relates directly to the coach-athlete relationship and athlete-athlete relationship. Having an honest, open line of communication and being able to have the "social courage to say what needs to be said" (DeMarsh) with teammates. In terms of selflessness, C9 described "having somebody at the top working for everybody else."

According to the coaches, leadership as an athlete involves "the ability to make your teammates better and the people around you better" (C7). Many coaches explained this can be done through "modeling behavior they want in their teammates" (C10) because athlete followers "can take that external example that external person and internalize it in a way that can, it

changes the way they think and the way that they act" (Rayfield). When it comes to athlete leadership, "you're talking about leading within your group, within your peers and I think there's a how do you lead yourself, how do you lead others component to that" (Rayfield). In addition, investment in others, embodiment of program values, and leading by example were indicated to be very important keys to athlete leaders' success.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. Results highlighted key components of defining athlete leadership, identifying and selecting athlete leaders, expectations of athlete leaders, development of athlete leaders, and keys to athlete leaders' success.

Major and New Findings

One way in which the present study adds to the previous literature is in providing a more in-depth look into how and why coaches identify and select athlete leaders on their teams. In identifying and selecting leaders, coaches expressed the need for self-leadership in order to be able to influence and invest in others. Coaches look for athletes with a strong ability to lead themselves and be consistent with performance before allowing an additional role to be added to the athlete's repertoire. Further, they highlighted that they look for both behavioral and personality characteristics to determine an athlete's fit and readiness for a leadership role on their teams as well as action-oriented behaviors that the athlete exhibits both within and outside of the sport context. Many coaches also stated certain personality traits they ideally would like to see in an athlete leader, but within those personality traits the importance lies on leading through one's personality. This means not changing oneself to fit the mold but instead to lead consistently through one's personality. For example, if an athlete leader is generally more

positive and supportive of teammates, asking this athlete leader to be more firm and authoritative will create dissonance within the athlete leader rendering them less effective. Thus, the importance lies on leading through one's true personality and being consistent within that.

Additionally, while previous research has indicated that teams have multiple athletes as leaders (Bucci et al., 2012; Loughead et al., 2006), the results of the current study add to this finding by suggesting that coaches look for compatibility between leaders and their ability to work with one another's strength and weaknesses to create a unified leadership team. These leaders may also serve different leadership roles, similar to the functions identified and examined by Loughead et al. (2006). For example, in the present study Coach DeMarsh's leadership trio included a doer, encourager, and tough love speaker. Thus, the coaches' insight into athlete leadership teams suggests the importance of ensuring compatibility among the leaders with respect to who they are as individuals, athletes, and teammates, as well as identifying the functions that the team needs their leaders to provide and finding synergy amongst those functions.

The present study also illuminated coaches' views on the keys to success for athlete leaders. In particular, regarding expectations, coaches highlighted the importance of consistency. Consistency in decisions, self, and performance are all keys to successful athlete leadership. Coaches expect athlete leaders to make decisions based on embodiment of program values and being a positive role model for teammates. Self-leadership was emphasized by several coaches of the current study. Before an athlete leader can be expected to lead others, the athlete must first be able to lead themselves on and off the field, as well as, academically. This plays into leading by example and being a role model for others as an expectation. Furthermore, coaches expect open, honest communication from athlete leaders. Open, honest communication

is key in developing trust and respect for strong coach-athlete relationships and athlete-athlete relationships. Without trust and respect, athlete leaders lose credibility and influence over teammates.

Finally, the results of the present study provide in-depth insight into the processes by which coaches select their athlete leaders, but also the various steps they take to try to develop athlete leadership. Coaches each had their own method to select and develop athlete leaders. For example, when selecting athlete leaders several coaches held team votes, while others selected the athlete leaders personally. Both methods had success stories and stories of struggle. Similarly, in developing athlete leaders, coaches use a multitude of methods. This includes discussions, opportunities, supplemental materials, and formal initiatives and programs. Each method has positives and negatives, but no one way seems to work alone. Since no method has been proven to be most successful, there seems to be a lack of best practice guidelines or recommendations in selecting and developing athlete leaders.

Connections to Previous Research

As a premise to the current study, Bucci et al. (2012)'s findings on the importance of the coach-athlete relationship in leadership remains supported. Coaches in the current study emphasized open communication between the coach and athlete leader. Additionally, trust and honesty were key components to a strong coach-athlete relationship. Weekly meetings were also important in conveying expectations, discussing team matters, and discussing teachable moments. Bucci et al. (2012) also suggested coaches indicated a desire for athlete leaders with strong work ethic, to lead by example, and to follow coaching instructions. Coaches in the current study supported strong work ethic and leading by example; however, no coach directly mentioned the coachability of a player on the field. Coaches in the current study and Bucci et al.

(2012)'s study emphasized the importance of an athlete leader sharing program values and aligning with the vision of the coaching staff.

Although Gould et al. (2013) suggested high school athletes are receiving guidance from coaches, Voight (2012) suggested collegiate athletes are not receiving guidance or developmental opportunities on leadership. Findings of the current study suggest otherwise. Each coach gave examples of discussions, opportunities, supplemental materials, or formal initiatives and programs they use for developing their collegiate athletes. Several coaches utilize leadership skills programs provided by the college or university, while others work with mental performance coaches on leadership skills. Additionally, Gould et al. (2013) suggested the most effective athlete leaders lead by example, are trustworthy and respected, are vocal, provide support, and are not afraid to take risks or do the right thing. Coaches in the current study supported all but being vocal. Coaches in this study believed as long as the athlete has respect or leads by example, they will be seen and heard without the need to be overly vocal.

Coaches in the current study frequently discussed the influence and impact athlete leaders have on the team and their teammates. Athlete leaders are large contributors in group dynamics, team attributes, team structure, role clarity, and group norms on the team (Crozier et al., 2013). Coaches described athlete leaders as the individuals on the team who have the most influence with regards to team culture and decision making both within and outside the sport context. This includes setting the tone for the rules and modeling program values. Thus, athlete leaders can have a positive and/or negative impact on their teammates and team. Their influence and impact, whether negative or positive, results in a potential change of culture, team structure, or group norms. Sometimes, as Glenn and Horn (1993) suggested, athletes in central positions are rated higher in leadership ability than non-central field positions in soccer. For example, in the present

study one volleyball coach stated that the setter runs the offense. As a result of her position on the court, the setter must display leadership qualities in order to be successful. However, in the present study, regardless of the athlete's playing position or tenure on the team, the coaches emphasized the importance of athlete leaders being a role model for teammates. Similar to coaches' perceptions in Bucci et al. (2012), coaches in the current study expressed the importance of athlete leaders being an example, modeling the behavior they want in their teammates, and enforcing rules and expectations of the values of the sport program. Not only is this emphasized on field, but also off the field outside of sport.

Considerations and Recommendations

Coaches. For coaches looking to create strong athlete leaders on their teams, considerations and recommendations include:

- Decide on the level of importance of developing leadership skills. Leadership skills will not be developed if time is not set aside for leadership development as you would for technical and tactical skills.
- Although there is not one way to identify, select, or develop athlete leaders, it is important to have strong rationale for your choice of approach.
- Developing leadership skills takes time. It is important to reinforce the skills through practices by giving athletes opportunities to lead. Athletes will never learn if there is no opportunity to apply the skills.
- Coaches of the current study suggest a team of leaders that can work together and are compatible to create a strong leadership team.

- The coach-athlete relationship plays a critical role. If there is not a strong relationship between the coach and athlete, it is very unlikely the athlete will feel comfortable enough to attempt to apply leadership skills.

Mental Performance Coaches. In recent years, many college and university programs have begun to work with mental performance coaches and leadership programs. Based on the results of the current study, mental performance coaches should consider the following when working with coaches and athletes on leadership development:

- Training the trainer, in this setting coaches, is as important as working with athletes.
- Developing honest, open communication and relationships between coaches and athletes is important for positive, successful leadership on teams.
- Coaches are looking for athletes who lead through their natural personality, strengths, and weaknesses. Developing this self-awareness with athletes to use it to their advantage is key in developing stronger leaders.

Athletes. For athletes looking to become stronger leaders, three important themes emerge:

- Self-Leadership, or handling, managing, and leading yourself on and off the field, enables one to influence and invest in others through leading by example.
- Open, honest communication creates trust and respect from coaches and teammates.
- Being consistent is one of the most desired qualities by coaches. This includes consistency in decision making, interactions with coaches and teammates, and in performance.

Limitations and Future Directions

A few limitations should be noted from the study. First, the sample of coaches consisted mostly of soccer coaches. Thus, most team sports are not accurately represented based on the

participant sample. Additionally, the present study used a semi-structured interview approach. Questions were pre-prepared and focused on certain aspects of leadership. This may have not allowed for leadership topics overall to fully be explored. The study focused on athlete leadership at the collegiate level; therefore, the results may not be able to be generalized to other levels of sport. The findings also cannot be generalized to female individual sports, male team sports, or male individual sports, as the focus on the study was to explore female team sports. Future directions for research examining coaches' perceptions of leadership should include gender differences, sport differences, and coaches' gender differences with gender coached. Additionally, focus on an athlete's position on the field and assistant coaches' perceptions may provide greater understanding of athlete leadership. Assistant coaches with several years' experience, who have yet to be in a head coach position, have enough experience to offer keen insight on athlete leadership on teams. It is important to continue research regarding coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership to aid in understanding influences on coaches' perceptions of leadership and developing and improving leadership programs.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Opening Segment

1. Can you tell me about your playing experience?
    a. Primary sports played
    b. Levels achieved playing
    c. Past leadership roles
2. Can you describe your coaching experience and career progression for me?
    a. How you got into coaching
    b. Starting age
    c. Years' experience coaching, genders coached, different age groups/ability levels
3. Can you describe to me your coaching philosophy?

Middle Segment

4. How would you define leadership in sport?
5. How would you define leadership in coaching?
6. How do you think someone becomes a leader (in sport)?
    a. Are leaders born or made?
    b. Can anyone be made into a leader?
7. How would you describe your leadership style?
8. How would you define athlete leadership?
    a. What types of leaders do you want to have or have on your team? (i.e., Team/Captain, Peer)
9. How do you develop athlete leaders?
10. How do you think your leadership style influences the type of leader you look for?
11. What criteria do you use to identify and select athlete leaders on your team?
    a. What do you look for in an athlete leader?
    b. What characteristics do you look for? - Age, past leadership roles, leading by example, leader potential, skill level, experience/tenure, starting status, bringing team together
    c. What factors, if any, affect this from year to year?
        i. Vision about team's potential, personalities of the team, etc.
12. What do you expect of your athlete leaders?
    a. Captains, Peer Leaders
    b. What specific duties, roles, requirements do they have?
13. Looking back on your most successful season, what impact/role did your leader have?
14. Looking back on your worst season, what impact/role did your leaders have?
15. Explain the worst athlete leaders you have coached and what went wrong.
16. Explain the best athlete leaders you have coached and what went well.

Final Segment

17. What impact do athlete leaders have on team and team performances?
    a. Significance/Strength of impact
    b. Examples
18. From your experience, what makes an athlete leader most effective?
19. We've talked a lot about athlete leadership, is there anything we haven't covered and/or anything additional you would like to add or discuss?

APPENDIX B

Barry University
Informed Consent Form

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is Coaches' Perceptions of Athlete Leadership on Female Teams. The research is being conducted by Samantha Engel, a student in the Human Performance and Leisure Studies department at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology. The aim of the research is to examine coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: an interview with the researcher in-person, over Skype, or on the phone. We anticipate the number of participants to be 50.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: a 20-90 minute interview with the researcher in-person, over Skype, or on the phone. Consent forms will be signed in-person for in-person interviews and for Skype or phone interviews consent forms will need to be signed and sent back electronically to the researcher before the interview. The interview will consist of a demographic questionnaire and pre-prepared questions regarding athlete leadership, such as "How do you define athlete leadership" or "What criteria do you use to identify and select athlete leaders on your team?" The interview will be audio recorded and will be transcribed, in which you will be sent a copy of the transcription to ensure the accuracy of the conversation and information you provided. Audio recordings will be deleted once the interview has been transcribed. Additionally, any emails between you and the researcher will be stored on a password-protected laptop and deleted upon completion of the study.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects for you. Additionally, you may choose to decline to answer any of the interview questions.

The are no known risks of involvement in this study. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership on female teams.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. As this project involves the use of Skype: to prevent others from eavesdropping on communications and to prevent impersonation or loss of personal information, Skype issues everyone a "digital certificate" which is an electronic credential that can be used to establish the identity of a Skype user, wherever that user may be located. Further, Skype uses well-known standards-based encryption algorithms to protect Skype users' communications from falling into the hands of hackers and criminals. In so doing, Skype helps ensure user's privacy as well as the integrity of the data being sent from one user to another. If you have further concerns regarding Skype privacy, please consult the Skype privacy policy. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will establish a separate Skype account for this research project only. After each communication, the researcher will delete the conversation history. Once this is done, the conversation cannot be recovered. The researcher will record the interview using a digital recorder to ensure that all the information is captured. Each recording will be transcribed verbatim onto a Microsoft Office Word document on a password protected computer. Once the interview is transcribed, the participant will be sent a copy to validate the accuracy of the data.

Recordings and transcriptions will be kept for five years in a designated locked cabinet. Electronic files will be held in a password-protected folder on the researcher's laptop and USB drive.

Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and no names will be used in the study unless you waive the right to confidentiality and are willing to let your name appear in the results. If you wish to to remain anonymous, a pseudonym will be agreed upon to protect your identity and only that pseudonym will be used when reporting results of the study. Interpretive research groups consisting of professors and graduate students from Barry University will aid in reviewing the transcripts. Since the primary researcher will be transcribing all interviews, your confidentiality will be maintained unless you have waived anonymity. Members of the interpretive research group will only be provided and have access to transcribed interviews with only your pseudonym, unless you have elected to waive anonymity. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office and on a password protected computer. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be maintained for 5 years and will be kept indefinitely.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Samantha Engel, at (607) 342-0640 or samantha.engel@mymail.barry.edu, my supervisor, Dr. Lauren Tashman, at (305) 899-3721 or ltashman@barry.edu, or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Barbara Cook, at (305) 899-3020 or bcook@barry.edu.

Voluntary Consent

_____I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this experiment by Samantha Engel and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment and wish to protect my rights to confidentiality.

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_____ _____

Signature of Participant *Date*

_____ _____ _____ _____

Researcher *Date* *Witness* *Date*

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)

APPENDIX C
BARRY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Barry University
Division of Academic Affairs

Institutional Review Board
11300 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33161
P: 305.899.3020 or 1.800.756.6000, ext. 3020
F: 305.899.3026
www.barry.edu

Research with Human Subjects
Protocol Review

Date:	February 4, 2016
Protocol Number:	161112
Title:	Coaches' Perceptions of Athlete Leadership on Female Teams
Meeting Date:	January 20, 2016
Researcher Name: Address:	Ms. Samantha Engel 810 S. Park Road Apt 1-11 Hollywood, FL 33021
Faculty Sponsor:	Dr. Lauren Tashman

Dear Ms. Engel:

On behalf of the Barry University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have verified that the specific changes requested by the convened IRB on January 20, 2016, have been made.

It is the IRB's judgment that the rights and welfare of the individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with requirements and that the potential benefits to participants and to others warrant the risks participants may choose to incur. You may therefore proceed with data collection.

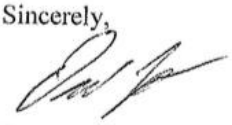
As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved by the IRB. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form.

It is a condition of this approval that you report promptly to the IRB any serious, unanticipated adverse events experienced by participants in the course of this research, whether or not they are directly related to the study protocol. These adverse events include, but may not be limited to, any experience that is fatal or immediately life-threatening, is permanently disabling, requires (or prolongs) inpatient hospitalization, or is a congenital anomaly cancer or overdose.

The approval granted expires on February 1, 2017. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request a progress report from you approximately three months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB point of contact, Mrs. Barbara Cook at (305)899-3020 or send an e-mail to **dfeldman@barry.edu.** Finally, please review your professional liability insurance to make sure your coverage includes the activities in this study.

Sincerely,



David M. Feldman, PhD
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Barry University
Department of Psychology
11300 NE 2nd Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33161

Cc: Dr. Lauren Tashman

****

Note: The investigator will be solely responsible and strictly accountable for any deviation from or failure to follow the research protocol as approved and will hold Barry University harmless from all claims against it arising from said deviation or failure.

Approved by Barry University IRB
Date: 2/5/2016
Signature

Institutional Review Board
Protocol Form
February, 00 **12**

Appendix E
Consent Form

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is Coaches' Perceptions of Athlete Leadership on Female Teams. The research is being conducted by Samantha Engel, a student in the Human Performance and Leisure Studies department at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology. The aim of the research is to examine coaches' perceptions of athlete leadership. In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: an interview with the researcher in-person, over Skype, or on the phone. We anticipate the number of participants to be 50.

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_____ _____
Signature of Participant *Date*

_____ _____ _____ _____
Researcher *Date* *Witness* *Date*

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)