

CAREER LONGEVITY OF FOUR WOMEN CROSS COUNTRY AND TRACK AND FIELD  
COACHES AT THE NCAA DIVISION III LEVEL.

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for  
The Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate  
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By

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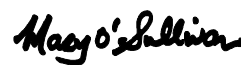
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## ABSTRACT

The dearth of women coaches at the college level is an established fact (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). The purpose of this study was to identify factors related to career longevity for women collegiate coaches of sports traditionally coached by men. A qualitative, multiple case study research design was employed (Merriam, 1998). The interrelationship of individual, structural, and social relations variables (Knoppers, 1992) were used as a theoretical framework. Four female collegiate cross country and track and field coaches at the NCAA division III level served as participants. Participants' collegiate head coaching experience ranged from 16-26 years. Data collection methods included a life history, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Each coach was visited three times throughout the course of her competitive season. Total days spent with each coach varied from 7-10. Data analysis consisted of within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). To enhance internal validity, triangulation of data sources, peer debriefing, and member check methods were employed (Merriam, 1998).

Career longevity enhancers included occupational socialization, program success, desire to work with athletes, institutional and professional commitment, access to power and resources, and personal and professional support systems primarily out of the workplace. Career challenges included feelings of isolation because of the lack of female coaching peers in their sports, gender harassment, especially early in their careers, and imbalanced coaching loads compared to other coaches at their institution. Further, each coach perceived the coaching profession as being "all-consuming" and made personal sacrifices in fully devoting themselves to the coaching profession.

Coaches relied primarily on individual coping mechanisms such as exercise, problem solving abilities and “planned escapes” to confront the challenges.

These findings suggest that support networks on multiple levels, success, and personal sacrifices were key factors for these women to persist in a male dominated profession. It is hoped that these findings may assist women who aspire to be career coaches and athletic administrators in their quest to retain women coaches.

Dedicated to my parents

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The passage of Title IX in 1972 created abundant avenues for girls and women to participate in sport at multiple levels. A highly visible aspect of Title IX has been its impact on collegiate level athletics. This impact includes: a four-fold increase in the number of collegiate sports offered for women since 1971, increased funding for female sport programs at the college level, increased numbers of collegiate athletic scholarships for women, and improvements in facilities and equipment used by women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2000). In one year alone (1999-2000) 205 new women's teams were added at NCAA Institutions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2000).

One may surmise that the substantial increase in support and participation for girls and women in sport would have led to increases for women in sport leadership positions. Unfortunately this has not been the case. In 1972, women coached more than 90% of the women's intercollegiate athletic teams. Many of these women coaches were part-time or volunteer coaches while also serving as physical educators at their college/university. As full-time coaching positions emerged and additional funding became available for women's programs, men began successfully pursuing coaching positions within women's athletics.

Since the passage of Title IX, the decline in the percentage of female coaches at the collegiate level is shocking. In 2002, the percentage of women coaching women's teams in all sports among the three NCAA Divisions was the lowest in history at 44% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). The latest hiring statistics from the NCAA suggest that this trend is not likely to be



reversed because during the past two years men were hired to fill over 90% of the newly created women's head coaching positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

Researchers have studied the dearth of women in coaching and sport leadership positions using a variety of approaches and theoretical frameworks. Researchers such as Hart, Hasbrook, and Mathes (1986) and Knoppers (1987; 1992) contend that individual approaches such as role conflict and incomplete occupational socialization, are unable to fully address the paucity of women coaches. Knoppers proposed alternative approaches such as structural (1987) and social relations perspectives (1992) to explore the myriad of factors impacting women in their quest to become or remain coaches.

Using one or a combination of theoretical frameworks, researchers have identified various reasons for the lack of women coaches. These include: the lack of female role models in coaching and administration (Danylchuk, Pastore, & Inglis, 1996), male athletic directors more likely to hire male coaches (Kane & Stangl, 1991), the lack of allies for women within the sporting realm (Hovden, 1999), inaccessibility to informal networks that exist for men (Hovden, 1999), the capitalistic and patriarchal nature of sport (Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, & Forrest, 1991), and hegemonic practices created in sport (Greendorfer, 1998; Knoppers, 1988). In examining the experiences of former female coaches and athletic administrators, Inglis, Danylchuk, and Pastore (2000) found that the lack of respect afforded women coaches combined with the infrequency with which women are selected to decision-making or resource controlling positions were factors that inhibited career longevity. Furthermore, Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, and Forrest (1990) found that, in comparison to male coaches, female coaches lack power on multiple levels including the lack of supplies, support, and information.

When examining the career aspirations of assistant coaches, Sagas, Cunningham, and Ashley (2000) found that in comparison to men, women lacked desire to pursue head coaching positions because they perceived occupational stress in head coaching positions. In addition, the

authors noted that 68% of the women assistant coaches indicated they would leave the profession before the age of 45, while only 12% of the men indicated an early career exit.

It is plausible that women leave coaching more often than men due to stress or burnout. Several researchers have found that women, when compared to men, have a higher tendency to find coaching stressful (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, 1994; Kelley, Eklund, & Ritter-Taylor, 1999; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992). Kelley et al. (1999) found that “negative media coverage”, “being a source of help to athletes” and “not having enough time to devote to coaching responsibilities” were greater sources of stress for female than for male coaches (p. 126). Other investigations have found that women coaches perceive higher levels of emotional exhaustion than their male counterparts (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Vealey et al., 1992). Researchers have suggested that the increased emotional exhaustion women experience could be due to the greater coaching and/or teaching workloads women coaches have compared to their male counterparts (Felder & Wishnietsky, 1990; Kelly, 1994; Kelly et al., 1999; Pastore, 1992; Vealey et al., 1992). Many studies have examined the dearth of women coaches. However there is not a clear consensus regarding why the percentages of women coaches have continually declined. In an effort to shed more light on this issue, the current study focuses on the reverse issue; why women stay in coaching careers.

#### Purpose of the Study

While research has examined barriers confronting women entering the coaching profession and reasons why women leave the coaching profession, little research has focused on women who have spent their careers coaching. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to focus on factors enabling some women collegiate cross country and track and field coaches at the Division III level to persist in the coaching profession over a number of years (15+). Coaches of these particular sports at the Division III level were chosen for several reasons. Foremost, women’s cross country (21.1%) and track and field (17.3%) consistently have the lowest

percentage of female coaches of all sports regardless of collegiate level (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). Previous experiences as a Division III cross country and track and field coach allowed me to identify easily and gain access more readily to potential participants and their institutions. Finally, my extensive knowledge of both sports from coach and participant perspectives enabled me to more fully understand the intricacies involved with coaching these sports. It is anticipated that examining factors that enable some women to persist in this male dominated environment could provide important insight to guide further study in this area which in turn could impact the recruitment and retention of women to coaching.

The interrelationship of individual, structural, and social relations variables (Knoppers, 1992) were used as theoretical frameworks to understand the myriad of factors associated with career longevity for women coaches. The individual approach seeks to identify individual coach interests, abilities, and choices of women for the dearth of women coaches (Knoppers, 1992). Some researchers contend that this approach is little more than a “blaming the victim” approach (Stangl & Kane, 1991). Furthermore, Knoppers (1992) argued that little research has shown gender differences in coaching longevity using an individual approach. Therefore this approach, alone, fails to account for the dearth of women coaches.

The structural approach is based on Kanter’s (1977a) work and is used to explain the impact of gender on power, opportunity, and proportion in the workplace. In using this framework to examine the dearth of women collegiate coaches, Knoppers et al. (1990; 1991) found that women consistently have less power and fewer opportunities than their male counterparts. However, Knoppers et al. (1991) found that power in coaching is also related to the status of the sport (revenue vs. non-revenue) as well as to the gender of the coach. It is because of this that Knoppers (1992) promoted a social relations approach to examine the paucity of women coaches. This approach provides a framework for understanding the role gender plays in the social construction and reconstruction of coaching while critically examining the power dynamics

of sport and coaching. Knoppers (1992) contended that gender relations do not operate in a vacuum, rather, organizational structures, jobs, work related activities, and workers are all gendered in the workplace. Therefore, if one is to explore the dearth of women coaches, one must examine all gendered aspects of the workplace. In a similar vein, Theberge (1985) asserts that to fully understand the dearth of women coaches one must study the “social and cultural context characterized by forms of power and domination and legitimized by ideology” (p. 200).

While each approach has primarily been used to examine the barriers confronting women entering the coaching profession and reasons why women leave the coaching profession, the goal of this study was to examine and understand why some women persist within the coaching profession by using a combination of these approaches. In addition to examining individual, structural, and social relation variables, Powell and Mainiero’s (1992) conceptual framework for understanding women’s careers was used to guide the research. This framework considers the influence of personal, societal, and organizational factors on women’s career choices and outcomes (Powell & Mainiero, 1992).

A qualitative multiple case study design was used in this study. This design allowed investigation of the multiple variables and complex social interactions surrounding the research questions (Merriam, 1998). This study employed feminist ethnographic methods which focus “on interpretation, rely on the researcher’s immersion in social settings, and aim for intersubjective understanding between researchers and the person(s) studied” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 46). Principles of feminist research that allowed employment of non-hierarchical, mutually beneficial, and collaborative research practices guided the research methodology (Kirsch, 1999).

Four long term female collegiate cross country and track and field coaches at the NCAA division III level served as participants. Data collection methods included a life history interview with the coach, semi-structured interviews with the coach, athletic administrators and current and

former athletes, participant observation, and document analysis of each coaching setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What factors enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 1.1. What individual factors (Knoppers, 1992) enhanced career longevity for these coaches?
  - 1.2. What structural or institutional factors (Kanter, 1977a) enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 1.3. What social relation factors (Knoppers, 1992) enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
2. What factors inhibited or challenged career longevity for these coaches?
  - 2.1. How are the career longevity challenges related to individual, structural, or social relations variables of coaches and coaching conditions?
3. What coping mechanisms have these coaches employed to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 3.1. Are these coping mechanisms related to individual, structural, or social relations variables?

### Significance of the Study

This research is significant because currently there is no empirical research examining the lives and career motivators of women who have spent the majority of their professional careers coaching. Furthermore, much of the research examining the dearth of women coaches has employed quantitative research approaches. Using a qualitative paradigm, this study sought to explore and gain a rich, in-depth understanding of the myriad of factors impacting current job and career longevity for four long-term women coaches. The sports of track and field and cross country are low profile sports often relegated to marginalized status in the sporting realm. Furthermore, sport programs at the NCAA Division III level often exist in the shadow of “big-

time” athletics. The opportunity to study the lives of women coaches who have spent their careers coaching minor sports at the Division III level, provides insight into the successes, struggles, and coping mechanisms of these career coaches. This research should enhance our knowledge of how a few women collegiate coaches have managed to become career coaches in sports dominated by men. Finally, it is hoped that such information can be used to assist administrators in their quest to hire, mentor, and retain women coaches.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

There were several limitations and delimitations of this study. Limitations refer to limiting conditions of the research design whereas delimitations are related to generalizability of the findings (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). First, not being able to observe each coach throughout an entire school year and all coaching seasons was a limitation. The participant in the pilot study indicated that if I were to interview her in the spring I might get an entirely different picture due to the time of year and stresses associated with coaching track and field. Further, due to time constraints I was only able to visit each coach on three occasions throughout the competitive season (early, mid, late). The total time spent with each coach ranged from 7 – 10 days. Therefore, the limited number of visits and the timing of such visits placed a boundary on the data collected.

The only athletes who were interviewed were those who volunteered. Therefore it is quite possible that I did not get a true picture of athletes’ perceptions of the coach’s behaviors, decisions, and career longevity enhancers. Another limitation involved the impact that I, as a researcher, had on the coach and the team. It is possible that coaches and athletes behaved differently due to my presence. Furthermore, the data and associated findings of this study were limited to the degree that coaches, athletes, and athletic directors were willing to share accurate and honest information with me. Finally, researcher bias was another limitation in this study. My experiences as a former collegiate cross country and track and field coach have likely influenced

how I perceived and interpreted coaches' careers and motivations to stay in the profession. This is discussed in further detail in the personal statement at the end of chapter three.

Delimitations of this study involve the uniqueness of the sample. The participants in this study came from a very specific group of coaches. The coaches in this study all coached at Division III institutions and coached cross country and track and field. These women were chosen from a very small population ( $n < 10$ ) of Division III women cross country and track and field coaches who have been coaching for more 15 years. Because of the uniqueness and the size of this sample of coaches, caution must be taken when generalizing the findings. It is hoped that what this study lacks in generalizability it makes up for in rich description (Denzin, 1994).

#### Definition of Terms

Career – “a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling” (Merriam-Webster, 1989). The terms occupation, career, and profession have been used interchangeably throughout the research examining career variables (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Wallace, 1993). Lee et al. (2000) assert the term occupation is more inclusive than profession because it includes both professional and non-professional members whereas career is broader in scope and often includes a series of jobs, vocational choices, and other work-related activities throughout one's life. I chose to use the terms career and career longevity. However when presenting research I used the terminology chosen by the authors.

Career Longevity – the persistence of an individual in her/his career over a long duration of time, typically over the greater portion of their career lifespan. In this study, career longevity in coaching refers to those coaches who have persisted in the coaching profession for a minimum of 15 years.

Opportunity – one of the three structural determinants of the workplace as defined by Kanter (1977a). Knoppers (1987) described opportunity as “the shape of one's career ladder, perceived obstacles and satisfaction, access to training, and availability and type of feedback” (p. 13). In the

coaching profession men typically have more opportunity than women due to the success of the “old boy” network (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985b). Opportunity in this context includes viable career options, income opportunities, channels to job information, and feedback.

Power – one of Kanter’s (1977a) three structural determinants of the workplace. Power is a function of the ability to mobilize resources, have autonomy, and make decisions without the approval of a superior (Knoppers, 1987). Those who lack power often behave in cautious and inflexible ways. In the coaching profession those with power are typically the coaches of major sports (i.e. football and men’s basketball). Therefore women as coaches are rarely in a power position. To improve power among coaches the decision-making capacity of women coaches must increase (Knoppers, 1987).

Proportion – one of the three structural determinants of the workplace is defined by Kanter (1977a) as the ratio of women to men in the workplace. When there are 15% or fewer women in a group, there is an increased likelihood that women will be treated as tokens. Such treatment can lead to status leveling, slotting, and occupational stereotyping.

Social Relations – “describe the structural relationships that create and reproduce systematic differences in the positioning of different groups of people” (March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 1999, p. 103). Social relations include gender, class, race and ethnicity, however most references to this approach are limited to gender relations. Knoppers (1992) has promoted a social relations approach to account for the dearth of women coaches by examining how organizations, jobs, activities and workers are “gendered”. In this study I have extended social relations to include partner, spouse, family, and community relations.

Tokenism – term coined by Kanter (1977a) to represent the experiences of women in predominantly male workplaces. Kanter suggested that in work groups with a preponderance of men (roughly 85%), women are seen as representatives of their gender and “treated as symbols rather than individuals” (Kanter 1977b, p. 966).



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The area of career longevity has not been well studied, especially in regards to women and also with respect to coaching or athletic administration careers. Due to the lack of research in these areas, this review first focuses on the reverse issue, the dearth of women coaches. This research is presented according to the three categories of theoretical approaches that have been used to exam the dearth of women coaches: individual, structural, and social relations frameworks (Knoppers, 1992). A brief overview of each of these approaches is presented followed by a review of research aligned with each approach. Within each approach, links are made to indicate how this research assisted in understanding factors associated with career longevity for women coaches. Next, a brief summary of findings from a pilot study for this dissertation is provided along with implications for the current study.

The second section of the chapter focuses on career related research that has proven useful in understanding career longevity for women coaches. These categories include: career theories, work-related commitment, career success, satisfaction, and gender relations. A summary follows indicating the usefulness of this research in the current study.

Acosta and Carpenter (1985a, 1992, 2000, 2002) have continually documented the decline in women coaches at the collegiate level since the passage of Title IX. Shortly after their first published study in 1985, researchers began to examine and explore reasons associated with the decline in women coaches. Numerous theories have been offered to explain the dearth of women coaches. For instance, Hart et al. (1986) indicated that role conflict, incomplete

occupational socialization, and discrimination were the initial theories used to explain this issue. Role conflict theory and the incomplete occupational socialization theory are what Knoppers (1992) classifies as individual approaches. Together, these theories suggest that the multiple and conflicting roles for women coaches (such as mothers, wives, teachers etc), as well as inadequate training and socialization to become successful coaches are viable reasons for the paucity of women coaches. Stangl and Kane (1991) stated that using these theories to account for the lack of women coaches is nothing more than a “blaming the victim” approach. Furthermore, Hart et al. (1986) suggested that little empirical work has provided support for or denounced these theories.

Discrimination on multiple levels (hiring, equipment, facilities, administrative support) provides a compelling framework to explain the dearth of women coaches. However this framework has failed to consistently and adequately account for the dearth of women coaches (Hart et al., 1986). Considering the challenges facing each of these approaches, Hart et al. (1986) suggested that, "aspects of all three theoretical frameworks, rather than any single framework, best described why females did or would drop out of coaching" (p. 69). Hart et al.'s (1986) theorizing is one of the first examples of a rebuttal to using primarily an individual approach to study the dearth of women coaches. Knoppers (1992) agreed with the need to use multiple frameworks in studying this issue and classified three such approaches: individual, structural, and social relations. Individual and structural approaches are more commonly used than social relations. What follows is a description of each approach along with research aligned within each approach.

#### Individual Approach

The individual model or approach is based on the assumption that the worker shapes the workplace (Kanter, 1977a). In examining gender differences in the workplace, this approach suggests that women bring more deficiencies than assets to the workplace. Knoppers (1992) contended that sex role socialization theory and human capital theory are commonly used

individual approaches to study the sex segregation of jobs and occupations. The sex role socialization theory assumes that the internalization of gender-appropriate behavior learned during childhood and adolescence influences the type of career and job one chooses. Meanwhile, human capital theory suggests that wage differences are a result of differences in human capital (Knoppers, 1992). Human capital includes “the cumulative educational, personal, and professional experiences that might enhance an executive's value to an employer” (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995, p. 489).

The majority of research examining the dearth of women coaches at the collegiate and high school level has used one or more individual approaches to frame their work. This research can be classified in the following categories: human capital variables, career choice, and stress or burnout research.

#### *Human Capital Variables*

Numerous studies have attempted to explain or attribute the dearth of women coaches to human capital variables. Most studies comparing men and women coaches of women’s sports show that women coaches are younger, usually 4 - 8 years younger than their male counterparts and typically have less experience coaching with the experience differential consistent with the age differential (Barber, 1998; Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Dubois & Bacon, 1999; Lovett, Lowry, & Lopiano, 1991; Pastore, 1992; Pastore & Judd, 1993). Not all studies showed that the age gap is consistent with the differential years in coaching experience. Pastore (1993) found that even though women college coaches were on average six years younger than men coaches, they had on average only one less year of coaching experience. This finding is consistent with Sagas et al. (2000) who found that even though women assistant coaches were on average 4.5 years younger than men, they had less than a one year difference in coaching experience.

Some researchers have found that women do not plan on coaching as long as men. Sagas et al. (2000) found that 68% of women assistant coaches anticipated leaving the profession before

the age of 45 while only 12% of the men assistant coaches anticipated leaving coaching by that age. While Knoppers et al. (1991) found significantly more men (50.3%) than women (12.3%) planned on coaching until age 65. Sagas et al. did not investigate why women coaches anticipated leaving the profession. Knoppers et al. (1991) found that men and women collegiate head coaches were likely to leave coaching for the same reasons including: low pay, lack of challenge, and change in administrative philosophy. However women coaches were more likely to exit coaching than men and rated finding a non-coaching job, lack of leisure time, personality of athletes, and return to school, significantly higher than men as reasons to leave coaching.

Caccese and Mayerberg (1984) found that though women had less coaching experience (measured in years) they had greater longevity in their current position. For instance, a significantly greater percentage of women had been at their current job between 4-9 years (67% women v. 36% men) while a greater proportion of men (41%) had been in their current position for only 1 - 3 yrs. This finding suggests that women may have greater institutional commitment or be less likely to leave one coaching job for another coaching job.

The competence of women coaches is often questioned, especially when discussing the dearth of women coaches. Acosta and Carpenter (1985b) found male athletic directors believed the lack of women coaches was due to a lack of qualified female coaches. Since then researchers have compared the qualifications of male and female coaches and some have found data to challenge the perceptions of the male athletic directors in Acosta and Carpenter's study (Barber, 1998; Hasbrook, Hart, Mathes, & True, 1990).

Anderson and Gill (1983) examined gender differences in the sport socialization experiences of men and women's interscholastic basketball coaches. The sample consisted of three groups, male coaches of men's teams, male coaches of women's teams and female coaches of women's teams. When compared to male coaches of women's teams, female coaches were significantly more likely to have participated in college basketball ( $p < .001$ ), captained their

college basketball team ( $p < .001$ ) and to have majored in physical education ( $p = .001$ ). In this sample, female coaches were more similar to male coaches of men's teams. Despite the fact that female coaches of women's teams had more extensive occupational socialization (in terms of education and playing experience) than male coaches of women's teams, the majority of the women's teams (88%) were coached by men.

Hasbrook et al. (1990) surveyed statewide and nationwide samples of interscholastic coaches of girls' sports. In both samples, women were more qualified than men in regards to professional training, professional experience (significantly more women majored in and taught physical education), and coaching experience with female teams. Women were as qualified as men with respect to collegiate playing experience. The only areas where women were less qualified than men were in high school playing experience and, not surprisingly, coaching experience with male teams. It is plausible that women had fewer high school playing experiences due to limited participative opportunities prior to Title IX.

In examining gender differences in the sources and levels of perceived competence in interscholastic coaches, Barber (1998) found that despite being, on average, 6.5 years younger than men, women had similar years experience as a head coach (6.7 W vs. 7.1 M) and almost identical win/loss records. Furthermore, women were more likely to have been physical education majors (71.3% vs. 29%), more likely to hold positions as physical education teachers (54% to 18%) and have significantly higher perceived competence in teaching sport skills than their male counterparts.

In summary, these findings suggest that human capital variables and "incomplete" occupational socialization (Hart et al., 1986) do not adequately explain the dearth of women coaches. In some cases the reverse case is made, that women coaches are more likely to have physical education degrees than their male counterparts (Anderson & Gill, 1983; Barber, 1998; Hasbrook et al., 1990). On average, women head coaches tend to be younger than men head

coaches. One reason for this could be that women leave coaching earlier than men. Researchers have found that women intend to leave coaching earlier than men (Knoppers et al., 1991; Sagas et al., 2000). Another reason could be that women coaches spend less time as assistant coaches (Barber, 1998). It is plausible that women advance to head coaching positions quicker than men because of their prior education and collegiate playing experiences (Anderson & Gill, 1983; Barber, 1998; Hasbrook et al., 1990).

### *Career Choices*

Much of the literature examining the dearth of women coaches, especially from an individual approach, has studied coaches' reasons for leaving the coaching profession. Pastore (1991) found no gender differences in reasons for leaving the coaching profession when comparing NCAA Division I men and women coaches of women's teams. Both women and men indicated a need for increased time with family and friends as the most important reason for leaving the profession. In other studies, Barber (1998) and Pastore (1992) found that both men and women coaches considered time demands as the most influential reason for withdrawing from coaching. Meanwhile, Hasbrook, et al. (1990) found that family life was significantly more important as a reason for leaving coaching for men than for women. The authors pointed out that a reason for this gender difference could be because significantly more men (87%) than women (42.2%) were married. This finding challenges the perceptions of male athletic directors in Acosta and Carpenter's study (1985b). The athletic directors in this study believed that women are not coaching because of time constraints due to family obligations (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985b).

Hart et al. (1986) compared reasons for entering and leaving the coaching profession in a sample of present and former female interscholastic coaches. Current coaches entered coaching "to seek continued athletic involvement" while former coaches did so because they were "asked to coach by teachers or principals". Current coaches indicated they would leave coaching due to a

concern for "coaching performance" while former coaches left coaching primarily due to time and role conflicts with their personal lives. The authors attributed the differences between current and former coaches to differences in values and orientations toward the coaching profession. Former coaches had values that were not compatible with the increased competitive nature of girls and women's sports following Title IX implementation. The authors suggested this may, in part, explain the decline of women coaches at the interscholastic level.

Weiss and Stevens (1993) used the social exchange theory of motivation to examine female interscholastic coaches' motivation for persisting in or withdrawing from the coaching profession. According to social exchange theory, a coach will stay in the profession if the cost/benefit ratio is favorable compared with competing alternative professions. Current coaches had higher job satisfaction levels, and rated two benefits (program success and continued athletic experience) significantly higher than former coaches. However current coaches also rated two costs (time demands and low perceived coaching competence) significantly higher than former coaches, which was contrary to the researchers' hypothesis and to the stipulations of the social exchange theory. The authors suggest that the timing of the study (immediate postseason) may have impacted current coaches perceptions of coaching "costs". This is a plausible reason as Kelley (1994) found that time of season impacted stress levels of coaches with post season eliciting higher levels of stress. In summary, social exchange theory cannot entirely predict whether a coach will continue or withdraw from the profession (Weiss & Stevens, 1993). These empirical findings support Knoppers' (1992) assertion that the "individual" approach does not adequately explain the dearth of women in coaching.

Sagas et al. (2000), in studying the intent and aspirations of collegiate assistant coaches, found that more men (37.5%) than women (15.2%) had actively pursued a head coaching job. Additionally, significantly more men (92.5%) than women (68.1%) indicated a strong desire to become a head coach. Significant differences between males and females were also found

regarding perceptions on failing to receive a head coaching position. Women perceived that they were too young and lacked experience while men cited discrimination. Furthermore, being "too young and lacking experience" was the least likely reason men perceived for not obtaining a head coaching position. Demographic data indicated that while men were, on average, five years older they only had slightly more experience than the women. This suggests that in comparison to women, men may perceive that they are more qualified when in actuality they are not. Women indicated greater commitment and loyalty to their team, which is a plausible reason why they may not want to pursue a head coach position. It is possible that the gender of the head coach may have impacted assistant coaches' desire to become a head coach being that Danlychuk et al. (1996) found that both male and female coaches and administrators perceived same sex role models at an institution important for job attainment.

Findings from some studies suggest that withdrawal from the coaching profession could be related to perceptions of coaching self-competency. Barber (1998) found that despite having higher perceived competence levels than men, women were more likely to incorporate low competence perceptions into their decisions to withdraw from coaching. Barber suggests that this finding indicates that women may be "influenced by subtle [and sometimes not so subtle] messages from administrators and society regarding women's effectiveness in the coaching role" (p.248). Similarly, Weiss and Stevens (1993) found, to their surprise, that one of the factors separating current from former women coaches was that current coaches rated themselves higher in perceived competence than former coaches, yet current coaches indicated lack of competency is an important reason for leaving the coaching profession, while former coaches indicated they did not leave the coaching profession due to a lack of competency.

In contrast, Lovett et al. (1991), in examining the problems and sources of dissatisfaction among male and female coaches of interscholastic girls' sports programs, found that women's reasons for leaving the coaching profession had more to do with role conflict and excessive time



demands than coaching competence. Acosta and Carpenter (1985b) found similar results in that women coaches believed that the system demands and society's expectations were more influential factors for leaving coaching than professional competency.

In summary, this research suggests that there are various reasons why women leave the coaching profession. Time and/or role conflict are common reasons (Barber, 1998; Lovett et al., 1991, Pastore, 1991; Pastore, 1992), however men also indicate this as a reason for leaving coaching (Barber, 1998; Pastore, 1991; Pastore, 1992). Research also shows that current and former women coaches differ in their orientations toward coaching (Hart et al., 1986) and in perceived benefits and costs of coaching (Weiss & Stevens, 1993). However, these findings do not offer a substantive explanation for why women leave coaching at a younger age and at a faster rate than men.

#### *Stress and Burnout*

A vast amount of research using an individual approach to examine gender differences in coaching and the dearth of women coaches has focused on stress and burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1986) defined burnout as “a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (p. 134). The majority of research on coach burnout has been completed from a stress perspective. This perspective assumes that any factor that increases stress may be linked to burnout among coaches (Raedeke, Granzyk, & Warren, 2000).

Numerous studies have found gender differences in coach related stress or burnout. Women coaches have significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion as compared to men coaches (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Vealey et al., 1992). To date, only one study did not find gender differences in emotional exhaustion (Dale & Weinberg, 1989). These findings are particularly important in light of Kelley

et al.'s (1999) finding that emotional exhaustion was the single most substantial indicator of burnout in coaches.

A plausible explanation for the higher levels of emotional exhaustion in women coaches may be related to role conflict. For instance, Pastore (1992) found that significantly more women than men coached more than one sport. Further, Kelly et al. (1999) found "being a source of help to athletes" and "not having enough time to devote to coaching responsibilities" were greater sources of stress for women than for men coaches. Felder and Wishnietsky (1990) concluded that women coaches had greater and more varied teaching loads than men coaches. While Kelley (1994) found that women coaches ranked coaching issues, in which role conflict was one aspect, significantly higher than their male counterparts. Pastore and Judd (1993) noted that women coaches might feel "pressure to continually prove the worth of women's sports" (p. 208). Alternately, Caccese and Mayerberg (1984) suggested that women may simply be more willing than men to admit that they are burned out.

There have been conflicting results from studies examining the relationship between support and burnout. Martin, Kelley, and Dias (1999) found that social support, in terms of the number of social support providers, was negatively related to burnout in high school female athletic directors. Meanwhile, Kelley (1994) found levels of satisfaction with social support were negatively related to burnout for male coaches but not for female coaches. The author did not elaborate on potential causes of this difference. Vealey et al. (1992) did not find a significant relationship between perceived support and burnout though the variable did approach significance (loading of -.26). Finally, Felder and Wishnietsky (1990) found that while women coaches showed a greater likelihood for burnout, they did not perceive a lack of support from the administration, school, and community. These findings show that while women coaches are highly likely candidates for emotional exhaustion and burnout, it is not necessarily related to lack of social support.

On a different note, Raedeke et al. (2000) used a commitment perspective to examine burnout in age-group swim coaches (125 females, 170 males). This perspective suggests that a relationship exists between burnout and reasons for coaching. Coaches in this study exhibited three commitment profiles: attraction-based commitment, low commitment, and entrapment commitment. Attraction-based commitment coaches, those in coaching for enjoyment purposes, had high levels of commitment and low exhaustion scores. Coaches with low professional commitment had average exhaustion scores. The entrapment commitment coaches, those perceiving they are “trapped” in the coaching profession, had the highest levels of exhaustion, and moderate commitment scores relative to the other groups. Entrapment coaches also had lower satisfaction levels, higher investment levels (indicated by below average benefits associated with above average costs) and higher social constraints in comparison to the attraction-based commitment coaches. The authors suggested that a commitment perspective does not refute that burnout is stress related. While this research did not specify the gender proportion of coaches within each commitment profile, it appears that examining commitment profiles of career coaches may be useful in understanding how coaches deal with coaching stressors.

In general, the research suggests that women are more likely candidates for coach burnout. Many researchers have suggested that role conflict, in particular that women coaches have greater coaching and/or teaching workloads than their male counterparts, may be the cause for the increased emotional exhaustion (Felder & Wishnietsky, 1990; Kelly, 1994; Kelly et al., 1999; Pastore, 1992; Vealey et al., 1992). Further, Pastore and Judd (1993) found that coaches’ level of emotional exhaustion decreased with age and experience. This could possibly explain the gender differences in burnout given that women coaches tend to be younger and less experienced than men coaches. No gender differences have been found regarding the relationship between perceived social support and emotional exhaustion.

### *Summary of Individual Approach Research*

The most consistent finding from research using an individual approach that may explain the dearth of women coaches is that women coaches perceive higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to men coaches. However, findings are inconsistent regarding stressors for women coaches. Barber (1998) contended that psychological variables or social influences alone cannot explain why women leave coaching at a greater rate than men or why fewer women enter the profession. Barber suggested "an interactive approach to more fully examine patterns of entry, continuation, and withdrawal in the coaching profession" (p. 269). Knoppers asserted an individual approach "overlooks the structural causes of inequity and the institutionalization of sexism in sport and in the athletic workplace" (1987, p. 12).

#### Structural Approach

To better understand the structural inequities of the workplace, Knoppers turned to the business world to find a framework suitable to study the dynamics of the coaching profession. The organizational model Knoppers used was based on Kanter's (1977a) work that assumed the structure of the workplace shapes the behavior of the worker. Kanter (1977a) found three structural determinants of the workplace: opportunity, power, and proportion, are differentially experienced by men and women and may explain gender differences in the workplace.

Opportunity within the coaching profession is largely gender-related. For instance, women are rarely, if ever, considered as viable candidates for coaching positions of men's sports, whereas men are often hired (more often than women) to coach women's programs. Acosta and Carpenter (1985b) maintained that the strength of the 'old boys' network' along with the demise of the old girls' network, following the collapse of AIAW, have contributed to the apparent lack of opportunity for women in coaching. Other obstacles include sexual harassment, increased domestic responsibilities for women, and perceived or actual glass ceilings, as the number of female athletic administrators has considerably declined since the passage of Title IX (Acosta &

Carpenter, 2002). To improve the opportunities for women in coaching many changes need to occur. Knoppers (1987) proposed an incentive system for coaches who mentor women assistant coaches and then “lose” them to head coaching positions. Additionally on-site day care, and a program to encourage women coaches to apply for coaching positions with men’s programs and/or administrative positions should ameliorate opportunity barriers.

Power in the workplace is a function of the ability to mobilize resources and make decisions without the approval of a superior (Kanter, 1977a). In the coaching profession those with power are typically the coaches of major sports (i.e. football and men’s basketball). Therefore women as coaches are rarely in a power position. Those who lack power often behave in cautious and inflexible ways. To improve power among coaches the decision-making capacity of women coaches must increase. Knoppers (1987) suggested providing new coaches with a mentor who “has power”. Additionally, Knoppers (1987) maintained that knowledge is power. Therefore, improving communication and sharing information regarding budgets and salaries may provide better access to power.

Proportion, as defined by Kanter (1977a), is the ratio of women to men in the workplace. When there are 15% or fewer women in a group, the greater the possibility that women will be treated as tokens. Kanter (1977b) asserted there are three perceptual phenomena associated with tokens: visibility, polarization, and assimilation. Tokens are highly visible, often isolated from the dominant group, and required to fit the generalization of the dominant group (Kanter, 1977b). Tokens’ visibility leads to performance pressures as their actions are public and they are expected to bear the burden of representing all members of their token group. Tokens typically respond to performance pressures by either overachieving or engaging in behavior that will limit their visibility. Kanter (1977b) stated that fear of success in women may actually be a fear of visibility. Polarization refers to the informal isolation experienced by the token group as the dominant group, men in this case, discuss important issues in settings that are not open or accessible to the

token group (Kanter, 1977b). To demonstrate loyalty to the dominant group, tokens can either choose to fully accept the dominant view or allow themselves and their token group to be the source of amusement for the dominant group. Assimilation forces tokens into role limitations or stereotypical roles, while women who fail to fall into a stereotypical role are considered by the dominant group to be an “iron maiden” (Kanter, 1977b). Knoppers suggested that power, opportunity, and proportion are interrelated and increasing the “number of women in an organization may have little effect on organizational behavior if the structure of power and opportunity has not changed” (Knoppers, 1987, p. 18). Therefore an analysis of all three structural determinants may explain the dearth of women coaches.

#### *Research Using Structural Approach*

The limited research employing a structural approach to study the dearth of women coaches has focused on areas of support such as social networks, program support and administrative support and Kanter’s (1977a) structural determinants of power, opportunity, and proportion. What follows is a brief overview of this research.

Stangl and Kane (1991) examined employment practices within high school athletic departments over a 15-year period to determine if a relationship existed between the gender of the athletic director and the gender proportion of coaches. Results indicated a direct relationship between the gender of the athletic director and the gender of the coach. The authors identified this hiring pattern as a case of homologous reproduction, whereby individuals are hired with the same social and physical characteristics as the athletic director. At the time of the study women represented less than 10% of the athletic directors. Therefore, Stangl and Kane asserted, “homologous reproduction, as a powerful structural/institutional process, appears to offer explanatory power for the dramatic reduction in the number of women coaches since the passage and implementation of Title IX” (p. 55). This study clearly shows that women are at a

disadvantage in the hiring process and therefore have less “opportunities” in coaching as compared to men.

Kane and Stangl (1991) examined occupational sex-segregation components of tokenism and marginalization in a group of female coaches of high school boy’s sports programs over a 15-year period. Only 1.26% (92 of 7,325) of the head coaching positions were occupied by females, therefore these women could be considered “tokens” (Kanter, 1977b). The percentage of women in head coaching positions did increase over the 15-year time period studied. However the increase was less than 2% (from .74% to 3.50%) of the overall sample of head coaches. The authors contended that Title IX did not significantly impact occupational opportunities for women coaches in men’s/boy’s sports. During this 15-year time period only one woman coached a team sport (soccer). Women were represented most often in swimming (12.6%), gymnastics (12.5%) and tennis (7.3%) and least represented (less than 2%) in golf, track and field, and cross-country. Wrestling, baseball, basketball, football and ice hockey, did not have any women serving as a head coach.

Kane and Stangl (1991) concluded that the few women coaches who did serve as head coaches were in less prestigious sports. Therefore, even though the proportion of women coaching increased, albeit slightly, over the 15-year time period, specific coaching positions were segregated by gender or “off-limits” to women. The authors contended that it is the “powerful structural and institutional forces that systematically keep women out of the coaching profession” (Kane & Stangl, 1991, p. 37).

Pastore, Inglis and Danylchuk (1996) surveyed 359 intercollegiate coaches and administrators, in regards to their perceptions of their work environments. Participants rated the importance and fulfillment of the following retention factors: work balance and conditions, recognition, and inclusivity. Data were analyzed and grouped according to gender, country (U.S. and Canada) and position. Findings indicated that all groups valued a work environment that was

inclusive, with the females rating this highest of all groups. However, females rated the fulfillment of an inclusive environment significantly lower than the importance of one. An interesting finding was that the opposite trend occurred for men. They rated fulfillment of an inclusive environment significantly higher than the importance of one. This suggests that work environments for males and females are perceived differently in regards to the significance and satisfaction of openness and discrimination in the workplace. All groups had significantly lower ratings for fulfillment of work balance and conditions in comparison to importance of that factor with females again having the greatest discrepancy in ratings. This finding implies that while improvements in the work environment can be made for all groups, females perceive a greater disparity between their ideal and current work environments.

Knoppers et al. (1990) studied the distribution of power in the athletic workplace in a sample of 947 Division I coaches (32.5% women). The sample was divided into the following four groups: women basketball coaches, men basketball coaches, women non-basketball coaches, and men non-basketball coaches. Variables measured included access to supplies, access to support, access to information and job satisfaction. Results showed that women non-basketball coaches consistently had the least power while men basketball coaches had the most power and the most frequent access to the athletic director. The authors contended that power in the athletic department is gendered due to the high percentage of male athletic directors (99% in this study) and the greater probability for men to coach revenue sports in comparison to women. However, gender alone did not account for the power differential in this study as women basketball coaches had similar access to power as did the men basketball coaches. The authors concluded that the dual context of sport and gender is necessary in understanding the distribution and dynamics of power in the athletic workplace.

Danylchuk et al. (1996) evaluated factors deemed important in the attainment of athletic coaching and management positions at the collegiate level. Collegiate coaches and athletic



administrators from both men's and women's programs in the U.S. and Canada served as participants. Previous work experience, appropriate training, and personal traits were the three most critical factors in getting a coaching position. There were no gender differences in this ranking, however differences existed in how Canadians vs. Americans responded and in how coaches vs. administrators responded. Previous work experience was cited as the most critical factor in the attainment of coaching or athletic management positions. Females rated their own gender, an affirmative action initiative, and contact with a female from within one's institution as significantly more important in obtaining a position than did males. Meanwhile, males rated contact with a male coach as significantly more important than females. These findings support a same sex role model theory and may help explain the lack of women in coaching. For instance, if both genders perceive same sex role models at an institution as important for job attainment, it makes sense that the male dominance of athletic departments will be perpetuated.

Inglis et al. (2000) used a qualitative approach in examining the experiences of women in coaching and athletic management positions. Eleven women who were former coaches or athletic administrators served as participants in this study. Three categories emerged from the data: support, gender differences, and change. Sub-themes related to support included role models, support from administration, athletes, and parents. "Most women were quick to identify their love of sport and the work itself, and the students as being great, but were less enthusiastic about giving unequivocal credit to the administration" (p. 10). All research participants spoke of gender differences and disparities in the workplace. Often the disparities were hidden or not readily obvious. The women in this study were empowered by mentors, working with athletes, new assignments, roles or responsibilities and women's leagues. On the flip side, these women perceived lack of respect, and inability to be in a decision-making position or resource controlling position as non-supportive factors for career longevity. These findings support the need to

understand gendered aspects of the workplace, the creation and control of power, and availability of resources and information as they relate to career longevity.

#### *Summary of Research Using Structural Approach*

In general, research examining the dearth of women coaches and administrators from a structural approach has found that women have less access to power (Knoppers et al., 1990), have fewer opportunities to obtain coaching positions (Danylchuk et al., 1996; Kane & Stangl, 1991; Stangl & Kane, 1991), are more frequently in marginalized coaching positions (Kane & Stangl, 1991; Knoppers et al., 1990), and perceive their work environment to be less inclusive than do males (Pastore et al., 1996). Knoppers et al.'s (1991) finding that women coaches of non-revenue sports had the least access to power in the athletic department is particularly interesting finding in the current study as cross country and track and field are non-revenue sports.

#### *Social Relations Approach*

While the structural approach offered a more dynamic and critical way to examine the coaching profession it does not fully explain the paucity of women coaches. Shortly after proposing the structural approach, Knoppers (1988) stated that it “tends to ignore the extent to which male dominance is institutionalized in coaching and the extent to which the coaching labor market and sport are driven by economic forces” (p. 73). Another inadequacy of the structural approach in explaining the sex segregation in coaching is that the athletic workplace is loosely structured; therefore formal and informal hierarchies vary from one institution to the next and across sport divisions (Knoppers, 1992). Finally, the relationship between gender, sport, and power found by Knoppers et al. (1991) prompted Knoppers to explore a social relations approach as a means to examine the role patriarchy and capitalism have in perpetuating the sex segregation of the coaching profession.

“Social relations such as those of gender, race, and class are characterized by domination/subordination and by human agency” (Knoppers, 1992, p. 216). The social relations

approach provides a framework to understand the role gender plays in the social construction and reconstruction of occupations. "It requires us to explore the ways structures, jobs, workers, and the workplace are gendered" (Knoppers, 1992, p. 224). This approach challenges those involved in athletics to critically examine the roles of coaches, coaches' job descriptions, and the power dynamics of sport and coaching. Bray (1988) perhaps best summarized the social relations approach in explaining the dearth of women coaches when stating, "capitalism creates the structures within which sport must operate and patriarchy prepares and selects the people for the structures" (p. 50).

The social relations approach involves analyzing the interaction between sexism and other social forces such as classism, racism, ageism, and heterosexism thus affording "greater flexibility in formulating the problems and potential solutions to overcoming the oppression of all women" (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994, p. 100). Kabeer has been credited with providing the most comprehensive framework for examining institutions and organizations from a social relations approach (March et al., 1999). This framework includes five dimensions of social relationships within institutions that can be "identified as significant to the analysis of social inequality in general and gender inequality in particular: rules, activities, resources, people, and power" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 281).

Using this approach Knoppers (1988) proposed some dynamics that may rationalize the dearth of women in the coaching profession. Among these are that the dominant group remains privileged as they are the ones who write the rules. Homophobia and the gate keeping functions of some athletic directors work against hiring heterosexual or lesbian women. Furthermore, as sport becomes less exclusively male on the participative domain, Knoppers (1988) suggested that male superiority must be reconstructed in other domains within the sporting realm such as coaching and leadership. Greendorfer (1998) extended this viewpoint going as far as to state that Title IX was a direct confrontation of male dominance and hegemonic socialization in sport. The

influx of men into coaching women's sports is a form of backlash against Title IX. This backlash shifts attention from equality to the reproduction, protection, and preservation of male dominance in sport. "In sum, backlash espouses ideological beliefs that reproduce male privilege by implying 'inherent and natural' interest and by misrepresenting women's presence and interest in sport" (Greendorfer, 1998, p. 90). In short, Greendorfer proposes that the decline of women in coaching could be due to men preserving the male domain of sport.

#### *Research Using Social Relations Approach*

There has been limited research examining the dearth of women coaches from a social relations approach. To date, Hovden (1999), Knoppers et al. (1991) and Theberge (1988) are the only researchers who have used portions of this approach to help explain the paucity of and challenges facing women coaches and administrators. None of this research has used the social relations framework outlined by Kabeer (1994). What follows is a description of these studies along with applications to the present study.

Knoppers et al. (1991) explored the gendering of opportunity and work behavior in Division I college coaching. Findings indicated that coaching and administrative opportunities were gendered in that only seven women served as head athletic directors and no women coached men's sport programs, therefore women had considerably less professional opportunities and vertical mobility in athletics. The authors indicated this finding could explain why significantly more men (50.3%) than women (12.3%) planned on coaching until age 65.

Knoppers et al. (1991) found that women used significantly more formal networks to access information while men used significantly more informal networks, possibly indicating the continued strength of the 'old boys' network'. There were no gender differences, overall, in career aspirations. Although women indicated an earlier exit from coaching than men, both women and men indicated similar likely reasons for leaving the profession: low pay, lack of

challenges, and change in administrative philosophy. The results and the work behaviors of coaches led the authors to assert that coaching is a low opportunity occupation.

The authors concluded that “the capitalistic system operant in Division I institutions seems to limit opportunities for mobility and growth” (p. 15). Additionally, the patriarchal nature of sport may further limit the opportunities for women coaches. “When this gender based ordering of status is woven into the hierarchical sequence produced by capitalism, it severely truncates opportunity for women in athletics” (p. 15). They also found that men were significantly more satisfied with their jobs and had significantly more opportunity than women thus indicating an interactive relationship between satisfaction and opportunity which is “reflective of a capitalist patriarchy” (p. 17).

In studying the experiences of 20 women coaches and sport administrators in the Norwegian Volleyball Federation, Hovden (1999) concluded that the lack of women in coaching and sport organization positions is not an individual issue, rather it “reflects the premise that both structural and cultural conditions within organizations are constructed and reconstructed by and for men” (p. 27). Women in the administrator group indicated they felt their resources were poorly used in a relative sense. Many also reported a lack of allies in the organization and that they were seldom included in the informal network that existed among the males. Furthermore, two-thirds of the administrators indicated they would not consider a sport leadership position in the future citing a time factor and lack of positive feedback from their male counterparts. These findings suggest that the Volleyball Federation in Norway has a deeply gendered hierarchy.

Similar gender relation problems were found with the women coaches. Despite being highly qualified, many of the women coaches interviewed indicated that they were discriminated against when searching for coaching jobs. This finding suggests that sport administrators either did not believe the women were qualified or believed that the women did not want to coach. An interesting finding was that coaches indicated they were uncomfortable with carrying out the

“traditional” coaching role as it was too authoritative and did not allow the opportunity for team members to make decisions and take responsibility. This finding suggests that the role of a coach is socially defined and gendered. Knoppers (1992) contended that White, heterosexual, middle class, men, as the dominant group in sport, have constructed what it means to coach. Hovden indicated these findings suggested an implicit pattern of gendered competence and values as women’s qualifications, resources, and attitudes were less valued and visible than men’s.

Theberge (1988) examined the careers, experiences, and orientations of 31 women coaches in Canada. Socialization into coaching, entry into coaching, career mobility, and professional development were discussed during interviews. Socializing factors for most of the women to enter the coaching profession came from prior sport experiences and not from influential role models. An unanticipated finding in the study was that most of the women were either invited to apply for their position or offered a job without going through a typical interview process. However, this supportive structure did not exist regarding career advancement. Roughly one third of the respondents indicated a desire to advance in the coaching ranks. Several respondents indicated exclusionary dynamics, some blatant, some subtle, in their attempts to become national team coaches. Additionally the limited number of jobs at the national level was an inhibiting factor in their mobility. Of the women that did not want to advance to higher-level positions, many cited they lacked commitment to coach at that level. Only one respondent indicated that the “male-dominated system” was an inhibitor. Most did not perceive themselves to be victims of the male sport domain as “few have developed a feminist consciousness of their condition and see a need for structural change in this regard” (p. 126).

#### *Summary of Research Using Social Relations Approach*

The previous research highlights the challenges, on multiple levels, that women in coaching and sport administration face. When using a social relations approach to examine these issues, it becomes evident that there are more than just individual or structural factors involved in

understanding the dearth of women coaches. There are deep-rooted patterns of gender stereotyping (Hovden, 1999), examples of gendered jobs (Hovden, 1999; Knoppers et al., 1991), gendered organizational structures (Hovden, 1999; Knoppers et al., 1991; Theberge, 1988) and gendered networks (Hovden, 1999; Knoppers et al., 1991) that help explain the decline of women coaches and sport administrators. In studying the reverse issue, why women persist in the coaching profession, I have chosen to examine gendered structures and patterns within athletic departments and institutions.

While Knoppers (1992) promoted a social relations framework to study the dearth of women coaches, it appears from the research reviewed here that a combination of an individual, structural, and social relations approach may offer the best insight into this problem. Furthermore, of all the studies examining the dearth of women coaches, all but three (Hovden, 1999; Inglis et al., 2000; Theberge, 1988) have exclusively used a quantitative approach. It is evident that a myriad of factors impact women coaches and administrators. Therefore, employing qualitative methodologies, alone or with quantitative methods could enhance the depth and richness of the data. This is especially important in understanding the reverse issue, why women persist in the coaching profession, in that there is a dearth of research on this topic. Before examining literature pertinent to career longevity, a brief synopsis of a pilot data is presented.

#### Pilot Study

A single case pilot study was conducted from September 2000 until February 2001 as a means of testing methodologies for the dissertation study. Data collection and analysis methods for this study were consistent with the methods outlined in the next chapter. At the time of the study, the coach, a 36-year-old Caucasian female, had been coaching track and field and cross country at a small, private, NCAA Division III institution, for 12 years.

Four themes emerged relative to career longevity for this coach. The first two themes, relationships and success, are associated with the primary reasons for persisting in the coaching

profession. The use of multiple approaches (individual, structural, and social relations) in analyzing the data helped frame additional themes: support and balance. These themes helped to explain, on different levels, the process by which this coach persisted in coaching. The following summarizes the findings:

1. The ability to develop and nurture relationships with athletes was the most highly valued and satisfying part of this coach's job. However, program success played a crucial role in job and career satisfaction.
2. There was a strong perceived relationship between program success and coach-athlete relationships.
3. Support from the athletic department, friends, and alumni enabled this coach to devote more time to coach-athlete relationships and achieve program success. Furthermore, the athletic director was aware of the coach's goals and motivating factors for staying in the profession and was willing to support these goals.
4. There were abundant same-sex and career longevity role models as well as a strong commitment for gender equity within the athletic department. For instance, women coached 80% of the women's teams and the average organizational tenure for these women was 22 years.
5. The coaches' reflectivity, amenability to change, resiliency, and ability to maintain a solid distinction between her profession and her personal life strongly suggest that she was capable of coping with the stressors associated with coaching.

These conclusions suggest that this coach is likely to persist in coaching. The findings of this pilot study lend support for different theoretical frameworks when examining why women persist in the coaching profession. The pilot data helped focus this dissertation study on a closer examination of the following factors:

- Gender proportion of the coaching staff



- Institutional and career tenure of departmental coaching peers
- Athletic director's awareness of and willingness to assist in the attainment of coaches' goals
- Coping mechanisms employed by coaches to handle daily and cumulative work-related stressors
- Work-home life balance

### Understanding Career Longevity

There is a paucity of research examining factors associated with career longevity within athletics and other professional areas. In the business world much research has examined factors related to employee turnover and intent to stay at an organization, however there has been considerably less research examining intent to change or stay within a career (Blau & Lunz, 1998; Sullivan, 1999). Furthermore the majority of research examining career variables has used primarily White male participants (Sullivan, 1999).

Due to the lack of research on career longevity or career turnover intentions, this section focuses on theories of career development, work-related commitment variables, career success, and career satisfaction as these all appear to be strongly related to career longevity. Additionally, due to the gendered aspect of this study it was necessary to examine research regarding the effects of gender proportion in the workplace. The vast majority of this research and literature comes from outside the athletic realm. Therefore, applications will be made regarding how this literature may impact career longevity for women coaches.

### *Career Theories*

Two career theorists, Super (1957) and Levinson (1978) are credited with providing the major traditional theories on career development. Super's (1957) theory suggested that careers could be summarized in four stages throughout ones' life-span. These stages include, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. Levinson (1978) meanwhile proposed that

career development consists of a regularized and alternating pattern of periods of stability (roughly 5 years) followed by periods of transition (typically 5-7 years). These theories were initially successful in studying traditional careers where advancement occurred within one or two organizations or firms (Sullivan, 1999). However, these theories have been recently challenged due to a lack of generalizability to women and the vastly changed work environment since the incorporation of these theories. “In sum, the traditional career stage models were developed to explain the careers of men and were tested primarily with male samples” (Sullivan, 1999, p. 462).

In response to this, Powell and Mainiero (1992) theorized an entirely different approach to understanding women’s careers. Their conceptual framework considers non-work related issues in addition to work issues such as subjective measures of career and life success and the influence of personal, societal, and organizational factors on women’s career choices and outcomes (Powell & Mainiero, 1992). This approach does not assume women’s careers follow stages as suggested by traditional career theorists. To conceptualize this approach, Powell and Mainiero (1992) provided the visual “cross-currents in the river of time”. The authors maintained four factors exist in this model: 1) success in career, 2) success in relationships with others, 3) emphasis on career versus relationships with others, and 4) time. The time aspect includes past, present, and future occurrences. This model suggests that, “at any point in time, a woman may place a particular degree of emphasis on career versus relationships with others in her actions and decisions” (p. 221).

Another non-traditional theory is the boundaryless career theory proposed by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) to reflect the changing nature of work environments. This theory differs from the traditional career theories in that it conceptualizes careers as going beyond a single work setting and values the following characteristics in workers: transferable skills, personal identification with meaningful work, on-the-job learning, and individual responsibility for career management (Sullivan, 1999). While this theory appears useful in analyzing careers in today’s

corporate world, it does not seem to be a good fit for most coaching settings because the theory is premised on the notion that individuals will change jobs often and with these changes may come vastly different responsibilities. While coaches may change coaching jobs fairly frequently (from one institution to another), they rarely take on drastically different responsibilities.

In understanding the career choices, enhancers and inhibitors of the women coaches in my study, I felt it was important to follow the guidelines set forth by Powell and Mainiero (1992). This approach does not portray women as occupying a specific stage at a specific time; rather it allows women to place themselves on a continuum reflecting the balance between career and relationships (Powell & Mainiero, 1992). Furthermore, this model includes personal, organizational and societal factors in understanding a career. In doing so, this approach appears closely aligned to a social relations framework.

#### *Work Related Commitment*

Healy (1999) maintained that the concept of commitment in the workplace is socially constructed, has a multiplicity of meanings, and is frequently gendered. In studying career longevity it is necessary to understand work related commitment. There are many types or levels of work related commitment including work, material, organizational, temporal, intrinsic, and occupational commitment (Healy, 1999). In particular professional (occupational) and organizational commitment appear most relevant to understanding career longevity for coaches. Therefore a brief review of literature for these two forms of commitment is provided.

Professional commitment is defined as the “relative strength of identification with and involvement in one’s profession” (Morrow & Wirth, 1989, p. 41). Healy (1999) asserted that professional commitment is a type of intrinsic commitment and involves a primary attachment to the profession. Meanwhile, organizational commitment is characterized by a psychological attachment to the organization (Wallace, 1993). Healy (1999) extended this definition to include

the acceptance of goals and values of an organization that may involve sacrificing allegiances to groups outside the organization.

Much of the commitment research has focused on organizational commitment. More recently research has sought to understand the relationship between professional and organizational commitment. Wallace (1993) employed a meta-analysis of correlational data from 15 studies and found that professional commitment had a moderately strong and positive (.452) correlation with organizational commitment. Findings revealed that the relationship between professional and organizational commitment varied across occupations with more “professionalized” occupations having a stronger positive relationship. The relationship also varied across ranks within an occupation, with higher ranks also having a stronger positive relationship between professional and organizational commitment.

Lee, et al. (2000) performed a meta-analysis on 76 studies that reported at least one correlation involving occupational commitment. The major findings of the meta-analysis were that demographic variables (i.e. age, education, gender, marital status, occupational tenure, organizational tenure) did not correlate with occupational commitment, however, several job-focused constructs were significantly related to occupational commitment. Job satisfaction (.435), job involvement (.518), and career satisfaction (.444) were all positively related while the three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion (-.435), reduced accomplishment (-.428) and depersonalization (-.365) were negatively related to occupational commitment. The strongest relationship, not surprisingly, was between occupational commitment and intent to leave (-.621). Another major finding was the strong positive relationship between affective organizational and occupational commitment (.449). This finding suggests that individuals with a strong emotional and value-based tie to their organization will also have a strong commitment to their profession.

In a longitudinal study examining medical technologists’ intent to leave a profession, Blau and Lunz (1998) found that “professional commitment explained later intent to leave the

profession beyond controlled for work-related, personal, and external variables". Findings also showed that older and more satisfied medical technologists were less likely to leave the profession. The positive correlation between satisfaction and professional commitment is consistent with previous research. Finally, in comparison to females, males had a stronger intent to leave the profession, based mostly on financial reasons. The authors asserted that professional commitment is a stable predictor for intent to leave one's profession.

The research clearly shows a positive relationship between professional commitment and organizational commitment (Lee et al., 2000; Wallace, 1993). Furthermore, professional commitment is inversely related to intent to leave a profession (Lee et al., 2000; Blau & Lunz, 1998). However the question of which type of commitment predominates among professionals in organizations is unknown (Wallace, 1993). These findings are important to consider when examining the factors associated with career longevity for women coaches. It seems that most college coaches would have strong professional commitment due to the preparation and qualifications needed to get a job at that level. Colleges and universities vary greatly in size, mission, and athletic philosophy (i.e. NCAA I, II, III). Because of the relative scarcity of college coaching jobs, coaches may need to accept a position at an institution that does not match her goals or philosophies. Therefore it would seem that professional commitment would be stronger than institutional commitment for most coaches. In the current study professional commitment and institutional commitment were examined to determine the role each plays in career longevity for the coaches in this study.

#### *Career Success*

Career success is another important variable that is likely related to career longevity. Career success has been defined in a multitude of ways in literature. Judge et al. (1995) defined career success as "the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (p. 486). Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, and Graph

(1999) extended the definition of career success to include "the supervisor's subjective assessment of the employee's promotability" (p. 580). Perhaps Boudreau, Boswell, and Judge (1999) provided the most comprehensive definition in asserting that career success "reflects the accumulated interaction between a variety of individual, organizational and societal norms, behaviors and work practices" (p. 4).

Career success is believed to include objective (extrinsic) and subjective (intrinsic) elements (Boudreau et al., 1999; Judge et al., 1995). Objective measures of career success include observable and measurable career achievement such as pay, promotion rates, and job title (Wayne et al., 1999). Subjective measures of career success are concerned with one's feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment within one's career including satisfaction with current job (Judge et al., 1995). Researchers often use human capital variables such as education, job and organizational tenure to predict career success (Judge et al., 1995; Wayne et al., 1999). Recently, personality, in particular the Big Five dimensions (negative emotionality, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), has been used to predict career success (Boudreau et al., 1999; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Meanwhile, organizational variables such as firm size, industry sector, geographic location, supervisor sponsorship, have also predicted career success (Seibert et al., 1999; Wayne et al., 1999).

Van Eck Peluchette (1993) examined subjective career success in 424 faculty members (72% male) at two U.S. research institutions and found that rank, tenure, self-esteem and sense of competence are strong positive predictors of subjective career success. Faculty members with high multiple role stress had lower levels of subjective career success. Furthermore, two organizational variables, availability of resources and networking, significantly contributed to subjective career success while variables such as gender, mentoring, marital status, and family size were not significantly related to subjective career success.

Other findings from the career success literature indicate that personality is related to subjective career success. For instance, a proactive personality (Seibert et al., 1999), extroversion (Boudreau et al., 1999), high levels of self-esteem, and a sense of competence (Van Eck Peluchette, 1993) correlate positively with subjective career success, while neuroticism/negative emotionality (Boudreau et al., 1999) negatively impact subjective career success.

Numerous studies have found organizational tenure to be positively related to career success (Boudreau et al., 1999; Judge et al., 1995), while Wayne et al. (1999) found a negative relationship between the two variables. Education appears to be positively related to objective measures of career success (Judge et al., 1995). However Melamed (1995), in one of the few studies comparing gender and career success variables, found this only to be true for women. Finally, Judge et al. (1995) found organizational success correlated positively with subjective career success.

A glaring problem with most of the literature examining career success concerns the demographic homogeneity of the samples, mostly White males, and an over reliance on objective measures of success. Powell and Mainiero (1992) suggested that research examining careers for women should expand the definition of career success to incorporate what is deemed most important, success wise, for women. Finally, when assessing subjective career success, most researchers have used only career or job satisfaction measures. Powell and Mainiero (1992) asserted that the inclusion of life success/satisfaction measures is important if one is to accurately assess career success for women. This is a particularly important consideration for the current study as coaching can be an all-consuming profession.

In summary, while it is difficult to generalize the findings from these studies to a sample of women coaches, career success appears to be directly related to satisfaction and ultimately career longevity. The findings from Van Eck Peluchette's (1993) study, particularly that availability of resources and networking were positively related to career success while multiple

role stress was negatively related, appear particularly relevant for consideration in the current study.

### *Satisfaction Measures*

The research examining job and/or career satisfaction is voluminous. For the sake of this review, I will highlight research that is particularly relevant to the current study. Job satisfaction appears to be strongly and positively related to career success (Judge et al., 1995) professional commitment (Lee et al., 2000) and organizational commitment (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Indeed, Judge et al. (1995) maintained that job satisfaction is a subjective measure of career success as one's current job is part of their career and often considered strongly when assessing career success. Many studies have found a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and intention to turnover (Griffeth, Horn, & Gaertner, 2000).

Scandura and Lankau (1997) found that women managers working in organizations that offered flexible work hours reported higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction while the existence of flexible work hours did not have an impact on men's attitudes regarding commitment and satisfaction. This finding is pertinent to the current study especially due to the time demands of coaching. Meanwhile, Murphy and Ensher (2001) measured the impact of self-management strategies and informal mentoring on job satisfaction and perceptions of career success in a gender-balanced group of teachers and media specialists. Participants were asked to identify a mentor according to one of three types of support: vocational, role-modeling, and psycho-social. Results indicated that employees who utilized self-set career goals had greater job satisfaction and perceived career success than those employees who did not utilize self-set career goals. In regards to mentoring, only vocational support had a positive correlation with job satisfaction and perceived career success. The researchers were unable to determine what role mentors had in the protégés' development of self-management strategies. The findings appear to suggest that employees who self-set career goals and have vocational mentors may have greater



job satisfaction and career longevity. Aspects of mentoring and goal setting were examined in the current study.

### *Gender Proportion*

Due to the gender implications in the current study, it is necessary to review research examining the impact of gender proportion on career related variables. Using Kanter's (1977a) group typology, Izraeli (1983) examined perceptions of leadership abilities, role entrapment, and relative powerlessness in balanced work groups (41-60% women) and gender skewed (20% or less women) work groups from labor-intensive industries in Israel. Results showed that women in the balanced group perceived women as more endowed with leadership skills while women in the skewed group viewed men as better leaders. In both groups, men viewed males as stronger leaders. Members of skewed groups believed that women are needed to represent other women (role entrapment). Finally in skewed groups, women perceive themselves as less influential than men, while there is no difference on perceived level of influences between the sexes in balanced groups.

Findings supported Kanter's thesis that "structural conditions have a significant impact on attitudes and perceptions and contribute to the explanation of the apparent sex differences" (p. 162). The author asserted that Kanter ignored the difference between gender proportions that are institutional as opposed to those that are situational. For instance, situational gender dominance can be partly due to chance, whereas institutionalized gender dominance is a stable occurrence that is culturally and socially defined. Therefore, the attainment of balance in group proportions may have no impact on gender perceptions. "As long as sales is regarded as a male specialty, even the numerical dominance of women will not lead men to feel they are under pressure to prove themselves, as are token women" (p. 164). In light of these findings, Izraeli asserted the need to integrate the alternative socialization and structural perspectives in trying to better understand the dynamics that impact minority members of skewed groups.

Some researchers have challenged Kanter's (1977a) theory of proportion and the effects of token status in the workplace. For example, Toren and Kraus (1987) found that for women faculty members at Israeli Universities, being "less of a minority" (35%) was more detrimental to academic rank than being in a "token" group (15% or less women). The authors concluded that increasing proportions of women in the workplace without changing the prevalent gender biases is not likely to improve women's position in the workplace.

In a similar vein, Zimmer (1988) stated that by failing to recognize sexism, Kanter (1977a) did not fully explore the impact of the token role on women. For instance, Zimmer (1988) cited research comparing experiences of token males to that of token females with the impact on males far less detrimental than on females. Kanter (1977a) suggested that it is the organizational structure that must change. For instance, by substantially increasing the number of women in the workplace to the point where they are no longer in the "token" category, many of the struggles that women face in the workplace will be alleviated. Zimmer (1988) contended that simply equaling numbers between men and women in the workplace does not assume equal treatment for women. Rather, it is people, in addition to the structure, who must change. "The problem is not just that tokenism is an inadequate explanation for women's occupational difficulties; the bigger problem is that a focus on tokenism diverts attention away from sexism" (Zimmer, 1988, p. 72). Changing proportions is a much easier task than confronting and eliminating sexism in the workplace. To change women's lives both on and off the job, the focus should be on ways to eradicate sexism in the workplace rather than tackling tokenism in the workplace (Zimmer, 1988).

The research on token groups and gender perceptions in the workplace has direct relevance to the current study. Women coaches of track and field/cross country can be "tokens" within their athletic department and within their sport coaching ranks. For instance, data from Acosta and Carpenter (2000) reveal that less than 50% of the coaches of women's collegiate

sports are women, while close to 100% of the men's programs are coached by men. Therefore, on average, women coach less than 25% of the sports in each athletic department. This percentage can drop even more once assistant coaches, athletic trainers, and sport information staff members are considered.

Token status is also an issue for women track and field/cross country coaches outside of the athletic department. For instance, the track and field/cross country coaches' associations at the conference, regional, and national level are comprised of coaches from men's and women's programs. Further, most competitive meets are coed. Acosta and Carpenter's (2000) data shows that less than 20% of the women's cross country and track and field programs are coached by women, while, close to 100% of the men's programs are coached by men. Therefore, it is evident that women are likely to have token status on coaching committees, in aspects of meet management and administration as well as in their athletic department. In a profession that is as public as coaching, the token status can have deleterious effects on women. Many women coaches believe that when their teams lose they are believed to represent all women and when they succeed, they are perceived as the exception.

The findings and assertions of Izraeli (1983), Toren and Kraus (1987) and Zimmer (1988) are important to consider in that by merely changing the proportion of women working in an athletic department or women coaching cross country and track and field may not change the predominant view that coaching is a male profession (Greendorfer, 1998). It is because of these dynamics that Knoppers (1992) proposes using a social relations approach to understand the dearth of women coaches.

### *Summary*

There are a multitude of factors that are potentially related to career longevity and a vast array of research on different variables. Unfortunately a large proportion of this research has focused on the jobs and careers of White men. What I have attempted to do is highlight theories

and research findings most applicable to career longevity factors for women in hopes to better guide the current research. In doing so I was guided by Sullivan's advice stating that research on women's careers "should take a broader approach and consider the interaction of multiple factors, including the timing of parenthood, family responsibilities, the career stage of the woman's partner, organizational support, and work-place discrimination" (Sullivan, 1999, p. 461). In my quest to understand the lives and careers of women collegiate coaches, Powell and Mainiero's (1992) career theory framework and "river of time" analogy appears useful. Additionally, understanding the relationship between institutional commitment, professional commitment, and "non-work" or family commitment for the women in my study is essential. Finally, examining the role that gender proportion of one's athletic department and among track and field/cross country coaches within one's athletic conference is necessary to understand potential barriers and enhancers to career longevity.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors that have enabled four women collegiate cross country and track and field coaches at the Division III level to persist in the coaching profession. A qualitative case study design employing feminist methodologies was used in this study. This chapter outlines the research design, framework, participant selection procedures, and methodologies used in this study. An overview of the data collection methods, data analysis, and issues of validity and ethics is provided. The chapter concludes with a personal statement in which I position myself in the research.

#### Study Design

This study was exploratory in nature (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) as the goal of this research was to better understand the reasons why women choose to stay in coaching with hopes to eventually facilitate the process of increasing the number of successful women coaches. A qualitative paradigm was used to investigate this phenomenon, identify important categories of meaning and show "relationships between events and the meaning these relationships have" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 33). A qualitative paradigm was chosen in an attempt to elucidate the multiple factors and inter-relationship of those factors involved in career longevity for women. This study employed feminist ethnographic methods which focus "on interpretation, rely on the researcher's immersion in social settings, and aim for intersubjective understanding between researchers and the person(s) studied" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 46). This research was guided

by the tenets of feminist research in that it aimed to be non-hierarchical, mutually beneficial, and collaborative (Kirsch, 1999). Research goals that addressed these tenets included: asking research questions that acknowledged and validated the participants' experiences, getting to know the participants in the context of their daily lives, and involving participants in the research process by asking them for feedback on data collections and interpretations (Kirsch, 1999).

### *Case Study*

A qualitative multiple case study approach was used to “examine the relationship between cases and particular social structures or processes” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 169). This methodology appeared to be the most useful for this study as it is anticipated that multiple inter-related factors (individual, structural, and social relations) are related to career longevity for women coaches. “Qualitative case studies can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). A case study approach was useful in this study because it focused on a particular phenomenon and group of people: women who spend their careers in coaching. The intent was to provide a rich and thick description of the participants and their institutional settings. The purpose was to identify the variables that may influence career longevity and understand the interactions among these variables across time (Merriam, 1998). Information was gathered from a wide array of sources for each particular case. Furthermore, this case study approach was heuristic in that a goal of the study was to shed light on the phenomenon of career longevity (Merriam, 1998). Each case was first analyzed individually, followed by a cross-case analysis. The goal of the cross-case analysis was to allow for further investigation of career longevity and to identify similarities and differences between cases (Stake, 2000).

### *Theoretical Framework*

The interrelationship of individual, structural, and social relations variables (Knoppers, 1992) were used as a theoretical frame to understand the factors associated with career longevity for women coaches. Individual factors, such as occupational socialization patterns, individual

interests, abilities and choices, mechanisms to reduce or control work related stressors, and perceived benefits and costs of coaching were investigated to determine pertinence to career longevity. Structural factors including power, opportunity, and proportion (Kanter, 1977a) were examined as to the impact on career longevity. Finally, social relation factors (Kabeer, 1994) such as the gendered dynamics of the athletic department and institution, the relationship of personal lives and professional lives, and partner and family support mechanisms were examined.

### Research Questions

Three major questions guided this research. The first question sought to determine career longevity enhancers. The second question was aimed at determining career longevity barriers or challenges and the final question sought to determine career longevity coping mechanisms. The first research question was subdivided according to each of the three approaches outlined by Knoppers (1992). Table 3.1 illustrates the theories, research variables and methodologies used to address each of the three approaches. Methodologies are listed in accordance with the order of significance. For instance to determine the role of individual factors in career longevity I anticipated the majority of data to be drawn from life history interviews. However, it was also expected that additional data be gathered from semi-structured interviews with the coach, observations of practices and athlete interviews. Powell and Mainiero's (1992) theory of careers for women guided the generation of questions to determine individual career longevity factors for each coach. Additionally, an exploration of patterns of occupational socialization and understandings of commitment, especially in relation to stress and burnout (Raedeke et al., 2000) was also employed.

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Theory/Theories</b>	<b>Research Variables</b>	<b>Methodologies: Listed in order of significance</b>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Socialization</li> <li>• Social Exchange Theory</li> <li>• Commitment Perspective</li> <li>• Powell &amp; Mainiero (1992) Women's Career Theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Capital</li> <li>• Stress-Burnout</li> <li>• Commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life History</li> <li>• Coach Interviews</li> <li>• Participant Observation</li> <li>• Athlete interviews</li> </ul>
Structural	Kanter's (1977a) structural determinants: power, opportunity, proportion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support systems (program, admin.)</li> <li>• Role conflict</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Gender Equity</li> <li>• Gender Proportion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach Interviews</li> <li>• Participant Observation (daily work life)</li> <li>• Document Analysis (department hiring practices, evaluation and retention practices, philosophy statements)</li> <li>• Athletic Director Interviews</li> <li>• Senior Women's Administrator Interview</li> </ul>
Social Relations	Social Relations Framework (Kabeer, 1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race, gender, age, sexual orientation</li> <li>• Work-life balance</li> <li>• Social support systems</li> <li>• Family, community relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document Analysis (department and institutional gender practices)</li> <li>• Coach Interviews</li> <li>• Participant Observation (professional and personal)</li> <li>• Athletic Director Interviews</li> <li>• Senior Women's Administrator Interview</li> </ul>

Table 3.1. Theoretical Underpinnings and Investigative Methods of Research Questions



An analysis of the available coach support systems along with Kanter's (1977a) structural determinants guided the data collection process to determine institutional factors impacting career longevity. Data were derived from a variety of sources. Initial coach interviews, following their life histories, focused on perceptions of support and equity within the workplace as potential career longevity enhancers or inhibitors. Finally, a social relations approach (Kabeer, 1994) was utilized to determine gender and race relations in the workplace. To appropriately answer this question data from multiple sources were collected. These sources also varied depending on the institution. For instance only one of the four institutions examined in this study had a senior woman administrator.

#### Selection of Cases and Sampling

The case is "a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The unit of analysis for this study was the cross country and track and field coach. The boundaries were the institution and those individuals who directly impacted the professional and personal lives and careers of these coaches. The selection of participants followed Patton's (1990) extreme or deviant case sampling strategy. The percentage of women who coach cross country and track and field at the Division III level is roughly 20%, amounting to less than 50 coaches nationally. From this group I identified those coaches who have been coaching cross country and track and field for more than 15 years. Currently there are less than 10 women coaches at the Division III level who fall in this category. Four coaches were recruited from this group. This extreme case sampling technique enabled me to select "information-rich cases for study in depth" (Glesne, 1999, p. 29). A rich description of the participants and their settings is provided in chapter four. Prior to collecting data permission was granted from the athletic director at each institution. A sample of the letter requesting permission from the athletic director is in Appendix A.

## Data Collection Methods

“Human beings are complex, and their lives are ever changing, the more methods we use to study them, the better our chances to gain some understanding of how they construct their lives and the stories they tell us about them” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 668). To better understand the motivations, successes, failures, and job and career satisfaction of a coach, I spent considerable time using multiple methods of data collection and interacting not only with each coach but also with her athletes, colleagues, supervisors, friends, partners and family members. These methods included life histories, in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and document analysis. By incorporating a variety of methods the possibility for rich and thick description was enhanced (Denzin, 1994).

In feminist qualitative research, “participants are always ‘doing’ research, for they, along with the researchers, construct the meanings that become ‘data’ for later interpretation by the researcher” (Olesen, 1994, p. 166). My intent was to involve my research participants as much as possible in the data collection, interpretation and analysis process. Using an ethnographic methodology, the primary methods I used were participant observation and interviews.

### *Visits*

I visited three of the coaches three times during the fall. The total number of days spent with each coach of these coaches ranged from nine to ten days. Two competitive meets and six or seven practices were observed for each of these three coaches. The first visit took place prior to the start of the cross country season, or during the first week of the season (August 25<sup>th</sup> – September 8<sup>th</sup>). The purpose of this visit was to collect life history information, start preliminary interviewing, and become familiar with the institution, campus, and surrounding community. The second visit occurred during the middle of the season (September 25<sup>th</sup> – October 13<sup>th</sup>). The purpose of the second visit was to observe each coach throughout her day, during one competition, and to do in-depth interviewing. The purpose of the final visit, which occurred

during the later portion of the season (October 22<sup>nd</sup> – November 17<sup>th</sup>), was to complete coach interviews and observations and to interview the athletic director, a senior woman administrator, and some of the coach's athletes. The fourth coach was on medical leave in the fall thus limiting interview, practice and meet observation opportunities. I met with this coach on three different occasions, twice in the fall and once in the winter (2<sup>nd</sup> week of January). A total of seven days were spent with this coach, however only two practices (indoor track and field) were observed.

The purpose of observation schedules was to have an opportunity to observe each coach at distinctly different points in their competitive season. I maintained contact via phone and/or email between visits and after visits until all data were collected, analyzed, and the member check process was completed. During the visits my role was as a participant observer (Glesne, 1999) at practices and throughout the rest of the day. Observations included attending department meetings, observing coach-athlete interactions during the day, peer interactions, coaching staff interactions, student interactions, social interactions outside the workplace, and family interactions.

### *Interviews*

The interviews were semi-structured, open-ended ethnographic interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Each coach was interviewed 5-7 times. The goal of the interviews was to understand the factors pertinent to the coaches' job and career longevity. Table 3.2 provides an outline and timeline for all interviews. A life history of each coach was conducted to gain greater, in-depth information regarding the coach and her background, occupational socialization and how each coach's life and career has evolved (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The purpose of subsequent interviews was to explore pertinent issues regarding longevity in coaching. Additionally, data collected from observations and document analysis were used to inform interview questions. The coach interview protocol is provided in Appendix B.

<b>Type of Interview</b>	<b>With Whom</b>	<b>Which visit</b>	<b># of interviews</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Life History	Coach	1 <sup>st</sup>	1-2	Obtain background educational and professional socialization information
Semi-structured	Coach	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3-4	In-depth exploration of career longevity enhancers, barriers, and coping mechanisms
Semi-structured	Athletic Director (AD)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1	Obtain information regarding departmental philosophies, retention strategies, evaluation strategies, and gender relations of athletic department.
Semi-structured	Senior Woman Administrator	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1	Gather information regarding gender equity, gender relations, and gender hierarchies with the department
Semi-structured	Athletes (2-3 per team)	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 per athlete	Gain knowldege regarding perceptions of career longevity enhancers, barriers, coping mechanisms
Semi-structured	Former Athlete	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1	Explore how coach has changed over time especially regarding longevity enhancers, barriers, and coping mechanisms

Table 3.2. Information Regarding Type and Purpose of all Interviews

For each coach, the athletic director and three current athletes were interviewed. In one case, where the athletic director was a man, the senior woman administrator was also interviewed, and in three cases a former athlete was interviewed. Athletic directors and the senior woman administrator were interviewed to understand coach evaluation and retention processes, department philosophies and practices, gender relations within the department and institution, sport equity and gender equity issues within the department, and perceptions of coach career longevity enhancers, challenges, and coping mechanisms. Current and former athletes were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the career longevity enhancers, job challenges, and coping mechanisms for their coach. Former athletes were interviewed to add depth especially

regarding perceptions of how the coach has changed over the past several years. In two cases the former athlete was currently serving as an assistant coach thus adding another layer of relations. Interviews typically lasted about one hour and were audiotaped after receiving consent from the participants. I transcribed, verbatim, all audiotaped interviews. The interview protocol for the athletic director and senior women's administrator is provided in the Appendix C and the protocol for the athletes is provided in Appendix D.

### *Observations*

Observations are an integral part of qualitative research and are “used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 80). A combination of observational strategies ranging from highly structured to more holistic unstructured methods were employed for this study. Sport practices and competitions were observed multiple times throughout the course of the competitive season. Six or seven practices were observed for three of the participants. As one participant was on medical leave during the fall, only two practices (during the indoor track and field season) were observed. Roughly two-thirds of the observations took place during the middle portion of the season while the remaining third took place during the later portion of the season. In addition two competitions were observed for three of the coaches, one during midseason and one toward the end of the season. The goal of initial observations was to “discover recurring patterns of behaviors and relationships” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 79). After patterns emerged, observations became more focused to determine if emerging themes were consistent over time (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Prior to setting up the observation schedule, I consulted each coach to jointly determine which practices and competitions would be best to observe in order to reflect typical practices and competition in the middle and late season. During these practices, my role was as a participant observer (Glesne, 1999). My participation in group activities was secondary to gathering

information (Merriam, 1998). I shadowed the coach through all portions of practices and competitions taking notes on a small notepad. My primary role during these observations was to observe and record coach behaviors, coach-athlete interactions, and athlete responses to these behaviors and interactions. Practices or competitive sessions were not videotaped or audiotaped. Following the observations I reviewed the observation notes and included reflective, methodological, and theoretical notes.

### *Documents*

Several documents were gathered and analyzed to gain a greater understanding of the school, athletic department and individual sport programs. Athletic department brochures, departmental philosophy statement, sport program philosophy, sport program history, coach biography, coach evaluation forms, recruiting letters, college mission statement, admission brochures, and athletic department press releases were collected for each case. Some sources were obtained from the college and athletic department website. Document analysis was an on-going process taking place before, during, and after field observations and had multiple purposes in this study. Preliminary document analysis of website materials assisted in focusing observations and interview questions. Document analysis during and after interviews and observations was used to confirm or disconfirm emerging themes. These documents were helpful in understanding career longevity enhancers and inhibitors from a structural and social relations framework. For instance, documents were examined in an effort to understand gendered aspects of policies, procedures, resources, and power (Kabeer, 1994). Furthermore, information regarding gender proportion of coaches in the athletic department and in the associated athletic conference assisted in understanding “token” (Kanter, 1977a) dynamics of the workplace.

### *Data Analysis*

Silverman (2000) provides five questions that qualitative researchers, in particular those using interviews as data, should ask themselves. These are:

- 1) What status do you attach to your data?
- 2) Is your analytic position appropriate to your practical concerns?
- 3) Do interview data really help in addressing the research topic?
- 4) Are you making too large claims about your research?
- 5) Does your analysis go beyond a mere list? (pp. 824-825)

I continually reflected upon these questions as I went through the data analysis process.

Furthermore, to ensure that my research was grounded in a feminist perspective, I used the principles of feminist research as outlined by Kirsch (1999). Among these principles were; asking questions that acknowledge and validate women's experiences, collaborating with participants as much as possible, taking responsibility for the representation of others, analyzing how my experiences, training and theoretical framework have shaped the research agenda and created an environment that was mutually beneficial, interactive and cooperative (p. 4-5).

In this study, I examined the lives and careers of four female cross country coaches. Individual ethnographic case studies were created for each coach using a feminist perspective to guide the research. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). N5, a software program specifically designed for qualitative data analysis, was used to assist with data organization and the coding process (QSR N5, 2000). Interview transcripts, observation notes, document analysis notes, and journal entries were repeatedly reviewed throughout the data collection process searching for patterns, codes, and themes. As initial patterns and themes emerge from the data, the search for negative cases ensued (Glesne, 1999). Data were compiled into themes and data not fitting into themes were treated as outliers or negative case data. Data were initially coded descriptively and then after all the data were coded a search for themes related to the research questions began. Codes and categories were aligned with themes and the process of understanding the relationship between the themes and the research questions began.

“The purpose of the case report is not to represent the world but to represent the case” (Stake, 2000, p. 448). Data analysis consisted of both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). Data were first analyzed with-in case. Each case was treated as a comprehensive case (Merriam, 1998) with the purpose of presenting a portrait of each coach relative to the research questions. After the four cases were analyzed and written cross-case analysis ensued. The purpose of the cross-case analysis was to determine similarities and differences across cases in an attempt “to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (Yin, 1994, p. 112).

#### *Validity and Ethics*

I engaged in the following steps to enhance the credibility of my research: triangulation of data sources and methods, peer debriefing, and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several data collection methods and numerous data sources were used in this study. Interviews, observations, and document analysis served to enhance the depth of the data collected for each coach. Further, multiple documents were analyzed, several individuals closely related to the coach were interviewed, and meets and practices were observed throughout the course of the season.

The peer debriefing process was a valuable credibility method for this study. Two individuals served as peer debriefers. The first was my advisor, who has been involved in this study from the beginning. Her strong pedagogy and research background were invaluable. Additionally, a faculty member at a nearby university who was a former collegiate track and field/cross country coach also served as a peer debriefer. This person was especially helpful due to her specific background related to coaching.

Another form of trustworthiness is the search for negative cases (Glesne, 1999). In feminist research, "The purpose of exploring multiple perspectives is not to eliminate so-called rival hypotheses, but rather to add depth to our research enterprise" (Kirsch, 1999, p. 14). In



instances where negative cases or “outlier data” arose, a node was created to hold such data. After analyzing all data with-in case or cross-case, I went back to the negative case data and examined the impact these data had on the story.

#### *Member Check Process*

I believe the member check was the most valuable and necessary measure of validity for this study. Each coach was considered a research collaborator in that she was an “indispensable partner” in the research process (Glesne, 1999). Throughout the study I shared interviews transcripts and drafts of the final report with each respective coach to check for errors in fact or intent (Glesne, 1999). The goal of the member check process was to ensure I represented each coach, her life, and her career intentions, as accurately as possible. Each coach was provided with a copy of their individual case story with instructions to read, edit where needed and contemplate the following questions:

- Have I misinterpreted anything? Or is there wrong information?
- Have I missed anything important?
- Do I have anything in there that you do not want in there?
- Have I made more of an issue/theme/item than you feel is appropriate?
- Is there anything that you see printed in the manuscript that could reveal your identity?

Member checks with two participants were done in person, while two were done via phone. The member check sessions each lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. During this time we discussed the above questions and the significance of each theme in the three categories (career longevity enhancers, career longevity challenges, career longevity coping mechanisms). The participants provided me with their edited copy of the manuscript. I photocopied that manuscript and returned it to them along with the final edited version.

Kirsch (1999) suggests, “Interpretive conflict is inevitable in qualitative research since we can never fully enter someone else’s consciousness, nor can we see reality through others’ eyes” (p. 49). Further, Kirsch maintains that the greater the collaborative efforts between the researcher and the participants, the greater likelihood for interpretive conflict to occur. The member check process in this study did reveal several instances in which interpretive conflict arose. In these cases I followed Kirsch’s recommendations by “juxtaposing multiple perspectives” (p. 49). Where interpretive conflict was evident I provided footnotes or notes in the text to indicate the participant’s view of my interpretation of their story.

Another part of the member check and participant-researcher collaboration process included a “women’s coaching forum”. The purpose of this coaching forum was to provide each participant an opportunity to share her story, but more importantly to provide young women coaches an opportunity to learn from these women. This forum took place after the cross-case data analysis was completed and shared with participants.

Finally, the process of reflecting upon my own subjective biases in relation to this research study served as another procedure for establishing validity. Throughout the course of the study, I kept a reflective journal as a means to record and explore evolving theoretical dispositions, personal biases, and preferences (Schwandt, 1997).

### *Confidentiality*

Whenever engaging in research, one must be aware continually of ethical concerns and potential harmful effects to participants. A moral obligation exists between the researcher and the researched (Stake, 2000). Prior to engaging in research, methods and procedures regarding data collection, analysis and write-up were explained to the participants. A sample informational letter for the coach is in Appendix E and the athletes is in Appendix F. A copy of the consent form is provided in Appendix G. Participants’ privacy and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. Participants were asked to provide pseudonyms. Additionally pseudonyms were

provided for the institution, town, and for any other person or place that may potentially expose the coach, athletes, or institution. Due to the uniqueness of the women in this study I have used fictitious geographic or institutional data in some of the cases to maintain anonymity.

#### Personal Statement

I find it necessary to describe my background in an effort to provide the reader with insight regarding my positioning and the lens I have brought to this research. Running, in particular the sports of track and field and cross country, has had a profound influence in my life. I started running my first year in high school, mostly because my older brother competed on our high school cross country and track and field teams. I quickly came to love these sports for the social network they provided and for the incredible sense of accomplishment realized through team and individual successes. My passion for competing in these sports intensified through college and led me to major in exercise science with hopes of pursuing a career in a fitness-related field.

My desire to pursue a career in coaching did not manifest until my first year out of college. Having had many more male coaches than female coaches through high school and college (4 men, 1 woman) I had a preconceived notion that men, in comparison to women, were superior coaches. This bias was challenged in graduate school when my eyes were first opened to understanding the gender dynamics in sport and coaching. These experiences greatly influenced the coach, teacher, and person that I am today. I was incredibly fortunate to have worked with outstanding women mentors in a unique coach education program. In particular three women, the head coach whom I worked under, my coaching advisor, and thesis advisor, provided great leadership, challenged me to excel in many areas and encouraged me to think outside of the box.

With a master's degree in sport studies and two years of assistant coaching experience, I accepted my first collegiate head coaching position at a women's college in Minnesota. This was a great career starter as the program was relatively new and there were minimal expectations.

Further I was fortunate to have a nurturing female athletic director and a small yet very supportive department. I met weekly with the basketball and softball coaches (both men) and discussed coaching strategies and issues over lunch. “Taco-Tuesdays” became an important part of my socialization into the coaching profession. Another major benefit, although not fully realized at the time, was the fact that the majority of my coaching colleagues in the conference were women.

After three enjoyable and successful years, I left that position in an effort to move closer to home. My new position was considerably different than the one I left. Foremost, it was at a coed school, so for the first time in my coaching career I had to coordinate efforts and share funding with a men’s program. The programs were well established with a successful history especially in track and field. We were centrally located in our conference and state and had good meet hosting facilities for all three sports. Further, as a tenure track faculty member I had increased teaching responsibilities. I liked the increased challenges that came with this position and was fortunate to have a great mentor and friend in the men’s track and field coach. He had been coaching at the school for over 30 years and was known as “Mr. Track” throughout the state. For the majority of my time in this new position I was the only female head coach of track and field and cross country in our athletic conference. While I did not feel isolated, I did miss the presence of other women coaches. Finally, there was little administrative support from the athletic department. The athletic director could be best characterized as a “hands-off” administrator. During my six years I was only in his office two times. While there was ample autonomy, the lack of resources and support were challenging.

After my fourth year, the men’s coach retired and this substantially impacted my job satisfaction. My coaching philosophy differed greatly with the new coach and this became problematic in that we shared facilities, hosted meets together and often traveled together.

Further, each year I found my workload outside of coaching and teaching increasing due to my involvement on national committees, campus wide committees and hosting championship meets. Toward the end of my coaching career the negative aspects of my job began to outweigh, what were once, the seemingly endless joys of coaching: working with athletes. I found it increasingly harder to come to practice each day and leave my frustrations behind.

In 1999 I took a three-year leave of absence to pursue my Ph.D. with the option of returning to my original position as a coach and teacher, or to a “teaching only” position. My deadline for informing the administration of my intentions was October 2001. Until late September of that year I was still wavering as to whether I would return to coach the cross country team. Observing coaches and athletes during the pilot and dissertation study brought back fond memories and sparked a strong interest to return to coaching. In the end, however, I decided that while I have changed considerably over the past three years, few things have changed at my current institution or in the coaching world that could warrant a successful and healthy return to coaching. Instead my plan is to return to teaching and devote my research interests to women in coaching and coach education issues.

#### *Ethical Considerations*

My past experiences have undoubtedly affected this study. Having eleven years of coaching experience at the Division III level enhanced my ability to gain access to sites and establish trust and a solid research rapport with the participant coaches. I knew all of my participants prior to engaging in research and knew many coaches and administrators at one institution. While the extent of my relationship with each participant varied, none extended outside of the coaching realm. I had known one of the participants since I was an athlete and later coached in the same conference with her. I had known another coach for 13 years but had little interaction with her over the past 10 years. Finally, I had known the other two coaches roughly 8-10 years.

On a yearly basis I interacted with 2 - 3 of these participants between 3 - 4 times at national championships, national meetings, and conventions. Having a history with each of the participants helped establish trust in the researcher-participant relationship. However, due to the competitive nature of sport, being a former coach with the possibility of returning to coaching at the conclusion of this research had the potential to be a detriment to our relations. I believe this potential shortcoming was initially thwarted by the fact that I had most recently been coaching in a different region and conference than these four coaches. Further, I was up front in sharing my future plans with the participants and informed them once I knew for sure that I was not returning to coaching upon completion of my degree.

During my visits I had differential access to each of my participants. I spent time with and observed each coach at work and outside of work, however this access varied. For instance, I stayed at one participant's house during two of my visits thus enabling me to see her partner and neighbors. For another participant, all but one interview occurred at her home, permitting me to see her home and life away from work. In another case I spent considerable time away from school (i.e. in the community) interacting with the coach.

In some cases my access to information was limited. For instance, I had known many coaches and administrators at one institution. Further, during the time of my visits, especially toward the last visit, there was considerable intra-department conflict. There were times when I perceived a lack of trust on the participant's part due to my past history with some members of the department. During these visits I tried to avoid "bumping" into other coaches and administrators but at times it was unavoidable.

Each participant knew the other participants in my study. In many cases this was inevitable due to the proximity of some institutions and the uniqueness of the sample. On more than one occasion I was observing one coach at a competitive meet that was attended by another participant (and her team). Two coaches in this study had a history of coaching nationally ranked

teams that often went head-to-head in regional or national competitions. Both of these women are highly competitive and while they are cordial to each other they are certainly not best friends. I was unaware of this prior to gathering data but soon learned of this after my first visit with one coach. To further complicate matters I always visited these coaches back-to-back due to their geographical location. Although I had explained, up front, to all participants that I would not be sharing any information between coaches, I made a point of verbally ensuring these coaches that all information was confidential.

Issues of confidentiality and study limitations render it impossible to tell the whole story for each coach. Given the constraints of this study I have presented, to the best of my ability, each coach's professional and personal lives and examined how these lives have impacted their career longevity.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This study was designed to explore factors impacting career longevity of four collegiate track and field and cross country coaches. The goal was to examine the professional and personal lives of each coach to determine all potential factors affecting their career longevity. Chapter three outlined the procedures used for selection of participants and methodology employed to gather and analyze data. Three primary and five sub questions directed this study:

1. What factors enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 1.1. What individual factors (Knoppers, 1992) enhanced career longevity for these coaches?
  - 1.2. What structural or institutional factors (Kanter, 1977a) enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 1.3. What social relation factors (Knoppers, 1992) enabled these coaches to persist in the coaching profession?
2. What factors inhibited or challenged career longevity for these coaches?
  - 2.1. How are the career longevity challenges related to individual, structural, or social relations variables of coaches and coaching conditions?
3. What coping mechanisms have these coaches employed to persist in the coaching profession?
  - 3.1. Are these coping mechanisms related to individual, structural, or social relations variables?



This chapter presents the findings for four case studies. Case studies of each coach include a brief life history, a brief departmental and institutional summary, and findings associated with each research question.

#### Case One: Elaine

Elaine is 47 years old, White, and has been the head women's track and field and cross country coach at Gorham State University for the past 21 years. Her partner of 20 years, Scott, is the head men's cross country coach and assistant men's track and field coach at Gorham State University. Elaine's undergraduate degree was in physical education and she taught physical education and coached volleyball at a middle school before pursuing her masters' degree. Elaine and Scott met in graduate school while completing their masters' degrees in exercise physiology and came to Gorham when Elaine was hired, part-time, as the head women's track and field coach and head women's badminton coach. Scott was hired as a part-time assistant coach before being promoted to the head men's cross country coach.

The oldest of three children (2 girls, 1 boy), Elaine grew up on a farm within an hour's drive of Gorham. Her father was a farmer and her mother a "stay-at-home Mom". Elaine's parents were avid sports fans and introduced their children to sports at an early age. Elaine played football, basketball, and ice hockey with neighborhood boys and started competing in age-group swimming while in grade school. She did not start running until her senior year in high school and stated, "I would give an arm and a leg to have the opportunities they [girls and women] have now" (Elaine, 8-31-01). In college, Elaine competed in track and field (4 years), gymnastics (1 year), and swimming (1 year). Table 4.1 provides education and coaching background data for Elaine.

Gorham is a four-year state-funded institution located in the northwest. Gorham has an enrollment of approximately 10,000 students and offers 21 varsity sports (11 for women, 10 for men) at the NCAA Division III level. These sports are coached by a total of 16 coaches (6 female,

10 male). Elaine is the only person coaching three sports in the department. Three of the male coaches coach two sports and the other coaches coach one sport. Table 4.2 provides gender and longevity data for coaches at Gorham.

# Years	Level	Position/Degree/Sports
4.5	College	B.S. Physical Education, 4 years track and field, 1 year swimming, 1 year gymnastics
1.5	Middle School	Physical Education Teacher, Middle School Volleyball Coach
2.5	Grad School	M.S. Exercise Physiology, Age Group Swim Coach, High School Girls Assistant Track and Field Coach
21	NCAA Division III	Gorham College: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach. Initial position was part-time coaching Track and Field and Badminton. After one year the badminton program was dropped and cross country was added. Elaine's became full-time in her 5th year when she started teaching in the physical education department. She has also worked in admissions and is currently working in academic advising.

Table 4.1. Elaine's Education and Coaching History

Elaine's initial job at Gorham was part-time as the women's track and field coach and badminton coach. After Elaine's first year at Gorham, the badminton program was dropped and the women's cross country program was started. Elaine became the first, and to-date the only, women's cross country coach at Gorham. Within a few years Elaine's job became full-time as she picked up teaching responsibilities in the physical education department. Over the 21 years Elaine has been at Gorham she has worked in the physical education department, admissions, and advising, in addition to her coaching duties. Currently Elaine is working in advising where she spends 20 hours/week, fall semester only, advising undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Science. Elaine's workload is divided between coaching indoor and outdoor track and field (40%), coaching cross country (33%), and working in advising (27%). During the cross country

season Elaine typically does not have an assistant coach, although this year an alumnae volunteered as an assistant. During the track and field season, Elaine has two assistant coaches (throws and jumps) who are both full-time staff members with duties beyond coaching.

<b>Men's Sports</b>	<b>Gender of Coach</b>	<b>Years at Gorham</b>	<b>Women's Sports</b>	<b>Gender of Coach</b>	<b>Years at Gorham</b>
Baseball	Male	14	Basketball	Female	6
Basketball	Male	12	Cross Country <sup>a</sup>	Female	21
Cross Country	Male	20	Golf	Female	6
Football	Male	2	Gymnastics	Female	2
Soccer	Male	18	Soccer	Male	3
Swimming & Diving <sup>a</sup>	Male	9	Softball	Female	16
Tennis <sup>a</sup>	Male	12	Swimming & Diving <sup>a</sup>	Male	9
Indoor Track and Field <sup>a</sup>	Male	17	Tennis <sup>a</sup>	Male	12
Outdoor Track and Field <sup>a</sup>	Male	17	Indoor Track and Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	21
Wrestling <sup>b</sup>	Male	2	Outdoor Track and Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	21
			Volleyball	Female	19
Mean for coaches of men's sports		11.8	Mean for coaches of women's sports		10.4
Mean Years for all male coaches		10.9	Mean Years for all female coaches		11.7

*Note.* One woman coaches 3 sports: cross country, indoor track & field, outdoor track & field. Three men coach 2 sports: indoor track & field and outdoor track & field; M&W tennis; M&W swimming  
<sup>a</sup> Coaches who coach more than one sport are only counted once in longevity calculation.  
<sup>b</sup> Part-time coach.

Table 4.2: Gender and Longevity Data of Coaches at Gorham State University

Elaine has experienced significant coaching success since coming to Gorham. Her office walls are covered with conference championship plaques while national championship trophies dominate a corner of the office. Over the past twenty years, Elaine's teams have won a dozen national championships and close to three dozen conference championships. In the past 16 years her teams have not finished lower than second in the conference championships in any sport. She has been named national coach of the year three times, and conference coach of the year 25 times. Over 60 of Elaine's athletes have attained All-America status. From a winning standpoint, Elaine is one of the most successful coaches in the country regardless of Division.

To understand Elaine and the factors impacting her longevity in the coaching profession it is necessary to understand the structure that is central to her life. There is little variation from one day to the next. Everything is planned ahead of time and deviations from the plan, while not fully objectionable, are not tolerated easily. There seems to be a purpose behind almost every minute of her day. Elaine thrives on this structure and appears to be a master of time. There is a calm yet purposeful cadence to each day. Time is not wasted however there is little evidence of rushing. A typical day for Elaine during the fall semester is presented in Table 4.3.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>
7:05-7:15	Leave for work
7:30-7:45	Arrive at work (coaching office)
8:00-12:00	Work in advising taking walk-in and scheduled appointments with students. When not meeting with students there is time to check email, read NCAA News and other coaching related papers, and meet with athletes who either drop by or are called in for a special meeting.
12:00-1:30	Run, stretch, shower, then eat lunch at desk while going through mail, messages, etc.
1:30-3:15	Coaching administrative work, meetings with athletes, last minute preparation for practice.
3:15-5:30	Practice
5:30-6:00 <sup>a</sup>	Leave for home
~6:30-9:30	Dinner at home, talk with Scott, recruiting phone calls, watch TV, read.
9:30-10:00	In bed

*Note.* In the spring, Elaine’s schedule is not as structured. She does not work in advising. Instead mornings are used to prepare for practice, meeting with recruits, and doing various administrative tasks related to track and field.

<sup>a</sup> Each Monday in the fall, Elaine co-teaches a physical fitness class from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Table 4.3. Elaine’s Daily Schedule, Fall Semester.

The data were analyzed from individual, structural, and social relations perspectives in search of longevity enhancers, longevity challenges, and coping mechanisms. Enhancers are primary reasons for Elaine’s persistence in the coaching profession. Challenges refer to specific barriers Elaine has endured throughout her coaching career. Finally, coping mechanisms speak to

the ways in which Elaine has dealt with the specific challenges in an effort to persist and thrive in the coaching profession. What follows is a description of the themes that emerged for each main category (enhancers, challenges, coping mechanisms) in regards to how they have impacted Elaine as a coach, co-worker, partner, and friend. Table 4.4 lists pseudonyms and a description of the people pertinent in Elaine’s story.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Role in Elaine’s Life</b>
Scott	Elaine’s partner. Head Men’s Cross Country/Assistant Men’s Track and Field Coach at Gorham
Mike	Athletic Director at Gorham
Laura	Associate Athletic Director and Women’s Basketball Coach at Gorham
Moira	Gorham Alumnus. Former Cross Country/Track and Field Athlete. Current Assistant Cross Country Coach at Gorham
Diane	Senior athlete and captain on Elaine’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Catalina	Junior athlete on Elaine’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Jo	Senior athlete and captain on Elaine’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams

Table 4.4. List of Participants in Elaine’s story

#### *Individual Career Longevity Enhancers*

Individual career longevity enhancers are factors related to human capital variables, personality, and educational background that have enabled Elaine to persist in the coaching profession. Three themes emerged as individual career longevity enhancers for Elaine. These are an intense passion for the career, the opportunity to impact young women, and sustained program success.

#### *Life Long Passion for a Career in Coaching*

A lifelong sport participant and enthusiast, Elaine’s desire to be a coach dates back to junior high school. Since that time, Elaine has dedicated her life to fulfilling this dream. Elaine was involved in a variety of sports and competitive games at an early age. She stated that if it was competitive, she did it. To achieve her career goals, Elaine sought out appropriate undergraduate

and master's degrees and was strongly involved in competitive athletics. Throughout her undergraduate and graduate years Elaine coached volleyball, track and field, and swimming at the junior high, high school, and club levels.

Elaine's passion to become a coach was predominantly internally driven. Elaine rarely mentioned the impact of role models on her career choice.<sup>1</sup> She stated her parents were not supporters in her quest to go to college and fulfill her dream of becoming a physical educator and coach. "They were thinking that I should just go take some factory job. I would have died inside as a person having to do something like that. I always wanted to do something that I was passionate about" (Elaine, 11-5-01). Coaching was a career Elaine was passionate about as it fulfilled certain needs for her. These needs included the ability to be active, moving, working with people, challenging in a competitive sense, exciting, and a certain amount of structure. "I need excitement and I need stimulation, and I need somewhat of a structure" (Elaine, 10-9-01).

Elaine perceives coaching to be a perfect career match. In this sense no other career, at least that she is aware of, could quite measure up to coaching. "I can't come up with anything else that I would rather be doing. And I have even asked my friends and they are at a loss too .....I am highly organized, I like teaching, I like working with people" (Elaine, 8-30-01).

Like so many other coaches Elaine's job extends beyond a traditional 9-5 workday. Athletes spoke of the tremendous amount of time she devotes to coaching. It is evident that even when Elaine is not at work, she is often thinking about her athletes or a specific aspect of her coaching job. A former athlete who is now assisting Elaine in coaching cross country spoke to this devotion. "Everything about running is exciting to her and I think for her it is a career, but it is also a passion, she loves to do it. They [Elaine and Scott] focus their whole life around it" (Moir, 11-5-01). When asked to distinguish between allegiance to the career or to the institution Elaine stated that it is passion for the career of coaching that has kept her in it all these years.

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<sup>1</sup> Elaine stated that she did not have mentors because she did not need them: "I knew what I wanted to do".

Clearly Elaine's commitment to living the coaches' life is impacted by Scott's commitment to do the same. Together they live, eat, and breathe track and field and cross country. Most of their discussions revolve around coaching and running. Elaine reads many track and field magazines and journals.

Elaine's devotion to a career in coaching extends beyond her passion for running. When Elaine spoke of the desire for challenges in a career, she was mostly referring to the opportunities to work with and influence young women. It is this day-to-day interaction that is most fulfilling about her job.

#### *Opportunity to Impact Athletes*

Elaine's schedule enables her to devote a good portion of each day to individual meetings with her athletes, and it is evident that most of these meetings are enjoyable parts of her day. During these meetings Elaine believes her role is to motivate and challenge her athletes to be better people and athletes. Expectations are high and numerous athletes described Elaine as intense. Elaine admitted that most of the interactions she has with her athletes are strictly sport and running related. She is not one to spend time talking about frivolous topics.

But there is more that Elaine enjoys about her job than just meeting with athletes. The real pay-off is seeing their hard work pay off and in knowing that she had a hand in their transformation and ultimate success. "I like to get individuals to not limit themselves. Take away their limits, push those limits away and let's just see where we can go. I get great excitement in seeing the happiness when that happens" (8-30-01). One of her athletes concurred with this in stating: "I think she gets a lot out of seeing other people do their best. Just the fact that she knows she is leading them. And then she sees them have the sense of accomplishment. That gives her a sense of accomplishment" (Catalina, 11-6-01).

The sense of accomplishment goes beyond what is gained on the track or in the sporting arena. A major goal of Elaine's is for the women she coaches to leave Gorham as more "self-

sufficient" women so they can handle the challenges that they will inevitably face in the working world. Elaine is persistent in helping her athletes achieve life skills and routinely holds them accountable for their actions. She continually challenges them to use positive language, stand up (or not back down) to the athletes on the men's team, and strive for excellence in everything they do. The impact that Elaine has had on her athletes does not go unnoticed. The athletic director noted that:

She is a great role model for the women in that program. She probably teaches them more about life than probably any other coach on campus. She takes some athletes that come in as timid little people and they leave here very self-confident that they are going to go out and tackle the world. She has just done a great job with them (Mike, 11-5-01).

In addition to holding her athletes accountable for their actions, Elaine has high self-expectations and holds herself accountable for her athletes' actions. An athlete stated: "Her big thing is if we are not striving to meet her potential then she is not doing her job as a coach" (Diane, 11-6-01). Elaine's desire to positively impact the lives of her athletes and challenge them to strive for excellence is closely related to her desire to build winning teams and be successful.

### *Program Success*

Data from numerous sources clearly suggested that program success is the driving force that keeps Elaine in the coaching profession. For Elaine, success is mostly defined in terms of winning championships and in helping her athletes achieve their potential. Elaine maintained that if her teams were not successful, "I would probably get out because I would be unhappy all the time" (10-9-01). Winning at the conference level is of primary importance to Elaine and this is not lost on her athletes.

I remember my sophomore year at the conference meet, we were not picked to win at all and probably shouldn't have won, and when we did, she couldn't even stand she was so full of excitement. She couldn't believe it and she was crying. It was the first time I ever saw her cry about a race before and I think that is the part that she loves the most is the competition and watching her athletes strive (Diane, 11-6-01).

Elaine readily admitted the importance of conference championships to her satisfaction in coaching: "I would give up every coach of the year I ever had to keep on winning the conference



title. Without even a second thought. Give us the team trophy baby. And whatever the other stuff is....I don't care” (Elaine, 11-5-01).

Elaine’s success appears to be highly related to her intensity, dedication, and competitiveness. Athletes spoke of Elaine’s level of intensity and her expectations of athletes. There is an expectation that all athletes, regardless of ability or position on the team, will strive for excellence. Striving for excellence is a mantra continually repeated by Elaine and her athletes. A testimony to Elaine’s intensity is her passion for setting and achieving challenging goals. Elaine sets goals for most things that are job and life related and devotes considerable time and effort toward achieving these goals. “When I started coaching my goal was to win 10 national titles” (8-30-01). After reaching that goal, Elaine did not rest on her laurels. If anything, previous successes have motivated her to “stay on top”. In addition to team related goals, Elaine also sets personal running goals and life style goals.

Former and current athletes perceive a relationship between Elaine’s dedication and commitment to coaching and her success as a coach: “I think she puts so much of her life into it. I mean she can give everything that she has to the program. So it is successful because she has given everything” (Jo, 11-6-01). An alumnus who is currently assisting with the program asserted:

Her goal is to be a winning coach and she has every right to be that way because she puts her heart and soul into practice every single day. I mean she will call me three times on a Sunday. That is all she thinks about (Moir, 11-5-01).

This former athlete also stated: “She loves to win. That sums it up a lot. I mean it is not, like when I think of Elaine's passion for winning and love for competition I don't think about it in a bad way” (Moir, 11-5-01).

It is evident that success is paramount in keeping Elaine in coaching. The success that Elaine has enjoyed at Gorham appears to be largely influenced by individual factors. For instance, her athletic director stated:

I think she would have been successful no matter where she was. A couple of years ago I thought we were going to lose her to a Division I school and she would have been as successful there as here just because of her make-up and her drive (Mike, 11-5-01).

While Elaine also believes she could be successful in many places, she is quick to credit the current and former athletic directors with providing her with very good support.

### *Structural Career Longevity Enhancers*

Structural career longevity enhancers refer to factors specific to Gorham that have been instrumental in Elaine's persistence in the coaching profession. Two themes emerged in this category, support from the athletic director and Elaine's autonomy in running the programs as she sees fit.

#### *Support from Athletic Director and Higher Administration*

The greatest evidence of structural enhancers comes from the support Elaine gets from her athletic director. The current athletic director has been at Gorham for roughly 12 years. In addition to the current athletic director's support, Elaine noted the role the previous athletic director had in her career longevity. Interestingly both athletic directors had been former track coaches and Elaine perceived this as a major plus for she and Scott. "We have been lucky from that standpoint because we have always had the head guy be interested in our sports. That is a huge thing" (8-30-01). Elaine also spoke to the role that she and Scott have had on committees that have hired both of those athletic director's.

Elaine feels that she can share anything she needs to with her athletic director. She perceives her relationship with him to be better than most if not all the coaches in the department. Elaine has a direct line to her athletic director who has helped her negotiate work-related duties outside of coaching. For instance, Elaine stated that every five years or so she looks to change the non-coaching portion of her job. Her athletic director has been instrumental in helping her move from teaching to admissions and then to advising. Elaine is now looking at getting back into teaching and the athletic director is helping her negotiate that process.

Elaine's athletic director likes her, respects her and is willing to do what is necessary to keep her happy and at Gorham. The athletic director spoke of the impact his role as a former track coach has in fostering a strong relationship with Elaine:

I think for one I am an ex-track coach. So that's helped. I think the other thing is Elaine realizes that I am more than willing to listen. I won't always agree and I think she respects that. And I think because we have the philosophy of treating people equally I think she feels she gets very much of a fair shake here. So I think all of those types of things work into it. And on top of that, I like Elaine. Before I ever came here I liked Elaine. So you know from that standpoint helps. Very much (Mike, 11-5-01).

Elaine also feels strong support from the higher administration at Gorham. During Elaine's tenure at Gorham there have been three chancellors and all have been very supportive and made her feel a special part of Gorham. Further, Elaine has good rapport with Mike's (AD) direct boss, the associate dean of student affairs (Sam). Elaine maintained that she would never "go over" Mike's head but if her needs were not being met, and Mike could not help, she would ask him "would you mind if I go talk to Sam [Associate Dean] about this" (Elaine, 3-8-02).<sup>2</sup>

### *Autonomy*

Elaine enjoys the autonomy she has at Gorham. "Mike is our boss, but I have so much free reign. I mean I have huge free reign. I can pretty much do whatever I want with track and cross country. I mean, I am trying to think of where he would step in. I can't even come up with where he would step in" (11-5-01). Mike corroborated this by saying:

I guess my job, more than anything else, is to make sure that they have the resources to be successful and get out of the way. I am not a micro-manager. I look at the big picture. My feeling is there's 15 ways to skin a cat. As long as you do it ethically, I am not sitting there looking over your shoulder making sure that you are doing it (Mike, 11-5-01).

The autonomy that Elaine has at Gorham has helped her institutional longevity. Elaine turned down a Division I position because she feared she would not have the autonomy necessary to run her program. Even though there was evidence of ample monetary support and resources,

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<sup>2</sup> When Elaine was growing up she was taught "you always get more with sugar than with vinegar".

Elaine perceived that the lack of autonomy would impact her ability to control those resources and in turn impact her ability to be successful and ultimately be satisfied with her job.

The thing that ultimately decided it was cross country was housed under the umbrella of track and so I don't know if the financial end of it, as far as scholarships would be enough to be able to make us be competitive. And I am better at being my own boss....It would be like I was the number one assistant, I would still answer to [the head track coach]...but the resources and the money that I would have had were unbelievable (Elaine, 10-11-01).

Elaine is also satisfied with budgetary support for her program. She qualifies this by comparing what her teams get, in terms of uniforms, travel arrangements, etc. to what other teams at Gorham receive and to what she perceives other programs (conference/region) receive. On the other hand, Elaine would like more support from administration in the form of help for recruiting, expanded athletic training services for her athletes, and more gender equitable treatment with publicity in sports information.

In summary, because of Elaine's relationship with the athletic director she has access to knowledge, opportunity, and power within the athletic department and perceives a great deal of autonomy in her job. These factors have helped her stay at Gorham and in the coaching profession. The data also revealed factors on a social relations level that have enhanced Elaine's persistence in the coaching career.

#### *Social Relations Career Longevity Enhancers*

Social relations enhancers refer to factors beyond Elaine's individual and institutional professional life that have enabled her to persist and thrive in the coaching profession. Two themes emerged in this category, support from her partner, and living a "clutter-free" life.

#### *Partner Support*

It is clear that Scott has been a substantial support mechanism and career longevity enhancer for Elaine. That Elaine and Scott coach at the same institution and that they both coach the same sports are key factors in Elaine's career and institutional longevity. Scott understands

the daily and long-term challenges of the career and shares many of Elaine's interests. Elaine spoke to the impact that being married to a coach has had on her longevity:

I think it would be really hard if I were married to someone who wasn't a coach, just from the standpoint that he would be home on the weekends and I would be gone. And it is neat too because we talk shop at home a lot of times (8-30-01).

Sharing the same vocation has also impacted the types of vacations Elaine and Scott take. They are both avid track and field fans and have frequently traveled great distances to watch the World Championships or Olympic Track and Field Trials. Additionally, both are seasoned marathoners and have traveled the country to compete or participate in marathons.

Scott's willingness to move to Gorham when Elaine got the job and his readiness to leave Gorham had Elaine accepted a Division I coaching offer exemplify the sacrifices he was willing to make to help advance Elaine's career. The Division I school would have provided Scott with a job, however it would not have been in coaching. Career support in this sense has been mutual in that one of the reasons why Elaine did not take the Division I job was that Scott would have had to leave coaching. "Scott was willing to move with me, but I thought he would be giving up too much and I wasn't unhappy here. So then we just stayed" (8-30-01).

Scott also provides support for Elaine at home as work appears to be divided equally. Scott does a major portion of the cooking and preparing meals (Obs., 10-9-01). Scott also supports Elaine in a social sense. Scott is a central part of Elaine's social circle, as she does not have many close friends in the department or outside of work. She is a private person and is not able to give the time commitment to foster such friendships. Elaine maintained Scott is her best friend and pointed to the positive impact this has on her professional and personal life. Over the years Scott's teams have also enjoyed success although not to the degree that Elaine's teams have. Elaine maintained that her greatest coaching moment occurred when she and Scott's teams each won national championship titles during the same season. For both of them to be at the pinnacle of their careers at the same time made the moment unforgettable and extraordinary.

### *Few Non-work Priorities*

Elaine's life outside of coaching has very few distractions. She and Scott do not have children or many social demands in their lives. During the season social outings are limited to spending time every couple of weeks with "a little brother" whom they sponsor and attending an NFL game once or twice a month. And while they do have some close friends, they find it difficult to spend quality time with them during their competitive seasons. Elaine spoke to the nature of the coaching lives they lead:

It is really hard to be friends with different people. I mean friend friends. I don't mean surface, how are you doing. We run at lunch, so you don't go out to lunch with people. We get home from practice late and so we certainly aren't going out to dinner during the week, unless we grab something on the way. Okay, then friends like to do stuff on the weekends. Well like we can do that?! So you don't necessarily have a lot of friends (11-5-01).

It appears that having an uncluttered life was a conscious decision on Elaine and Scott's part. Elaine stated, "It is just the way it is. When you know you are going to be a coach you know it requires this much energy, this much time, and if you don't like it then it is time to get out" (11-5-01). For Elaine and Scott, having children did not seem realistic given the demands of a married coaching duo. It is not to say that they could not have done it, but a lot of things would have had to change, and someone or something would suffer. Elaine stated:

I couldn't imagine going home from work now and having a kid. Because when I go home I am fried. I couldn't imagine...and then what kind of a life would the kid ever have if Mom and Dad are gone every weekend. Who would even take care of your kid every weekend?! (11-5-01).

Together, the mutually supportive relationship Elaine and Scott have, and the fact that there are few distractions or demands outside of the workplace, have enabled Elaine to devote her full energies to her coaching. This uninterrupted devotion has assisted with her success, satisfaction and ultimate longevity in the coaching profession.

In summary, Elaine's career longevity enhancers include: a never-ending competitive drive that has led to substantial successes; an intense passion for attributes associated with

coaching; great support from the person in the department with the most power; and a partner and home life that is conducive and supportive of a career in coaching. These are very strong forces that have enabled Elaine to exist in this profession happily and without much stress. This is not to say that she has not been challenged. However the enhancers have set the foundation for her to handle challenges.

### *Career Longevity Challenges*

Career longevity challenges refer to barriers either in the workplace or at home that have inhibited persistence in the coaching career. Four themes emerged relative to Elaine's coaching challenges. These include, recruiting, changing nature of athletes, imbalanced workloads, and constantly proving oneself.

#### *Recruiting*

The greatest coaching challenge for Elaine involves athlete recruitment. The pressure to recruit is primarily self-imposed and related to Elaine's strong desire to continually have nationally ranked programs. Recruiting consumes a great deal of time and constant attention. It is a never ending cycle as once the class for the upcoming year is in place, total focus goes toward securing the following years' class. In the fall, Elaine will make 10-20 contacts (phone calls) per week. Over the course of the previous school year, Elaine had made 500 phone contacts with prospective student-athletes in track and field and/or cross country. In addition to phoning athletes, Elaine sends out bulk mailings and will routinely attend high school competitions to watch athletes compete.

Recruiting provides the greatest, and for the most part, the only coaching related stress or frustration for Elaine. Philosophically, having to "sell" her program runs counter to Elaine's beliefs. However, she feels that to be competitive it is crucial that she recruit student-athletes to her program. Therefore, stopping or curtailing recruiting efforts is not an option. For instance, Elaine stated that in her time at Gorham only one walk-on (person not recruited by her) has

contributed to her program by scoring at a conference meet. A further challenge with recruiting involves the “negative recruiting” that occurs within her conference or region. Elaine knows of many instances where other coaches, in recruiting student athletes who are also looking at Gorham, have bad-mouthed Elaine or her program while recruiting athletes. In each case it has always been a male coach doing the “negative recruiting”. This is a particularly personal challenge for Elaine in that the negative tactics are perceived as not only an attack on her successful program, but also an attack on her as a female coach.

In the past few years there has been an increase in the time needed for recruiting and it is now a year-round job. Elaine explained that she now must continue recruiting athletes even after they have decided upon Gorham. This is to “ward” off other schools/coaches from “stealing” her recruits after they have decided upon Gorham. Finally the “keeping up with the Joneses” syndrome is also an added stress for Elaine. It used to be that Elaine could “out-recruit” anyone in her conference. Now other coaches are also recruiting hard thus making Elaine’s chances of getting top athletes to Gorham increasingly difficult. “One of my...I don't know if I should use the word goal again...is to outwork any other program, like in the conference” (10-9-01). Over the past two years Elaine has substantially increased the amount of recruiting, but she does not see a consistent or direct pay-off.

Recruiting is a double-edged sword. As much as she dislikes it, Elaine cannot see herself backing off on it as she realizes the relationship it has to successful programs and in the long run job satisfaction. At this point she is not willing to make that trade-off but Elaine stated that if it comes down to where she must do home visits to stay competitive, she will get out of coaching.

Division III has changed so much, even in the past five years. Now it is school visits and home visits. I don't think I will do a home visit. If I have to do that to feel success that is probably when I will leave coaching. And it won't have anything to do with the athletes. It won't have anything to do with giving up the weekend or any other aspect. It won't even be the time thing so much. It will be because it is not what I believe in (Elaine, 8-30-01).



This suggests that it is not necessarily recruiting that Elaine dislikes so much but rather the changing nature of recruiting at Division III. Another factor is Elaine's comparative gauge. As long as she can outwork other programs, without compromising her beliefs, she is okay with the amount of recruiting that she has to do to be successful. Finally this is one of the few areas where Elaine feels that she could use more support from the institution in funding assistant coaches to assist with the recruiting efforts.

#### *Changing Nature of Athletes*

Another challenge for Elaine is the changing nature of athletes. Elaine spoke of how athletes are not as strong willed as they were 10-15 years ago.<sup>3</sup> Because athletes are "needier" now Elaine must spend more time with them, although she does not perceive this as necessarily a bad thing. Elaine's assistant coach stated that when Elaine's teams were consistently winning national titles the athletes were different. "She had good recruiting years those years. So she could push those buttons because she just could. Also it is the type of athlete that is coming out now. I don't think they are as dedicated to the sport anymore" (Moir, 11-5-01).

Elaine has felt the increasing age gap between herself and her athletes. Elaine spoke to the fact that because she was "born too early" she missed out on many experiences in sport and this impacts her effectiveness in relating to athletes. This is especially evident during the recruiting process. Elaine stated that because she was not recruited she has no first-hand experience from an athletes' perspective.

If you were recruited as an athlete then you would know what other coaches did and what you liked and didn't like. Because now you are trying to figure out well what would work for this 18 year old or this 17 year old? And, you know, I am so out of the loop. I don't have any kids of my own to know what they are interested in. I kind of know what my collegiates are, but high school I think is still a different age group and to relate to them and what clicks for them....I think that would have been helpful to have gone through that whole process (11-6-01).

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<sup>3</sup> Elaine sees the change more so in the past five years.

To assist in this aspect, Elaine has brought on an assistant coach who graduated from Gorham three years ago. However this person is serving in a voluntary capacity and Elaine does not want to overburden her.

Another challenge for Elaine is related to prospective student-athletes' perceptions of female coaches. The majority of the young women Elaine recruits have had male coaches in high school. Some are wary of having a female coach in college and some have specifically chosen other schools because of that.

I think in recruiting sometimes they [student-athletes] think a woman can't be tough enough and I was told that before. I think once they are here it is fine. Sometimes I think that individuals will try to take advantage of you more if you are a female coach, than if you are a guy coach. And that is based on just how women are viewed in society (Elaine, 11-5-01).

Elaine's athletic director also sees the gender biases that young women have toward female coaches.

It is very interesting watching some of the athletes who have always had male coaches through high school. Some of them right from the start think that you have to have a male to be successful. Well what we try to do is point out the Elaine's and the Laura's [women's basketball coach] and say 'well that is not true'. But what they are looking for is that personality that they can't walk over and a lot of times they get in those things and they think that they have the upper hand and that is when it starts failing. But as I said if you look at that personality, the person who is very determined, it works (Mike, 11-5-01).

Given the decreasing percentages of female coaches at the high school level, it is unlikely that this perception is going to change anytime soon. Beyond the changes in recruiting and in student-athletes, Elaine is also frustrated with her coaching workload in comparison to other coaches at Gorham.

#### *Imbalanced Workloads*

From time to time Elaine asserted that coaching track and field is an all-consuming job. The track and field seasons (Indoor and Outdoor) last approximately five months, not counting preseason training. In addition to the long season the number of athletes competing is typically higher than any sport outside of football and the number of specialty events surpass most other

sports. Elaine is essentially okay with her workload until she compares her workload to other coaches in the department. For instance, Elaine gets a 40% full time equivalency (FTE) for coaching track and field while the volleyball coach gets a 60% FTE for coaching a sport that lasts three months and has approximately 1/3 the size of the track and field team.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, this coach only coaches one sport. There is equity in the workload percentages allotted to her and to the men's track and field coach (40%), however the men's coach is the head coach of only track and field as Scott is the head cross country coach. Therefore the men's track and field coach only has to coach and recruit for track and field while Elaine essentially coaches year round.

There are different reasons for the imbalance in coaching workloads at Gorham. It is believed that the volleyball coach's FTE's are higher to counterbalance the historically high FTE's allotted to football. The men's track and field and cross country positions were separated shortly after Elaine arrived when the then coach of both sports opted to just coach track and field. Scott took over the cross country program, and once the track and field coach retired, Gorham hired a new coach for the men's track and field program. Finally, over the past 20 years and more specifically in the past 5-10 years coaching time demands have increased significantly due to the increasing pressures to recruit at the Division III level. Because of these increases, many two-sport coaches had their coaching workload reduced by one sport.

Regardless of the reason, the inequity between workloads is apparent and unfair. For most of her time at Gorham, Elaine has preferred being the head coach of both sports as she can control both programs. However, now when she sees that she is carrying the greatest coaching workload it does concern her. "If I had to do it over again, I don't know if I would be the head track coach. Head cross country is a snap but maybe assistant track because then you don't have to recruit all areas" (8-30-01). Elaine is not yet willing to give up the autonomy of being the head

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<sup>4</sup> Elaine maintained that this is a thorn, but it would never make her leave coaching. Elaine went on to state that from time to time, when needed, she points it out to Mike, the athletic director.

coach of both sports, however she has discussed with the athletic director the option of transitioning to an assistant track and field coaching position in the near future.

### *Constantly Proving Oneself*

A final coaching challenge is gender related and concerns how Elaine has been continually challenged to prove her worthiness as a coach. Elaine discussed how she has had to deal with stereotypes and backlash from male coaches, particularly earlier in her career. Elaine found herself constantly having to prove herself equal to her male coaching colleagues. When she first started coaching she was the only female coach in the conference and she recalls how the 'old boys' club' was prevalent at coaches' meetings where she felt isolated because of her gender. The gendered challenges have not only come from male coaching peers but also from athletes. Elaine related how a first-year sprinter on the men's track and field team once stopped her relay practice session to offer instructions on how to do relay exchanges. Other examples included male athletes critiquing the women's performances and their workouts. Elaine maintained that these challenges are gendered and rarely happen to male coaches. "I think if you are a woman you have to continually prove yourself. I don't see that same urgency in Scott... there is never anybody trying to, what I would call, step on you" (Elaine, 11-6-01).

Being doubted and constantly having to prove her ability has perhaps worked to Elaine's advantage as she uses this challenge as a motivation. For instance, when Elaine first started coaching at Gorham, the men's cross country coach (before Scott) stated that she would never have success. This motivated Elaine: "He lit an unbelievable fire under me. To this day, he doesn't even know it" (8-30-01). Even though Elaine has been motivated by this doubt and the constant need to prove oneself, one must wonder at what cost? While Elaine maintained the doubts and the challenges are more subtle or have diminished over the years, she believes they are a ubiquitous part of her job.

While none of these challenges alone appear to be especially daunting, collectively they present sizable obstacles to persisting as a long-term coach. Data revealed several coping mechanisms that Elaine has employed to diminish the effects of the coaching challenges.

#### *Career Longevity Coping Mechanisms*

Four themes emerged relative to Elaine's ability to cope with coaching related challenges. These are: negotiating the system, discipline and routine, adaptability, and persistence.

#### *Negotiating the System*

It appears that Elaine's best coping mechanism for dealing with career longevity challenges is her ability to negotiate the system to best suit her needs. As previously mentioned Elaine has a very close relationship with her athletic director, Mike. In Elaine's words, it is easy for her to "make her wishes known" to Mike. The fact that he and the former athletic director were both former track and field coaches has probably helped Elaine's ability to "negotiate" the system. "I always just figure out a way to get what I want. I wiggle. I never break any rules but I always figure out a way to get what I need" (Elaine, 11-6-01). Typically getting what she "needs" includes resources for her programs and work-related opportunities for Elaine so that she can continue to develop successful teams. Examples of negotiation include bargaining for salary, and for her non-coaching work duties (i.e. admissions, teaching, advising).

In addition to negotiating specific job and work-load related entities, Elaine also does a good deal of behind the scenes negotiation to help her team achieve success and to assist in her job satisfaction. In response to the inequities in FTE's among coaches, specifically that the volleyball coach has a 60% FTE for coaching, Elaine stated:

I have made my wishes known. Since that is kind of a fact, I ask things in other ways. Like I asked to go back into physical education [instead of advising] or I ask for an increase in pay. So if I can't go one way, I will try to find another way to be able to go. And you see I make more [money] than our volleyball coach. Significantly more. So I find other ways....if I can't go through the system (11-5-01).

Another way of negotiating the system is the association that Elaine has formed with Laura, the associate athletic director. Laura, who also coaches the women's basketball team, and Elaine both have considerable access and allegiance to the athletic director. Many of the coaches in the department are aware of this access and some, particularly coaches of men's sport, have nicknamed Elaine and Laura the "Queen Bees". While the term "Queen Bees" is a derogatory term, it does imply Elaine's access to power in the athletic department.<sup>5</sup> Beyond her negotiating abilities, Elaine's daily routine and unyielding personal discipline have also helped her confront the challenges in coaching and enhance her career longevity.

### *Discipline and Routine*

Elaine is very willing to admit that daily structure plays a huge role in her coaching life. Elaine works by the clock, in fact during the fall her watch is set on "cross country time" and she expects all of her athletes to follow cross country time.<sup>6</sup> There is a time and place for everything and little tolerance for deviations to the overall plan. In general all athletes are at least 5-10 minutes early to practice. This discipline and routine that is set by Elaine and followed closely by her athletes has provided an atmosphere where there is little stress and few surprises from day to day. Elaine is never seen rushing around and her athletes rarely, if ever, perceive her as being stressed. Elaine also sets professional limits for herself. For a while in her career, Elaine was on the executive board of a national coaching committee. She no longer volunteers for such duties and this is primarily due to the time and effort that it would take from her team.

The following quote perhaps best summarizes the structure and discipline in Elaine's life and how she perceives it impacts her ability to be a lifelong coach:

I believe that if you want to be successful you can't be distracted. I want my athletes to do school, running, and to have time for some other things, but I don't want them to spread themselves too thin. So I don't want to be doing a lot of things during the season because then your energy level is not where it needs to

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<sup>5</sup> Elaine does not see this as a power issue, rather she perceives this to be pure jealousy on the part of two men in the department and a sign of the "good old boys' club".

<sup>6</sup> Elaine stated she does this to "eliminate places where I think there will be issues".

be. If you want them to be passionate, well then you have to be passionate. So in August I go to the store and get enough detergent and toothpaste until the next year. I am not doing any of that stuff during the season. The only shopping I do is to go get groceries. That is enough. We try to do something fun once a week or once every two weeks. And so we completely unclutter our life. All that little stuff is done before the season starts. Well, we could do some of that stuff in December. But I am not running to Wal-Mart, I am not running to Target. I am not doing anything. I am going to the grocery store and that is it. Because if I want them to be that way, I have to be that way (10-9-01).

It is evident from this passage that Elaine has mutual expectations of her runners and herself.

Additionally, she understands what it takes for her to be a passionate and successful coach and she is willing to make those sacrifices and to structure her life in such a way that it is done painlessly and without stress. The sacrifices Elaine makes are not year-round. Elaine and Scott “escape” in the summer and during winter break. In the summer they typically travel to Europe while during winter break they go to Arizona to visit with Scott’s mother. The three or four vacations they take each year provide a great break from their otherwise structured and busy lives. Further, Elaine enjoys the vacation planning process as this provides her with an opportunity to “escape” while at Gorham. Another coping mechanism for Elaine has been her ability to adapt to the changes in the coaching profession.

### *Adaptability*

While the profession of coaching and demands on coaches have changed throughout the course of Elaine’s career, Elaine also spoke to how she has been able to adapt to change. This is perhaps another instance in which Elaine practices what she preaches as she is continually teaching her athletes how to adapt to things that they cannot change or control. Elaine contended that over the years she has developed better coping skills, is better able to put things in perspective, and is “more mellow” than in the past. When she first started coaching, “everything was life and death, now only a few things are” (11-6-01). It would appear that winning conference championships and striving for excellence are still considered life and death aspects of coaching. Elaine has become more extroverted which has helped her in dealing with situations

such as being the only woman at a coaches' meeting. "Now I would go in and say hi to everybody. Then [early in her career] I was too introverted to do that, where now I would just go over and introduce myself" (Elaine, 11-5-01).

Additional adapting strategies include withdrawing from situations or people whom she cannot change and focusing her energies in ways and arenas where she can make a difference. For instance, in dealing with backlash from male coaches in her conference, Elaine stated that while she does not like it, she has learned to focus her energies elsewhere. When probed where this would be she stated, "Where I can make a difference. Back on my team" (Elaine, 11-5-01). Elaine alluded to the relationship between adapting and longevity in coaching in believing that:

You just have to be able to deal with the other stuff that comes at you. It is a part of the job and you know it is coming, got to adapt. No other way around it, adapt or get out. I am not quite at the get out stage, so I just stay in (Elaine, 10-9-01).

Her willingness to adapt and to "stay in it" is also related to her persistence.

#### *Persistence*

A final coping mechanism for Elaine is her never say die attitude. Elaine has always been the kind of person who rises to the challenge. It is almost as if she wants to be doubted so that she can go out and prove people wrong. "Whenever I am told I can't do something, I don't mean from an administrative standpoint, but you can't do something athletically it just drives me harder to be able to do that" (Elaine, 8-30-01). Several athletes concurred that a major reason why Elaine has persisted in the male dominated coaching profession is because of her determination and strong personality. "I think she is a very strong person. I don't really think she cares what other people think. So if someone on the team is mad at her, I don't think she really cares" (Jo, 11-6-01).<sup>7</sup>

Related to Elaine's persistence is the fact that she is haunted by the losses incurred by her team. The haunting stems back to when Elaine was an athlete. She remembers mostly the bad

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<sup>7</sup> Elaine was surprised by this comment and stated that it "chews her up inside" when an athlete is mad at her. She continued "Of course I want to be liked by them (the athletes) but you can't let them see that side of you".



aces that she had and little of the good races. Fortunately for Elaine the bad races were few and far between. The same case appears to be true for her coaching. But none-the-less she is devastated by losses and readily admits that she struggles with the repercussions of bad meets or bad seasons. Elaine believes that her loathe for losing has in the long run made her a better coach because it drives her to make changes, work harder, and recruit more. Her athletic director also spoke to the relationship between success and her abhorrence for losing. “She has a drive and an ego and when I say this I don't want it to be taken negative because it is not. It is very, very positive. But that is what makes her successful. She hates to fail” (Mike, 11-06-01).

Furthermore Elaine believes that the reason for the early exit of people from the coaching ranks is that they give up too soon. Her advice to young coaches is to surround yourself with a network of strong people and to never give up the fight. “I think that is part of the reason why I still fight so hard, it is still the ‘good old boys’ club’ and I will do everything in my power to break the ‘good old boys’ club’” (8-30-01). While Elaine’s network of people is limited to her partner, her athletes, the athletic director, and the associate athletic director, they all serve a very strong role in her career persistence.

#### *Summary*

In general, Elaine’s career longevity enhancers and coping mechanisms far outweigh her coaching related challenges. From an early age Elaine was strongly motivated to pursue a coaching career. This career fulfills her competitive desires and she is at a loss when searching for a comparative career. The daily support that she receives from her athletic director and her partner is undeniably linked to her longevity at Gorham and in coaching. Further, she and Scott have jointly devoted their lives to this career by essentially melding their vocation with their avocation. While there have been challenges and sacrifices made along the way, they are far fewer and pale in magnitude to the joys she and Scott have experienced over the years.

## Case Two: Katy

Katy, 49, is a White female and has a partner of 24 years. She and her partner Mark have three children between the ages of 17 and 22. Katy received a bachelor's degree in biology and physical education and a master's degree in exercise physiology. She has been coaching collegiate cross country and track and field for 26 years. For 21 of those years, Katy has coached at Dekan University, a private, Division III institution located in the northwest.

Born and raised in the northeast, Katy comes from a family of seven children (5 girls, 2 boys) born over 18 years. Her father was a jeweler and a former WWII pilot and her mother a "stay at home Mom". Katy, her twin sister, and a sister one year younger were known as "the girls" and were formidable neighborhood sport competitors. Due to the lack of interscholastic sporting opportunities for girls, which she regrets to this day, Katy's high school sport experience was limited to cheerleading. It did not stop Katy and her sisters from engaging in numerous sporting activities and taking on the boys in the neighborhood. Their backyard was a makeshift track and field facility complete with long jump, high jump, and hurdling stations. Next-door neighbors provided space for football and basketball, while baseball was played at a nearby cow pasture.

Initially Katy did not plan on majoring in physical education at college. This was partly because her twin sister was majoring in physical education and Katy wanted a more "academic" discipline. Katy initially majored in medical technology until she realized that she needed more interaction with people and chose instead to major in physical education and biology.

During her first three years in college, Katy played field hockey, lacrosse, and basketball. After her junior year, Katy transferred to another college to pursue a physical education degree. The summer before transferring Katy was urged by her youngest sister, Eileen, to join her as a member of a local track club. Katy found immediate success and once at her new college competed in track and field and cross country in addition to basketball. Although Katy only

competed in track and cross country for two years in college she achieved much success and competed at the national level. Katy’s running success in college led her to pursue a graduate degree in exercise physiology, with hopes of continuing competitive running. Table 4.5 details Katy’s education and coaching background.

# Years	Level	Position/Degree/Sports
3 Years	1st College	Majored in medical technology, 3 years basketball, field hockey, lacrosse
2 Years	2nd College	B.S. Physical Education & Biology, 2 years track and field/cross country, 1 year basketball
1 Year	Grad School	M.S. Physical Education, Graduate Assistant Men's Cross Country Coach, Interim Men's Track and Field Coach
5 Years	NCAA Div III	Dekan College: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach, Physical Education Instructor
3 Years	NCAA Div III	College B: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach, Adjunct Physical Education teacher
2 Years	NCAA Div III	College C: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach, Physical Education Instructor
16 Years	NCAA Div III	Dekan College: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach, Physical Education Assistant Professor (5 Years); Associate Professor (11 Years)
Family Milestones		Married after 1st year at Dekan. First child born after 3rd year at Dekan. Second child born toward the end of 5th year at Dekan. Third child born during summer between College B and C.

Table 4.5. Katy’s Education, Coaching, and Family History

Katy went directly to graduate school and served as a graduate assistant coach with the men’s cross country team. At the conclusion of the season the head coach was fired and Katie became the interim men’s track and field coach, thus getting her first experience as a head coach. After receiving her master’s degree, Katy took over as the women’s cross country and track and field coach and an instructor of physical education at Dekan University.

During her first year at Dekan, Katy started a long-distance relationship with Mark, a coaching colleague from back home. Katy and Mark married the following year and he resigned

from his tenured teaching and coaching position to be with Katy. Initially, Mark strung together part-time teaching and coaching positions before opening a store in town.

After five years Katy left Dekan when Mark took a college coaching and teaching position back east. After a 3-month hiatus from coaching, Katy, convinced she could not be a “stay at home” mom to her two daughters, took a position as the head women’s cross country and assistant women’s track and field coach at the same college. Three years later, dissatisfied with the college and surrounding area, and fearful that Mark would not get tenure, Katy and Mark started job searching. Their search led them back to the northwest where Katy became the head women’s cross country and track and field coach and physical education instructor while Mark became the intramural director and building supervisor at a college within the same conference as Dekan. Two years later Katy returned to her original coaching position and a tenure track teaching position at Dekan. Katy achieved tenure in 1989 and was promoted in 1991. Since Katy’s return to Dekan, Mark has held numerous jobs. For the past five years, Mark has been assisting Katy, on a part-time basis, in cross country and track and field. He was also recently hired as a school teacher in a nearby city.

Dekan has an enrollment of approximately 3000 students and offers 27 sports (13 for women, 14 for men). There are 18 head coaches (5 female, 13 male) and all full-time head coaches (4 female, 10 male) have faculty status and teach in the physical education department, however, only three are tenured (Katy; men’s track and field/cross country coach; AD/volleyball coach). Gender and longevity data for coaches at Dekan are provided in Table 4.6.

In the fall Katy teaches a women’s strength training course and coaches the cross country team. In the spring, her load is considerably heavier as she teaches an exercise physiology course with a laboratory and coaches the indoor and outdoor track and field teams. Her coaching duties extend from late August to late May with a 6-week break from the end of November until the first week of January. In addition to coaching and teaching duties, Katy is a regional coaching

representative in cross country. This entails compiling and analyzing data for all teams in the region to determine weekly regional and national rankings. At the time of the study Katy was serving on a planning committee for their new field house, a duty that necessitated weekly meetings with builders and planners. A typical day for Katy during the fall semester is outlined in Table 4.7.

<b>Men's Sport</b>	<b>Gender of Coach</b>	<b>Years at Dekan</b>	<b>Women's Sport</b>	<b>Gender of Coach</b>	<b>Years at Dekan</b>
Alpine Skiing <sup>a b</sup>	Male	12	Alpine Skiing <sup>a b</sup>	Male	12
Baseball	Male	7	Basketball	Female	14
Basketball	Male	7	Cross Country <sup>a</sup>	Female	20
Cross Country <sup>a</sup>	Male	32	Golf <sup>b</sup>	Female	4
Football	Male	5	Ice Hockey <sup>b</sup>	Male	2
Golf	Male	10	Indoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	20
Ice Hockey	Male	5	Nordic Skiing <sup>a b</sup>	Male	3
Indoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Male	32	Outdoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	20
Nordic Skiing <sup>a b</sup>	Male	3	Soccer <sup>a c</sup>	Male	1
Outdoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Male	32	Softball	Female	6
Soccer <sup>a</sup>	Male	13	Swimming & Diving <sup>a</sup>	Male	12
Swimming & Diving <sup>a</sup>	Male	27	Tennis <sup>a</sup>	Male	12
Tennis <sup>a</sup>	Male	12	Volleyball	Female	11
Wrestling	Male	11			
Mean years for coaches of men's sports		12.0	Mean years for coaches of women's sports		8.8
Mean years for all male coaches		11.23	Mean years for all female coaches		11.0

*Note.* One woman and one man each coach 3 sports: cross country, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field. Five men coach 2 sports: M&W alpine skiing; M&W Nordic skiing; M&W soccer; M&W swimming & diving; M&W tennis.

<sup>a</sup> Coaches who coach more than one sport are only counted once in longevity calculation. <sup>b</sup> Part-time coach. <sup>c</sup> Last year the men's soccer coach took over women's program, previous coach (female) had been there 7 years.

Table 4.6. Gender and Longevity Data of Coaches at Dekan University

Throughout her 26 years of coaching, Katy has experienced much success. Early in her career at Dekan, Katy's teams placed in the top five at cross country nationals on two occasions. She has coached three individual national champions and has advanced a team to nationals 14 of the last 16 years. Katy has achieved this success with very large teams. In a typical year 50

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>
5:30	Wake-up, runs with a group of 10 women 4 mornings a week
6:00-7:00	Early morning practice on Tuesdays and an occasional Thursday
~7:00 or 8:00	Trip to the coffee shop for coffee fix.
8:00-9:00	Teaches lifting course on Tuesday-Thursday.
9:00-11:45	Coaching administrative work: rankings, meet hosting preparation Department or committee meetings
Lunch Hour	Cross training workout or run if didn't run in morning. Shower and eat (usually at desk).
1:30-3:15	Coaching administrative work, faculty committee meetings, last minute preparation for practice.
3:30-5:00	Main practice time on Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Thursday is typically a pool practice from 4:30-5:45.
5:00-6:30	Late practice time on Monday, Wednesday, Friday for athletes that have lab, class or music conflicts
~7:00	Typically leave work by this time. May leave work early (3:30) on Tuesdays and Thursdays to watch son's soccer game.
11:00-11:30	In bed

*Note.* In the spring, Katy's teaches an exercise physiology class with a lab. The class meets M-W-F 10:45-11:45 and lab meets Tuesdays from 8-11:00.

Table 4.7. Katy's Typical Daily Schedule

women compete on the cross country team while 70 women compete in track and field. These numbers are far greater than the average size team in this division.

Katy stated that her teams usually graduate more athletes than other schools have on their teams. While some coaches may perceive the large numbers to be a disadvantage due to management issues and decreased contact time with each athlete, Katy and her athletes feel that this is a key ingredient in their success. Ironically Katy does very little recruiting. Most of the women on her team have chosen Dekan strictly for academic reasons or because of the reputation of Katy's program, not because Katy has spent much time or energy recruiting them.

To understand the factors that have enabled Katy to prosper as a career coach, data were analyzed from individual, structural, and social relations perspectives in search of longevity enhancers, longevity challenges, and coping mechanisms. Longevity enhancers refer to specific factors influential in Katy's persistence in coaching. Longevity challenges include career barriers

and job stressors for Katy, while coping mechanisms refer to specific strategies employed to overcome the barriers and stressors. What follows is a description of the themes that emerged for each main category (enhancers, challenges, coping mechanisms) in and how they have impacted Katy as a coach, co-worker, mother, partner, and friend. Table 4.8 lists pseudonyms and a description of the people pertinent in Katy’s story.

Person	Role in Katy’s Life
Mark	Katy’s partner. Currently teaches at a nearby high school and assists Katy with her coaching duties
Jean	Katy and Mark’s oldest child. Dekan Alumnus. Former Cross Country/Track and Field Athlete. Currently a high school teacher and assistant coach.
Steph	Katy and Mark’s second child. Junior athlete on Katy’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Carol	Athletic Director and Women’s Volleyball Coach at Dekan
Fred	Head Men’s Track and Field and Cross Country Coach at Dekan
Amy	Senior athlete and captain on Katy’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Beth	Junior athlete on Katy’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams

Table 4.8. List of Participants in Katy’s Story

*Individual Career Longevity Enhancers*

Katy’s 26-year career in coaching can best be characterized by great programmatic victories punctuated by long and tiresome professional battles. Three individual themes emerged that have enabled Katy to achieve program success and withstand professional battles. First, Katy had strong mentors, early in her career. Second, Katy never lost sight of the main reason she chose this career, to provide opportunities for women athletes. Finally, Katy’s competitive nature was a strong force helping her through tumultuous times and helping her teams achieve success.

*Early Experiences and Mentors*

Katy was socialized into a sporting life at a very young age. She and her sisters were involved in a plethora of sports and the most influential person for Katy, in a coaching sense, was

her youngest sister Eileen. At four years younger than Katy, Eileen had more organized sporting opportunities than her older sisters. Already an accomplished local track club runner, Eileen entered high school in 1971 with hopes of competing for her high school's cross country and track and field teams. Realizing the school did not sponsor cross country for girls, Eileen joined the boys' team. However a state law prohibited girls from competing on boy's teams. Eileen, with the help of her parents, successfully sued the state on the basis of gender discrimination and won the right to compete. Although Katy was in college at this time, it was a memorable experience and an influential factor in her later years as a coach. Had it not been for Eileen, Katy may have never started running competitively. Eileen persuaded Katy to join her track club, and while Katy had considerable success, given her late start, it was Eileen who became Katy's role model. Eileen earned a college scholarship and became a nationally and world ranked marathon runner in the early 1980's. Katy spoke of the impact Eileen had on her decision to coach: "She was really living the life, by nature of when she was born. I was really trying to give opportunities to people never having it myself. So it is pretty interesting to see how some of that all fits together" (Katy, 8-29-01).

Katy also spoke of the role her mother played in teaching her to stand up and fight for what is right. Katy described her mother as being passionate for a cause. She recalled how her mother, furious that the school would not recognize the first "Earth Day" in 1968, took matters into her own hands. She and her children "walked a country mile" collecting trash along the way, and designed a school exhibit to display their "mile of trash". Katy believes she has adopted many of these fighter instincts.

Katy had several early mentors who helped her learn the ropes, shared coaching methods, and provided daily support. The majority of these mentors were male. The most influential mentor for Katy was the coach she assisted in graduate school. This person was also Katy's club coach and taught Katy "to love the sport and kids with a passion" (3-8-02). Unfortunately this



coach was fired after Katy's first season. Katy became the interim coach and was fortunate to have several coaching colleagues from neighboring schools take her "under their wing" and provide a support mechanism that was lacking within her institution. She still maintains contact with many coaches from this group even though she has relocated.

When Katy first came to Dekan, the men's interim cross country coach taught her how to "play cross country". This person had a profound effect on Katy's coaching methods and philosophies that are evident to this day. Having "fun" is a major component in Katy's practices, and her athletes readily speak to the role this has in their sport persistence and success. In addition to offering coaching advice, this person also fulfilled a social role as Katy found herself alone and thousands of miles away from her family and friends in her new job. They would often pool their limited money, refrigerator leftovers, and cupboard supplies at dinnertime and talk track and cross country. Katy and he have kept in touch after he relocated.

#### *Athletes*

Katy continually spoke of the role her athletes have had in keeping her in the coaching career. The two plus hours Katy spends with her athletes each day is described as the most fulfilling and energizing part of her day. When asked what keeps her mother in coaching, her oldest daughter, who ran for her mother's team stated, "I think she just loves working with the women, having the opportunity. She gets to touch 70 peoples' lives every year just by coaching cross country and track and I don't know any of them who have not had a good experience" (Jean, 11-8-01). In particular what Katy likes most about working with the athletes is seeing the change and growth that takes place over their four-year tenure at Dekan. Katy explained:

It is the Dekan type of kid, they are very sensitive to each other. They really buy into the team and family concept. They really like each other. They don't compete against each other, they compete with each other. And so it is just seeing these great kids come in and grow up. The growth that happens through those four years is incredible (8-29-01).

Katy also stated that she has never been let down by a team or questioned a team's commitment and this in turn helped foster her commitment to them and in turn, the coaching profession.

Outside of practice time, Katy has little interaction with her athletes. It is not common for athletes to stop by her office during the day. This is primarily due to the location of the athletic facilities. They are off the beaten path therefore athletes only come down during practice times. Katy will occasionally meet with athletes at the campus center. Another factor prohibiting daily contact outside of practice time is the size of her teams. Katy is adamant about making sure everyone is treated equally, therefore encouraging all of her athletes to stop by her office whenever they wanted would be impossible. The women on her team know that the best time to run something by her is either before or after practice. However her athletes also know that Katy is there for them in times of need. Many of the athletes consider her to be their second mother.

One athlete described this as follows:

She definitely has her door open for us when we have problems that aren't cross country related. And I think that everyone feels that we have another mom here on campus if we need it. She has taken so many people to the hospital (Amy, 11-8-01).

Katy explained the relationship between being a mother figure and being intimidating:

It is not like they can't make mistakes. It is just that there is a certain level of expectation. I kind of treat my team the same way I treat my children. There are certain levels, and it is okay to be a little afraid of your mother (Katy, 10-3-01).

Another athlete explained how Katy's intimidation is often perceived as a sign that she cares about her athletes. This athlete said that it is hard to tell Katy when you have to miss a practice or meet, but she treats everyone the same, irrespective of their position on the team. "She will get mad at you or frustrated [if you miss a practice]. But in the same respect that you feel so bad about it, you feel that she cares that you are there, so it is kind of a double edged sword in a way" (Beth, 11-8-01).

There is little doubt that Katy is intense and her athletes know they will be challenged. "I am a yeller. But I never yell at a kid. I just challenge them and push them a little bit more than they think they can" (Katy, 10-3-01). Katy's motivating abilities are evident to more than just her athletes. Her athletic director noted:

She just has the most dynamic and outgoing personality. She is so encouraging and so in your corner that if she told you let me train you and I will cut two minutes off your time, I would be like where do I sign? She is so charismatic (Carol, 11-7-01).

Katy stated that, over the years, her athletes were a primary factor that kept her in coaching:

There were a lot of times I thought of hanging it up and then I would go to practice and see these great kids and just say, no I have to go back to doing what I love to do and not worry about the bullshit. The one thing that has kept me going back was why did I start this? Why am I here? Why do I love what I do? It isn't because of this, this, and this. It is because of these kids right now and what I can offer them these four years (Katy, 8-29-01).

### *Competitive Challenges*

Katy's passion for competitive challenges is unmistakable. As an athlete, Katy was fiercely competitive and fully admitted that when she was an athlete "I'd rather die than lose" (Katy, 10-5-01). As a coach, Katy maintained that while winning is valued she does not have a win-at-all-cost attitude. "Nobody loves to win more than I do, but I have never sacrificed what we do along the way" (Katy, 10-2-01). Her oldest daughter concurred with this philosophy:

We win a lot and I know she enjoys that. Who doesn't enjoy that? But I also know that there is never pressure on us. When someone has an eating disorder she doesn't let them starve themselves and keep running to get better (Jean, 11-8-01).

Jean also maintained that her mom would not leave coaching if her teams were not successful.

It appears that Katy is addicted to the excitement and the "charged" atmosphere sport provides. In the early years, Katy would anxiously anticipate the start of a new season and felt summers were too long. Usually within a week after the track and field season ended she was ready for the start of the cross country season. Over the years the compulsive desire for continual challenges has waned considerably, however the anticipation and excitement that accompanies a new season and working with a new group of athletes is still there. Katy noted, "When that first

meet comes I get so sick to my stomach. And I am kind of afraid for the day that doesn't happen as I probably will have lost it" (Katy, 10-3-01).<sup>8</sup>

Katy's team does not have to win the conference title to satisfy her competitive desires. For Katy the thrill is being in the race, taking chances, and competing on the edge. Katy particularly enjoys it when her team rises to the occasion and catches other teams off guard. In explaining what made this year's conference championship win so special, her younger daughter said, "I think part of it was that we weren't really supposed to win at all" (Steph, 11-8-01).

In addition to the excitement of competition, Katy also takes pleasure in certain by-products of sporting success. Athletics provides an avenue for Katy and her team to be recognized for their accomplishments and while it is not an "end-all" the acknowledgement is certainly important to her. Katy enjoys the exposure and the limelight that comes with being a coach. She prides herself on hosting festive meets and is a strong advocate for women's invitationals because of the opportunities to highlight women athletes. An annual highlight for Katy is her end of the season cross country banquet. Katy devotes much emotional and physical energy in preparing for and pulling off this annual event. Parents are invited to the banquet and many travel great distances to be there. The banquet is a true showcase for the women on her team. She acknowledges the individual accomplishments of each woman on her team and gives out numerous awards. One of the most coveted awards at the banquet is the "tough as nails" award signifying an athlete's perseverance and determination irrespective of finish time or placement on the team. Katy compiles a yearbook for each season commemorating the teams' journey and accomplishments. Katy devotes so much effort to these traditions because they are indispensable parts of the sport for her.

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<sup>8</sup> When reading this for the member check, Katy wrote "That's the day I resign".

These individual enhancers have provided Katy with much energy to fight the professional and political battles year after year. However there are also structural factors specific to Dekan that have enabled Katy to persist in the coaching profession.

#### *Structural Career Longevity Enhancers*

The data revealed two career longevity enhancers at an institutional level for Katy. These are, a close philosophical fit with the school and the students which includes support to run her program her way, and the power and freedom that a tenured position affords a coach.

#### *Philosophical Fit*

Katy perceives a strong philosophical alignment with the mission of Dekan and the students it serves. She particularly likes the community atmosphere, the Division III philosophy that espouses academics foremost, and the long-standing sport traditions and rivalries associated with Dekan. Part of what makes it a “great school” is the athletes and students. Katy believes that the athletes are different than athletes she coached at the two previous institutions. Katy perceives Dekan students as more caring and willing to be part of the family network.

The athletic director also spoke of the “Dekan package”:

You can't drive an hour and have better competition. There is camaraderie, fierceness, competitiveness and rivalry. You have Hively [cross town rivalry] two miles away. And those games, no matter what the sport, those games are like the Olympics. They are the most amazing contests across the board. So I think people really just like Dekan. They love the kids, love their sport, like the conference, and like Division III. And Center is an awesome town. It is a wonderful place (Carol, 11-7-01).

Katy's daughter conferred, “I don't think there is anything she doesn't like about the Dekan experience, at least not that I can see” (Steph, 11-8-01).

Even though Katy has always had a strong Division III philosophy, when she first started coaching she dreamed of being a Division I coach. After years of coaching however, Katy knows that she would not be happy coaching at the Division I level because of the philosophical differences. The primary differences relate to travel squad limitations, emphasis on winning, and

the pressure to recruit. "Right now the pressure I have is my own pressure, I don't think I would like the pressure of Division I" (Katy, 10-5-01).

Another part of the philosophical fit is the support that Katy has field large teams. Katy loves coaching large teams, however it takes substantial budgetary support to adequately field such teams. Katy gets this support, in part due to the Division III philosophy but also because of gender equity requirements. Having over 70 women competing in cross country and track and field helps balance the men's and women's programs by providing equal sport opportunities for both genders. Katy's budget appears to be limitless as she purchases "72 of everything" including uniforms, warm-ups, practice gear, water bottles, and specific training equipment such as "aqua joggers". When asked if she ever goes over budget, Katy stated, "I don't worry about my budget because I can justify every penny we have ever spent when I go over budget because you just have to get this number of people to where they are going" (Katy, 11-8-01). However a couple of years ago the athletic director told her she would have to work on keeping within budget. Katy retorted, "You can't have it both ways" (Katy, 11-8-01). Katy explained if they wanted her to carry high numbers to help maintain gender balance she would need the proper support.

#### *Tenure and Tuition Benefits*

Katy perceives her tenure status to be instrumental in her ability to speak her mind and in her job security. She makes sure her voice is heard and does not worry about potential repercussions. Katy perceives that her access to resources would be much different without tenure. Less than 20% of the coaches on staff have tenure. Katy explained the impact tenure had on her ability to go to the athletic director and fight for her program:

I couldn't do that if I were a young coach and not tenured. I couldn't do that. I would have to play by all the rules. But I am at the point now where the rules are stupid. Some of the rules really don't make any sense. You can't have it both ways. I am in a position where I

can do that. Not a lot of coaches get tenure, so I don't know what some of these people do (Katy, 11-8-01).<sup>9</sup>

After receiving tenure Katy felt the administration would have to have “just cause” to get rid of her. The link between tenure and job security has been a recurring theme for Katy more so than it has been for her partner, Mark. Mark gave up a tenured position to be with Katy. Further, she and Mark left one coaching job partly for fear that Mark would not get tenure.<sup>10</sup>

Katy believes that her tenure status at Dekan has made a tremendous difference not only in getting and maintaining resources for her own teams, but also for the entire women’s athletic department. Once Katy got tenure she started fighting the gender equity battle.

Once I got tenure then I really started pushing a lot with the Title IX. That is how we got the soccer coach hired, and the softball coach hired. Some of the fields changed. I went to the dean and said we are out of compliance in 9 out of the 13 provisions of Title IX (Katy, 8-29-01).

Katy did not feel secure enough to fight those battles before tenure. In this sense tenure has been a supportive structural mechanism for Katy.

Another major institutional benefit has been the tuition remission program at Dekan. Jean and Steph, her two daughters, have already taken advantage of the tuition benefits. Katy maintained that a factor keeping her in coaching for at least five more years is that her son, and youngest child, will be entering college next year. She could not imagine sending him to a college like Dekan without the tuition benefit.

While certain factors in the athletic department have been a source of frustration for Katy over the years, it is evident that there are enough positive institutional factors that help keep her in coaching. The following section examines social relation factors that have enabled Katy to persevere in the coaching career.

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<sup>9</sup> During the member check Katy stated she is not as militant as this appears. She is not irresponsible with her budget. Further she supplements her budget with revenue from the high school state meet and other fundraising opportunities.

<sup>10</sup> Katy stated, “We were miserable. The ‘Tenure Threat’ just helped us get out sooner”.

### *Social Relations Career Longevity Enhancers*

Social relations enhancers refer to factors beyond Katy's professional life that have enabled her to persist and thrive in the coaching profession. Four themes emerged in this category. The most evident social relations enhancer for Katy is the support she receives from her partner. Second, Katy is also grateful for the opportunity to have her daughters on her teams. Third, the community ties led Katy back to Dekan and provided her with another life outside of coaching. Finally a factor keeping Katy in coaching over the years has been finances.

#### *Partner Support*

Without a doubt, Katy's strongest supporter over the years has been her partner.

Everyone involved in Dekan athletics echoed the support Katy gets from Mark. Katy noted:

When you come right down to why I could stay in coaching, it is that I had the support of a husband. There is no doubt about that. Right from the get go, when we got married he gave up a tenured teaching position to come out here trying to find a part-time, interim position so I could get some experience under my belt (Katy, 8-29-01).

Mark's support went beyond giving up a tenured position to include the daily support needed in raising a family.

I am probably a lousy wife<sup>11</sup>...when you get right down to it. Mostly because he just let me do what I had to do. He was always there if I needed to take off and go to faculty meetings. I didn't have to get babysitters for that stuff. And then when I was home and really had to work on a lecture, he could put the kids to bed and stuff like that. And the fact that he has understood the time and energy [needed to coach] (Katy, 11-8-01).

Their daughters also spoke to the role their father had in helping out at home. "He usually always had a job where he could be home with us after school or we would go to his store when we were little. And he would make dinner and stuff" (Jean, 11-8-01). Mark is content in his supportive role and out of the limelight. Katy's younger daughter explained:

He is the big cheerleader, a big supporter. Even when I was younger, when my mom would be having issues or whatever, he would be like I am 100% behind you, or I believe what you are saying. So I just remember that. He has always kind of been in the background. Sometimes I don't even notice that he is at practice. He is always just a

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<sup>11</sup> Katy qualified this by stating that she is more committed to her children than Mark. She believes it might be hard for them to adjust after their kids leave home.



cheerleader, just keeping everybody positive. He has done that not only with the teams but with my Mom (Steph, 11-8-01).

Mark has also shared Katy's interests: "So we had a lot of the same interests, obviously the sport thing, the love for track. He is definitely more of a track nut than I am" (Katy, 8-29-01). Their mutual love for the sport has enabled them to involve the entire family in their professions. Her oldest daughter stated, "I always knew that they would both give anything just to watch us in a track meet" (Jean, 11-8-01). The athletic director at Dekan noted, "Mark is Mr. Ambassador. The two of them are like the pied pipers of track and cross country. That is their life as a family. That is their life as professionals. It is just who they are" (Carol, 11-7-01).

### *Coaching Daughters*

Part of the "family affair" that has been influential in keeping Katy in coaching involves the opportunity to coach her daughters. For the past five years, at least one of her daughters has been on her team. Katy maintained that her biggest coaching thrill has been coaching her daughters. Steph, Katy's youngest daughter, reflected upon the change in her Mom since she started coaching her older sister Jean:

It was a lot of fun for her to be able to do that. I think that is a big reason why she is having so much fun with it now. My Dad is the assistant coach and my brother might come here. So I think that she is just really excited to be around her family<sup>12</sup> (Steph, 11-8-01).

Having her daughters on the team has renewed Katy's passion for coaching track and field. Katy says that the opportunity to coach Steph will keep her coaching track for at least two more years. Katy knows if she stopped coaching the track and field team the men's coach would likely take over the program. Katy was adamant that "there was no way he was ever going to coach my daughters" (Katy, 3-8-02). Steph was one of the top high school runners in the state. When asked why she chose Dekan, it was not to be coached by her Mom; it was because "she is a really good coach" (Steph, 11-8-01).

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<sup>12</sup> Katy stated, "It's been the easiest 'family time' of our lives"!

Her oldest daughter also knew that her Mom was a great coach and added that she chose Dekan because she:

wanted to see what she [her Mom] spent all of her timing doing. She was always gone in the afternoon. And I knew she was this great coach. I wanted to get to be part of it and to see what it was like. And I knew the program so well, I couldn't imagine going somewhere else (Jean, 11-8-01).

One of Steph's teammates remarked on the impact of mother-daughter coaching relationship on the team and Katy's coaching style:

I think it has made her more passionate about the whole team. Because she has that extra bit invested in it now. When she is watching a race she is watching it not only as a coach would watch it but also as a mom would watch it. And those are two different ways to watch a race. But rather than confine it to her children, she has expanded it to the whole team, so I think it has made her a better coach, because she is more of the mom. She can be more forgiving maybe, than a coach would be if they never had that interplay (Amy, 11-8-01).

It is clear that the unique opportunity to coach her daughters has been a supportive factor in keeping Katy coaching and at Dekan. Steph will graduate in less than two years and her younger brother Jason will be graduating from high school this year. Although he has not made his college decision yet, it is highly likely that he will attend Dekan and compete in soccer, wrestling, or track and field. While Katy will not have the opportunity to coach him she is excited at the prospect of watching him and being closely involved in his collegiate career.

#### *Friends and Community Ties*

Katy's life and happiness as a coach extends well beyond the walls of Dekan. "I just love this town, I regretted it from the day I left here" (Katy, 10-2-01).<sup>13</sup> Since returning to Center in 1986 she and Mark have been vocal and visible members of the community. Having three children in school who are all active in sports and owning a store in town have been instrumental in building and maintaining strong community ties.

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<sup>13</sup> Katy stated, "When we moved in 1981 I cried the whole way [20 hour car ride]. I knew we made a mistake. It was great to be able to move back".

Katy's desire for a life outside of coaching is evident in her active membership in the community. Recently Katy, along with the athletic trainer at Dekan, started a community fitness program for older adults and for many years Katy has helped train women distance runners in the area. This informal group of runners meets weekly at the local coffee shop. The coffee shop is a popular place and Katy visits daily for her caffeine fix. It is hard for her to get in and out without stopping for a quick visit with friends from the community.

When asked what advice Katy could give to women coaches just starting out she offers, "Have plenty of friends. And have friends that support you inside and outside of the profession. Friends that really don't care whether your team wins or loses. Surround yourself with people that care about you" (Katy, 11-8-01). Katy has many friends, mostly outside of coaching and the athletic department at Dekan.<sup>14</sup> Currently Katy has a group of "women friends" whom she sees on a regular basis. During each of the past two summers they have gone on an extensive and challenging weeklong hiking trip. These have been wonderful get-a-ways for Katy.

#### *Financial Issues*

Katy admitted that: "I will be honest, there were times when it [reason for staying in coaching] was really the job. Because Mark didn't have a full-time job. In fact rarely in our 25 years of marriage has he had a full-time or at least a 'full-pay' job" (Katy, 10-3-01). Coaching has provided Katy with a steady income to support her family. Another factor somewhat related to monetary support is the notion that Katy did not see herself as a "stay-at-home" Mom.

The one time I did get out of it I couldn't stand it.<sup>15</sup> It took me one summer before I was back in teaching when I was at Haven. I could not be a stay-at-home Mom. I am a better mother when I am not home all the time (Katy, 10-3-01).

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<sup>14</sup> Katy commented that this was mostly related to age and stage of life. My friends outside of the department are older (her age) and have kids.

<sup>15</sup> During the member check Katy discussed the internal battles she was having at the time and stated: I got out of it for all the wrong reasons. It was more socially acceptable to "stay at home", than to say I was getting out of coaching because I was tired, defeated, and just plain tired of trying to justify why and what I was doing.

Overall there have been several career longevity enhancers for Katy. It appears that her family and the attachment to her athletes are the primary enhancers.

### *Career Longevity Challenges*

This section addresses the challenges that Katy has faced since she began coaching over a quarter of a century ago. Three of these themes are related to the fact that she is a woman coaching in a male dominated sport. The final two themes concern balancing home and work life and maintaining the necessary energy level for coaching.

### *Differences with Men's Coach*

Some of Katy's greatest challenges involve her dealings with Fred, the men's track and field and cross country coach at Dekan. Their relationship can be considered volatile at best. Fred has been at Dekan for 32 years. He started coaching at Dekan six years prior to Katy's arrival in 1976. From the start Katy and Fred did not get along, mostly due to philosophical differences in coaching methods and beliefs regarding gender equity in sport. Katy quickly learned he was not a supporter of women's athletics or gender equity.

Katy reflected upon numerous instances where Fred claimed that her teams would never have success. Early on Katy was motivated by the doubt Fred cast upon her and her team. Within three years of coming to Dekan, her cross country team placed second at nationals. However years of fighting with him has taken its toll on Katy.<sup>16</sup>

Katy and Fred also differ regarding meet management philosophies. Katy likes hosting large and festive meets, whereas Fred is a "low-key" meet manager. This has caused much stress on their meet hosting relationship. It has gotten to the point that Katy and Fred often host separate meets rather than combined (coed) meets.

I think he was just so jealous of our program, and so jealous of the fact that we have this huge meet. He doesn't do anything big. He has meets with four teams. Everything I do is a circus to him. To me everything I do is like a showcase for women. I don't consider it a

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<sup>16</sup> Katy stated that more recently the fact that her teams have won numerous conference titles, something his team never has done, and consistently advanced teams to nationals, has taken its toll on Fred.

circus. It is a showcase. We have a thousand female athletes. It is wonderful (Katy, 10-4-01).

Fred has refused to share “his equipment” and Katy maintained he would maliciously try to prevent Katy’s meets from running smoothly.<sup>17</sup> Initially Katy received very little support from the athletic administration or from the higher administration at Dekan. In order to be heard and to initiate action, Katy felt that she needed to go to great lengths. Often this included losing her temper. Relations between Katy and Fred were so bad at one point that the dean stepped in to help rectify the situation.<sup>18</sup>

The current athletic director acknowledges Katy’s and Fred’s stormy past. She half jokingly states that for the next major meet they will be hosting she will need have a more active administrative role while Katy and Fred will just coach. Otherwise “there is going to be a murder, suicide or I don't know what is going to happen” (Carol, 11-7-01). Katy takes these differences seriously and maintained it has taken its toll on her. After years of battling, Katy said, “We get along better now because I just make him feel like he is king of the hill. And it makes me want to throw up but I am way too tired to fight it” (Katy, 10-4-01).

Beyond abuse directed at her, Katy stated Fred has continually made derogatory comments about women athletes. Katy felt that her role was to protect her athletes, however she also felt powerless.

So I spent most of my energy being a buffer. And that is what I think was my most important role was I was trying to protect my team from this garbage. Because I didn't need to listen to it. I couldn't stop it, I would just be more and more isolated. We didn't do warm-ups together anymore, because the guys kind of bought into his garbage too and they would abuse me they would abuse the women.<sup>19</sup> We don't need to do this. And I would be the one who would get mad because he knew how to push my buttons and nothing I ever did would push his buttons (Katy, 10-4-01).

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<sup>17</sup> Katy stated, “This was usually done in a subtle way which made it even harder (to prove)”.

<sup>18</sup> Katy stated, “I’m the only person in the department who has to work closely with Fred”.

<sup>19</sup> Katy stated, “Not sure it was intentional, they just thought they were funny”.

## *Harassment*

Challenges were not confined to interpersonal problems with the men's track and field coach. Throughout Katy's career there have been numerous instances of harassment from coaching peers, assistant coaches, staff members, and athletes. Most of the harassment was sexually charged, however some involved instances when male coaches would purposefully make her job more difficult. For instance, one coach would purposefully turn off the field house lights before Katy's practice, knowing that it would take 45 minutes for them to come back on.<sup>20</sup> Forms of sexual harassment included unwanted physical contact, sexually explicit statements, sexually suggestive gestures, and verbal abuse.

I put up with a lot of that during my career anyway, so when you think about it, it is kind of amazing I stayed with it. It was a lot of that kind of harassment where you are so young, so you are still resilient, but you are also so young that you don't know where to go to for help (Katy, 8-29-01).

Shortly after Katy returned to Dekan the men's basketball coach repeatedly harassed her physically and verbally. When she went to the athletic director about filing a harassment case she received little support. When the basketball coach learned of a potential suit against him he sent a message to Katy, via the athletic director that he would "destroy" Katy and her family financially if she went through with the lawsuit. Dissatisfied with the lack of support from her athletic director, Katy turned to a trusted male colleague on campus who, after doing some background checking also advised Katy to drop it, as it would likely hurt her upcoming tenure decision.

It was evident to Katy that having tenure meant that you could exercise the basic freedom of asking for what was right, or fighting back in harassment cases. While dealing with these cases of harassment Katy felt alienated and powerless. She maintains there was not a tenured woman on staff to talk to about these issues. The few women whom she could turn to were essentially powerless to do anything because they did not have tenure. Katy often felt at a loss when searching for someone to turn to. Katy points to the fact that, early on, none of the harassment

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<sup>20</sup> Katy stated, "To him this was a fun joke. To me, it kept me from doing my job".

incidents ever got documented and she received little if any support from the administration, even after there were changes in the administration.

I could have probably won three to four lawsuits against the college. I know I could have, but I never went there. I just kept doing my job, backing off, and taking a lot of this garbage where I wasn't getting any support from anybody.<sup>21</sup> Who could I go to? Obviously I couldn't go to the athletic director, he is the one that gave me the message from the basketball coach to stop this harassment or you will be destroyed. I've got three little babies. Who do you go to? (Katy, 10-4-01)

More recently, a particularly troubling incident occurred when an assistant coach from the men's track and field team verbally abused Katy in front of several teams at a home meet. The verbal abuse escalated into a violent tirade where Katy and a female assistant coach feared for their safety. This incident did go to the dean, however it turned into a character attack whereby the men's head coach insisted Katy was a liar and an unworthy coach. Katy felt further victimized by this incident and felt that she was portrayed as the "bad guy".<sup>22</sup> Dekan eventually fired the assistant coach, but not before leaving a devastating mark on Katy. She considers it the worst experience in her 25 years of coaching mostly because of the way the administration handled it.

### *Gender Related Challenges*

In addition to harassment, Katy has also endured numerous challenges as she fought for equitable treatment for herself and her athletes. There were gross gender discrepancies regarding locker rooms, equipment, uniforms and facilities. In the late 1970's as money began to be allocated to rectify some of these discrepancies there was subtle backlash from coaches of men's teams. The backlash worsened as the women's teams, in particular Katy's teams, started winning. Katy maintained:

There was a lot of resentment for us being good. There was all this Title IX garbage, it was just getting harder and harder. There were so many things that had gone on that I couldn't deal with anymore. And I had little babies. So it got to the point where I was really tired of having to deal with that and still trying to

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<sup>21</sup> Katy stated, "More accurate is probably that I didn't know who I could go to. That is still the case today".

<sup>22</sup> Katy stated, "It was implied that I didn't handle the situation correctly by walking away from this man instead of 'grabbing him by the collar and handling it right then'".

keep my head above water believing in what I was doing. I just remember bawling: 'I can't do this any longer'. That is when Mark started looking for jobs (8-29-01).

Katy insisted:

I spent a lot of my career in controversy. Probably a lot of this Title IX stuff has hurt me professionally. It has helped my teams. Certainly didn't hurt me coaching but totally closed doors for administration. I could never get hired as an athletic director<sup>23</sup> (Katy, 8-29-01).

Katy strongly believes that for a woman to persist in coaching she has to continually prove she is superior to the "guy next door", otherwise you will not survive:

You are so driven, but you have to be so much better than your male colleagues. I really believe that you have to be so much better. Because I always felt like we couldn't just be good, we had to be GREAT! And I never really wanted to be average in anything I did anyway, but I always felt that we had to be even that much better (Katy, 11-8-01).

Katy believes that the pervasive pressure and scrutiny forces women to either succeed or secede. She backs this theory up by pointing out that the women who have lasted in coaching for 20 years or more have consistently had nationally ranked programs.

Some of the gender related challenges facing Katy concern the declining network of female coaching peers. Katy has been very fortunate in that her conference has a higher than usual percentage of female coaches in cross country and track and field. Over the years many of these women have provided emotional support for Katy, especially when she was dealing with harassment issues. Recently some of these women have left coaching for either administrative positions or because of family demands. While women have filled the majority of these vacated positions they are younger women. Katy has been especially impacted by the departure of one coach whom she considered her best friend in coaching. "I miss Mary, I truly miss Mary. That is the one [coaching departure] that just kind of broke my heart"<sup>24</sup> (Katy, 10-4-01).

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<sup>23</sup> Katy wrote: There was a time (recently) when this bothered me. Not now, my enthusiasm for the administration is at an all time low.

<sup>24</sup> Katy stated, "I think it's because it was unexpected. I thought she was a 'lifer' like me".



In addition to losing female coaching peers in track and field and cross country, Katy also spoke of the changes within the department. There was a time 8-10 years ago when the female coaches in the department did things together. This is no longer the case and part of it is due to the women's volleyball coach, Carol, taking on athletic director duties. Another factor is an age difference. Outside of the volleyball and basketball coaches, the rest of the women on staff (full or part time) are considerably younger and therefore at different points in their careers and social lives. Katy misses the social opportunities she once had in the department and of late even feels slightly alienated. When asked if staff members in the athletic department respect her, Katy indicated "I think respect and like are two different things. I think I have way more friends outside of the staff" (Katy, 11-8-01).

#### *Balancing Work and Home Life*

In addition to gender related challenges in the workplace, Katy has had her share of challenges in balancing a work life and home life. Raising a family and being a three sport coach has presented many obstacles for Katy. Katy and Mark planned the birth of their children to minimize interference with teaching and coaching responsibilities. Two children (oldest and youngest) were born after the school year and track season. However, their second daughter was born during the championship portion of the track and field season. Katy described how she handled this conflict:

I taught and coached on Wednesday, had her on Thursday morning, and was back teaching and coaching on Monday. I missed the state meet but two weeks later I took 10 athletes, an almost 2 year old, and a new baby to the National track and field meet. I had one baby in a backpack and one in a front-pack (Katy, 2-15-02).

Katy maintained there were times when she felt she was a better coach than she was a mother.

Though her daughters do not support that statement Jean stated:

When I was little it was maybe that she was gone so much. I knew what she was doing but sometimes I just wanted my mom home. I would get really mad at her and tell her that she has 55 daughters and I am the 56th one. I know that she never thought like that,

but it was hard. Like she couldn't go see us for like the grand march at prom because she had track meets <sup>25</sup> (Jean, 11-8-01).

Jean insisted that her Mom never ignored them; she was just torn in so many different directions. Her younger daughter, Steph, pointed to the differences that she saw in her family life compared to her peers.

All of my other friends' parents were home making them their little bag lunches. My mom was gone and gone all weekend for meets and stuff. A lot of times I would go with her but it was never 'lets go to the mall'. It was 'lets go to a cross country meet' or 'lets go to a track meet' (Steph, 11-8-01).

Even though Katy received tremendous support from Mark, she still felt that it was a constant struggle to maintain a balance.

I think some of the stress came from trying to balance my coaching and my family lives. Because I felt like I was cheating my kids a lot of times. That was high stress because I wanted to be a good mom too. Probably the thing that has suffered the most, even though we are still married, is my marriage. Because I was either with my team or my kids, Mark and I didn't do much together. We just went along with the chaos (Katy, 10-3-01).

Going along with the chaos included getting to as many of their children's sporting events as possible. This made dinners at home a rare occurrence.

I don't ever remember us eating dinner together at our house more than like twice a week. We would all be going out because no one had time to cook or we would have a soccer game or a cross country meet or a track meet or my Mom had something at Dekan. It was crazy, always with an activity or something. It was fun; we spent a lot of time doing that together. It wasn't like a typical sit down, eat your ham and potatoes dinner. But we got to spend time doing stuff we liked (Jean, 11-8-01).

### *Energy Level*

The final longevity challenge is related to the energy demands of coaching. Katy finds her job more tiring as she has gotten older. When Katy started at Dekan she was "teaching a load that would kill me now" (8-29-01). This included two theory courses and several activity courses each semester. While her teaching load has diminished she has taken on more administrative responsibilities, committee work and is committed to continuing the traditions that she started

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<sup>25</sup> When Katy read she commented "I tried...I was always five minutes late and saw them in the parking lot. I cried all the way from [the meet] knowing I would not see them get dressed and get ready".

when she first began coaching (banquet and yearbooks). These time-honored traditions have consumed lots of Katy's energy. However she does not see a way out of this cycle.

It is hard to back off some of that stuff. I think my style of coaching hasn't changed at all, but my energy has changed tremendously. I think maybe that is what I feel now. It takes me a lot longer to recover from meets. It takes me a lot longer to recover from seasons. It takes me longer to recover in the summer time (Katy, 10-3-01).

Although her recoveries take longer, Katy feels that she has still been able to muster the energy needed for her coaching style. While Katy maintained that having tenure has given her freedom to fight gender battles, she also lamented, "I don't have the energy to exert that freedom anymore. The battle is not worth it anymore"<sup>26</sup> (Katy, 11-8-01).

In addition to diminished energy reserves Katy and her athletes mentioned increased stress brought on by the "little things" associated with coaching. The "little things" refer to caring for and issuing uniforms on a weekly basis and other daily administrative tasks. Most of these duties could be delegated to athletes, office workers or paid staff members. However, Katy, a self-proclaimed perfectionist and control freak insists on having things done her way therefore she often does the work herself. "I have a tough time delegating because I have such high standards. Other people just don't meet those high standards" (Katy, 10-3-01). Katy realizes that she is her own worst enemy in this regard, but does little to change this behavior. One of the reasons Katy gave for not recruiting was "because I am just tired. It is kind of funny because now I actually have more time to do things, with my kids being gone, but now is the time where I would really like to start grabbing back some of those hours for me" (Katy, 8-29-01).

It is evident that Katy has endured substantial challenges and barriers throughout her coaching career. When asked why she endured all the challenges Katy said she did it not only for her athletes but also because she was supporting her family.

I didn't have a lot of flexibility to leave here. There were times when I thought if Mark got this bang up \$100,000 job I would have kissed this baby off a long time ago and I

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<sup>26</sup> Katy stated, "I'm finding fewer and fewer battles are worth it".

probably would have gone out with a bang and blown up all the bridges on the way out (Katy 11-8-01).

The following section highlights the specific coping mechanisms she has utilized to help combat and overcome these challenges.

### *Career Longevity Coping Mechanisms*

Three themes emerged relative to Katy's ability to cope with the challenges in coaching. These include, developing and maintaining a tough "outer skin", merging her work life and family life, and adapting to the changes in the coaching profession.

#### *Hard-Shelled, Soft-Hearted*

To cope with career challenges Katy has developed a tough, outer core that has helped shield her, and to some extent her family, from the harassment, biases, and ill-tempered backlashes experienced over the years.<sup>27</sup> This layer results from years of fighting the battles and serves to protect Katy and her feelings. Many athletes and colleagues do not, at first, realize that there is another Katy under this tough outer layer. However, once athletes and colleagues get to know Katy they realize that underneath the brash outer core is a soft-hearted, fun-loving and passionately devoted coach.

The outer layer is characterized by her quick temper, feistiness, and reactivity. Katy readily admitted that she easily flies off the handle, but then is quick to recover from these bouts. This is corroborated by an athlete who stated:

She has a quick temper. She is definitely an opinionated person and I think that unsettles people at first. But she is just one of those people...that is just her and once you get to know her then you know if she gets mad at you, she gets mad at you really quick but then it will be over (Amy, 11-8-01).

This athlete explained Katy's reaction to an injury she sustained in an intramural ultimate Frisbee tournament "At first she was like 'What were you thinking!' but after five minutes she

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<sup>27</sup> Katy stated, "The downside of this is that others don't think I can be hurt, so I am an easy target".

was like alright get in to see the trainer, you will be running in a week and a half and I was” (Amy, 11-8-01).

In addition to her tough, outer core, Katy has an uncanny ability to mix humor with adversity. Katy can reflect back and laugh at herself and at some of the challenges she has endured. No matter how difficult those challenges have been, over time, she has been able to put them in perspective and never lose sight of the reasons why she is in this profession, mainly to work with and help the athletes achieve their dreams. She is quick to joke about things that she has done in the past. She has a strong passion to do the right thing and to fight for the right thing, but she also has the ability to balance her temper with humor.

### *Adaptability*

Throughout her career Katy has demonstrated resiliency and adaptability. These have been facilitating factors in coping with coaching challenges and not only persisting, but thriving in the coaching career. Katy’s athletes believe that she is not like a typical mom, rather she is “with it” and acts much younger than her age. Her athletes and daughters perceive her dual role as a mom and a coach as a very positive thing. Her “young at heart” attitude and having teenage children have helped her keep in tune with today’s athletes.

Katy believes that the only way to survive in coaching for a career is to be able to adapt to the changes without sacrificing core values. For instance, Katy said that she had a hard time at first when the team ran in sports bras. However she realized the importance of being able to adapt to the little things. “I never changed my values, but I did change how I approached the kids” (Katy, 10-2-01).

Another factor helping Katy stay and feel young is her renewed dedication to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Two years ago, despondent by a recent gain in weight and overall poor conditioning, Katy embarked on a running and fitness program. Since that time, Katy has lost over 20 pounds and recently ran a marathon in just over 4 hours. Getting back into running shape

has been a major confidence booster for Katy. “I respect myself a bit more [now that she is in shape again]. Before I was telling kids how to run and do this and I wasn't doing anything” (Katy, 11-8-01). Her athletes also noticed a change when Katy started running again.

Her attitude towards the team and running changed when she started running again. So that was fun to see. Now she goes out and runs for hours. We all think she is crazy. It hasn't really changed the way she coaches, but just the way she talks to us about things (Amy, 11-8-01).

Katy has also changed in the way that she deals with her differences with Fred. She no longer lets each incident get to her or become bigger than life. Rather she has backed off and is willing to let him have his way in order to avoid conflicts.

As long as he feels that he knows more than me or that he has the upper hand then he treats me better. And even though that makes me sick it just takes a lot less energy. I just can't do it anymore. It has taken me this long, I have finally figured it out (Katy, 10-4-01).

Katy relates her ability to “let go” of these battles to her longevity in coaching.

I am tired of fighting the battles, someone else can do these battles and so that is probably a lot of where I have been able to prolong my career a little bit, because I think I was getting to the point where I just didn't want to do this anymore. As much as I liked the day-to-day stuff with the kids there was enough going on. I didn't want to feel bad about being good. I just wanted to feel that what we accomplished was really cool and that each athlete felt the outcomes were worth the time and energy (Katy, 11-8-01).

### *Family Affair*

A “really cool” aspect of Katy’s job has been the fact that recently she has been able to involve her family in her profession. Having her family be an integral part of the coaching scene has enabled Katy to cope with several coaching challenges. Katy’s athletic director, who also is married and a mother, spoke to how Katy and Mark have involved their kids in their career: “I think she and Mark decided that the kids are going to be part of it, we are going to make it fun and so they just stayed in it” (Carol, 11-7-01). Combining her home life and work life also proved to be advantageous when it came to finding people to baby sit. Katy states that whenever she needed a babysitter all she would have to do was offer free food and laundry privileges to her athletes. That strategy worked every time and provided memorable experiences for her children.

We had the best babysitters and it was just fun, they would invite us up sometime just for pizza, without my Mom being there, or let us go to the café for dinner and take us to basketball games. Stuff that my friends never got to do (Jean, 11-8-01).

Steph concurred, “It was fun. I always had big sisters around. I used to come up to practice every afternoon when I was little. I just looked up to them and they were always just super nice” (Steph, 11-8-01). In addition to coming to practices, each of Katy’s children went on a spring break trip with the track and field team. Regarding these experiences Steph said:

It was like a treat for us to go. I think that she got to combine being a mom with being a coach. I think that Dekan is such a good school for that. There were so many babysitters that we had. People that would help take care of us when she was busy at a meet. So I think that probably helped her stay in there (Steph, 11-8-01).

Having children who enjoyed being at track and field meets and having a team of babysitters were not the only benefits or coping mechanisms for Katy. Katy stated that having a family has helped her stay sane. The fact that she had a family to go home to helped keep her from putting too much energy or focus on her work. Katy does not know how single women stay in coaching “I don't think it would have been enough for me, as much as I love it [coaching], and the teaching and Dekan, I don't think I could have done this as a single woman for that long” (Katy, 10-4-01).

Having both family and work obligations helps Katy to balance them both and not get too wrapped up in either one. “I can't imagine if I didn't have a family. I don't think coaching would have been enough for me. And that is not to put down what anybody else does. I just don't think I would have been satisfied being just a full-time coach” (Katy, 11-8-01). Recently Katy has perhaps the best of both worlds in that her work life has truly meshed with her home life. For two years, Katy had both daughters running for her and Mark assisting with the team. The only family member missing out on the action was their son Jason.

### *Summary*

Katy's coping mechanisms along with career enhancers have enabled her to endure over a quarter century in collegiate coaching. However she has bittersweet memories and is apprehensive when asked if she would do it over again.

I am not so sure to be honest with you if I had that opportunity to do that, I could turn my life back, go back to the early 70's and fight this battle again. I am not sure I would do it. I know that the things that I did were really good for the athletes that I coached. I know that on every level. Giving opportunity is never wrong. And they have appreciated it. Personally, I don't know if it was worth the toll that it took. Just some of the.... there were some pretty hard times (Katy, 8-29-01).

For Katy, the same people who helped keep her in coaching, her partner and children, are also the same people she feels she has cheated.



### Case Three: Maya

Maya, 52, is African American, female, has a partner and no children. She has coached for 30 years. For the past ten years she has been coaching cross country and track and field at Fridley College, a private women's college. A lifelong sport enthusiast, Maya has an undergraduate and graduate degree in physical education.

Maya grew up in the Midwest and is the youngest of six children (4 boys, 2 girls). Maya's father was a mechanic and her mother was a nanny. Her siblings were athletic and played a variety of organized sports such as football, basketball, and baseball. Her older sister played 3-on-3 basketball in high school however the program was dropped before Maya started high school. Maya played many backyard sports with her siblings and neighborhood kids. She played the tackle position in pickup football games.

In college, Maya competed in track and field, volleyball, and basketball for 4 years. While Maya excelled at all three sports, her true love was track and field. She advanced to the national track and field meet her senior year where she placed in the finals of the hurdles. After Maya graduated from college she spent the summer training and competing at the national level. She competed in the Pan American Games and at the Olympic Trials before taking a position as a high school physical education teacher and coach.

Three years after, Maya returned to college to finish her masters' degree in physical education and became a graduate assistant track and field coach. Upon graduating Maya took another high school teaching and coaching position for a year before moving to the college ranks. Maya has coached at five different colleges during the last 25 years with the majority of the time at Division I institutions. Table 4.9 displays the positions and job duties throughout Maya's career.

# Years	Level	Position/Degree/Sports
5 Years	College	B.S. Physical Education 4 year starter: Basketball, Track & Field, Volleyball
3 Years	High School	PE Teacher, Girls Basketball coach, Boys & Girls Track & Field/Cross Country Coach
1 Year	Grad School	M.S. Physical Education, Graduate Assistant Track & Field Coach, Intramurals
1 Year	High School	PE Teacher, Girls Basketball Coach, Girls Track & Field Coach
2 Years	NCAA Div I	College A: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach
1 Year	NCAA Div II	College B: Women's Track and Field/Field Hockey Coach
7 Years	NCAA Div I	College C: Women's Track and Field Coach (Women's Cross Country Coach for 1st year)
5 Years	NCAA Div I	Devon College: Women's Track and Field Coach (Women's Cross Country Coach ?)
10 Years	NCAA Div III	Fridley College: Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Coach

Table 4.9. Maya's Education and Coaching History

Fridley College has an enrollment of approximately 1500 women and sponsors 15 intercollegiate sports for women at the Division III level. These sports are coached by 11 coaches (7 female, 4 male) and all except three coach one sport. Two coaches, field hockey/lacrosse and softball/volleyball, coach two sports, while Maya coaches three sports (cross country, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field). Table 4.10 provides gender and longevity data for coaches at Fridley College.

The coaches at Fridley are on annual staff appointments and have relatively light teaching duties. Coaches typically teach one or more activity courses per semester depending upon their coaching load. Maya usually teaches one course per semester, either a physical fitness activity course or a professional development seminar for students in the physical education major.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Gender of coach</b>	<b>Years at Fridley</b>
Basketball	Female	2
Crew	Female	5
Cross Country <sup>a</sup>	Female	10
Equestrian	Female	21
Field Hockey <sup>a</sup>	Female	17
Lacrosse <sup>a</sup>	Female	17
Alpine Skiing <sup>b</sup>	Male	3
Soccer	Male	2
Softball <sup>a</sup>	Female	22
Squash <sup>b</sup>	Male	8
Swimming & Diving	Male	25
Tennis	Female	23
Indoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	10
Outdoor Track & Field <sup>a</sup>	Female	10
Volleyball <sup>a</sup>	Female	22
Mean years for Female Coaches		14.29
Mean years for Male Coaches		9.5
Mean years for all coaches		13.13

*Note.* One woman coaches 3 sports: cross country, indoor track and field & outdoor track and field. Two women coach 2 sports: volleyball & softball; field hockey & lacrosse.

<sup>a</sup> Coaches who coach more than one sport are only counted once in longevity

<sup>b</sup> Part-time coach. All other coaches are on full-time administrative staff appointments.

Table 4.10. Gender and Longevity Data of Coaches at Fridley College

Maya typically has between 15 and 20 women on the cross country team and 18-25 women on the track and field team. Fridley has an affiliation with a graduate program at a nearby university that provides graduate assistant coaches for many of their sport programs. Maya typically has two graduate assistant coaches whom she mentors over a two-year period. In addition to coaching, teaching, and mentoring duties, Maya is active on several college and national committees. She is also involved in extensive meet management duties throughout the year. Maya's typical daily schedule is outlined in Table 4.11.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>
Morning	Workout at health club in town
9:00-10:00	Arrive at work. Spend morning doing administrative tasks, committee meetings, recruiting etc.
12:30-1:30	Lunch at faculty club at least three times/week otherwise Staff Council Meetings or other meetings
1:30-4:00	Administrative tasks, meet with assistant coaches, goal setting meetings with athletes, prepare for practice as needed
4:00-6:00	Practice
6:00-7:00	Post practice tasks, wrap up with assistant coaches etc.
Evening	Recruiting phone calls from home (on average 5 - 6 hours/week). Weeknights during the week prior to hosting home meets, time will be spent at work preparing for the meet.

*Note.* Each semester Maya teaches either an activity course or a theory course. These courses typically meet once per week for 60-90 minutes (late morning/lunch hour).

Table 4.11. Maya's Typical Daily Schedule

In her 10-year tenure at Fridley, Maya has won one conference championship in each of the three sports she coaches, cross country, indoor, and outdoor track and field. She has also advanced at least one athlete to the track and field nationals in each year and has had six athletes attain All-America status.

In examining the factors associated with career longevity for Maya, the data were analyzed from individual, structural, and social relations perspectives. Longevity enhancers refer to specific factors enabling Maya's persistence in coaching. Longevity challenges include career barriers and job stressors for Maya, while coping mechanisms refer to specific strategies employed to overcome barriers and stressors. What follows is a description of the themes that emerged for each main category (enhancers, challenges, coping mechanisms) in regards to their impact on Maya's professional and personal lives. Table 4.12 lists pseudonyms and a description of the people and places pertinent in Maya's story.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Role in Maya's Life</b>
Pam	Athletic Director at Fridley
Lynda	Fridley Alumnus, Former Track and Field and Cross Country athlete at Fridley and currently assisting Maya with Track and Field
Lily	Junior athlete on Maya's Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Maddy	Sophomore athlete and captain on Maya's Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Mary	President Harding, President of Fridley College
Sue	Maya's Mentor and College Track and Field Coach
Devon	College Maya coached at before she came to Fridley
Olmsted	College Town where Maya lives, and the home of Fridley College

Table 4.12. List of Participants and Places in Maya's Story

### *Individual Career Longevity Enhancers*

Two themes emerged regarding individual career longevity enhancers. These were a lifelong passion for being involved in the sport of track and field and a strong desire to provide sporting and coaching opportunities for young women.

#### *Intense Passion for the Sport of Track and Field*

Three catalysts sparked Maya's initial love for the sport of track and field. These included her siblings, a high school physical education teacher, and the Olympics. Maya's siblings served as sport role models and she had a strong desire to follow in their footsteps. One brother in particular was very supportive especially in convincing Maya's father to allow her to compete in sports. Maya found a strong role model in her high school physical education teacher, Ms. Book. "I was just so enthralled with my PE teacher. She was the role model. She was always there for me in terms of all the different things I went through" (Maya, 9-26-01).

Maya felt a calling to be a track and field coach from her senior year in high school. When Maya started high school the only sport for girls was tennis. At the time there were no African American students on the tennis team. Captivated by the Olympic Track and Field performances of women such as Wilma Rudolph and Wyomia Tyus, Maya talked her physical education teacher into starting a track and field team for girls.

That was before Title IX. I bribed Ms. Book into taking the team. I said I will get the people out there. We will come up with something. I will get books, I will read, I will do whatever. We worked it together and it just sort of went from there. I recruited all the athletes. I went to everybody, White, Black or whatever. So I guess I sort of had a taste for coaching at a very early age. Working with people and trying to get them to do something, perform things. That is how I got started (Maya, 9-26-01).

Maya states she was a decent but not a top student. However, once she started realizing the potential opportunities in athletics:

Sports really did a lot for me. It changed my whole mindset that I really can do this and I really want to do sports. And I am going to be good in this, this, and that. It fell together there basically; and that one summer there, watching the Olympics got me on the right path it sort of got me straightened out (Maya, 9-26-01).

Maya had immediate success in her one year of high school track: "I went to the state in my only year of competing and I got third in the state in the hurdles. I won the regional hurdles" (Maya, 9-26-01). Because of her success, she was recruited to compete in track and field in college. Her initial career plans were to follow in her brothers' footsteps and join the service but this plan changed once she realized she had an opportunity to go to college. Maya's father was not supportive of her going on to college, especially not to compete in track and field. At the time there were no athletic scholarships for women athletes, so Maya's parents worried about finances. Maya's brothers and physical education teacher were instrumental in convincing her parents to let her go and compete on the college track and field team.

My dad had a job for me at the Holiday Inn, so you know he is from that old school. He didn't want me to do track. He never saw me run in high school. It was like I don't want you doing this because you are going to get hurt. It is the old mentality. My mother was like yeah go for it, my brothers were like 'come on Dad she is really good at this'. So they all chimed in and were supportive and got me going (Maya, 9-26-01).

Although Maya competed in other sports in college, track was her first love and the sport she felt most passionate about. After graduating Maya had a choice of two teaching positions and chose one school strictly because it had a track. "I just knew track was my thing. And you have to have a love for what you do. If you don't you don't stick with it. I love it quite a bit, otherwise I

still wouldn't be doing it basically” (Maya, 9-26-01). Once in coaching, Maya’s love for and commitment to the sport grew and extended beyond impacting the sport at a local level.

A strong career motivator for Maya has been her commitment to coaching and administrative duties at the national level. Throughout her coaching career, Maya has been a visible member of national coaching committees. She has held numerous positions within the sport governing body, (rules committee, executive board member, assistant commissioner, manager) and she has also served as the national team manager for several international meets. After devoting 30 years of her life to coaching, her main goal now is to get on the Olympic Staff for the 2004 Games. Maya describes how this goal relates to her longevity in coaching. “I probably will retire here [at Fridley]. Probably, but there are other things I want to do. I have goals for myself such as to be on the Olympic Staff in 2004” (Maya, 9-26-01). Maya’s passion for the sport extends to impacting the advancement of the sport by providing opportunities to athletes and future coaches.

#### *Providing Opportunities for Women*

Maya believes that a crucial part of her role as a coach is to provide opportunities for young women in the sport. This includes athletic and coaching opportunities. Maya is adamant about being a mentor for future women coaches. “After seeing all this happen with men going into women’s coaching positions, which I feel are truly women's positions, I feel that my calling in life is to mentor other young women and to keep them staying in it longer” (Maya, 10-24-01). Because sport has had such a profound influence on her life, Maya believes “it is very important to still be out there giving back to the sport or to young girls and young women” (Maya, 1-11-02). Part of the giving back includes “making sure that the women in the sport are getting a fair shake” (Maya, 9-26-01).

A good portion of Maya’s job at Fridley is devoted to mentoring assistant coaches. She typically has two graduate assistant coaches each year. During her time at Fridley, Maya has

mentored six women and three men. Maya is serious about her role in preparing her assistants for a collegiate coaching career and sets very high standards for them. “I like for them to be 10 steps ahead of me” (Maya, 1-11-02). This is not an easy task, especially given Maya’s organizational skills. A former athlete who is now assisting Maya states “she is on top of things to the level that people just laugh. We would get itineraries down to the minute” (Lynda, 1-10-02). Maya encourages her assistant coaches to be self-starters. Each assistant is in charge of coaching a certain event group such as sprinters and jumpers, distance runners and throwers. The assistants are responsible for designing and implementing practices using a yearlong training template Maya created for them. Maya meets formally with her assistants for 90 minutes at the beginning of each week. During this time the assistants share their workouts for the week and discuss athletes’ progress. Assistant coaches check in with Maya after each workout and briefly discuss the next days' workout.

Maya provides numerous hands-on experiences for her assistant coaches to become involved in recruiting and meet management. Her athletes recognize the responsibility she gives her assistant coaches.

This spring when we went out to nationals she had April [former assistant coach] do most of the interacting with the committees and with what was necessary...like picking up the paper work, talking to other coaches, so it was very clear that April was the one in a leadership position (Maddy, 1-10-01).

While the “hands-on” experiences are valuable for her assistant coaches, some athletes would prefer that Maya were more active or visible at practices. One athlete believes that it is a strength of character that Maya is so willing to let her assistant coaches learn by doing, however it is not always the best for the athletes:

Maya gives a lot of responsibility to the assistant coaches which is really nice. It is a hands-on experience and I have been really impressed by that; that she doesn't just muscle in. But at the same time, it has crossed my mind, I wonder if she pulls back too much and then we miss her, we miss that input. So that is kind of like the strange strength-weakness depending on the experience of the assistant coach. It is really a strength of character to be able to do that. It just might not always workout (Lily, 1-10-01).



Maya typically coaches athletes in an event area that is not a strength of her assistants. However, her role is seen more as managing the team as opposed to directly coaching the women. An athlete explains, “I would like to see her more involved with us. I appreciate what she does with the assistants in order to bring them up by giving them so much responsibility and direction, but I sort of would like to see her input more in workouts, see what she thinks we should be developing. Maybe by having more of a presence in practice” (Maddy, 1-10-01). In discussing why she gives her assistants so much responsibility in designing and administering the practices Maya maintains that, “You learn by doing. Can you make a mistake?...You know I try to get to them before they make a mistake or whatever, so that is why I have the meetings” (Maya, 1-11-02).

While Maya clearly values the opportunity she has to mentor and positively impact the women who work with her, she has not lost sight of why she coaches. “Why are we here? Why are we doing things? It is for the student-athletes basically” (Maya, 10-24-01).

Maya is concerned with providing great experiences for the women on her teams. Though athletes do not interact much with Maya outside of practice the feeling is that she is there for them when needed. Athletes describe her as a mother figure, good friend, protective of their needs, and available in crisis times. Further, her athletes believe she is quite knowledgeable about the sport and quick to pick up on little things that her assistants might miss. One athlete described how she had been hampered by a calf muscle problem while Maya was on medical leave. The assistant coaches had not “picked up on it or made it a big issue, even though it had been going on for a couple of weeks. As soon as Maya saw it, she pulled me out and forced me to get in the pool for a week” (Maddy, 1-10-02). Another athlete describes Maya as being “sharp” and that it is evident she has “been in the business a long time. What I really like about her is that she will not spend all day telling you things. She will say small things and they are really keen and they are really bang on the nail” (Lily, 1-10-02).

One of Maya's athletes states she has persisted in coaching because of her passion for the sport and eagerness to be around athletes.

There is an energy that I know she has tapped into that she keeps getting from just being around the track, being around athletes. You can see it in her. There is that bounce there, that energy. I think she really likes to see the sport progressing as it has and to have a hand in continuing that. Like she is always thinking about the next class, the eager people coming in to run, how it is going to be in a couple of years. The goals that she sets and looking always for that next thing I think keeps her going (Maddy, 1-10-02).

The goals that Maya sets are associated often with helping athletes make it to the highest level possible. This typically includes getting athletes to the national level and is a particular highlight for Maya. "Every year since I have been here we have gone to nationals [in track]. So to me it is like a barometer that you measure things by" (Maya, 9-27-01) and has inspired her to persist in the coaching profession.

A love for the sport, passion for providing good experiences for women athletes and future coaches, and commitment to service at the national level have been strong individual factors keeping Maya in the coaching career. However, these are not the only longevity enhancers for Maya. Institutional enhancers have also played a role in Maya's career longevity.

#### *Structural Career Longevity Enhancers*

Maya has been at five different institutions during her 25-year collegiate coaching career. She has been at Fridley for 40% of this time and for the most part perceives good institutional support and enjoys the collegiate atmosphere Fridley offers. Two major themes emerged regarding structural career longevity enhancers for Maya: access to institutional resources and the "Fridley Package".

#### *Access to Institutional Resources*

Since coming to Fridley, Maya has made a conscious effort to become involved in the Fridley community.

I made the effort to go out and get involved in some other things. I am sure a lot of our other coaches are respected among the people who know them, but they are not as known

[around campus]. They have been here longer [than Maya], but they just haven't gotten involved in a lot of things (Maya, 9-27-01).

These connections have enabled Maya to have access to certain resources and information. Maya has been influenced by the Fridley College President, Mary Harding who is also a woman of color.<sup>28</sup> A former athlete describes the role that Harding has had in keeping Maya at Fridley.

Maya gets another job offer every year. I am aware of them. She has told me the jobs that she has been offered. President Harding took an active interest in keeping the few professors of color and staff members of color on the campus even though it didn't seem to be valued by this department. Mary Harding was the one who gave the ultimatum to keep Maya on staff here. That was after Maya got a Division I offer (Lynda, 1-10-02).

Maya has also created alliances with other influential individuals on campus and made sure she was on important campus wide committees. For instance, several years ago when Maya was trying to secure funding for a new outdoor track, she did a lot of the networking and groundwork over lunch at the faculty club. Maya makes sure she gets “to know who is who in the Advancement Office. I don’t do things to step on Pam’s [athletic director] feet but I do go to lunch at the club everyday and so I meet people and I know who is going to be there” (Maya, 9-27-01). Her next major task is to have a stadium built around the track. In speaking about her ability to network with people on and off-campus, a former athlete states: “She is a phenomenal fund raiser. I think she could help more than just track and field in the college” (Lynda, 1-10-02).

### *The Fridley Package*

There are factors unique to Fridley that have been career longevity enhancers for Maya. These include: longevity among the coaching staff, access to graduate assistant coaches, Division III athletic philosophy, supportive environment for women, and professional development opportunities.

Five of the 11 head coaches have been at Fridley for over 17 years. The athletic director offers her perspective regarding the longevity of her staff. “I think Fridley is a great place to

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<sup>28</sup> Maya stated, “It was like a sisterhood actually. She wanted to see women of color do well not only on the athletic field but academically...she also has encouraged me to finish up my doctorate”.

work. People value the college, therefore the coaches value what they are doing and their day-to-day lives are good because the kids are good” (Pam, 10-24-01). A further plus is that the coaching staff is predominantly women (7 of 11). However, a major drawback for Maya is she is the only African American staff member in the athletic department.

The Fridley package also includes getting graduate assistant coaches through Fridley’s affiliation with a master’s program at a nearby institution. The athletic director speaks to the importance of this program: “I think we get a higher quality assistant coach than most schools because of the grad program. And we get them for two years so you are guaranteed some continuity” (Pam, 10-24-01). Maya has been fortunate to get, on average, two assistant coaches a year through this program. This is a plus for Maya not only for the coaching and administrative help that they can offer, but also for the role she can have in mentoring them.

Fridley’s athletic philosophy is much different from previous institutions where Maya worked and this is positive. Maya’s colleagues had wondered why she would leave a position at a prestigious Division I university for a position at a Division III women’s college. Maya replied “I have been there, done that. This is probably one of the best moves I have ever made” (Maya, 9-26-01). Maya maintained that she experienced much pressure and stress at Division I to the point where she feared it was impacting her health. Beyond the stress concerns, Maya thinks “Division III is more in line with what my whole self is about in terms of the academic piece and working well together” (Maya, 9-26-01). While Maya insists she had few academic related problems at Division I, she felt she “always had to check-up. It was a constant check-up” (Maya, 9-26-01).

Not all of the Divisional differences have been positive. For instance Maya had her own secretary at previous Division I institutions. Now she has to do many more administrative tasks and recruiting is more challenging in that she has no money to offer athletes and she is limited by the type of student-athlete she can recruit to this highly selective woman’s college. One positive aspect of recruiting athletes to Division III is that once they are on the team Maya perceives that

they are more intrinsically motivated because “the almighty scholarship is not pulling them along” (Maya, 9-26-01).

One of the things Maya enjoys most about Fridley is that it is a women’s college. “The environment is so supportive for women. You have support mechanisms throughout the college and you have young women who are going to go on and be the future leaders of America probably. It is a big selling factor” (Maya, 9-27-01). After spending many years fighting for equity at other institutions Maya feels fortunate to not have those battles. “When you are on the other side of the fence at coed institutions there is a ‘good old boys’ network’ in play” (Maya, 9-27-01).

Maya also perceives good budgetary support for her program.<sup>29</sup> Like all sports at Fridley, Maya’s teams travel by bus, sleep two to a room, and have very nice uniforms. Maya is fanatical about making sure the women on her team stay at nice hotels and eat at good restaurants. She wishes the per diem rate for food was higher, but she manages her budget to meet expectations. The equipment budget appears to be plentiful as there are lots of training “toys” and gadgets for her athletes. Beyond programmatic support, Maya has a relatively light teaching load. Having assistant coaches means that Maya can spend more time each day doing things she enjoys; mentoring young coaches and networking with people on campus and colleagues across the country.

Maya is pleased with the professional development support at Fridley. During her tenure, Maya has had an opportunity to complete internships, work outside of the athletic department and continue graduate coursework. The athletic director maintains, “I am pretty flexible about how we do things. Since Maya has been here, for example, she has been on two or three leaves from

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<sup>29</sup> Maya stated, “I wouldn’t say good. I think it is adequate for now but we need to keep up with the times”. Maya’s biggest concern now is in securing funding to bring prospective student athletes to campus and getting administrative help for her mounds of paperwork.

coaching either cross country or part of her sports” (Pam, 10-24-01). These opportunities have helped keep Maya challenged over the years.

Besides on campus opportunities, Maya has engaged in numerous professional development opportunities off-campus. These include attending national meetings, conferences and special events. Last year the school supported a two-week trip to South America during the school year for Maya to serve as the U.S. manager for an International Track and Field competition. Maya indicates that she takes full advantage of her professional development funding.

Some people use it, some people don't. It was written into my contract when I came. I said I need to go to meetings or whatever, and I think that Pam has been supportive of finding ways to do that. I don't know where she comes up with it but it works. She comes up with it and I don't ask any questions (Maya, 9-27-01).

The athletic director maintains that professional development for employees is an important mission for the college. “We have a commitment as a school to professional development for our employees and so it is pretty easy for me to convince somebody else to put some money into this” (Pam, 10-24-01).

In general, Maya feels good support from the institution. She stated:

If I really wanted to change and go to another division I would do that. I feel I can still do that but I like the college and I like this town and I like the people. It is a good fit. I probably will retire here (Maya, 9-26-01).

#### *Social Relations Career Longevity Enhancers*

In examining the data for social relations enhancers, one major theme emerged: networking. Maya engages in networking at many levels (institutional, community, national). Networking has helped her stay connected to people in the coaching profession and is a support system outside the athletic department.

#### *Networking*

Maya perceives herself fortunate to have had strong women mentors throughout her career. Her list of mentors is extensive and includes numerous college coaches and professors.

Their role went beyond a typical mentor/teaching relationship and many of these women were highly instrumental in helping Maya procure coaching positions. In essence, Maya was supported by an “old girls’ network”, especially early in her career.

Maya’s college track and field coach, Sue, has been the most prominent person in Maya’s coaching life. Sue was a legendary coach from the late 60’s through the 80’s and was very visible on the national scene. She was instrumental in helping Maya obtain two college coaching positions and an appointment to the national rules committee early in her career. Maya talks regularly with Sue and maintained, “to this day, she is really a key person” (Maya, 9-26-01).

In addition to her track and field coach, her college basketball coach, another coaching legend, was also instrumental in Maya’s life. When Maya was first looking for a job she made the necessary contacts and drove Maya to the interview three hours away from campus.

She took me to the supervisor of physical education and said ‘Hey, this young lady needs a job’. She gave her my credentials and my resume and they took me around to two different schools. I had the choice of one that didn’t have a track and one that had a track. So I took the track (Maya, 9-26-01).

When Maya took her second college coaching job, it included coaching field hockey, a sport with which she had little experience. Mentors helped her with this sport: “I used to call the resources in and they worked with me. I am going to do this, I want this job” (Maya, 9-26-01). Once when Maya was between jobs a former mentor who had connections at Devon (the institution Maya worked at prior to Fridley), told the athletic director “you should look for Maya, she would be good at Devon, and so they found me” (Maya, 9-26-01).

It has been important to Maya to stay connected to her career mentors. She attends numerous conventions throughout the year partly because it gives her a great opportunity “to reconnect with those people” (Maya, 9-27-01). Maya is very involved with the USA Track and Field Women’s Development Committee and is currently focused on getting more women of color into coaching. This involves spreading the word, “calling my Division I resources” (9-27-01) and being involved with the Black Coaches Association.

Maya has, in turn, become a major player in the “old girls’ network” in establishing strong network bases for young women coaches. She believes administrators must be active in combating the ‘old boys’ network’.

If there are two equal candidates, one is a male, one is a female, and they have equal qualifications, I would have to give the bump to the female because I know what the ‘old boys’ do. They give the bump to the male. There is no doubt about it. And I have no qualms in saying that....So you just have to make the call. You have to make the call and say hey she would really be good (Maya, 9-27-01).

It is clear that Maya is not just interested in putting any woman in a coaching position. She has high standards and expectations for the assistant coaches she mentors. A former athlete who is now assisting with Maya attests to Maya’s support in helping good assistants find positions.

When discussing the influence Maya can have on her assistant coaches she adds:

If you don't come out with organizational skills something is wrong. You didn't do something right. But I know that people have a love hate relationship with her. They either love her and keep in touch with her and she opens the doors to every professional in track and field that you could imagine or she doesn't like them [and] you know those doors are closed (Lynda, 1-10-02).

The one area where Maya believes she did not have the proper mentoring was in negotiating for salary and job benefits. Therefore she has taken a very active role in providing this mentoring for the women (and men) whom she mentors.

Maya has developed numerous personal and professional connections on Fridley’s campus. She is a very visible coach on campus primarily because of her efforts to interact with faculty and staff outside the department. Going to the faculty club for lunch each day is a great way for Maya to have some “downtime” from the athletic department and meet new people across campus. Maya speaks to the importance of having close alliances with different people across campus.

There are some women of color and other people that I do feel very closely attached to that if I have issues I can go to them. The Ombudsperson is a good person to go sound things off. If I have problems within the [athletic] department that is the first person I will go to. Or just other people throughout the college. The institutional diversity person is a very good friend of mine (Maya, 10-24-01).



Maya extends her networking philosophy to her teams as well. She is an avid promoter of campus wide activities and strongly encourages the women on her team to become involved in activities outside of sport. In describing Maya's philosophy, one athlete offers, "She was thinking beyond athletics. Thinking about academia and not just that but diversity" (Lily, 1-10-02). Maya is adept at networking and has national contacts on all levels in track and field. When Maya came to Fridley she negotiated for funding and time release to attend national meetings and Division I national championship meets. A former athlete comments on Maya's drive and networking ability.

I have never seen such a determined woman. She has a way...she gets something in her mind that she wants to happen and the woman is very socially gifted when it comes to the gabbing. I mean if she has one thing that has made her...her coaching career it is that she is a schmoozer and she does it so dang well and that is admirable. Because someone of her position needs to have those skills and that is really what has made her someone to be reckoned with even on the national scene. I hope she gets this Olympic position that is due to her (Lynda, 1-10-02).

Maya also values connections within the community of Olmsted (where Fridley is located). Olmsted is a very progressive and liberal community and Maya maintains "The comfort level is very good, the community is very good, the support throughout the community and the networking, you know, the connections throughout the community of Olmsted. It is very important. So that is a big plus" (Maya, 10-24-01). Maya is very involved with the Kiwanis Club, the local school board, and regularly has her teams helping out at the elementary schools in town. "We do a reading piece at the elementary schools locally. We have four elementary schools in Olmsted, so we are doing that to just tie us in a little bit tighter with the community" (Maya, 9-27-01). Maya has also joined a health club in the community. Instead of working out, for free, at Fridley Maya opted to join the health club because "it was important. You get to meet other people and sort of get connected there" (Maya, 10-24-01). Networking has enabled Maya to become more connected on campus and in the community thus making moves from Fridley less

desirable. She has turned down a few job offers in the past few years and a major factor in her decision has been her ties to Olmstead.

It is evident that networking has played a pivotal role in Maya's coaching career. The strong connection to networks on multiple levels has enabled Maya to persist in the coaching profession especially during difficult periods or transitions in her career. What follows is an examination of the challenges Maya has faced throughout her career.

### *Career Longevity Challenges*

Maya has endured several challenges over her career in coaching. Some of these challenges have been career related, while others have been related to a particular institution. Five themes emerged relative the career challenges Maya has faced in coaching. These include departmental, recruiting, challenges, and social challenges, as well as being a woman of color.

### *Departmental Challenges*

The former athletic director at Fridley was highly influential in bringing Maya to Fridley. "I really liked the previous athletic director. That is the reason why I came here. I didn't have to leave Devon" (9-26-01). Maya felt the athletic director really wanted her at Fridley and would support her interests and needs. She also believed they had similar personalities, outgoing gregarious and very active on campus. Within Maya's first year at Fridley however the athletic director's contract was not renewed because of poor evaluations from staff. The associate athletic director was promoted to the position and over the years she and Maya have had their differences.

Maya perceives her athletic director, Pam, to be introverted and a "work alone" person. These characteristics are quite different than the previous athletic director and Maya's personality. In describing her relationship with Pam, Maya states: "I think we have a work relationship in terms of being cordial and knowing who is in charge and that type of thing" (Maya, 10-26-01). Maya states that unless a problem arises she sees little need to interact with her

athletic director. The athletic director admits that her interaction with coaches in the department varies considerably but maintains that this is typically due to alignment of coaching backgrounds.

I probably have more of those interactions with team sport coaches than with individual sport coaches. I come from a team sports background, so for me to interact and talk about strategies and how you got the team to do, seems to fit better than me thinking about the swimmer peak or what were you working on. I mean it is just harder to have a conversation, for me, so I guess in the overall that would be one dividing line (Pam, 10-24-01).<sup>30</sup>

While Maya feels a fit with the larger Fridley community she is not happy with the departmental climate and considers it to be “below average”. She does not have close friends in the department and perceives little harmony among coaches. A lack of trust among co-workers is a major issue. “There is not really anyone in the athletic department that I would share my deepest thoughts with basically” (Maya, 10-24-01). This is the first place Maya has worked in which she has not had a close friend within the athletic department. Instead she feels the need to be careful about what she says and to whom she says things. “So you always catch yourself watching what you are saying so you are not offending people” (Maya, 9-27-01).

Some of the climate problems in the athletic department stem from changes in coaches’ job descriptions over the years. For instance, one person used to coach basketball and soccer, however when a new coach was hired two years ago, the athletic director separated the coaching duties and hired two coaches, one for each sport. For years, Maya and the field hockey/lacrosse coach have been lobbying to decrease their coaching duties by one sport. Several years ago Maya was promised she would be next in line for a change but it has not happened and she doubts it will. “My faith in the administration is not that great” (Maya, 9-27-01).

A final issue with the department is that in the past few years Maya has perceived a subtle message, mostly from the athletic director, that younger coaches are more valued than older coaches. More than half of the head coaches at Fridley have been coaching at the collegiate

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<sup>30</sup> Maya stated “[Pam] hasn’t made an effort to learn about these sports...I have never been at a place where there hasn’t been an effort on the administration’s part to learn something”.

level for more than 17 years. Maya perceives the administration is “looking for that young type coach that they can sort of mold. That is not as rebellious perhaps or confrontational was the word that they use a lot here” (Maya, 1-11-02). Another age-related factor has to do with the changing nature of Division III coaching. The athletic director comments on this impact:

When I hire a new coach they know recruiting is part of the job. When some of these coaches came here recruiting was not part of their job. So I find a lot more resistance and distaste on their part with the recruiting process. You know they are pretty disciplined and they will do the work but they don't delve into it the way our two newest coaches delve into it. Because the new coaches know that that is 50% of their job (Pam, 10-24-01).

### *Recruiting Challenges*

Maya finds recruiting student athletes to a highly selective women's college with no athletic scholarships a challenging task. She floods the system with recruiting letters. Last year she sent out 5000 letters. Maya spends between 10 and 20 hours per week on recruiting. Her assistant coaches each make about 8 calls per week. But basically Maya maintained that she does “a lot of the grunt work that you wouldn't normally do at a Division I school, but you adapt and do what needs to be done” (Maya, 10-26-01). Maya has found an even greater challenge in losing athletes she has specifically recruited for the track and field and/or cross country programs to other sport programs at Fridley.

There are 45 kids walking the campus that were track and field athletes I recruited that are not doing track and field or cross country right now. They opted to go to rugby. I recruited 12 or 15 people last year, five of them are out doing rugby right now (Maya, 9-27-01).

Maya feels that she has been “used” by some of these women to get into Fridley College. “A lot of these kids were on the cusp. They wouldn't have gotten in unless I put them on the push list” (Maya, 9-27-01). When asked why they decided to do rugby many stated they want to have fun and perceived the less organized atmosphere of club rugby as more conducive.

A further recruiting challenge involves the decline in dual-sport athletes (i.e. volleyball/track and field) at the Division III level. Maya is disheartened by the fact that over the years she

has lost many dual-sport athletes to “team” sports because of the increased demands of off-season training and non-traditional season competitions. For instance many of her jumpers, sprinters, and hurdlers would play volleyball in the fall and compete in track and field in the spring. Now they are feeling pressure to compete in spring volleyball. “The beauty of Division III is that you are able to do at least two sports, hopefully. So we are losing a lot of that” (Maya, 10-26-01). Maya has lost enough athletes to other sports that she now avoids recruiting dual-sport athletes and concentrates solely on recruiting athletes who only compete in track and field and cross country.

### *Being a Woman of Color*

Maya was the first African American female coach at four of her five collegiate coaching positions. At some schools there were African American male coaches or administrators however there were never more than two or three coaches of color on the staff at one time. Maya finds herself particularly alienated at Fridley because she is the only person of color on the athletic staff. Maya maintains, “It would be nice to have someone, another coach. Being in the Black Coaches Association is a plus. You can sound things off of that too” (10-24-01).

Maya perceives she is singled out because she is a woman of color. She is often called upon to speak for all African Americans. Recently when coaches in the department where encouraged to recruit more minority student-athletes they all looked to Maya as if she had all the answers. Maya recalls how she responded to the coaches, “Are you looking at me for a reason because I am Black or what is up? You know it shouldn't be that way. You guys need to step out and do it. How do you recruit anybody?” (Maya, 9-27-01). Maya talks about how she is often called to serve on search committees “They are looking for that person of color on the search committee. There are not many of us on campus. It gets old after a while” (Maya, 9-27-01). Pam, the athletic director, states “She has a lot more alliance outside of the department than most coaches do. Some of it is based on color, in getting together with like people” (Pam, 10-24-01). However, Maya perceives little effort by Pam to get more coaches of color on staff especially in

comparison to efforts by the former athletic director. “You have got to be really proactive in getting stuff out there. The former athletic director was like that. They sought me. I wasn't looking for a job. You have to get out there and you have to find them” (Maya, 10-26-01).

Throughout her career Maya perceives she has had to continually prove her ability and worth because of her skin color.

I have to be successful and so that has always been a driving force, being a woman of color, I don't know if that is another issue, but just proving myself constantly, that has always been a driving force, to be the best that you can be (Maya, 10-24-01).

A former athlete recognizes Maya's achievements and the challenges she has faced. “If she were to defy every barrier that someone would have, she has defied it” (Lynda, 1-10-02).

That Maya is a woman of color has been a positive thing for her athletes and the diversity of her teams.

I think I am drawn to her because I am sure that she has been through a lot. There aren't many women athletes of color at Fridley and I think at one time the track and field team had about three or four, which is probably more than anyone as a team and I used to think I wonder if Maya has something to do with that. I don't think she goes out....I don't know whether she goes recruiting people of color necessarily and I think knowing oh there is a woman of color coach might make students of color feel a bit more comfortable (Lily, 1-10-02).

In addition to fighting racial discrimination Maya has had to fight the ‘old boys’ system’. This was especially evident in her third collegiate coaching position. “It was the boy bastion there which was the most irritating thing. It turned me off so bad I almost got out of coaching actually”. Maya maintains that she came close to filing a lawsuit but instead decided to drop the case and find a job elsewhere. In addition to racial and gender challenges, Maya has also been faced with financial challenges for much of her career.

### *Financial Challenges*

For most of Maya's career she has felt that she has not been compensated appropriately. Maya took a major pay cut when she left a high school teaching and coaching position for her first collegiate coaching position.

I went from \$20,000 to \$10,000 just to get my foot in the door with college coaching at Alpha University. And I didn't feel like I had anybody to turn to in terms of that. I was so excited for getting in the door, I didn't ask for what I was worth (Maya, 9-26-01).

To make ends meet Maya took a summer job working in a factory. Within three years she decided to search for another job. "I didn't feel that they were making big enough strides in terms of getting things where they need to be. I had been there for 3 or 4 years and making \$12,000. Something is wrong. Our team is winning the state championship" (Maya, 9-26-01). At her third collegiate coaching job Maya was making \$14,000 while the men's track and field coach was making \$60,000. When Maya complained, "They upped me to like \$20,000 something, I said you have got to be kidding me. No way, that is why I didn't stay" (Maya, 9-26-01).

When asked if she regrets any career related decisions she has made over the years Maya stated:

The only thing I regret is the financial difficulties...the first job getting into college coaching. That was a huge mistake right there. I just didn't go to anybody and ask. I was just so excited to be getting in there. To take a \$10,000 cut in pay is just not an acceptable thing and I will never ever do it again. I am not all caught up in money. It is just like an issue. It just should not have happened (10-24-01).

These early experiences have led Maya to become a strong advocate in teaching her assistant coaches and other coaching colleagues how to negotiate for salary. Maya believes that while she had good mentors, none of them helped her in terms of negotiating salary and benefits.

Maya is content with her salary at Fridley and perceives it is competitive with other coaches with the same tenure regardless of Division. However that was not always the case. Maya was hired at a competitive salary but over the years has received few merit increases. She believes that the main reason why she has not received merit increases is because the current athletic director, who has "carte-blanche" in allocating merit, believed her starting salary was too high. Maya has still been able to negotiate salary while at Fridley. At one point a few years ago she was able to use a job offer at a Division I institution to bargain for a salary increase at Fridley.

Maya has expressed an interest in retiring at Fridley but is unsure if she wants to continue coaching until she retires. One option Maya is considering is to direct the Fridley fitness facility which is scheduled for completion in a few years. However the athletic director informed her she would need to take a pay cut if she stopped coaching and became fitness director. "There is not even a question that I am taking a cut to be a fitness director of all the sports. That would not be a logical move for me. So I just put that out on the table. Why would I take a cut?" (Maya, 1-11-02).

### *Social Challenges*

Maya believes, without a doubt, her personal life has taken a backseat to her professional life:

I had no idea [when she first started coaching] but it became more clear to me as I got a bit older....that it BECOMES your life. It does impact your personal relationships. In fact I am going through those things right now actually, in terms of making sure that I do find time for my personal relationships (Maya, 1-11-02).

Maya speaks of an engagement she broke off when she was in her late 20's because her fiancée "wanted me to give up my career to be a housewife, to take care of the kids. I was like you have got to be kidding...you don't understand where I have been, no way. So that was the end of that relationship" (Maya, 1-11-02). While Maya believes that it would be possible to have kids and be in this profession, she doubted it would be fair. "I didn't think that was going to be fair, to be gone so much. I think it can be done. There are people that are doing that, but I think it takes a lot of time" (Maya, 1-11-02).

The only relationships that will work are with someone who is either passionate about their job and spending an inordinate amount of time at work or someone who understands the nature of coaching and is willing to help you. Maya's partner is passionate about work so Maya sees that as a plus for their relationship. "It is important to have someone committed and also can help you to do what you need to be able to do and who is interested in what your goals are, working to help you get to where you want to go" (Maya, 10-24-01). However, Maya believes it



is still not an equal commitment and that her job is more time intensive and this has presented challenges in their relationship.

Over the years Maya's focus has been primarily on work and not on "play" or a social life. She does take time in the summer but has found that in the past few years, working camps and maintaining recruiting efforts throughout the summer have impinged on her summer social time. "The happy balance between work and having a social life and playing, that is a hard...and I am still working on that" (Maya, 10-24-01). When asked what she would have changed about her career Maya mentions she would have liked to have more of a social life. "The regret would be in not giving more of myself perhaps in relationships. I am working on those issues now. You get so caught up in...you know it is like you don't have a life" (Maya, 1-11-02). It is clear that Maya has endured several challenges throughout her career. The following section examines coping mechanisms Maya has employed to help address the challenges.

#### *Career Longevity Coping Mechanisms*

Two coping mechanisms emerged from the data that address how Maya deals with coaching and career related challenges. "Change, adapt, or move on" refers to Maya's ability to recognize what she can change about her job or work environment and what she can adapt to. In cases where she could do neither she opted to move to another position. Regardless of Maya's choices to change, adapt, or move to another position, there has always been one prevailing tenet, to never compromise her integrity.

#### *Change, Adapt, or Move On*

A coping mechanism for Maya, especially early on in her career, has been her ability and willingness to change jobs. When she was not happy with a job she tried to change things and if that didn't work, she resigned and sought a new job. A major challenge early in Maya's career involved not getting paid what she believed she was worth. In two instances she resigned from her job, before having another job, because she could not "change the system" and was unwilling

to continue working in an environment where she felt under-appreciated. In both cases she found a job within a few weeks. After leaving her third institution, Maya pondered her career choice, instead of opting out of the career she thought:

How could I go about changing the system? You know making things better for young women that will come behind me. If I were going to stay in it, why would I stay in it? How can I make the money better? What can you do to sell yourself and make yourself better? Well you have got to believe that you are the best that you can be. If you are not the best then you have to do the things that you need to do to get to become the best. I said yeah, I am the best, so lets go after it. So I changed my way of thinking I guess (Maya, 9-26-01).

Through this process Maya learned the skill of negotiation.

Each school was a stepping stone to other things, pushing the envelope a little bit more in terms of things, see how far you can go. Not asking for outrageous things of course, just finding out how you survive within the system that you set up and how you work the system to get what you need for your program or for the women involved in your program, especially at the coed institutions (Maya, 9-27-01).

The program support that Maya bargained for is not lost on her athletes. One athlete believes she goes beyond the duties of a typical coach “making sure that we are treated well by the athletic department” (Maddy, 1-10-02). Maya’s negotiation skills have come a long way and have been related to her job and career satisfaction. Further, she makes sure these are skills her assistant coaches develop under her tutelage. Maya has proven quite adept at using her networking ability to either change the system at Fridley or to get the system to work for her. This is evident through her behind the scenes work in raising both consciousness and funding for a new outdoor track and field facility.

Fridley’s athletic director believes a reason for Maya’s career longevity is her ability to change and to work at different places. In addition to this she commented:

Maya is a people person, so as long as you can put her around people that she enjoys and things she likes....able to make friendships and relationships with the people around her. And it doesn't have to be about coaching for her. It could be like five people in another department on campus (Pam, 10-24-01).

Maya can also adapt to new situations when necessary. Since Maya has come to Fridley her coaching style and philosophy have changed. A former athlete noted: “She is more flexible. Even

than when I was an athlete. She is more flexible about someone having a huge research project coming up or a huge conference where they have to go present a paper” (Lynda, 1-10-02). Maya also notices a change, particularly in her interpersonal interactions/tactfulness. Maya contends that when she first started coaching she often opened her mouth before thinking but she has been working on that over the past few years. “I do have a tendency to have a temper, maybe I have been able to step back from that before I go in to approach Pam [Athletic Director] or whomever” (Maya, 9-27-01). Another change Maya has made in the past few years is in trying to take more personal time and declining offers to serve on committees or even stepping down from some committees. While Maya has changed over the years, she has never compromised her values or ethics to adapt or fit into an institution or department.

#### *Maintaining Integrity*

Throughout her career Maya has felt it important to hold high ethical standards for herself, her athletes, and assistant coaches. Maya has been influenced greatly in this area by her Mother who taught her “to follow your own conscience basically. So that is what I have always done. She said, ‘you need to be true to yourself and know right from wrong’” (Maya, 9-26-01). This philosophy has impacted how Maya has coached and mentored her assistant coaches:

There are things that are acceptable and things that are not acceptable. The professionalism piece, there is that fine line. The age of the athlete you are coaching. They are 18- 21, how do we not cross that line? You know dating the athletes. And I have seen so much of this happen. The males taking over the women. It is that power position. I have gone on and fired coaches for it. I have done a zillion different things, whether it is male-female, female-female. It is wrong. There is a time and place for everything and I think they should all be fired...basically. Those pieces just didn't sit well with me (Maya, 9-26-01).

Maya is not afraid to let her feelings be known and is very willing to stand up for what is right even though it may cause internal conflict with in the athletic department.<sup>31</sup> She has a very direct communication style and is adamant about standing up for what is right. “Even if my colleagues

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<sup>31</sup> During the member check, Maya commented that she is experiencing conflict right now and perceives she has no allies in the athletic department. However she is adamant that she will never compromise her values or what she believes in to go along with the flow.

were treating someone poorly I would say something to them to the point of also making them upset or something” (Maya, 9-26-01). An athlete noted that, “She isn't willing to be talked down to or let people under her control be talked down to, that would apply to the assistant coaches or to us” (Maddy, 1-10-02).

Treating people fairly is a recurring mantra and Maya reflects upon how this has impacted her coaching style.

I think the thing I am most proud of is that I treated them [athletes] all fairly. Being fair is a big thing with me. You may not be the best but you will get treated fairly. I think they have a sense that they are treated fairly. It is not, you are a good athlete I give you this, this, and this (Maya, 1-11-02).

In essence, the fair and equitable treatment that Maya adheres to with her athletes, assistant coaches and peers has been a coping mechanism to help her overcome the career related challenges and barriers.

#### *Summary*

What has kept Maya in the coaching career for 30 years is primarily her intense love for the sport of track and field and her desire to provide sport and coaching opportunities for women. Maya has been faced with numerous barriers over the years. Earlier in her career when Maya could not change or adapt to the coaching environment she moved to another institution. Throughout these moves she was assisted by an “old-girl network” of coaches and administrators. Since coming to Fridley, Maya has established effective networks throughout the campus and community and is adamant about ensuring her team’s needs and her own needs are met. It is evident that her access to networks on multiple levels has been a significant factor in keeping Maya in coaching.

#### Case Four: Miriam

Miriam is 44 years old, White, single, and has been coaching track and field and cross country at the college level for 16 years at Baxter College, a private, liberal arts women's college. Miriam has an undergraduate degree in physical education and a master's degree in sport psychology.

Miriam is an avid sport participant. An only child, she started swimming competitively at age five and switched to playing basketball at age 12. For part of Miriam's childhood, she lived with her grandmother. Miriam's parents divorced when she was 12 and she moved with her mother to a rural community. Prior to her senior year in high school Miriam moved to another state to live with an aunt and uncle. What helped Miriam adjust to her new hometowns was her involvement in sport, especially basketball.

Miriam majored in physical education in college and competed in swimming (1 year), basketball (1 year), field hockey (2 years), and lacrosse (1 year). Prior to her senior year she started running and competed in a marathon at the conclusion of the field hockey season. This was Miriam's first competitive running experience.

After college Miriam took a position as a physical education teacher, coach, and dorm mother at a small, private high school for two years before going to graduate school. In graduate school Miriam was a graduate teaching assistant and taught four activity courses each semester (i.e. triathlon, marathon, swimming courses). Table 4.13 lists Miriam's education and coaching experiences.

Upon receiving her masters' degree, Miriam spent two years teaching theory and activity courses at a southern University and coaching tennis at a private high school. During this period Miriam spent considerable time training for and competing in triathlons and marathons. Miriam was motivated to find a job near Baxter College so she could be closer to her partner. Although she had never coached track and field or cross country before she felt confident enough to apply

given her recent competitive success in triathlons and marathons and her physical education, particularly biomechanics, background.

<b># Years</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Position/Degree/Sports</b>
4 Years	College	Majored in Physical Education, Basketball (1 year), Field Hockey (2 years), Lacrosse (1 year), Swimming (1 year)
2 Years	High School	PE Teacher, Basketball and Tennis Coach, Private Girls School
2 Years	Graduate School	M.S. Sport Psychology, Graduate Teaching Assistant
2 Years	College/ H.S.	Physical Education Teaching position, Girls High School Tennis Coach
16 Years	NCAA III	Baxter College, Women's Cross Country, Track and Field Coach, Physical Education Instructor

Table 4.13. Miriam’s Education and Coaching History

Miriam was hired at Baxter to teach in the physical education department and to coach the newly established cross country and outdoor track and field teams. After three years there was pressure by some athletes to field an indoor track and field team. An indoor program was started the following year with Miriam as head coach. Five years later, Miriam petitioned to give up coaching indoor track due to time constraints. The dean approved her petition and ever since, Baxter has hired a part-time head coach for indoor track and field who assists Miriam for the outdoor season. Miriam has no coaching duties during the indoor track and field season, however she still maintains administrative duties for the entire track and field program and attends team meetings and several competitions. For the past two years Miriam has had an assistant coach for the cross country season. This person also assists with the indoor and outdoor track and field programs.

Baxter College is a four-year, liberal arts women’s college and competes at the NCAA Division III level. Baxter has an enrollment of approximately 2000 students and offers 15 varsity sports coached by 13 coaches (9 female, 4 male). Table 4.14 provides gender and longevity data

for all coaches at Baxter. All full-time coaches at Baxter have faculty status, but unlike most faculty members they do not have tenure. Three coaches, including Miriam and the athletic trainer, are senior lecturers. Senior lecturers have advanced through three 3-year contracts and one 5-year contract. Miriam is in the middle of her second 5-year contract.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Gender of coach</b>	<b>Years coaching at Baxter</b>
Basketball	Female	2
Crew	Female	10
Cross Country <sup>a</sup>	Female	16
Field Hockey <sup>a</sup>	Female	4
Golf <sup>b</sup>	Female	1
Lacrosse	Male	18
Riding	Female	18
Soccer	Female	2
Softball <sup>a</sup>	Female	4
Squash	Female	1
Swimming	Male	4
Tennis	Male	9
Indoor TF <sup>b</sup>	Male	2
Outdoor TF <sup>a</sup>	Female	16
Volleyball	Female	2
Mean years for all coaches		6.85
Mean Years for female coaches		4.22
Mean years for male coaches		8.25

*Note.* Two women coach two sports: field hockey & softball; cross country and outdoor track & field.

<sup>a</sup> Coaches who coach more than one sport are only counted once in longevity

<sup>b</sup> Part-time coach, all other coaches are full-time non-tenured faculty members

Table 4.14. Gender and Longevity Data of Coaches at Baxter College

Miriam typically teaches four activity courses each semester in the required basic instruction program. In addition, she has six advisees and is actively involved with on-campus committees. Miriam also serves as a reviewer for a professional journal and typically reviews three articles each year. She enjoys this aspect of her job but does find it time consuming. For six

years Miriam also served as an accreditation reviewer for two national organizations. While this role was highly valued by the college, Miriam gave it up due to the time commitment. Miriam has also served as chair of a regional track and field committee for two years. For the past 15 years Miriam has spent eight weeks each summer working as an aquatics director and hiking director at a sports camp for 7-14 year old girls. Table 4.15 shows a typical workday during the fall semester for Miriam.

Miriam typically has about 18-25 women on the cross country team and 30-35 women on the outdoor track and field team. During her tenure at Baxter, Miriam has coached six All-Americans and a two-time National Champion. She has been named Regional Coach of the Year in Track and Field once and Conference Track and Field Coach of the year twice. Her teams have won a team conference title in cross country and one in track and field. Miriam devotes between 6-8 hours a week throughout the year, including summers, to recruiting student athletes. She typically has direct and multiple contacts (phone calls, email, campus visits) with about 100 athletes each year.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>
8:00 a.m.	Usually in work by this time (Friday's comes in ~9:30)
8:00-12:00	Teaches 1-2 classes Monday-Thursday. Time between classes is spent answering emails, voicemail, administrative duties, meeting with students, attending committee meetings, etc.
During the day	Walks dog (20-30 minutes) and tries to get in a bike workout (30-60 minutes).
1:00-4:00	Teaches hiking class on Thursday, otherwise meets with athletes, recruits, prepares for practice, does administrative duties, attends committee meetings etc.
4:15-6:30	Practice (along with strength training activities)
6:30-7:00	Wrap-up after practice, meeting with athletes, responding to emails, voicemail.
8:00 p.m.	Usually home (30-40 minute commute). Upon arriving home, Miriam showers, makes dinner, catches up on work (recruiting or class prep), and then enjoys some down time.

*Note.* Miriam teaches a total of four activity-based classes each semester. In the spring semester, Miriam does not coach in January or February.

Table 4.15. Miriam's Typical Daily Schedule



To understand the factors impacting Miriam’s longevity in the coaching profession, data were analyzed from individual, structural, and social relations perspectives in search of enhancers, challenges, and coping mechanisms in her chosen career. Enhancers refer to specific factors influential in Miriam’s persistence in coaching. Challenges include career barriers and job stressors for Miriam, while coping mechanisms refer to specific strategies employed to overcome the barriers and stressors. What follows is a description of the themes that emerged related to enhancers, challenges, coping mechanisms and how they have impacted Miriam as a coach, teacher, co-worker, and friend. Table 4.16 lists pseudonyms and a description of the participants and places pertinent in Maya’s story.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Role in Miriam’s Life</b>
Debra	Athletic Director at Baxter
Melissa	Junior athlete, captain on Miriam’s Cross Country/Track and Field Teams
Laura	Senior athlete and captain on Miriam’s Cross Country Team
Audrey	Senior athlete and captain on Miriam’s Cross Country Team
Nadia	Miriam’s closest friend who is an Associate AD at a nearby college
Maxwell	Neighboring college
Annika	Former track and field/cross country coach at Maxwell College
Bayport	Town Miriam lives in
Zeus	Miriam’s dog

Table 4.16. List of Participants and Places in Miriam’s Story

#### *Individual Career Longevity Enhancers*

Three individual factors emerged from the data that speak to why Miriam has persisted in the coaching profession. These are: the desire to maintain a sporting identity, the passion for working with and helping college age women, and program success.

#### *Sport and Physical Activity Identity*

Sport and physical activity played a crucial role in Miriam’s childhood. Due to her early experiences in swimming and basketball, Miriam was drawn to pursue a career in physical

education. Miriam considers her experiences in basketball a “saving grace” during adolescence, especially as she moved twice during middle and high school.

I am convinced without it, I am too shy, and I didn't have anything else really going for me, in terms of ways to get involved in the community. It was again, almost like the opening door for the community. The team, the larger value that the school or that a community puts on a team (Miriam, 9-6-01).

Two women had a profound effect on Miriam’s desire to stay involved in sport and physical activity. Miriam’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade basketball coach spent considerable time helping her develop her basketball skills. Miriam states, “She took great care of me. Then when I made the transition to high school, I was fanatically committed to my coach who is still a very good friend of mine (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Upon entering college, Miriam found that her basketball skills were not at the level needed to be competitive. Struggling with the fact that she spent more time on the bench than in games, Miriam quit basketball. She recalls: “That was the first time that I had a little bit of an identity crisis about myself because athletics had become a huge part of my life. Physical activity had been a huge part of my identity. I didn't know what I was going to do” (Miriam, 9-6-01). During this time, Miriam was introduced to field hockey and this sport quickly filled her sport identity void.

Due to her love of sport and physical activity, it seemed natural for Miriam to pursue a career in this area.<sup>32</sup> While Miriam was drawn to physical education, she had little, if any, desire to be a collegiate coach. “I never envisioned myself as being a collegiate coach” (Miriam, 9-7-01). In college and graduate school Miriam’s teachers instilled strong messages that the philosophy and values of physical education differed from the coaching. Her physical education mentors strongly urged her not to go into coaching insisting she was “better than that” and instead recommended she pursue a Ph.D. in physical education. For a while Miriam strongly considered

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<sup>32</sup> During the member check Miriam maintained that she does not consider herself a “jock”. Comparing herself to friends who watch sport on television and attend tournaments she stated “none of that interests me”.

their advice then “something shifted, the idea of going back for a Ph.D. got less and less appealing to me the more I had seen people in their tenure track positions struggle, either not getting tenure or getting ulcers trying to get tenure” (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam states that majoring in sport psychology began to pique her interest in coaching. While in graduate school she became immersed in a running community. Although she had run marathons prior to this time, this is when she first developed a love for and identity with running.<sup>33</sup> This passion continued and extended to triathlons during Miriam’s first job after graduate school. Even after graduate school, Miriam was still not looking for a collegiate coaching job: “So when I was looking for positions, I wasn’t necessarily looking for a coaching position. But with a master’s degree in physical education most, if not all, positions involve coaching” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam maintains that if she had not been offered the Baxter position she probably would have taken a teaching and coaching position at a private high school.

Miriam believes she got into coaching collegiate track and field “through the back door” as she had no prior track and field coaching or competitive experience, outside of road racing and marathons. Her coaching experiences were limited to a few years of high school basketball and tennis. Miriam stated, “Track was new to me. Track and field had not been something that I had ever been really exposed to” (Miriam, 9-6-01).

In summary, Miriam’s life long involvement in sport and physical activity led her to major in physical education. While she did not originally desire to be a collegiate coach, this career has fulfilled her desire to maintain a runner’s identity.

#### *Relationships with Athletes*

Perhaps the strongest reason for Miriam’s persistence in the profession is the athletes that she works with on a daily basis. A major force keeping Miriam in coaching is the opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with the women she coaches. “The best part of my job has

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<sup>33</sup> Miriam stated that it was mostly maintaining a running identity as opposed to a sport identity that has kept her in coaching

been in working with the kind of women that we have here” (Miriam, 9-25-01). Miriam is aware that the women she coaches at Baxter are perhaps different than at other colleges.

I feel like I am blessed to be at an institution like Baxter where we have bright women, some individually great athletes, but mostly just really unique individuals who are diverse in their background, eclectic in their thinking, in their way of life and I just really enjoy working with the kind of student that is here at Baxter (Miriam, 9-25-01).

Miriam is committed to helping her athletes succeed in all aspects of their lives. Athletes know Miriam has an open door policy. They also know she is quite busy so it is usually best to email her first. She does a lot of daily communication via email. Miriam encourages athletes to come talk with her, especially if she perceives they are having a difficult time in any aspect of their lives. Miriam spends time at the end of practice making sure her athletes are doing okay, (i.e. handling the pressures of school and competing). If she perceives a problem, she will encourage the athlete to stop by her office.

When asked what she would miss most if she left the coaching profession, Miriam stated that it would be the relationships and the interactions with her athletes. These relationships have changed over time. When Miriam first started coaching she was a “friend” to many of her athletes. Now she believes she has more of a “motherly” role in their lives. She enjoys watching them mature while at Baxter. One athlete noted “She definitely gets into our personal lives and stuff, in a good way. So you could tell immediately that she was very caring and interested in our well being on and off the cross country course” (Audrey, 10-26-01). Another athlete commented:

She really gets to an interpersonal level with you. If she wants to talk to you she will touch you on the shoulder, really lightly, and that is her way of becoming, like, almost stepping into a more personal level with people (Laura, 10-26-01).

When asked what she thinks Miriam likes most about her job, one athlete stated:

I think that she likes the fact that we turn to her and rely on her for helping. You know it is always a give and take. She doesn't just help us for us, I am sure that she enjoys it too. I

think the relationships that she forms with her athletes I am sure that she likes. So everything that we like about her, I am sure that it is reciprocated (Audrey, 10-26-01).<sup>34</sup>

This athlete also suggested that the only thing she could see prompting Miriam to get out of coaching would be “if she stopped getting the reinforcement that we give her” or “if her athletes didn't think so highly of her” (Audrey, 10-26-01). When asked what it would take for Miriam's athletes to not think so highly of her Audrey responded, “It would take for her to be just a different PERSON. You know, I can't imagine the athletes not loving her. So it would be for her to stop caring about us, stop caring about our personal lives” (10-26-01).

Athletes saw Miriam as a role model in that she is a strong and confident person and cares about the athletes on her team. A senior described how Miriam impacted her role as captain:

I really try to emulate Miriam in some ways, as being kind of a caring person that people could reach out to you and I feel almost...I have had pretty in depth conversations with almost every person on the team, and I really try to be supportive of everyone (Laura, 10-26-01).

Athletes keep in contact with Miriam after they leave Baxter. Several alumni come to meets and call or write Miriam. One athlete described being in Miriam's office one day when she received a phone call from an alumna who graduated in 1990:

Miriam remembered exactly who she was right away and talked to her for 30 minutes and I was sitting there and it was great. She said ‘that is her right there in’ ...you know this little tiny face in this little picture on the wall.... it was great. I think that she loves that (Laura, 10-26-01).

Miriam cherishes the relationships she has with her students as well. She often sees her students outside of class, either in the building or on other parts of the campus. Some students also drop by her office to check in with her regarding their progress on days when classes do not meet. Miriam offers words of encouragement and inquires about their day showing that she genuinely cares about them.

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<sup>34</sup> Miriam initially disagreed with this comment when she first read it during the member check process. She stated “It didn't feel true to me as I read it. In a way I see a lot of this [coach-athlete interactions] as a burden. But I think if I didn't have that I would miss it”.

## *Success*

Another individual factor keeping Miriam in coaching is the success that she has had with her teams at Baxter. Success took time as Miriam built the programs. She doubted her ability to coach and sometimes wondered why she was hired. After a “few good recruiting years” and having a couple of athletes advance to the national meet, Miriam’s confidence improved and she became increasingly devoted to the program and the institution. “Somewhere in 91-92 things just started to change. I knew something was going to happen and I didn't want to leave when it was just beginning to happen. I don't think I was conscious of it” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Once her teams experienced success, Miriam found it even harder to leave. She comments on the impact her top athletes had on her longevity, “I had committed in my head to staying through their tenure. So she [an All-American athlete] graduated in ‘94 and that is when Alison came [two-time national champion]. So it kind of just kept going. I don't want to leave while this person is here” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Success provided Miriam with a confidence boost in her coaching abilities. In 1994 she was voted regional coach of the year by her peers. Miriam describes this experience as “an incredible honor, and in many ways a pinnacle” mostly because she no longer had to question her coaching abilities (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Having the first national champion at the school was also huge: “Momentum was so strong and then having Alison win those two years was a big thing for Baxter. And that nobody had ever won a national championship of any kind at Baxter” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam believed the success had an impact on the administration’s view of Miriam as a coach:

It was one individual [referring to Alison] but it brought some notoriety to the school. And interestingly enough at that time, at the very time, the first national championship in 98, I was being challenged by my boss, [athletic director], and the member senior to me on my committee, that I should be working on my recruiting more and that the summer camp needed to go and that I needed to teach fewer classes (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam is convinced that these successes were instrumental in maintaining her job at Baxter. As a senior lecturer she is now evaluated every 5<sup>th</sup> year. Miriam is currently in the second

year of a 5-year contract and perceives that if she does not have continued success in these upcoming years that she will again be challenged by her athletic director and the other members of her evaluation committee. The athletic director is fairly clear in her goals for program success: “I want us to aim to be in the top third of the conference, and then we will win some, but you know what, below 500 is not going to work. And if not, tell me what you need” (Debra, 10-23-01). Miriam’s teams have consistently finished in the top half (often top third) in the conference championship. This past fall, although her team was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> going into the conference cross country championships, they finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, Miriam was not entirely pleased because she felt that her team could have finished 2<sup>nd</sup>. The top runner on the cross country team describes Miriam’s attitude about success. “It is important to her that we are competitive, but maybe not that we end up winning, that we do our best, that we are working hard, and that you are being competitive” (Melissa, 10-26-01).

In summary, the individual factors that have kept Miriam in coaching include the desire to maintain a running identity, maintain relationships with her athletes, field competitive teams, and help individual athletes achieve their potential.

#### *Structural Career Longevity Enhancers*

What follows is an explanation of the structural factors keeping Miriam in coaching. These two themes are departmental support and flexibility in Miriam’s daily work.

#### *Departmental Support for Teaching and Coaching*

The main reason Miriam was hired at Baxter was for her physical education and teaching background not her coaching abilities. Miriam loves the teaching part of her job and it attracted her to Baxter. All coaches at Baxter are required to teach courses in the Basic Skills Program. Miriam teaches four courses each semester such as swimming, running, hiking, and outdoor leadership. Miriam commented, “I am busy and don't have a lot of time. But most people coach and teach two classes when they are in season and pick up a half a semester class afterwards. I am

teaching three full semester classes and one half. So I am teaching one extra class [each semester] (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam is not compensated for the extra teaching. She does it because she enjoys it. “That is something that at this point in my career still interests me, because I still feel this passion for physical education” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam enjoys the interaction with students, and especially the challenge of teaching beginning swimming. Her classes are often filled with women who are terrified of the water. Over the course of a semester she helps them overcome their fears and teaches them basic swimming, water safety, and survival skills. Miriam commented:

I love that we can service people in that way. Nudge them into being active while they are here and beyond. I am really committed to that and that is something that we have wrestled with. The college has wrestled with giving up that requirement, but then again I think as a department we have really held on to it because we believe in it (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam finds that she often takes on extra work and then struggles with the increased time demands:

I took on an extra class...I create these classes, and it is my own fault. I had created an outdoor leadership skills course, and a hiking class, and I want to teach them so that is sort of my own...I just feel that if I do that then I have to accept that it is my responsibility, and I don't want to give up swimming. So it is my own fault. And again that is why I think I am still learning. And [Debra] did take one away from me. She asked me which one, so I do feel that I have a bit more breathing room (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam goes on to state that her teaching interests have “been supported and valued, by Debra anyway, as something that has added to the department” (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Baxter has also supported Miriam’s coaching efforts. During her interview Miriam was up front with the committee regarding her inexperience in coaching track and field and inquired how they would support her if she did get the job. She recalled, “I didn't sell myself short, but I just wanted to know ‘will you support me in going to clinics’ and I got a resounding yes. So I said okay. I liked the challenge of this. But it was really hard at first. It is still hard” (Miriam, 9-6-01). The department did support Miriam to attend clinics, purchase instructional videos and manuals, and take certification courses.



Miriam noted that the departments' focus on coaching has changed over the years. She was hired as a teacher who coaches but "now we coach [foremost] and we teach" (Miriam, 9-7-01). Although Miriam's background was rooted in physical education she does not perceive the change in philosophy to be negative. Miriam spoke to this conflict and how it impacted her:

It was hard because part of me, being raised in a physical education track much more than an athletic track, part of me understood that. But obviously the other part was NO, we need this to be successful, we need four shots [shot puts] instead of one shot. We need better facilities. We need to get this. We need to get that. (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam admits that her teams have improved greatly, from a performance standpoint, over the years. There is more emphasis now in fielding competitive teams. The current athletic director, who has been at Baxter for 11 years, has been instrumental in changing the image of athletics on campus and getting more support for the teams. Miriam commented:

She is incredible, she has always been a great advocate for us on campus. That has been a huge thing. Before [Debra's tenure] there wasn't a great parallel relationship with the president and our department and I think now there is. And I think before it was definitely 'oh those Phys. Ed. Coach people, what are they doing?' We didn't get money. There wasn't that support (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Despite the departmental change in focus, Miriam has been able to maintain a strong connection to her physical education roots. This is evident in her role as a journal reviewer, an accreditation reviewer, and her active participation at regional and national conferences. These aspects of her job, although time consuming and challenging, are rewarding and highly valued by the administration. Miriam also enjoys having faculty status for financial and professional reasons. Faculty members get "a higher rate of salary increases than the staff and a mortgage package" that is not available to staff members (Miriam, 9-25-01). Additionally the opportunity to be involved with campus events such as convocation, commencement and committees is appealing to Miriam.

#### *Flexibility of the Workday*

A major job perk for Miriam is the flexibility of her workday. Miriam's day is typically pretty busy and includes one or all of the following: teaching, coaching, meeting with athletes or

students, meeting with recruits, attending committee meetings. However she has flexibility to attend to non-work priorities as well. Miriam maintains she is not in coaching for the flexibility within her day however she stated:

When I hear someone else describing their day, I am very cognizant of the flexibility in my day and the many different things that make up the day. No one day is the same. Even though I may teach the same Monday-Wednesday and teach the same Tuesday-Thursday, there is always something different. Yesterday I had a recruit come in. Met with her for an hour, took her on a tour. That was a different part of my day. So every day has a different component (9-25-01).

She can walk her dog during lunch hour and complete her workout during the day. Sometimes this makes for a long day but Miriam believes it is worth it. “By biking yesterday I ended up here at work until 8:20 last night. That was okay with me, because that was a tradeoff. It does make for a long day, but it was my choice to spend an hour biking” (Miriam, 9-25-01).

Work flexibility extends to the summers. Summer camp has been a major part of Miriam’s life for the past 15 years and she is thankful to have her summers “off” from Baxter. Even though she is not at Baxter in the summer she still maintains her recruiting duties and checks in from time to time. It is evident that there are influential factors on an institutional level that have helped keep Miriam at Baxter and in coaching. In addition to these there are some social relation factors that have been influential in Miriam’s career longevity.

#### *Social Relations Career Longevity Enhancers*

Two themes emerged regarding social relation factors related to Miriam’s longevity in coaching. These include the influence of friends and role models in her life and the personal support she has received at Baxter.

#### *Friends and Role Models*

Miriam had plenty of role models early in her sports career though few were instrumental in getting her into coaching. However, once Miriam started coaching she sought help and support from friends and other coaches. Once at Baxter, Miriam found support from several women

coaches or administrators at other institutions. A volleyball coach helped Miriam develop confidence in her abilities. Miriam described the impact of this woman:

She said ‘you are going to have a national champion within three years’ and I remember thinking puh ... and it didn't happen in three years. It happened later than that and it was still exciting. But I loved that she could be supportive of that. And it made me feel that at least I was on the right track even though I didn't have a history and I didn't have a background in track and field, or in coaching cross country for that matter. But it felt helpful at that time for other people to feel supportive of me (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam maintains that a mechanism that has enabled her to stay in coaching over the years is “to make sure I support myself, surround myself with people who are supportive in my life” (Miriam, 10-23-01). Miriam’s closest friend Nadia is an associate athletic director at a nearby college and they talk on the phone nightly and meet about twice a month. It is helpful for Miriam because while Nadia understands coaching she does not work at Baxter.

When Miriam first started coaching at Baxter she received much support from a track and field coach at a neighboring college. This person had considerable experience and much success as a participant and coach of track and field. Miriam recalled the influence she had, “Annika is a huge, significant person for me” (Miriam, 10-24-01). Although Miriam states she often had to swallow her “pride”, she frequently sought event specific training and technical advice as well as equipment purchasing assistance from Annika. Further, she, Annika, and three other track and field coaches in the area formed a “track coaches club” that would meet monthly to discuss track and field related issues. Unfortunately, this “club” only lasted for a few years, as it dissolved when Annika left the area for another coaching position. Although it was short lived, the club was highly instrumental in providing Miriam with a much needed sport specific support group early in her career.

Miriam also points to the support she received from friends, outside of the department, especially in going forth with her petition to not coach three sports. “It was really helpful to have outside people reminding me that no it is not okay to work from 7 in the morning to 7 at night and then go home and do three hours [more work], and be away all weekend” (Miriam, 9-7-01).

### *Personal Support*

Miriam has been supported on a personal level at Baxter. Several years ago, Miriam was struggling emotionally and physically with the demands associated with coaching three seasons (cross country, indoor, and outdoor track and field). Miriam was the only coach in the department coaching three seasons. She determined that she averaged twice as many coaching contact hours as other coaches in the department. After encouragement from friends and a counselor, Miriam sought to drop one of her sports.

I went in to see Debra with this document that I typed up and prepared justifying why I should not be coaching three seasons, and at that point I didn't know what season I would give up, I just knew I couldn't do this again (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Initially, Debra said that her hands were tied and that finances were not available to support funding for another head coach for one of the sports.<sup>35</sup> Knowing she could not possibly continue coaching all three sports, Miriam went to the dean regarding this issue. Miriam stated that she hated to go over Debra's head, but felt she had no other options. Miriam proposed to drop indoor track and field. She related:

For me personally, coaching in the winter is really hard. Winters are still tricky for me having grown up in [the south]. I had a real struggle doing indoor. You know it gets dark before 4:30 and coaching indoor track, I had a real hard time being here from 4:30-6:30 or whatever it was and then going home in the dark. It was just cold, dark. I pushed to give that up really because I don't like the winter season (Miriam, 9-7-01).

The dean agreed to fund a part-time head coach of track and field, and since 1996 Miriam has not coached indoor track and field. Miriam insists "This was a huge, pivotal moment for me, because it is why I have stayed" (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam states that had she not gotten the administration's support to drop coaching indoor track and field, "I definitely would have gone" (Miriam, 9-7-01). In this case leaving Baxter would have also meant leaving coaching because Miriam recognizes that most Division III coaching jobs in track and field and cross country require a three season commitment.

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<sup>35</sup> During the member check Miriam related that she still has feelings of frustration that Debra could not support her petition to drop one sport.

It is rare to find separate coaches for an indoor and outdoor track and field team. Miriam acknowledged, “There is definitely something lost in that process. It works for me personally, but I think there are probably some disadvantages as well” (Miriam, 9-7-01). While the athletic director would prefer the same person coached both programs, she is committed to making this work. The athletic director described how she encourages her coaches to be open with her:

I need to know so I can either help you here, give you some relief, or be a support. And I know a number, probably everybody in our department has gone through, including myself, a pretty serious personal situation in the last 10-15 years. And they have been there for me; I have been there for them (Debra, 10-23-01).

One of Miriam’s athletes also noted the departments’ climate, “I think this is a supportive environment. She has good co-workers it seems. People are passionate about what they do here” (Melissa, 10-26-01). Miriam believes that at Baxter she does not have to hide who she is as a person. In previous work environments this was not the case. The athletic director explained the importance of personal support in the workplace:

We can fight for equity and we can fight for better budgets. We can fight for the number of scholarships you need, the same facilities, all this stuff. But if you are not supported on a personal level, you can't be yourself. Eventually it wears you down. And I have said that numerous times (Debra, 10-23-01).

Being comfortable at work and having support mechanisms outside of the workplace have been important for Miriam. Although Miriam has numerous longevity enhancers, she has also experienced challenges throughout her career. The following section details these challenges.

### *Career Longevity Challenges*

Three career longevity challenges emerged from the data. These are: lack of sport specific knowledge in the technical aspects of coaching track and field, balancing job responsibilities, and inequities within the department.

#### *Sport Specific Knowledge*

Early in her career at Baxter, Miriam doubted her ability to coach track and field because she lacked sport specific knowledge. She often wondered why Baxter hired her. Miriam

describes, “It was just my insecurity. I never felt [that the administration doubted her]. If anything it was ‘gosh you are doing great’” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Yet Miriam still doubted her ability. The number of events in track and field and the knowledge to understand the technical field events overwhelmed Miriam. She drew on her biomechanics background and stated that she would have never taken the job if she had not had that experience. But it was still a daunting task, as she did not have an assistant coach for her first six years at Baxter. Even when Miriam did get funding for an assistant coach, the coach’s expertise was in the same area as hers (distance running) so she let him coach the one area she felt comfortable in “to make use of his strength” (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam found it difficult to ask for help because she did not want her coaching colleagues to think that she did not know how to coach her sport. “I couldn't tell my peers that I was calling the Maxwell coach [Annika] and asking her for advice” (Miriam, 9-7-01). Miriam noted:

Looking back I know that everybody has a weakness in some events but it was very hard to admit that because, again I looked at Annika, someone who I just thought was God, and some of my other colleagues around here, and I didn't see them as struggling. That was a little hard, especially when I meet people and they ask me what my event was I couldn't say that I had been groomed in a certain way. And that was a real challenge for me (Miriam, 9-6-01).

Miriam also found it challenging to convey a level of confidence to her athletes about her coaching expertise. Miriam admits that she felt intimidated:

I think the hardest part about those early years was being truthful, because I couldn't hide it, to students, that I didn't know how to coach triple jump, but being very committed to saying I will do whatever it takes to learn. It is still hard, because there would be this occasional very experienced woman who wanted to be brought to another level. I felt as a coach, that I had to be somewhere between making sure they had confidence in me but also being honest and saying ‘I've got to learn more’. All my spare time at that point was spent at night I would be watching video tapes I would be writing things down I would be reading (Miriam, 9-6-01).

The paradox in this is that Miriam wanted to recruit hard and have successful athletes on her team but at the same time she was intimidated by the challenges of coaching high caliber athletes.

Miriam does wonder how her colleagues at other schools manage to coach all three sports and keep balance in their lives: “They seem like they have pretty good balance in their life. They

seem pretty comfortable, at ease. They work hard, they have successful programs, and I don't know how they do it" (Miriam, 9-7-01).

One of Miriam's biggest challenges lately has been her inability to train and run competitively for the past four years. She feels out of touch with her team and less of a role model for them because she is unable to run with them in practice or stay fit by running. Further, as a consequence of not running, she has gained weight and struggles with that. While Miriam says she still struggles from time to time with confidence, her athletes do not perceive this:<sup>36</sup>

Miriam is very self-confident and so much of a role model. She carries herself so well. I think that a lot of people really look up to her and wish that we could be that strong and strive to be like as strong as she is (Audrey, 10-26-01).

### *Balancing Responsibilities*

Miriam has struggled with effectively balancing her work responsibilities. The time demanded to be successful at her job is a challenge to Miriam. She often feels:

I can't keep up with it. Because whether it is planning for a class or recruiting stuff, or departmental stuff, I am always working at home. I usually do recruiting stuff at home. And that is okay, but I prefer not to live that kind of life, not to have that kind of pace (Miriam, 9-7-01).

Miriam struggles to find time for herself, especially time to exercise. Miriam stated that this has changed over the years, especially in that she is not running anymore.

When I was more fit I committed more time a day, at least an hour of actual running time and then shower time. Now that I am less fit, a workout, other than biking, on the bike, I can do it in 45 minutes.... it is still an important priority but in some ways that is the hardest to juggle, because it is easy to say 'oh I can just get more work done' and then not workout (Miriam, 10-23-01).

Miriam stated that the administrative duties and department and committee meetings are a source of frustration. "We have brainstorming meetings, we have crisis type meetings, we have meetings about admissions, we have meetings about this. In an already busy day sometimes I find

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<sup>36</sup> During the member check Miriam stated, "I think I appear very confident to my athletes. Where I don't feel confident is comparing myself to other coaches".

myself getting a little frustrated that those pop up” (Miriam, 9-25-01). Miriam also finds her duties as a journal reviewer to be an additional time demand.

The athletic director realizes the time commitment her coaches give. While she recognizes they have lives outside of coaching, she also believes they need to put in long hours to be successful. “I have high expectations here. Sometimes during your season, you spend a lot of time here. Yeah, and I expect that” (Debra, 10-23-01).

Often Miriam feels overwhelmed by the number of athletes who need to see her before or after practice. She feels rushed prior to practice in helping take care of her athletes who have more concerns or issues now than 10 years ago. Recently she has had numerous athletes dealing with eating disorders and other emotional issues. Currently, Miriam has one athlete who is battling cancer. Miriam often feels ill prepared to deal with these issues and that they “take away from the technical aspects of the sport.....I like the personal side of coaching but I also find it hard, hard to do both....let me be the team psychologist or let me be the technical coach” (Miriam, 10-24-01).

Continually dealing with the personal side of coaching takes its toll on Miriam. “I feel so depleted at the end of practice, not because I have been coaching. Not because I have been yelling out times and splits. That stuff is great. It is this stuff” (Miriam, 10-24-01). Miriam went on to explain that, “if there is anything that is zapping my energy and strength it is that. I don't know what to call THAT, you know it is personal involvement. And yet on the other hand it is rewarding” (Miriam, 10-24-01). Her athletes notice the time and energy Miriam spends with them “I think that people seek her out as like a counselor almost. As someone to lean on” (Laura, 10-26-01). The administration has noticed the time and energy she spends with her athletes. However, over the years it has been noted in Miriam’s evaluations that she is too involved in her athletes’ personal lives. Miriam commented:

They have written down that I am too...I don't know if they use the word too understanding, but that I am perhaps too lenient or too kind and then the counseling



center with [an athlete] a couple of years ago said...they were critical that I was too open, not that I was too open, that I was too involved in their personal life and I should just let them deal with it (Miriam, 10-24-01).

This is bothersome for Miriam because she is just trying to help her athletes and would never want to turn away or refuse to help but she also recognizes the emotional and physical toll this involvement has had on her.<sup>37</sup>

It appears that Miriam wants to do it all, by playing many roles in her athletes' lives, juggling a teaching overload with coaching two sports, and committing herself to professional assignments outside of Baxter. While she struggles to balance the different aspects of her job and maintain a personal life she does not seem willing to give up other parts of her professional responsibilities.

#### *Department Issues*

Several department issues have challenged Miriam. These include, inadequate event hosting facilities, poor funding for assistant coaches, inequities in media coverage, and lack of close friends on staff.

Facilities, especially the outdoor track, have been a sore point for Miriam over the years. The outdoor track only has six lanes (standard for competition is eight lanes) and is in desperate need of resurfacing. Last year the athletic facilities, with the exception of the outdoor track, underwent renovations. One of Miriam's athletes stated that the outdoor track "just got brushed aside" (Melissa, 10-26-01). Miriam maintains that she can no longer host cross country meets because of a narrow and short course. Miriam has not gotten support from the administration to either change the existing course or find other alternatives. There is a golf course adjacent to Baxter that is used by the golf team. After years of trying, Miriam has finally gotten permission to run some practices there, however it is unlikely that she will ever get to host a meet there.

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<sup>37</sup> During the member check process Miriam reflected upon the comments her committee members have made along with the comments of her athletes regarding her "personal touch" with coaching and wondered "maybe I am too close to them. Maybe that is something that is not appropriate....but that is who I am".

Further, Miriam perceives inequities in the administrative support for hosting home events:

We haven't hosted a cross country or track meet in three years, but when we did it drove me crazy. Basketball, [field] hockey and some other sports got complete coverage from the administrators in terms of setting up meetings and getting reception rooms, complimentary beverages and things. For track or cross country it was all up to me to a point that I yelled about that and gradually it changed but in my mind not sufficiently (Miriam, 10-24-01).

Another challenge concerns budgetary support for assistant coaches. It took six years for Miriam to get funding for an assistant coach and when it happened the funding was so poor that it was difficult to find proper help, especially help in coaching the field events. Assistant coach pay is low, across the board at Baxter, especially compared to most other schools in the conference. The athletic director noted: "That has been a big issue for them, is assistant coaches to help with recruiting as well as the contact and work with the student-athletes. I think that has been a major one over the last five years" (Debra, 10-23-01).

Miriam also perceives a lack of coverage for her sports in the department and campus wide. She recalls very little coverage when one of her athletes won the national championship title. This student was the first national champion at the college (in any sport) and yet the school did little, at first, to recognize this achievement. Instead, Miriam had to go to her athletic director and encourage her to publicly acknowledge the achievement.

Finally, Miriam is not close with too many people in the department. At one point she had close ties with several coaches on staff. However within the past five years there has been considerable coach turnover and Miriam has lost some close friends. Additionally, the newer coaches on staff have bonded and do quite a bit of socializing together. Miriam feels left out of their "circle", in part, because she is older.<sup>38</sup> Miriam is closest with the swim coach, who provides more professional support, and with secretary who provides personal support.

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<sup>38</sup> Recently Miriam has perceived that new coaches are valued more by the athletic administration and receive more accolades than coaches with greater institutional longevity.

### *Career Longevity Coping Mechanisms*

Two major coping mechanisms to help counter the career related challenges emerged from the data. Over the years Miriam has gone through numerous channels to seek assistance and support to do her job better. Also Miriam has set and maintained boundaries as a means to escape from the pressures of the seemingly “all-consuming” profession of coaching.

#### *Persistence in Seeking Support*

It seems that often in her career, and especially early on, Miriam was constantly swallowing her “pride” in an effort to become a better coach. While she may not have liked doing it, Miriam actively sought out support from other coaches and colleagues throughout her coaching career.<sup>39</sup> Miriam recalls the internal struggles she would have going to Annika, a track and field coach at a neighboring college, for help. Still it did not stop her because: “I had to make sure I was doing the best for my students. Even if it meant sometimes having to be humble” (9-7-01). Miriam was also very persistent in learning as much about each event as possible. In addition to self-learning through videos and books, Miriam went to track and field coaching clinics and went through the coaching certification process.

A few years ago, when Miriam was coaching her national champion thrower, she sought out the help of a throws coach from another program. More recently, because of her inability to run with the cross country team, Miriam secured funding (albeit minimal) to hire an assistant cross country coach who could run with her team. These situations highlight Miriam’s persistence in seeking support and her ability to be honest and expose her limitations in an effort to help her teams.

#### *Solidifying Boundaries*

A way that Miriam has attempted to cope with career challenges involves setting and maintaining stricter boundaries that separate her professional and private lives. This includes

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<sup>39</sup> Miriam clarified that she was never afraid of asking for help but she also did not hide the knowledge that she had and felt it important to let it be known that she was knowledgeable about certain areas.

“escapes” during the day, at night, and in the summer. While Miriam spends roughly 10 hours at work each day, she schedules breaks that typically include walking her dog Zeus and exercising. Zeus, is a major priority in her life and goes many places with her. The walks she takes with him, through nearby woods and trails, usually last a minimum of 20-30 minutes. Miriam typically devotes 30 or more minutes to working out during her workday. This time spent away from Baxter helps Miriam to clear her mind and give her a break from a fairly hectic schedule.

Miriam admits she requires “a lot of private time” (10-23-01). She lives in Bayport, a town located roughly 30 minutes, by car, from Baxter. Bayport is an attractive place to live because it is a bigger town, has more to offer, and provides a way for Miriam to physically separate herself from Baxter and maintain her “private time”. One athlete commented that earlier in the season Miriam had invited the team over to her house. She called it “a rare event” because in her four years at Baxter no one on the team had ever been to Miriam’s place. This athlete commented on the role that living away from Baxter has for Miriam:

I know that she does take time for herself. She lives in Bayport, which is a half hour away. She is able to kind of separate herself from school. I was thinking about that, oh I wished Miriam lived closer, but I think it is good for her in a way because she spends so much time and so much effort at school, to have her own separate place where she can go and just kind of be alone (Laura, 10-26-01).

Miriam maintains that most times when she gets home she is “just so fried” from all the interaction with people she has had during the day (10-24-01). She rarely answers the phone, except to talk to her friend Nadia: “That time feels really important to me. Last night I lit a candle and I still had to do some school work, nothing too intense. I had to check my email. But that alone time feels real important” (Miriam, 10-23-01).

Finally during the summer Miriam’s way of “getting away” from her job is by devoting herself to the summer camp. This camp is located in another state. Miriam spends two months there. During this time she is away from a phone and has minimal use of email. It is a great way

for her to get away from Baxter, however it is still two months of fairly demanding work thus leaving Miriam with little vacation time.<sup>40</sup>

Seeking support and getting away have been two ways in which Miriam has attempted to combat the coaching challenges. However it does not seem as if Miriam can ever fully get away from some form of work as she spends over nine months coaching and teaching and two months working at camp.

### *Summary*

While Miriam got into collegiate coaching “through the back door” she quickly created a niche for herself and has been quite successful. In general, her athletes and, to a lesser extent, her students keep her in the profession. It is clear that there have been challenges over the years. The personal support she has received from Baxter is unique and a substantial career longevity enhancer. It is fairly evident that had she not been able to give up coaching indoor track and field, she would no longer be coaching. However, balancing her various job duties is still her greatest challenge. Miriam has struggled with trying to be everything to everybody. She has been encouraged by the administration and members of her review committee to cut back on her teaching and to spend less time with her athletes outside of normal practice hours. Although she has relinquished some professional responsibilities outside of Baxter she still voluntarily teaches an overload. In some ways Miriam has addressed the symptoms but not causes of this challenge.<sup>41</sup> For instance, even when Miriam “gets away” from work, she is still involved in some aspect of work.

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<sup>40</sup> Miriam stated that she does not know how to use “down-time”. She recalled that the one summer she stayed home with her partner instead of doing camp, “I was miserable”. However she believes that if she were to start a relationship with someone now that she would rethink doing camp.

<sup>41</sup> When Miriam read this she was initially defensive and thought “I am coping just fine”, however as she thought about it more it “rang true” and she had “an internal sigh of understanding”. However she still struggles with “not necessarily knowing what to do about it or how to do it differently because it is the way that I have done it for all these years”.

## CHAPTER 5

### CROSS CASE ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors associated with career longevity of four women collegiate cross country and track and field coaches. In particular the research focused on career longevity enhancers, challenges, and coping mechanisms employed by these coaches. Data were examined from individual, structural, and social relations perspectives in an effort to determine the myriad of factors impacting their persistence in the coaching profession. Data for each individual case are provided in chapter four. This chapter presents findings from and discussions of the cross case analysis for each research question. The cross case analysis is followed by research conclusions, implications for coaches, athletic administrators, and policy makers, and recommendations for future research.

#### Cross Case Analysis

A cross case analysis was performed to determine similarities and differences among cases relative to the research questions. Four collegiate coaches of track and field and cross country served as participants in this study. Demographic and professional data for each coach are provided for comparison purposes in Table 5.1. Each coach had a minimum of 15 years collegiate track and field and cross country experience. All coaches had coaching experience as an assistant college coach or head high school coach prior to their first collegiate coaching experience.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Total Coaching Experience</b>	<b>Head Collegiate Track and Field/Cross Country Experience</b>
Elaine	47	M.S. Exercise Physiology	Partner, no children	25 Years	21 years at the same NCAA Division III institution.
Katy	49	M.S. Exercise Physiology	Partner, three children	27 Years	26 Years, at 3 different institutions (NCAA III or II). 21 years at same institution.
Maya	52	M.S. Physical Education	Partner, no children	30 Years	25 years at 5 different institutions (NCAA I, II and III). Last 10 years at NCAA III.
Miriam	44	M.S. Sport Psychology	Single, no children	20 Years	16 years at the same NCAA Division III institution.

Table 5.1. Cross Case Demographic, Education, and Work Experience Information.

### *Career Longevity Enhancers*

The first research question sought to determine the career longevity enhancers for the coaches in this study. Five themes emerged: strong socialization and support systems, desire to work with athletes, program success, institutional and professional commitment, and power and gendered dynamics of the department. Each of these themes is discussed in the following section.

#### *Strong Socialization and Support Systems*

Lawson (1983) described occupational socialization as the social influences directing and shaping one's entry and subsequent acculturation into a profession. Anderson and Gill (1983) stated that socialization into a coaching profession "involves the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills, along with the internalization of occupational norms and values resulting in the development of a sense of occupational identity" (p. 105). The following factors enhanced the socialization process for these coaches: they were passionate lifelong sport participants, they had strong sport and movement specific educational backgrounds, and they had coaching and

teaching experience prior to their first head coaching job. Each of these factors is described in more detail below.

The four coaches in this study began a socialization process into the coaching profession at an early age. All were enthusiastic and passionate about sport and participated in a variety of sports growing up. There were more similarities among Elaine, Katy, and Maya than Miriam partly because they had siblings who were athletic and had fewer opportunities in organized sport. Elaine, Katy and Maya spoke of their success as backyard sportspersons and all wished they had more organized sporting opportunities growing up. However, the fact that they did not have organized sporting opportunities prior to high school, and limited ones in high school did not deter them from becoming avid and competent sportspersons. As an only child, Miriam's early sporting experiences were primarily in organized sport. She started competitive swimming at age five and basketball at 12. She recalled how girl's basketball was "huge" in her home state and had a tremendous impact on her, especially in helping her adjust to new hometowns during frequent moves as a child.

Only Maya and Elaine participated in track while in high school and only during their senior years. Maya was an instrumental force in getting the track and field program added at her high school. While high school experiences were limited, all participants competed in multiple sports while in college (including volleyball, basketball, track and field, swimming, field hockey and gymnastics). Maya, Elaine, and Katy competed in collegiate track and field and all achieved considerable success in this sport.

Elaine and Maya both knew at a young age (middle school/junior high) that they wanted to become a coach. Katy did not decide upon a career in coaching until late in college. Meanwhile it was not until after Miriam got her Master's degree in sport psychology that she pursued a collegiate coaching job. Even though career decisions were made at different times, each participant obtained specific sport and movement content knowledge while in college and



graduate school. They each majored in physical education as undergraduates and received a teaching certificate. At the time physical education was a likely major for a prospective coach. Elaine, Miriam, and Maya worked for a short time as high school or middle school teachers and coaches before going to graduate school and eventually to college coaching. All received their master's degree in physical education or a related field prior to obtaining their first collegiate coaching position (see Table 5.1). Finally, participants had some coaching experience, either as a graduate assistant or as a high school coach prior to obtaining their first collegiate head coaching job. This experience ranged from one year for Katy to five years for Maya.

The strong socialization patterns exhibited by these coaches are similar to previous research results indicating women coaches are indeed qualified to coach due to previous experiences and educational backgrounds (Anderson & Gill, 1983; Barber, 1998; Hasbrook et al., 1990). These results are also similar to that of Theberge (1988) who found that prior sport experiences served as strong career socializing forces for the women coaches in her study.

Once in the coaching profession each coach received strong personal and professional support. The sources of this support differed but the magnitude did not. Primary sources of support came from outside of the institution and included partners, friends, community members, and role models. Katy and Elaine received tremendous support from their partners. Both of their partners were actively involved in their coaching lives and moved in order for Katy and Elaine to start their first coaching jobs. Elaine's partner coaches the same sport (for men) at her institution. Katy's partner was a former collegiate cross country and track and field coach and has assisted her for the past several years. Katy's partner's greatest support was his role as a father. He was the primary caretaker of their three children and Katy believed she would have been unable to remain a career coach without this support. Maya's partner was instrumental over the years in helping her host meets. Both have demanding jobs and understand the time commitments involved and Maya's need to work long hours during the week and on weekends.

Throughout her coaching career, Miriam has relied on support from friends and coaches at nearby institutions. This support was especially important to Miriam when she first started coaching. Friends have also played an important role for Katy. One thing that helped keep Katy in coaching over the years is “having friends that support you inside and outside of the profession. Friends that don’t care whether your team wins or loses” (11-8-01).

Maya and Katy were active members of their communities. Their community networking was a way for them to distance themselves from work, however it also provided various avenues of work related support. In many ways the networks they developed with individuals outside the athletic department helped them maintain appropriate work boundaries and not get too caught up in their daily work.

Maya was the only coach to access an “old girls’ network”. This network has been influential since her college days and played a tremendous role in Maya’s socialization into coaching and also throughout her coaching moves. She still relies on this group of women coaches and administrators for support and camaraderie. Physical education rather than coaching role models were influential for Miriam, while Katy relied on mostly male coaching role models to “learn the ropes”. Role models were never instrumental for Elaine, because, as she stated, “I knew what I wanted to do” at an early age (3-8-02).

These findings are very similar to those of Inglis et al. (2000) who found that former coaches and administrators received a sense of support and empowerment “from various outside connections” (p. 8) and they highlighted the importance of having support mechanisms both in and out of the workplace.

#### *Desire to Work with Athletes*

Each participant asserted that what attracted them to and kept them in coaching was the opportunity to work with, develop, and provide opportunities for women athletes. This was the most cherished part of their jobs. However what each coach derived from working with athletes

differed. For instance, Elaine was driven by motivating her athletes to succeed and become “self-sufficient” women. Maya was primarily interested in providing opportunities for young women through coaching and mentoring. Miriam played more of a nurturing role in the lives of her athletes. Katy’s role was multifaceted and, in many ways, a combination of the above roles.

Each coach spent between two and three hours daily at practice coaching athletes. Most of this time was spent working with groups of athletes or the whole team. Rarely did this time allow for one on one coaching. The amount of time each coach spent with her athletes outside of practice varied considerably and appeared to be a function of other job duties, office location relative to the rest of campus, and the number of athletes on the team. For instance, out of the four coaches Elaine spent the most time with her athletes beyond general practice time. On average she spent about 2-3 hours a day meeting with athletes individually and valued this aspect of her job. Many of these meetings occurred while Elaine was working in advising (when her schedule allowed). Her teams are moderately sized (21 cross country, 35 track and field) and her advising and coaching offices are centrally located on campus making it convenient for student-athletes to “stop-in”. The rest of the participants’ offices were located “off the beaten path” thus decreasing the likelihood that athletes could just “drop by” during the day and most did not.

Due to the size of her teams (50 cross country, 70 track and field), Katy could not meet with each athlete individually during the season. She met athletes formally, only as needed; for instance if problems or special situations arose. However she often casually visited with her athletes either at the campus center or at the local coffee shop. Meanwhile, Miriam had the heaviest teaching load of the four coaches, teaching four activity courses each semester. Her teams were similar in size to Elaine’s. Depending on the day and her schedule, Miriam spent about 1-2 hours meeting with athletes either before or after practice.

Maya met with each of her athletes once or twice a season for goal setting meetings. She had the smallest teams (17 cross country, 20 track and field). She was the only coach who had a

formal mentoring role for assistant coaches and spent a minimum of 4-5 hours each week meeting with her assistants and discussing their progress.

It is fairly common for coaches to cite working with athletes as one of the most valued aspects of their job or in the case of former coaches, what they miss most about coaching (Inglis et al., 2000; Weiss et al., 1991). Maya and Katy reiterated several times that it was the athletes who kept them going through the tough times. They were willing to put up with the daily “crap” and the negative aspects of coaching for the opportunity to work with athletes. This finding is similar to that of Inglis et al. (2000) who found that for many women coaches it was “the athletes who made the work environment supportive” (p. 12).

### *Program Success*

A consistent theme in the data was the impact of program success on career longevity. All of the coaches experienced programmatic success over the years. From a winning standpoint, Elaine has clearly been the most successful coach, having won numerous national team championships and numerous conference championships in her 21-year career. Katy’s cross country teams had numerous top 15 finishes at nationals and several conference championship crowns. Miriam’s team had won two conference championships and she had coached a two-time national champion. Maya had also won two conference championships, coached several All-American’s and experienced success at all NCAA levels.

When discussing what it meant to be a successful coach, each coach went beyond objective measures of success (i.e. win/loss records) and spoke of the importance of creating a balanced environment and supporting well-rounded athletes. It was evident that their holistic view of success was in line with the Division III philosophy that espouses a balance between academics and athletics. For instance, Katy indicated success was for her athletes to learn, improve and grow and “if we happen to win along the way that is great” (Katy, 10-5-01). Maya concurred with this in stating her goal was to have “well rounded individuals come out of our

program and have a good experience in all aspects of it” (Maya, 9-27-01). Elaine defined success as striving for excellence in all areas of life. She felt her role, as a coach, was to motivate athletes to reach their potential on and off the track. Miriam described success as a coach as being a good role model for her athletes and fielding competitive teams (as defined by being in the top 3 in conference) without having a “win at all costs” mentality. One of her athletes noted that Miriam defined success as her athletes having a balance “socially, academically, and athletically” (Audrey, 10-26-01). Based on their definitions of success, each coach perceived that they had been successful over their careers.

Success impacted career longevity for each coach, however differences existed in the relationship between success and longevity. Of the four coaches, winning was clearly most important for Elaine. She stated that had she not been successful she would have never stayed in coaching. Her athletes, assistant coach, and athletic director echoed this sentiment. Miriam was the only one who felt her job would be in jeopardy had her teams, or individuals on her teams, not been successful. There was a link between perceived coaching competence, success and longevity. For Katy, Elaine, and Maya, having success as athletes impacted their perceived competence in coaching. They were all highly successful and fiercely competitive track and field athletes. These experiences provided them with confidence in their coaching abilities especially early in their coaching days. Miriam doubted her coaching ability at first because of her lack of sport specific knowledge and athletic experience in track and field. However Miriam’s confidence and perceived coaching competence increased once she started learning more about the technical aspects of the sport and having success at an individual and team level. Further, once her athletes started experiencing success, Miriam felt more committed to the program and her athletes: “So it kind of just kept going. I don't want to leave while this person is here” (Miriam, 9-7-01).

The success and longevity relationship found in this study is similar to previous research findings in coaching and business. In examining current and former coaches' motivation to persist in or withdraw from the coaching profession Weiss and Stevens (1993) found that program success was significantly more important for current than former coaches. The current findings indicate that all of the participants had experienced program success and this was at least a factor keeping them in coaching. The success, perceived competence and longevity relationship has also been supported by previous research. Weiss and Stevens (1993) and Barber (1998) found that current coaches perceived a lack of competence as a reason to leave the coaching profession. In studying career success of university faculty members, Van Eck Peluchette (1993) found that perceived self-competency positively correlated with subjective measures of career success. Considering these research findings, it does make sense that program success and high levels of competence are related to longevity for these coaches. Further, it is evident that it took time for each coach to develop her program into a successful program from a win/loss standpoint.

#### *Institutional and Professional Commitment*

In all cases participants felt strongly committed to their institutions. With the exception of Maya, each coach had spent between 80-100% of her coaching career at one institution. None expressed any desire to leave their current position for another collegiate coaching position. Elaine felt "valued" by the administration at Gorham who indicated their appreciation of her hard work, dedication, and the notoriety her programs had brought to the school. Katy felt strong philosophical ties to Dekan and valued her students and her tenure status. Maya valued working at a women's college and in a liberal environment. Miriam also valued those aspects of her work environment, but was particularly committed to her institution because she perceived they were committed to keeping her in coaching and at Baxter.

Table 5.2 details the institutional longevity data for each participant and other coaches at their respective institution. These data show that Miriam, Katy, and Elaine are all "senior" staff

members at their institution. Elaine has the greatest longevity of any coach at her institution. Katy is surpassed in longevity only by the men’s track and field and cross country coach and the men’s swimming coach (both men). There are only two coaches, a man and a woman, who have two more years of longevity than Miriam. The coaches at Maya’s institution have the greatest longevity of the four institutions and she had several coaches senior to her on staff.

<b>Participant (Institution)</b>	<b>Participant Longevity<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Mean (Range) Institutional Longevity of Head Coaches<sup>b</sup></b>		
		<b>Female Coaches</b>	<b>Male Coaches</b>	<b>All Coaches</b>
Elaine (Gorham)	21	11.70 (2-21)	10.90 (2-20)	11.19 (2-21)
Katy (Dekan)	20	11.00 (4-20)	11.23 (2-32)	11.17 (2-32)
Maya (Fridley)	10	14.29 (2-23)	9.50 (2-25)	13.13 (2-25)
Miriam (Baxter)	16	4.22 (1-18)	8.25 (2-18)	6.85 (2-18)

<sup>a</sup> At current institution, measured years. <sup>b</sup> Measured in years.

Table 5.2. Cross Case Institutional Longevity Data.

Data from each school show that the participants in this study were not the only coaches with institutional longevity. In all schools except Baxter coaches’ mean longevity was greater than ten years. Aggregate longevity data from NCAA Institutions are not available, however it is believed that the mean institutional longevity of coaches at Gorham, Dekan, and Fridley would be above average, especially for women coaches. Although Lee et al. (2000) found institutional longevity was not related to professional commitment, the lack of turnover in three of the departments appears to be a positive institutional quality.

While all coaches indicated a strong institutional commitment, all but Miriam indicated a stronger commitment to the profession of coaching than to their institution. For instance, their reasons for staying in coaching had more to do with a love of coaching than a desire to work at

their institution. Miriam, however, felt a stronger commitment to Baxter College than to the profession of coaching strictly due to Baxter's commitment to her in funding an indoor track and field coach. Miriam knows that her job as head cross country and outdoor track and field coach is rare. She has no desire to coach three sports again and does not envision leaving Baxter unless she decides to change careers.

Professional commitment was also related to a lack of desirable career alternatives. For instance, Elaine stated, "I can't come up with anything else that I would rather be doing. And I have even asked my friends and they are at a loss too" (Elaine, 8-30-01). Only lately have Miriam, Maya, and Katy thought of alternative careers. Several years ago Miriam thought of becoming a social worker but was dissuaded due to financial reasons (i.e. giving up a good paying job to go back to school). Recently, Maya has thought of an administrative career in higher education while Katy toyed with the idea of starting a community health and wellness program for women. These thoughts are typically short lived because the coaching career "fits them". An interesting paradox is that even though there is an apparent lack of alternate career options or desire to pursue other careers, each coach believed that could not coach "forever". Citing physical and emotional energy limitations, Elaine, Maya, and Katy believe they have between five and eight years of full-time coaching "left in them". Beyond that, they each believe they will stay involved in coaching in some fashion. For instance, Maya stated that she could not see herself "fully retiring" and that she would keep her hand in coaching and providing sport opportunities to youth.

There is a lack of research on professional or institutional commitment in coaching. Business research has focused on institutional more so than professional commitment however, recent findings indicate a positive relationship between institutional commitment and professional commitment (Lee et al., 2000; Wallace, 1993). In the current research it appears that institutional and professional commitment have facilitated career longevity. While three coaches had stronger



professional than institutional commitment, they felt a strong institutional tie. Further the findings of strong institutional philosophical ties for Katy, and valuing the women’s college environment for Miriam and Maya are interesting in light of Lee et al.’s (2000) meta-analysis findings that value-based organizational ties are positively correlated to professional commitment.

*Gender and Power Dynamics*

The gender and power dynamics of each coach’s athletic department had an impact on their career satisfaction and longevity. Table 5.3 details institutional and departmental data for each case. Two of the coaches worked at coeducational institutions, while two worked at women’s colleges. Acosta and Carpenter (2002) found that, on average, NCAA Division III institutions have less than half their women’s programs coached by women. Women coached over 70% of the women’s programs at Gorham, Fridley, and Baxter and 54% at Dekan.

<b>Institution (Participant) Inst. Type</b>	<b>Athletic Director Gender</b>	<b>Varsity Sports Offered</b>		<b>Head Coaches on Staff <sup>a</sup> (Gender %)</b>		<b>Women’s Sports Coached by Female Head Coach <sup>b</sup></b>
		<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
Gorham (Elaine) State, Coed	Male	11	10	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)	72.72%
Dekan (Katy) Private, Coed	Female	13	14	5 (27.8%)	13 (72.2%)	53.85%
Fridley (Maya) Private, Women’s	Female	15	0	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	73.33%
Baxter (Miriam) Private, Women’s	Female	15	0	9 (69.2%)	4 (30.8%)	73.33%

<sup>a</sup> Some coaches coach more than one sport.

<sup>b</sup> At all institutions, 100% of the men’s sports were coached by men.

Table 5.3. Cross Case Institutional and Departmental Gender Data.

The fact that three of the athletic directors in this study were women should not be overlooked as Acosta and Carpenter (2002) show that women hold only 27.6% of the athletic director positions at Division III institutions. Further, women athletic directors are more likely to

have women coaches for their women's programs than their male counterparts (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). Stangl and Kane (1991) used the term homologous reproduction to describe the phenomenon in which the gender of the athletic director impacts the gender of those hired. It would appear that in three cases (institutions with a woman athletic director) homologous reproduction did occur in the hiring of coaches for the women's programs.

An "old-boy's network" was essentially non-existent in Miriam's and Maya's athletic departments. There were predominantly women coaches on staff and all of the athletic administrators were female which is rare in athletic programs. Katy and Elaine stated that the 'old boy's network' was either dissolved or dying fast. Katy attributed this to a female athletic director, while Elaine stated "I do everything in my power to break the 'good old boys' club'" (8-30-01) noting that the associate (woman) and athletic director (man) were both proactive in this matter.

From a gender perspective these coaches were not alone in their departments. However, an interesting finding was that none of them were close with their female coaching peers. Miriam stated that the coach she was closest to on staff was a man. However, she also stated that it would be "weird" to work in a male-dominated environment. Of the four coaches Elaine was closest to two coaches (women) in the department but those interactions were limited. Considering this, the impact that gender proportion had on career longevity for these women was unclear. It appears that it was not necessarily the gender proportion, rather the lack of an "old-boys' network" facilitated perhaps by the gender proportion, that provided a positive work environment for these women.

The lack of an "old-boys' network" and gender proportion with the departments appeared to impact these coaches' access to power. Kanter (1977a) defined power in the workplace as the ability to mobilize resources and have autonomy to complete your job. Elaine had the greatest access to power with a close working relationship with the athletic director, perceived autonomy,

and the necessary resources to run her program the way she saw fit. These resources included two part-time assistant track and field coaches (full-time staff members) who worked exclusively with the women's program. No other coach in this study had an assistant coach who was a full-time staff member. Maya did not have much autonomy within the athletic department but sought access to institutional resources from other areas of the campus. She had a "sisterhood" with the college President, also a woman of color, and alliances with other individuals on campus who helped her achieve personal and team related goals. She had strong contacts with individuals in the institutional diversity department, college relations, and buildings and grounds and used many of these connections to support her efforts to get a new outdoor track.

Katy also had numerous ties with people on campus who could assist her in hosting meets and taking care of her large team (i.e. athletic training staff). She had few, if any, restrictions on her program budget and had the longest tenure of any woman coach on staff. Further, her tenure status afforded her a form of power that many of her colleagues did not have. Katy was the only coach in this study who had tenure or was in a tenure track position. Miriam, by virtue of her senior lecturer status and her longevity at Baxter also had power. She had autonomy in the type of courses she taught and was successful in negotiating not to coach indoor track and field. These were factors that related to her job satisfaction and persistence in the profession.

It was evident that it took time for each coach to develop access to power. Knoppers (1987) maintained that those who lack power often behave in cautious and inflexible ways. This was certainly true early in Katy's career. Once she received tenure she felt she could address Title IX battles in her department and fight back against the years of harassment she had endured. Tenure, for Katy, was definitely a "powerful" thing.

The women in this study appeared to have greater access to resources and power than women coaches in previous research studies (Hovden, 1999; Inglis et al., 2000; Knoppers et al.,

1991). Additionally, findings from Van Eck Peluchette (1993) indicated that availability of resources was related to career success for university faculty members. Therefore, it would make sense that the access these women had to power enhanced their ability to mobilize resources for their program and in turn have successful programs and careers and enhance their career longevity.

### *Career Longevity Challenges*

The second research question sought to determine what, if any, challenges or barriers confronted these women in their quest to be career coaches. Four themes emerged relative to this research question: imbalanced workloads and sport inequities, the consequences of being different, the changing nature of athletics, and personal sacrifices.

#### *Imbalanced Workloads and Sport Inequities*

A consistent theme for all coaches was an imbalanced workload compared to the majority of other coaches in the athletic department. Miriam is the only one no longer coaching three sports but is one of only two coaches coaching two sports in her department. Maya and Elaine have more coaching responsibilities (measured by teams coached) than others in their department. Katy has the same coaching load as her male counterpart but a higher load than other coaches in the department. Each coach also had teaching and/or advising duties similar to other coaches in their department. Considering the increased coaching duties each coach had compared to her peers, overall workloads were either highest or among the highest in the department.

Citing overload, Maya, Katy, and Elaine expressed a strong desire to eventually give up coaching one of the three sports. Imbalanced workloads was a particularly sore point for Maya who recently has witnessed two new coaches hired full-time to coach only one sport while she coached three sports and two other veterans each coached two sports. For many years she tried unsuccessfully to convince the administration to hire a cross country coach. Katy and Elaine would eventually like to only coach cross country and perhaps distance runners during the indoor

and outdoor track season. They each discussed the difficulties in “giving up” control of the track and field program to another coach but believe that in the near future this may be the only way they can stay in coaching.

A related concern to imbalanced workloads involved perceived inequities in support based upon the sport they coach. Miriam, Maya and Katy recalled a lack of support from the administration to host home events in comparison to what other coaches received. They stated that coaches of sports like basketball and volleyball had less to do to prepare for a home event, in some cases had more assistant coaches, and consistently received considerable support from the administration. Elaine was the exception. Her athletic director, a former track and field coach, assisted her with home meets and supported two part-time assistant coaches who were full-time staff members. However, Elaine did state that she had to continually fight for her athletes to get equal treatment in the training room and for her sports to have adequate coverage from the sports information department. She perceived these challenges to be sport, not gender, inequities.

The women in this study experienced role conflict in comparison to the majority of coaches in their department. The role conflict was associated with coaching multiple sports more so than a teaching and coaching conflict. Role conflict has been cited as a plausible reason why women leave the coaching profession at a faster rate than men (Felder & Wishnietsky, 1990; Hart et al., 1986; Pastore, 1992). Unlike previous studies that have shown role conflict to be related to gender because women had greater coaching and/or teaching roles than men (Felder & Wishnietsky, 1990; Pastore, 1992), in this study the role conflict was related to the type of sport coached. This finding supports Knoppers et al’s. (1991) assertion that one must examine the impact of gender and sport in studying the dearth of women coaches.

#### *Consequences of Being Different*

“Being different” was a common challenge for the coaches in this study. As women coaching a male dominated sport, Katy, Maya, and Elaine continually felt the need to prove to

their male coaching peers that they were worthy coaches. Miriam also felt the need to prove herself but it was not necessarily gender related; rather it had more to do with her lack of sport specific knowledge. That Miriam did not experience gender biases could be because the “old boys’ network” was never prevalent at her institution. Also, she is younger and started coaching after Katy, Maya, and Elaine experienced the bulk of gendered harassment in their careers.

Katy, Maya, and Elaine each described instances where they had been challenged in dealing with the men’s track and field coach at their institution. There were many cases in which male assistant coaches and male athletes also harassed, questioned, or challenged these coaches. They felt closely scrutinized strictly because of their gender. Katy relayed numerous instances of sexual harassment, especially early in her career. She often felt ostracized because of her role in fighting Title IX battles in her department. Maya perceived she was challenged not only because she was a woman but also because she was a woman of color.

Katy, Maya, and Elaine all spoke to the fact that they were motivated by the doubt cast upon them by their male colleagues. They believed that, in the long run, their ability to persevere through this made them better coaches. Katy perhaps best summed this up by stating, “I always felt like we [women coaches] couldn't just be good, we had to be GREAT! And I never really wanted to be average in anything I did anyway, but I always felt that we had to be even that much better” (Katy, 11-8-01). These findings are similar to previous research indicating women coaches are confronted by deep-rooted gender stereotyping (Hovden, 1999), lack of respect (Inglis et al., 2000) and the ‘old boys’ network’ (Knoppers et al., 1991).

Another consequence of “being different” was a sense of isolation. With the exception of Katy, the coaches in this study competed in a conference that had only one or two other women track and field and cross country coaches. Each coach, including Katy, brought up the declining number of women coaches and how they noticed the dearth of women coaches at regional and national meets. This isolation because of male dominated coaching ranks at conference, regional,

and national levels is similar to Hovden's (1999) finding that women coaches perceived a lack of allies, based on gender, in sporting organizations.

The sense of isolation also extended to the department. To some extent these coaches were isolated by choice, age, race, and/or beliefs. None of the coaches had close friends on staff. Elaine was closest to people on staff. This included her partner, the associate athletic director/women's basketball coach, and the women's golf coach. However, she rarely spent much time socializing with anyone except her partner. Miriam was closest with the swim coach and one of the secretaries. However, she felt largely separated from a group of new coaches who were all younger than her and mostly female. Katy perceived that her Title IX battles in the 1980's and 1990's alienated her from men and women in the department. She also spoke of a lack of friends on staff due to age and family obligations. Maya had many coaching peers similar in age, however none were coaches of color. Further, there had been only one other woman of color in any of the five departments where she had worked. Maya often felt that she was expected to speak for all African American women and was continually called to serve on campus committees because she is African American. Recently there has been considerable inter-departmental conflict and Maya feels alienated from the rest of the coaches because of her willingness to voice her opinion.

The isolation and/or alienation these women experienced in their departments is interesting given that they had access to power, female coaching peers, and seniority on staff. In some cases it appeared the isolation was a result of speaking ones' mind or being non-conformists and begs the question: Are these athletic departments intolerable of differences in opinions and beliefs among coaches?

#### *Changing Nature of Athletics and Athletes*

This theme related to challenges coaches faced due to changes in athletes, recruiting, and/or the values of Division III athletics. Each coach mentioned the change in athletes since they

began coaching. Miriam indicated that athletes now appear “needier” or are at least more willing to seek help than when she first started coaching. Miriam found this especially difficult in that she wanted to provide her athletes with the necessary help but at times felt she did not have the resources or the time to help them. Elaine stated that athletes are not as dedicated as they were five or ten years ago. Meanwhile Maya asserted that there are fewer two-sport athletes now compared to ten years ago because of the increase in off-season training programs. For instance volleyball and soccer athletes who used to compete in track and field are now training for soccer year round. This has presented recruiting and philosophical challenges for her.

Most coaches addressed how the recruiting demands have increased since they first started coaching. They perceived Division III as aspiring to be more like Division I. Most of these challenges were philosophical while some related to increased time commitments. Elaine was philosophically opposed to doing high school and home visits to stay competitive. She also felt recruiting had now become a year round task. Maya meanwhile believed it was harder to recruit women to a highly selective women’s college than to Division I schools especially since she did not have the administrative help she had at the Division I level. Ironically Katy, who had the largest teams, did not recruit. She was philosophically opposed to it and felt her time was better spent with the student athletes at Dekan. Miriam felt pressure from her administration to do more recruiting. In addition to being philosophically opposed to recruiting, she resents that recruiting has become a year round commitment forcing her to recruit while at summer camp.

Researchers have addressed the changes in women’s sport brought on by Title IX and the demise of AIAW (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985b). Elaine, Katy, and Maya each started their collegiate coaching careers during the AIAW era. While none wanted a return to the AIAW era they had philosophical differences with the increased pressures to field winning teams by recruiting top athletes.



### *Personal Sacrifices*

Some portion of each coach's personal life suffered because of her professional life choices. Personal sacrifice was perhaps most evident with Katy. She was the only coach who had children and explained how she dealt with the mid-season birth of her second child: "I taught and coached on Wednesday, had her on Thursday morning, and was back teaching and coaching on Monday" (Katy, 2-15-02). Throughout her coaching career she has felt tremendous guilt about not being able to spend as much time as she would have liked with her kids. Whether it was her children or her partner, she always felt like she was cheating someone. Meanwhile, Miriam, Elaine, and Maya each stated that a main reason why they did not have children was because of the specific time demands of a coaching career. Elaine and Scott wavered throughout their careers as to whether or not they would have children. While neither regretted not having children, it was a conscious decision because of the excessive demands of coaching. Elaine felt that with both she and Scott coaching it would be very difficult stating, "by the time I get home from practice I am just fried...who would even take care of the children every weekend" (Elaine, 11-5-01).

Maya perceived she had no social life because of her career as a coach. She was unaware getting into coaching the impact that it would have on her entire life but stated "it becomes your life" (Maya, 1-11-02). Her personal relationships have suffered because of the all-consuming career of coaching. Miriam has also struggled with maintaining a work and home life balance. She succeeded in dropping one sport because she feared for her sanity due to the excessive time demands and lack of a personal life, however she still feels the job is all-consuming: "I can't keep up with it. Because whether it is planning for a class or recruiting stuff, or departmental stuff, I am always working at home. I prefer not to live that kind of life, not to have that kind of pace" (Miriam, 9-7-01). Beyond not having kids, Elaine did not perceive a lack of balance between her home and work lives. This was because she and Scott had few non-work priorities especially

during the coaching season. Elaine and Scott believe it is part of the job and are willing to accept this.

In all cases these women made many personal sacrifices to be career coaches. They either had few responsibilities outside of work, or had tremendous support with home and family responsibilities. While these personal sacrifices have been guilt producing they have been career longevity enhancers. This is especially true in light of research finding that many coaches, regardless of gender, cite excessive time demands and/or personal sacrifices as reasons to get out of coaching (Pastore, 1991; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). By minimizing the responsibilities outside of the workplace these women have been able to persist in the coaching profession. In light of this finding it appears that Powell and Mainiero's (1992) career theory for women does not apply to this group of coaches. Their theory suggests that throughout a woman's career, she will fluctuate between spending more focus on her career to spending more focus on her personal life. It is evident in the present study that these women have and continue to devote their undivided attention to their careers.

A theme that was missing in these data but prevalent in much of the research examining why women leave coaching is stress. While the women in this study each made personal sacrifices to become and stay career coaches and had significant challenges along the way, they did not perceive the coaching profession itself to be stressful. The rare times they spoke of stress, it was in relation to gender or departmental challenges, rather than working with athletes, the pressure to win,<sup>42</sup> or extensive time commitments to the work. That these women did not find the coaching profession stressful may be a career longevity enhancer as several studies have found that compared to men, women find coaching more stressful and report higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Vealey et al., 1992). Further, coach burnout is related to high levels of emotional

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<sup>42</sup> During the cross case analysis member check, Elaine stated "If I ever said the coaching profession was not stressful, I take it back. My self-imposed pressure to win is very great!".

exhaustion (Kelly et al., 1999). It was unclear why the women in this study did not find coaching stressful, however it is possible that their strong longevity enhancers and coping mechanisms may have minimized the perceived impact of coaching related stress. These findings suggest that lack of perceived job-related stress may enhance longevity for women coaches.

### *Career Longevity Coping Mechanisms*

The third research question sought to identify what, if any, coping mechanisms the coaches employed in their quest to be career coaches. Three main themes emerged. These included a daily exercise regime, problem solving strategies, and planned escapes.

#### *Daily Exercise Regime*

The four coaches exercised on a daily basis. Elaine was most disciplined running six days per week for 20 years and averaging 36 miles/week. During the week she runs at lunch hour either alone or with her partner (twice a week). Two years ago Katy started running again on a regular basis in an effort to improve her declining fitness levels and be a better role model for her athletes. The majority of her training was done early in the morning with a local running group. Maya stayed fit over the years by cycling, running, or going to the gym. Over the years, she was hampered by a bad knee and finally had reconstructive knee surgery this past fall. Finally, Miriam, an avid marathoner and triathlete in her younger days was now bothered by knee problems but bikes and hikes on a regular basis and recently resumed a gradual running program.

Each coach spoke of the importance exercise had in helping her maintain a healthy balance in their busy lives. Miriam stated that finding time to exercise each day was “an important priority” (10-23-01). Katy echoed this sentiment and stated, “I started making myself a priority” by taking time to exercise daily. (11-8-01). Elaine’s daily running regime is partly for “mental health because it relieves stress” (10-9-01). Maya also spoke of the benefits of daily exercise in that “it gets me ready for my whole day” and when she is having problems with work

related pressures “I just take it out in exercise” (10-24-01). For each coach a daily exercise routine appeared to help them cope with daily work challenges.

### *Problem Solving Strategies*

The coaches in this study proved to be strong-willed, persistent, skillful negotiators and adept at adapting to the changes in coaching. They displayed a healthy mix of resolve, determination, and flexibility throughout their careers. Together these qualities enabled them to be effective problem solvers and cope with daily work challenges.

Persistence was evident in how they sought support, identified and secured resources, handled gender biases and harassment, and succeeded in coaching male dominated sports. Miriam proved quite persistent in seeking sport specific knowledge as a novice coach. Maya proved her persistence in fighting battles or moving to another job when she could no longer be effective in the system. Katy continually fought sexual harassment battles yet refused to let these challenges impact her coaching.

They used their negotiation abilities to “make-up” for the apparent biases, sport inequities or heavy workloads in the department. For example, Maya felt grossly underpaid early in her career and believed she learned the hard way how to negotiate for salary and benefits. Now she ensures other coaches do not make the same mistakes by teaching them salary negotiation skills. Elaine was very effective in negotiating for salary, benefits, and support for her program as a way to compensate for the workload inequities. On the occasions in which her athletic director could not help her she relayed her concerns to the dean. It was rare that both the athletic director and dean turned down her requests. Miriam has been highly successful in obtaining support for a head indoor track and field coach and an assistant coach in cross country. Finally Katy approached the gender equity issue on her campus and was instrumental in ensuring equal support and opportunity for women athletes at Dekan.

The styles these coaches used to problem solve differed. Elaine and Miriam had similar non-confrontational, yet highly persuasive and effective styles. Elaine stated “you get more with sugar than with vinegar” (3-8-02). Katy and Maya displayed a more confrontational communication style. Their direct communication style has in some ways hindered relations with administrators and other coaches in the department but they were unwilling to compromise their beliefs. This confrontational style appears to have taken a toll on Katy and Maya and both are getting tired of continually fighting battles.

Interestingly none of these coaches considered themselves to be “feminists”. Katy and Elaine particularly spoke of the negative connotations associated with “feminists” when they were growing up. However throughout their careers they have been “pro-women” and willing to fight for equal rights for women. The data also revealed that each coach had changed (i.e. mellowed) over the years, mostly in response to the changing nature of athletics. These personal changes or adaptations appeared to enhance their longevity. Katy, Maya, and Elaine indicated that they are not as tough on their athletes as they used to be and have “mellowed out” over the years. Further, each coach is also more cognizant of and dedicated to taking time for herself.

#### *Planned Escapes*

A common coping mechanism involved “getting away”. While the methods of “getting away” differed for each coach, the objective of such “escapes” was similar. In general the coaches used these escapes as a way to step back, reflect, renew and rejuvenate for the next year or season. Elaine and Scott take at least three vacations per year. One vacation is typically a trip to Europe. In the past few years Katy has “escaped” for one week each summer with a group of women from the community for a weeklong hiking trip. Maya typically visits her siblings, coaching friends and mentors in the summer. Miriam has the busiest summer in that she works for two months at a girl’s sport camp. While it is demanding work, she loves being able to get away from her typical routine at Baxter.

In some cases “planned escapes” occurred during the workday. Recently Katy started playing golf in the fall, during the workweek once every week or two. While she has not been able to play guilt-free, she is adamant about the positive benefits. Miriam “escapes” from work daily as she walks her dog through nearby wooded paths. Maya “escapes” to the faculty club during the lunch hour where she networks with people from other parts of campus. Finally, when Elaine is feeling the need to “escape” she spends time planning an upcoming vacation. These planned escapes are interesting in light of the “sense of isolation” these women felt in their departments. It is possible that these women felt a need to escape from the within department isolation by being with supportive people (Katy and Maya) or just being alone away from the workplace (Miriam).

*Cross Case Findings Relative to Individual, Structural, and Social Relations Perspectives*

The purpose of analyzing the data from an individual perspective was to determine the impact the coach’s background, knowledge, values, and personal characteristics had on career longevity. It was evident that the women in this study had solid individual career longevity enhancers including: a strong socialization into the coaching profession, an intense desire to work with athletes, and considerable success over the years. Individual challenges did not emerge in the cross case analysis. This was perhaps due to the strong individual enhancers and individual coping mechanisms such as the coaches’ discipline, persistence, and problem solving capabilities.

Had the data been analyzed from purely an individual perspective one would assume these women persisted in the coaching profession strictly because of their perseverance, background, success, passion, desire, and effective coping mechanisms. Further, analyzing the data from this perspective only would not have revealed any challenges these women faced throughout their careers. In essence this perspective alone would point toward a “super-woman” theory. Indeed these women believed that to be career coaches they had to be much better than their male peers and did everything in their power to ensure success.

Recommendations from this perspective would be to encourage more “super” women with a competitive drive and good sports background to go into coaching. This would be similar to a blaming the victim approach (Stangl & Kane, 1991) as it narrow mindedly suggests that the only reason why these women were able to persist in this male dominated sport is because they are truly exceptional. Therefore, when viewed in isolation, the individual perspective prevents us from truly seeing all the issues that impact the careers and lives of these women coaches.

In analyzing the data from a structural perspective the goal was to identify the impact of the institution on each coach’s career longevity. Structural enhancers included: access to power and resources within the department and on campus, a strong sense of commitment to the institution, and a favorable gender proportion compounded by the lack of an “old boys’ network”. Structural challenges involved imbalanced coaching loads, especially in comparison to other coaches on staff, support inequities by sport, and isolation from other coaches in the athletic department due primarily to age, race, and/or beliefs. The sense of isolation is troubling and somewhat perplexing, especially given the relatively high proportion of women on staff at these institutions. The sport inequities and imbalanced workloads were largely perceived to be sport based as opposed to gender based. Structural coping mechanisms were limited to daily “planned escapes”.

Extending an analysis to the structural level proved useful in identifying numerous enhancers and challenges and revealed that the context in which these women work did impact their longevity. This impact was both positive and negative and the magnitude of the impact varied among the women. For instance, Elaine received substantially more support and had access to power, while Maya and Katy appeared to have greater structural challenges throughout their careers.

The purpose of analyzing the data from a social relations perspective was to examine the dual impact of personal and professional lives on career longevity. While only one social

relations career longevity enhancer emerged from the data, it was clear this was a major factor. Each coach received substantial personal and professional support. The majority of this support came from outside the workplace, including partners, friends, and mentors. On the negative side, each woman made substantial sacrifices in her personal life throughout her career. Finally, one social relations coping mechanism emerged from the data: taking breaks and interacting with people who played a supportive role in the coach's personal or professional lives.

Including social relation factors in the analysis has highlighted the fact that the social and emotional dimensions of coaching cannot be overlooked. To understand why women stay in coaching we must look beyond individual and institutional factors and include the impact of personal lives on professional lives and vice versa. For the coaches in this study, individual, structural, and social relations factors impacted career longevity. It was clear that these women had strong individual enhancers and coping mechanisms. While there were challenges at the social relations and structural levels there were also considerable enhancers. In examining career longevity from these three perspectives, the enhancers and coping mechanisms outweighed the challenges. In short, what enabled these coaches to be "super-women" or "lifers" in the coaching profession was a combination of factors that existed on individual, structural, and social relations levels.

### Conclusions

There are three major take home messages regarding career longevity in coaching that can be gleaned from this study. These are related to success, support, and sacrifices. Each of these is described below.

#### *Succeed or Secede*

A major force keeping these women in coaching, especially in the male dominated sports of track and field and cross country, was their ability to be successful. While success, from a win/loss standpoint, varied among coaches, each coach perceived they were successful. This



success was a major reason they persisted in the coaching profession. It was evident that they each had a burning desire to be successful and was fiercely competitive. One coach admitted she would have never stayed in coaching had she not been successful, as it would have driven her crazy. Another coach received strong messages from the administration that objective measures of success were a major part of the evaluation process. Each coach defined success in objective and subjective ways, however the bottom line was that they perceived they had to be more successful, in an objective sense, than their male counterparts to stay in coaching. One coach summed this up the best by stating, “we couldn’t just be good, we had to be great” (Katy, 11-8-01).

#### *Multiple Support Systems*

Findings from this study point to the importance of multiple support systems for coaches. Support was evident at the institutional level. Each coach had access to power and resources, although the magnitude of the power varied across cases. This access in turn helped them be effective coaches and field successful teams. However it was quite evident that, alone, access to power and resources was not enough to keep these women in coaching. One athletic director summed this up best by stating, “If you are not supported on a personal level, you can't be yourself. Eventually it wears you down” (Debra, 10-23-01). This perspective clearly suggests support is needed on multiple levels.

The coaches in this study did receive substantial personal and professional support from outside sources. Partners were willing to give up their careers so that two coaches in this study could establish or further their coaching careers. Friends and mentors also played significant roles in the professional and personal lives of these coaches.

That these coaches had several challenges on a structural or social relations level highlights the importance of enhancing institutional, local, regional, and national networks for women coaches. Only one coach had access to multiple networks, including an “old girls’

network”. These connections were vital to her persistence in coaching. All coaches wished for more women coaches in their sports at conference, regional, and national levels. They perceived an “old boys’ network” to be alive and well in the sports of track and field and cross country.

*Athletics is a Greedy Institution*

Each woman in this study made numerous sacrifices in their personal and family lives to be a career coach. Each gave total commitment to their job usually at the expense of outside or personal commitments. Coser (1974) termed institutions that demand total commitment from workers “greedy institutions” and stated, “such institutions do not themselves coerce participants into total commitment. Rather there is something about their nature which attracts voluntary compliance” (p. 270). None of the women in the study felt “forced” to totally commit their lives to coaching, but they exhibited “voluntary compliance”. At first, few realized the “all-consuming” nature of the coaching profession.

Sport, by its nature, is highly competitive and comparative. Because of this, the notion “more is better”, right or wrong, is often assumed. Coaches in this study likened this notion to a “keeping up with the Joneses syndrome”. For instance, as other coaches in their conference or region started to increase recruiting efforts they felt compelled to do likewise. Recruiting at the Division III level is now a year round task. The same was true regarding the number of contact hours with athletes and the time spent preparing for practices. Practice schedules are close to year round now as well. It used to be that practice for indoor track and field did not start until December or January. Now fall track and field practice is becoming a norm and coaches are finding themselves juggling two practices, or going straight from the end of the cross country season to the beginning of the track and field season.

The coaches in this study had greater coaching responsibilities than the majority of coaches in their department. In this case, it appeared that athletics was “greedier” for cross country and track and field coaches than for coaches of other sports. Further, coaches in this study

found that as time went on they took on additional responsibilities either at their institution (committee work) or on conference, regional, or national committees. Once the coaches found themselves over-committed it was difficult to change or refuse an assignment as it was typically accompanied by a sense of letting someone down.

### Implications and Recommendations

The following implications and recommendations address what needs to change, and what should stay the same, to keep more women in coaching. Where applicable, these questions are explored from the perspective of coaches, administrators, and sport as an “institution”. Two major categories are discussed: improving support mechanisms for coaches and challenging the status quo.

#### *Support Mechanisms and Networks*

To make the coaching career more attractive and viable for women, and to keep more women coaching it is evident that multiple support mechanisms both in and out of the work environment are necessary. Each of the coaches in this study was fortunate to have substantial support outside of the workplace. However, in some cases this was their only form of personal or professional support. Athletic departments, institutions, and athletic organizations should take an active role in providing appropriate support for coaches to have successful and fulfilling careers. Examples of this support include: fostering mutual commitment between coaches and institutions, providing family support, offering sport specific support, establishing coach networks, and extending professional development support. Each of these is described in further detail.

The coaches in this study felt committed to their institution. Research indicates a strong positive relationship between institutional commitment and professional commitment (Lee et al., 2000; Wallace, 1993). Athletic and institutional administrators should be aware of this relationship and be proactive in promoting institutional commitment among their coaches. In the current study, institutional commitment was fostered in different ways. For example, Miriam felt

strongly committed to her school because of their commitment to her in securing funding for a head indoor track and field coach. Elaine continually received strong messages from the higher administration that she is a valued member of the Gorham community. While Katy and Maya worked at several institutions, they found a “home” and a “good fit” at their current institutions. This points to the need for coaches to closely examine institutional “fit” factors when job searching.

It is evident that greater support for starting and having a family is needed. One coach in this study felt she had to plan the birth of her three children around the three seasons she coaches because maternity leave was not an option. This left roughly two months out of the year. When her second child was born during the track and field season she was back teaching and coaching within three days. The rest of the coaches in the study made conscious decisions not to have children citing role conflict, time constraints, and daycare issues. On campus daycare is typically not an option for coaches given the late hours they work. Other areas that need to be explored are extended maternity leaves, leave of absences and creating “family friendly” athletic departments.

It is also clear that specific sport related support is needed from athletic administrators. Elaine clearly had the best rapport with her athletic director out of the group of coaches in this study. Her athletic director was a former track and field coach. Beyond philosophical similarities, Elaine felt that her athletic director understood the demands of her sport and could support her, especially in hosting meets. Similar support was found in the pilot study where the athletic director was also a former track and field coach. While it is impossible to have athletic administrators with coaching experience in all sports, it was evident in this study that not having knowledge of track and field was a hindrance for coach – athletic director relations. Maya’s athletic director readily admitted having a better rapport with coaches from “team” sports because she understood those sports. Other than Elaine, coaches felt a lack of support in hosting home events, especially in comparison to support received by other coaches. This begs the question:

what expectations should we have of athletic administrators and their ability to understand the specific sport demands placed on coaches? Further, what responsibility should coaches have in “educating” their athletic directors about their sport and effectively “communicating” their needs?

The women in this study were socialized into a coaching profession through competitive experiences, undergraduate and graduate training, and assistant coaching experiences. However, in most cases formal training essentially ended once they became coaches. Each coach spoke of the challenges in learning how to coach the different events in track and field. Most coaches indicated that they learned how to coach these events by trial and error or through extensive reading during their first few years coaching. In some cases coaches sought avenues to continue professional development, but the opportunities were limited and not consistent across events. Professional development and coach education should be readily available and an ongoing process throughout a coach’s career.

Related to professional development is the notion of establishing supportive networks. The women in this study spoke of isolation, either within their athletic department or at the conference, regional, or national level. The facts are clear: less than 1 out of 5 women coach women’s cross country or track and field at the college level (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). Networks for women coaches of these sports need to be established on the local and national level. We need more coaches like Maya who are dedicated to mentoring young women coaches. For this to happen, athletic administrators and head coaches should be trained in the mentoring process and in providing networks for coaches to share their concerns and assist each other.

### *Challenging the Status Quo*

The results from this study indicate that to attract and keep more women in coaching, sport as a male domain and athletics as a “greedy institution” should be challenged. The fact that an “old boys’ network” was either non-existent or defunct at these institutions was certainly an enhancer. However, track and field and cross country are still male dominated. Three coaches in

this study experienced gender harassment, especially early in their careers. All coaches felt they had to prove they were better than their male coaching peers in the conference or region. As more men's and women's track and field and cross country programs are becoming combined, the number of positions available to women is declining: less than 2% of all men's NCAA programs are coached by women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

Some of the structural challenges affecting the coaches in this study were due to perceived sport inequities rather than to gender inequities. Challenging the status quo means critically analyzing the existence of major and minor sports at Division III institutions. Knoppers (1992) found that power dynamics in athletics were not strictly a function of gender. Rather the status of the sport played a role with coaches of non-revenue sports having the least power and access to fewest resources. At the Division III level essentially all sports are non-revenue generating. However, in this study it was evident that there were major and minor sports in each department and they were not always gender based. The coaches in this study had the highest (or tied for the highest) coaching loads of all coaches on staff. Miriam was the only coach not coaching three sports, but she had to fight hard to drop one sport. Initially her athletic director stated it was "nature of the sport" to coach all three and that her "hands were tied". Miriam was able to convince the higher administration that she was overloaded. The athletic director admitted "it is not an ideal situation" but she knows it has kept Miriam in coaching. We need more schools like Baxter that challenge the norm by thinking and acting "outside the box".

The findings of this study lead one to question the combined effect of sport and gender inequities on the dearth of women coaches. The latest NCAA Division III data show that sports with relatively high percentages of women coaches are either traditionally "female" sports such as field hockey (96.4%), lacrosse (86.2%) and softball (61.4%) or high profile sports such as basketball (62.2%). Track and field (17.3%) and cross country (21.1%) have the lowest percentage of women coaching women at the Division III level (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). The

coaches in this study clearly felt “over-worked” in comparison to their department peers. Many pointed to the high coach-athlete ratio of their sport in comparison to sports like basketball. The findings of the current study along with the contrasting percentages of women coaches across sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002) indicate that longevity in coaching and the dearth of women coaches need to be examined from a sport perspective. This includes looking at the “status” of the sport, the “gendered” nature of the sport, and the support and resources available for the sport/coach.

Miriam and Maya felt the athletic administration at their institution valued new and young over older coaches and those with greater institutional tenure. The not so subtle messages these coaches got were that 1) experience and commitment to an institution are not valued, 2) older coaches and coaches with greater tenure, are less likely to change or are not as qualified as younger coaches, 3) values have changed in sport therefore new coaches are more apt to have those values. Is there ageism in coaching and if so is it gender based? For instance, is it more acceptable for a man to be an “old” coach than for a woman to be an old coach?

The notion of athletics as a “greedy institution” also needs to be questioned. Powell and Mainiero’s (1992) career theory for women did not apply to this group of women coaches. The women in this study focused exclusively on career success and rarely on relationships with others. There was not a “give and take” between career and relationships with others as described by Powell and Mainiero. This could be because the coaching career is male dominated therefore only traditional and male dominated career theories apply to coaches, regardless of gender. Or it could be because athletics is a “greedy institution” and requires relinquishing competing commitments. Related to this is that each coach felt a need to “keep up” with other coaches in their conference and region. For instance, once one coach started recruiting year round or doing home visits, others felt the need to follow in order to stay competitive. Unlike Division I or II, there are few recruiting restrictions (i.e. number of contacts, contact periods) in Division III.

Perhaps more stringent guidelines need to be put forth to curtail the “more is better” notion. The coaches in this study expected their athletes to strive for a healthy balance in their lives, however it was evident that these coaches struggled with maintaining a balance in their own lives. For a coach to be effective, is it necessary to relinquish non-work priorities? What responsibilities should college administrators and the NCAA have in “controlling” the greedy nature of athletics?

#### Research Recommendations

It is clear that more work needs to be done to fully understand career longevity and why women coaches leave the coaching ranks at a faster rate than their male counterparts. These recommendations examine the usefulness of the framework used in this study and provide suggestions for future research.

#### *Revisiting Knoppers’ Framework*

In this study, the interrelationship of individual, structural, and social relations perspectives was used as a theoretical framework. Knoppers (1992) suggested the use of a social relations perspective because the individual and structural perspectives fail to fully address the dearth of women coaches. Few studies have used a social relations perspective in analyzing this issue (Hovden, 1999; Knoppers, 1991; Theberge, 1988). In using the social relations framework I took certain liberties in defining social relations. In proposing the social relations framework, Knoppers (1992) recommends analyzing the gendered aspects of the athletic workplace, including studying how jobs, structures, and institutions are gendered. In addition to examining these aspects of the workplace, I extended the boundaries of social relations to include each coach’s personal life to understand the impact of professional lives on personal lives and vice versa. This enabled me to understand more of the forces impacting career longevity for each coach.

To date no studies have used a social relations framework to examine the personal and professional lives of women who are career coaches. This framework has helped guide a thorough examination of the multiple factors impacting career longevity of the women in this



study, however identifying factors as exclusively individual, structural, or social relations was problematic at times. For instance, planned escapes did not neatly fit into any one perspective, rather it related to all three perspectives. Further, power and gendered dynamics of the athletic department were both structural and social relations. In most cases it was difficult to separate social relations, as defined by Knoppers (1992), from structural factors, as defined by Kanter (1977a). Both researchers examined gendered aspects of the workplace, however Knoppers extends this view beyond the workplace to include gendered aspects of the coaching profession and of society. At times it was difficult to discern gendered aspects of the workplace from those “inherent” in the coaching profession or society. One recommendation would be to use a “gendered lens” to examine individual factors, structural factors, and personal factors outside of the workplace to study career longevity for women coaches. The personal factors should address the relationship between personal and professional lives. In the end it appears that using the three frameworks enabled a thorough examination of career longevity even if there were “gray areas”. Further, the multiple frameworks, as suggested above should prove useful in examining why women leave the coaching career at a faster rate than men and why fewer women enter the coaching ranks.

One issue related to the research questions that warrants attention involves the identification of coping mechanisms. At times it was difficult to distinguish coping mechanisms from longevity enhancers. My initial intent was to view coping mechanisms as specific methods used to address coaching challenges. However, in some cases it was evident that enhancers were used to address coaching challenges. For example, access to power was used in some cases to address, in part, the imbalanced workloads and sport inequities. Further, in some situations coping mechanisms also served as career longevity enhancers. This was the case with daily exercise. Finally, depending upon the situation, some factors served as coping mechanisms for some coaches while they were enhancers for other coaches. For instance, role models were

classified as enhancers if they were influential in the socialization process, while they served as coping mechanisms if they helped coaches address career challenges. In hindsight, it may have been more useful and less redundant to combine enhancers and coping mechanisms.

#### *Future Research*

1. In an effort to better understand career longevity for women coaches, longitudinal research is needed. Studying women coaches throughout their careers should provide opportunities to develop and test career theories for women in coaching. It is likely this research could shed light on how career longevity enhancers, challenges, and coping mechanisms change over time. Further, this research could provide insight on the relevance of career theories for women used in the business world to women in coaching.
2. More research is needed to understand why women leave the coaching profession prematurely. Using the individual, structural, and social relation perspectives outlined in this study as a guide, a qualitative, case study design with women coaches who recently left the coaching profession could shed light on this issue. In particular focusing on factors of personal and professional support, success and sacrifices should prove illuminating in light of the current findings.
3. A large-scale quantitative study comparing career longevity of women collegiate coaches in female dominated (<80% women coaches), balanced (40-60% women coaches), and male dominated (>20% women coaches) sports could reveal the role gender dynamics within each sport has on career longevity.
4. An investigation to determine factors impacting career longevity for male coaches is also needed. It would be interesting to compare career longevity of male and female track and field/cross country coaches, especially in light of the “sport” vs. “gender” inequities found in the current study.

5. A study examining the values and perceptions of athletic directors and college presidents regarding the dearth of women coaches should prove illuminating. How does this group perceive the findings, implications, and recommendations of this study? Do they perceive athletics to be a greedy institution? What is their perception of what needs to change in athletics to hire and retain more women coaches? What influences and pressures (and sources of influences) are prevalent in athletic departments and/or academe that impact the dearth of women coaches?

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## APPENDIX A

### LETTER PRESENTING PERMISSION FROM ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

To Whom It May Concern:

I am currently a doctoral student at Ohio State and am writing to ask your permission to do research at your institution. The title of my research is "Understanding career longevity of women coaches". This research is being performed as part of my dissertation. The purpose of the research is to identify factors that enhance and/or inhibit the career longevity of women collegiate coaches of sports traditionally coached by men.

I was hoping \_\_\_\_\_ could serve as a participant for my research. As a participant I will be interviewing her several times throughout the year. Initial interviews will be used to gain insight regarding \_\_\_\_\_'s professional background. Follow up interviews will be used to investigate coaching practices, methods, and philosophy. Interviews will typically last about one hour. With \_\_\_\_\_'s consent the interviews will be audiotaped. I am also hoping to interview you, the senior women's administrator, and some of \_\_\_\_\_'s athletes should they be agreeable. The interview with you, should you choose to be interviewed, would be completed to gain an understanding of the coaching philosophy of the athletic department, coach retention factors and coach evaluation practices. Athlete interviews would be used to gain greater insight regarding their perceptions \_\_\_\_\_'s coaching practices, behaviors and decisions.

In addition to interviews, I will be observing several practices and competitions throughout the cross country season. \_\_\_\_\_ will decide which practices and competitions will be best for me to observe in order to reflect typical practices and competition in the early, mid and late season. During these practices my presence will be as unobtrusive as possible with my primary role being to observe coach behaviors and interactions and athlete responses to these behaviors. I will not be videotaping or audiotaping practices.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's participation, along with yours and her athletes, will be entirely voluntary. At any point during the study she may choose to withdraw from the study, not answer some questions, or limit access to practices and competitions without prejudice to \_\_\_\_\_, you, or your institution. All choices will be respected. No inducements will be offered to \_\_\_\_\_, her athletes, or you.

All information obtained through this study will be kept strictly confidential. Any information that would serve to identify participants will be altered or eliminated. Names of participants (coaches, athletes, AD) along with the institution name, town name, etc. will be fictitious.

Participants will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts to check for errors in either fact or intent.

Benefits for being part of this study include adding to a research base in an area in which little research has been performed (women's coaching issues). Additionally the chance for coaches, athletes, and athletic directors to reflect upon coaching philosophy, behaviors, and decisions may be a valuable experience.

Should you agree to allow me to conduct research at \_\_\_\_\_, I will need for you to sign a consent form prior to starting research. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary O'Sullivan (principal investigator)

614-688-4701

Margaret M. Gehring (co-investigator)

740-369-6501

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR COACH

#### 1. Life History questions pertinent to coaching:

- ✓ Describe your educational background.
- ✓ Describe your sport experiences as a youth, in high school and in college.
- ✓ When did you first decide to become a coach?
- ✓ What prompted you to decide to become a coach?
- ✓ Did anyone support your decision and efforts to become a coach?
- ✓ What were initial barriers to becoming a coach?
- ✓ When you first started coaching, did you think it would be a lifelong career?
- ✓ How did you learn "how to" become a coach?
- ✓ What prior coaching positions have you had?
- ✓ What jobs have you had outside of coaching?
- ✓ When did you start coaching at your current position?
- ✓ What prompted you to come to this school/position?
- ✓ When you took this position did you envision yourself being here for \_\_\_\_ years?
- ✓ What other duties do you have at your school besides coaching the sport of \_\_\_\_\_?

#### 2. Longevity specific questions:

- ✓ What are the best parts of your job?
- ✓ What do you like least about coaching?
- ✓ If you could, what would you change about your job?
- ✓ What parts of your job do you find stressful? How do you handle this stress?
- ✓ What keeps you in coaching year after year?
- ✓ How do you bounce back from a "bad" or "tough" season/year?
- ✓ Have you ever thought about not coaching anymore? If so, why haven't you quit?

- ✓ What would it take for you to find another coaching job? Another career?
- ✓ How long do you envision yourself coaching?
- ✓ What would be your ideal position at \_\_\_\_\_ College/University?
- ✓ If you were not a coach, what career would you choose?

### **3. Success in coaching questions:**

- ✓ How do you define success in coaching?
- ✓ What kind of knowledge/skills/attributes are necessary to successfully coach this sport?
- ✓ Do you believe that you are a successful coach? (if so, how do you know?)
- ✓ What would it take for you to be more successful?
- ✓ Is your success as a coach related to your longevity in the profession?
- ✓ How active are you in your local and/or national sport organization? If you are active, how did you become active? How has this activity helped you with your career as a coach? How have you changed as a coach through this involvement?
- ✓ What do you do to ensure that you are staying "on top of your field"?

### **4. Coaching methods/Strategies/Philosophy questions:**

- ✓ Describe your coaching philosophy (Probe for philosophy regarding team selection, cuts, role of academics in sport, role of sport in academics)
- ✓ What past influences and experiences do you think most affect the coach that you are today?
- ✓ Have you changed as a coach? If so, what has prompted these changes?
- ✓ How do you go about planning a season?
- ✓ How do you go about planning daily practices?
- ✓ What kinds of reflective exercises do you do after practices and competitions?
- ✓ How do you prepare for competitions?
- ✓ How do you use prior events to prepare for future practices and competitions?
- ✓ What is your typical role during practice? During competition?
- ✓ What are your strengths during practice? Competition?
- ✓ What areas would you like to improve on at practice? Competition?

### **5. Athlete related questions:**

- ✓ What do you "look for" when recruiting athletes?

- ✓ Describe your typical communication and interaction style with your athletes.
- ✓ Could you give an example of a difficult situation involving an athlete (i.e. dealing with an athlete who has an eating disorder, drug abuse problem etc.)
- ✓ How do you develop rapport with athletes?
- ✓ How do you develop/encourage team unity?

**6. Department specific questions:**

- ✓ Describe your relationship with the coach of the men's team (of the same sport that you coach) at your institution. (*social relations*)
- ✓ Do you believe that he/she respects you as a coach? As a female coach? (*social relations*)
- ✓ Do you feel that you are treated as an equal to him? (*social relations*)
- ✓ Does the coach of the men's team (of the same sport that you coach) have the same duties as you? If not, how do they differ?
- ✓ Describe your relationship with the rest of the coaches in your department. (*social relations*)
- ✓ To whom on the staff do you feel closest? (*social relations*)
- ✓ How many other coaches of women's sports in your department are women? (*proportion*)
- ✓ Does the gender of your coaching peers within the department have any impact on your job satisfaction or career longevity? (*proportion*)
- ✓ Is it important for you to have same sex role models in your department? Do you think it is important for other women coaches in your department? (*proportion*)
- ✓ Describe your relationship with your athletic director; senior women's administrator? (*social relations*)
- ✓ Is your relationship with your AD and SWA any different than other coaches in the department? (*opportunity/social relations*)
- ✓ Is your athletic director aware of the fact that your sport has such a low percentage of women coaching in your sport?
- ✓ Do you believe that your athletic director is supportive of women coaching women?
- ✓ Describe the climate of the athletic department. (*social relations*)
- ✓ Describe examples of gender equity within your department. What are some examples where there is gender inequity (either among coaches or athletes)? (*social relations*)
- ✓ What role do you have in hiring assistant coaches? Is your role the same as the men's coach? Other coaches in the department? (*power*)

- ✓ How is budgetary money allocated? Is your budget similar to the men's budget (of the same sport that you coach)? Other sport budgets? (*power*)
- ✓ Do you perceive opportunities for career advancement and/or promotion (for yourself) within your department or institution? (*opportunity*)
- ✓ Are opportunities for career advancement and/or promotion equitable for all coaches in your department? (*opportunity*)
- ✓ What factors enable other coaches in your department from becoming or remaining career coaches? Inhibit?
- ✓ What role have the athletic director, senior women's administrator, and athletic department had in your longevity in coaching?
- ✓ How does the departmental philosophy compare to your individual coaching philosophy? Does this impact your job satisfaction or longevity at this institution? (*social relations?*)

**7. Institution specific questions:**

- ✓ How does the institutions philosophy compare to your individual philosophy and the department's philosophy?
- ✓ What role has your institution played in your career longevity? For instance do you think you would have stayed in coaching just as long at any university?
- ✓ Do you perceive that your institution values your career longevity?
- ✓ What are examples of institutional practices that enhance employee retention?
- ✓ Are there individuals at your institution (outside of your department) who have been supportive in your longevity at this institution?

**8. Work-life balance questions:**

- ✓ What are some of your non-work priorities?
- ✓ How do you balance these non-work priorities with your work priorities?
- ✓ What kind of support do you receive from others to assist in balancing work and non-work priorities?
- ✓ What role has your partner, spouse, or significant other had in your job satisfaction and career longevity?
- ✓ What impact has your career in coaching had on having or not having children?

**9. Women in coaching/gender specific questions:**

- ✓ Why do you think more women are not coaching track & field/cross country at the college level?
- ✓ What would need to change in order to increase the percentage of women coaches in this sport?
- ✓ What advice would you give a woman interested in becoming a coach of this sport?
- ✓ How many other coaches in your conference are women? Your region? (*proportion*)
- ✓ Does the gender proportion of coaches in your conference or region impact your job satisfaction or career longevity? (*proportion*)
- ✓ How does your sport specific knowledge compare to that of other women coaches in your sport? Other men coaches?
- ✓ Do you think that your athletes would prefer to be coached by a man or a woman?



## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR AND SENIOR WOMAN ADMINISTRATOR

- ✓ Background information regarding the athletic department: number of varsity sports, number of full-time coaches, average number of years that a coach is employed by the university etc. gender of coaches by sport.
- ✓ Describe the philosophy of the athletic department.
- ✓ Describe the coach evaluation process.
- ✓ What role does the evaluation process have in the retention of coaches?
- ✓ What are some factors associated with coach turnover (voluntary or involuntary) in your department?
- ✓ What do you look for when hiring new coaches? What role does gender play in hiring new coaches?
- ✓ What strategies do you employ to enhance the hiring of women coaches on your staff?
- ✓ Describe your relationship with the coaches in your department.
- ✓ Describe examples of gender equity within your department. What are some examples where there is gender inequity (either among coaches or athletes)?
- ✓ Are there differences in the positions, responsibilities, or budgets, between the men's track and field/cross country coach, and the women's?
- ✓ How is budgetary money allocated for each sport?
- ✓ Do all coaches in the department have the same access to you?
- ✓ How are coaches promoted (title, monetary raises)?
- ✓ How are assistant coaches hired? Do all head coaches have the same role in hiring assistant coaches?
- ✓ Do all coaches have the same access to power, opportunities, and resources within the athletic department? If not, how are power, opportunity, and resources distributed among coaches and athletic teams? Who makes these decisions?

- ✓ What factors enable coaches in your department to become or remain career coaches?
- ✓ What factors inhibit coaches in your department from becoming or remaining career coaches?
- ✓ Do you perceive gender differences in the above mentioned factors?
- ✓ Why do you think (coach participant) has stayed in coaching for the majority of her career?
- ✓ Why do you think more women are not coaching track and field/cross country at the college level?
- ✓ What would need to change in order to increase the percentage of women coaches in this sport?

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ATHLETES:

- ✓ Why did you choose \_\_\_\_\_ school?
- ✓ How much of a factor did your participation in \_\_\_\_\_ sport have to do with your decision to attend \_\_\_\_\_ school?
- ✓ How much of a factor did the coach have to do with your decision to attend \_\_\_\_\_ school?
- ✓ What were your first impressions of your coach?
- ✓ Could you give examples of "positive coaching behaviors" that your coach has exhibited since you started competing for her?
- ✓ Could you give examples of "negative coaching behaviors" that your coach has exhibited since you started competing for her?
- ✓ How does your coach handle coaching related stress? (provide specific examples)
- ✓ How important is winning for your coach?
- ✓ How does your coach define success?
- ✓ What do you think are the most valued aspects of your coaches' job?
- ✓ What do you think are the least valued aspects of your coaches' job?
- ✓ What are some strengths that your coach possesses?
- ✓ What are some weaknesses?
- ✓ Describe examples of gender equity within the department. What are some examples where there is gender inequity (either among coaches or athletes)?
- ✓ Does your team have the same opportunity as the men's team? Other sport teams in the department?
- ✓ Why do you think your coach has persisted and succeeded in the coaching profession for so many years?

- ✓ How many women coach your sport in your conference/region? If it is a small percentage in comparison to men ask: Why do you think there are so few women coaches in this sport?
- ✓ Have you ever thought about coaching as a career? If so, what impact has your coach had regarding this?
- ✓ What barriers do you envision for women who desire to be “career coaches”?
- ✓ Do you see any gender differences in becoming a career coach? For instance do these barriers affect both men and women equally?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **INFORMATIONAL LETTER FOR COACH**

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that enhance and/or inhibit the career longevity of women collegiate coaches of sports traditionally coached by men. Data collection for this study will take place during the course of your typical competitive season (i.e. September to November). As a participant in this study you will be interviewed roughly eight times throughout the competitive season. The initial interview will be used to gain insight regarding your professional background (i.e. career choice, previous and ongoing training and coach education). Follow up interviews conducted throughout the season will be used to investigate coaching practices, methods, and philosophy. Interviews will typically last about one hour. With your consent the interviews will be audiotaped. I would also like to interview 2-3 of your athletes and your athletic director should they be agreeable. Athlete interviews will be used to gain greater insight regarding their perceptions of your coaching practices, behaviors and decisions. An interview with the athletic director will be used to gain an understanding of the coaching philosophy of the athletic department, coach retention factors and coach evaluation practices. Sport practices and competitions will be observed multiple times throughout the course of the competitive season. You will decide what practices and competitions will be best for the researcher to observe in order to reflect typical practices and competition in the early, mid and late season. During these practices the researcher's presence will be as unobtrusive as possible. The researcher's primary role during these practices will be to observe coach behaviors and interactions and athlete responses to these behaviors during practice. No videotaping of these sessions will be needed.

Your participation, along with your athletes and athletic director, will be entirely voluntary. At any point during the study you may choose to withdraw from the study, not answer some questions, or limit access to your practices without prejudice to you or your institution. All choices will be respected. No inducements will be offered to coaches, athletes, or athletic directors for their participation. All information obtained through this study will be kept strictly

confidential. Any information that would serve to identify participants will be altered or eliminated. Names of participants (coaches, athletes, athletic director) along with the institution name, town name etc. will be fictitious. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts to check for errors in either fact or intent.

Benefits for being part of this study include adding to a research base in an area in which little research has been performed (women's coaching issues). Additionally the chance to reflect upon your coaching philosophy, behaviors and decisions may be a valuable experience.

This study is being conducted by the School of Physical Activity and Educational Services at The Ohio State University. The principal investigator of this study is Dr. Mary O'Sullivan (614-688-4701) and the co-investigator is Margaret M. Gehring (740-369-6501). If at any time you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact either investigator.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INFORMATIONAL LETTER FOR ATHLETES**

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that enhance and/or inhibit the career longevity of women collegiate coaches of sports traditionally coached by men. Data collection for this study will take place during the course of your typical competitive season (i.e. September to November). As a participant in this study you will be interviewed once or twice during your competitive season. Interviews will typically last about thirty minutes. The purpose of the interview will be to gain greater insight regarding your perceptions of your coaches' practices, behaviors and decisions. Information obtained through the interviews will be confidential. This information will only be shared with your coach if you agree to have it shared and in such case your identity will be kept confidential.

Your participation will be entirely voluntary. At any point during the interview or study you may choose to withdraw from the study, or not answer questions without prejudice to you or your institution. All choices will be respected. No inducements will be offered to you for your participation. All information obtained through this study will be kept strictly confidential. Any information that would serve to identify participants will be altered or eliminated. Names of coaches, athletes, athletic director, institution name, town name etc. will be fictitious. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts to check for errors in either fact or intent.

Benefits for being part of this study include adding to a research base in an area in which little research has been performed (women's coaching issues). Additionally the chance to reflect upon your experiences as an athlete may be a valuable experience.

This study is being conducted by the School of Physical Activity and Educational Services at The Ohio State University. The principal investigator of this study is Dr. Mary O'Sullivan (614-688-4701) and the co-investigator is Margaret M. Gehring (740-369-6501). If at any time you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact either investigator.

**APPENDIX G**

**HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM**

**Protocol #01E0257**

**Consent for Participation in Research**

I consent to participate in research entitled: Factors associated with longevity and success for women collegiate coaches. Dr. Mary O'Sullivan, Principal Investigator, or her authorized representative Margaret M. Gehring has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described, as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal Investigator or authorized representative)