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**THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL
SOFTBALL TEAM**

By

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A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Physical Education and Exercise Science

1996

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL TEAM

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To date, research within the area of coaching has viewed communication as the act of the coach sending messages to a player or players. The players are viewed as passive receivers of the coach's intended message. The basic assumption from this perspective is that communication is successful when the players receive the coach's message. Very little time and effort has been spent on understanding what constitutes communication within the competitive sport setting. More importantly, we have no idea if the information that coaches intend to convey to their players is what players hear and see. In order to address some of these issues, I became a participant observer on a high school varsity softball team. I conducted over 155 hours of observations, approximately 35 hours of taped interviews, and countless hours of informal discussions with the players and the coach. Through the continual analysis of the interview transcriptions, the descriptive fieldnotes, and team handouts, evidence emerged that supports the overarching assertion that communication within the team setting is an ongoing interpretive process that is strongly influenced by one's past experiences in sport and reference group or groups within the team setting (benchwarmer, position, newcomer, starter, returning, etc.).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give a special thanks to my dissertation advisor, Doug Campbell. I may never have made it this far if he had not provided me with his unselfish support and guidance over the years. When no one else in my field seemed to find value in the “whys” and “hows,” Doug encouraged me to choose my own path. Without that encouragement, I would never have gone beyond my Masters program. Thanks to Doug, I am comfortable with my place in academia as a researcher and a teacher.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the participants of this study for allowing me into their world. These people should be commended for the courage that they showed by carrying on as a team without noticeable concern for how I would portray them within the body of this thesis. As far as I can tell, I was witness to some of the most volatile and most intimate moments in the lives of these people as members of “the team.” By opening their minds to the value of such research, they have provided us with important information about the role of communication in coaching and team development.

I would also like to thank my committee members Jayne Schuitemann, Yvonne Smith and Deb Feltz for their valuable input and support. Finally, I would like to thank Deb for the respect and support that she has shown me over the years. Our battles convinced me that I could thrive in academia.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Coaching is a task/profession that seems to be more clearly defined by the visions the word “coach” conjures up in our minds than an analysis of coaches’ backgrounds or listed job requirements. The visions elicited by the word “coach” exist on a continuum that ranges from a caring, charismatic, leader/teacher to a ranting, raving authoritarian. The charismatic leader seems to be our vision of the ideal coach, a good coach. The impatient, negative authoritarian is the stereotypical coach that has evolved through repeated observations of coaches on the sidelines at youth sport, high school, college and professional games. Although a wide range of descriptive responses are associated with the word “coach,” there is a fairly standard concept associated with the term “successful coach,” a coach with more wins than losses. This operationalization of a coach marginalizes the coach with a losing record who is successful at improving the skills of the players, at providing an enjoyable experience, and at developing a sense of self and pride in each player. In either case, the major determinant for being successful is how well the coach coordinates the mental, physical, and emotional characteristics of the individuals into a functional unit, a team. We know that a coach must be an effective communicator to accomplish this feat. Yet as this chapter will show we know very little about the process through which a coach effectively coordinates the individuals into a team or creates an environment of disenchantment.

For that reason, I have chosen to conduct an ethnographic study of a varsity high school softball coach in an effort to understand the role a coach’s communication behaviors play in integrating the individual athletes into a competitive sport team. Moreover, by entering into the world of the participants (coaches and athletes), I may be able to provide

an understanding of the processes involved in coaching and team development. Our difficulty in defining a good coach lies in our lack of understanding of how and why coaches do what they do. This study can provide us with descriptions of the behavior of a coach in a variety of team and informal settings (games, practices, team meetings, bus rides, pre-practice interactions, etc.). This information may help us understand the relationship between factors such as context, past experiences, coach-athlete interactions, and the coach's observed behaviors.

Coaches are responsible for the social, psychological, emotional, and physical well being of their players. Coaches are not only expected to sculpt our young people into skillful athletes, but also into moral, responsible, productive members of society. They are responsible for teaching skills, strategies, norms, rules, and values related to life as well as to the competitive sport setting. Coaches must develop a plan to shape the mental and physical sport skills of each individual as well as mold the individuals into a productive team. Coaches must be administrators, teachers, counselors, friends, pseudo-parents, budget directors and managers. In order to accomplish this task, coaches must convey their teachings, directives, needs and goals to players at different cognitive, social, and emotional developmental levels. This study will provide us with a description of how a coach attempts to communicate with her athletes. More importantly, this study will provide us with a conceptualization of communication that allows us to understand the impact factors such as years of experience, position, past experiences, and starter or sub have on the interpretation of verbal and nonverbal messages.

Coaches must be able to effectively communicate with other coaches, officials, parents, boosters, the media, administrators, and other people associated with the competitive sport setting. Moreover, we expect coaches to create an environment where each and every player has the opportunity to develop to his/her potential as an individual while working toward the group goal of winning. Yet, the demands of groups such as parents, administrators, boosters, the media, and teachers may force coaches to sacrifice

individual betterment for the good of the coach, the team, the school, or the community. Our knowledge base concerning the impact that structural constraints such as these have on a coach are limited. Thus a study of this sort may provide us with valuable information on how factors such as schedule, administrators, parents, weather, and academics influence the coach, the players, and “the team.”

One would expect that someone that has such a prominent position in the lives of our children, adolescents, and young adults would have a degree/certification, like teachers or social workers. To date, there are not any universally accepted guidelines stipulating the competencies necessary to coach. For now, the primary requirement for the position is having some sport related experience, sometimes not even in the sport one is coaching. The assumption seems to be that if you want to coach, you can. After all, it is just a game, for fun. With little or no formal training at all, we hire professionals or assign volunteers to coach young people from the ages of six to twenty-two.

At the high school level, there are approximately 5 million students participating in interscholastic sport programs. High school coaches spend more time with the student-athletes than any teacher. They must design and implement a program that nurtures both the student and the athlete roles of the adolescents in their care. Like individual definitions of “coach,” the requirements to become a coach differ from district to district, county to county, and state to state. Approximately 13 states require minimal certification standards (Martens, 1988). Due to the time commitments of teaching and coaching, fewer and fewer teachers are electing to coach (Freeman, 1995). Consequently the trend will be for interscholastic coaches to have little, if any, formal coaching education or teaching experience. The lack of standards at the high school level parallels the coaching dilemma at the college and youth sport levels.

College coaches spend upwards of 20 to 30 hours a week training their athletes for the physical and mental aspects of competition. Most colleges require coaches to have a college degree (any major) with sport experience. The assumption is that their sport

experience as an athlete will prepare them to formulate training sessions that incorporate principles of sport pedagogy. Furthermore it is assumed that coaches are capable of applying principles from psychology and sociology to bring a diverse group of athletes together as a team. The absurdity of such an assumption is only surpassed by our assignment of untrained volunteers to coach children as young as four.

These children are at their most vulnerable stages of physical, emotional, social, and psychological growth and development. Nonetheless, we bestow the title of coach on a person who may or may not have a high school degree or sport experience. Yet, we require teachers to spend a minimum of four years to get a teaching certificate to work with the minds of our youth. At all levels of competition, coaches make decisions that have the potential to negatively impact the physical, psychological and social development of our youth. This fact, along with the apparent disparity between the sophisticated skills required for the position of coach and the qualities possessed by many coaches, have not gone unnoticed by sport researchers.

Research on Coaches

Traditional Approach to Studying Coaches

The work done by sport researchers examining the behaviors and decisions of coaches utilizes the traditional theoretical framework within the field of organizational communication, that is the structural-functional perspective. The goal of researchers in the field of organizational communication is to investigate the relationship between the use of communication to facilitate the coordination of groups of people to achieve individual and group goals. The general assumption within the field of organizational communication is that communication is a message-gathering, message-sending, and message-interpreting process that enables people to create and share information in their quest to organize (Krebs, 1990). The most frequently used perspective to examine the role of communication within organizations is the structural-functional perspective. Although there is a variety of schools of thought under the umbrella of the structural-functional theoretical framework,

the basic tenet of structural-functionalism is that an organization has four basic characteristics (Farace, Monge, & Russell, 1977). First, an organization is composed of a group of people. Second, the organization normally lasts longer than the members. Third, the organization consists of rules, regulations, and goals that provide structure for the group. Four, a hierarchy of power exists that creates a unidirectional line of communication. More specifically, communication is viewed as a tangible object that flows through the pre-existing organizational structure to promote and maintain the values and norms needed to keep the organization structure together.

A team is viewed as a rational, efficient, system where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (coach and athletes). The performance and survival of a team depends on the amount of conformity to the values and norms of the team. A team is considered functional when the athletes and the coach subordinate their goals and needs for the good of the team in order to win (Coakley, 1994). When a group or individual within the organization exhibit behaviors that seem contrary to the homeostasis of conformity their behavior is deemed dysfunctional. The system is deemed functional/efficient again when all of the interrelated parts have subordinated their will to the good of the team.

From this perspective, the pre-existing structure determines the channels, the direction, and the type of communication within the organization. People act within this pre-existing reality, not react. Moreover, organizations, social institutions, teams, schools, etc., exist outside the minds of the human interactants that create and participate in them (Louis, 1981). Organizations are viewed as universal realities that have meaning independent of context or human interactions outside of or within the organization. From this perspective, culture, climate, communication and structure are major determinants of the behaviors of members of the organization (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982; Weick, 1987). Researchers in industry use the results from these studies to provide managers and bosses with recipes to create strong organizational climates and cultures in an effort to boost production and worker satisfaction.

Sport researchers make similar postulates about the competitive team setting. The coaches' communication behaviors are treated as concrete objects to be studied as they flow down the pre-existing structures of a team. Based on the over reliance on instruments that code coaches' communication acts, not their interactions, one can assume that these researchers view communication as something the team has, the coach does (superior) , and the players' (subordinates) receive, as do many in the field of organizational communication (Weick, 1969). Very little attention is paid to the group or dyadic interactions within the setting or factors that may mediate one's interpretation of the intended or unintended message. The athletes are viewed as the receivers of communication with little, if any, influence on the coach and the development of the team. Team structure (i.e., team), climate, coach-athlete communication, and culture are viewed as set features of the group and major determinants of the behaviors exhibited by members, interactions within the setting (Carron & Bennett, 1977; Sidentop, 1978; Smith & Smoll, 1978). Similar to their structural-functional counterparts in organizational communication, sport researchers have used the results from studies reducing communication to codable acts to provide coaches with recipes to communicate effectively with their players to enhance performance and player satisfaction.

As the following section will illustrate, the information gathered from research from the structural-functional perspective has brought to the forefront the powerful impact a coach's communication behaviors can have on individual players and the team. The only systematic line of research in the area of coaching has provided convincing evidence that there is a strong relationship between coaching behaviors (operationalized on the Coaching Behavior Assessment System) and the perceptions and attitudes of the players (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt 1977; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis 1978, 1979; Smoll & Smith 1980). Throughout this specific line of research in the youth sport area, three critical pieces of information have consistently emerged.

First, untrained coaches exhibit more negative than positive types of communication behaviors with an emphasis on outcome rather than individual effort and individual mastery (process). Researchers throughout the field have expressed concern that coaches' behaviors and attitudes are more outcome than process oriented, exposing the youngest of participants to a professionalized sport experience (Berlage, 1982; Gould & Martens, 1979; Sage, 1973; Yiannakis, 1982). Second, the children's self-esteem and satisfaction with the coach and sport was affected by the amount of social support coaches provided their players. Third, there were distinct differences between how the athletes and the coaches perceive the type and frequency of behaviors exhibited by the coach, with the athletes' assessment being more accurate.

Results from single studies using the CBAS or similar systematic coding instruments designed to observe, code, quantify, and analyze coaches' behaviors suggest that coaches' behaviors/decisions influence the team climate (Fisher, Mancini, Hirsch, Proulx, & Staurowsky, 1982); the players' satisfaction with the coach and their sport experience (Chelladurai, 1984; Spark, 1988; Rushall & Smith, 1979); the players' self-esteem (Kenow, & Williams, 1992; Smoll, Smith, & Barnett, 1993); and team performance (Dubois, 1981). These studies provide us with valuable information about what coaches are doing and that their behaviors have a tremendous amount of influence on the experiences of the players, confirming the assertion that coaches play a prominent role in the lives of our children, adolescents, and young adults. However, none of these studies describes or provides any explanations for coaches' behaviors within a particular sport, at a particular competitive level (high school, recreation, etc.), by team event (practices, games, meetings, etc.), or by gender. Nor do they provide any explanation for why coaches are doing what they are doing or if the social facts constructed by the researcher match the social definitions of either the players or the coaches.

Two recurrent findings in the literature make an excellent case for attempting to understand how coaches and athletes interpret their experiences within the team setting.

First, coaches differentially reinforce athletes based on their expectations of the athletes' abilities (Horn, 1984, 1985; Rejeski, Darracott, & Hutslar, 1979; Sinclair & Vealy, 1988). Results from these studies found that coaches provided more instructional feedback to the low expectancy athletes. The coaches in Horn's (1984) study provided the low expectancy players with more reinforcement than the high expectancy players. The results from these studies only partially support Martinek's (1981) model for the study of expectancy effects in sport and physical education. The basic assumptions of this model are that (a) coaches develop expectations of athletes skill potential, (b) those expectations influence the quantity and quality of coach-athlete interactions, (c) the differences in feedback the players receive influences self-perceptions, and motivation, and (d) over time the athletes' performance may conform to the coach's expectancies. In Sinclair and Vealy (1988), the high expectancy players received more frequent and positive reinforcement. However, in all cases, the low expectancy players received more instructional feedback.

Horn (1984, 1985) suggests that the differences in results can be attributed to a number of methodological factors. First, the dynamics within the competitive sport setting are qualitatively different than in the classroom. Consequently, there may be a different set of expectancy principles that apply to the sport setting. Second, studies using general coding behaviors cannot capture the coach-athlete dyads that could explain the within-team variations of coaching behaviors directed at individual players. Within-team and group variations in each study could account for differences. Third, different populations were investigated in each study. The level of competition, contextual factors (practices, games, point in season), and player maturity may be responsible for the differences in results from study to study. There are two valuable pieces of information missing from our knowledge base on the subject of expectancy effects in the sport setting. We do not have any understanding as to what cues coaches use to develop their expectations of a players' potential. Nor do we have any understanding of how the players' interpret coded and uncoded coaching behaviors that may impact their self-confidence and self-esteem. Our

lack of understanding about the processes underlying expectancy effects in sport and physical education is as troubling as our inability to understand the incongruence in the perceptions of coaches and athletes about factors such as team climate, preferred leadership styles, and player satisfaction.

This leads us to the second recurrent finding in the sport literature. Coaches' and athletes' perceptions of what coaches do are distinctly different. This assertion is supported by the findings of studies examining leadership styles. Every study has shown that there are very distinct differences in leadership style preferences between coaches and players (Carron & Bennett, 1977; Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983; Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989) and differences in how coaches perceive their behaviors and/or team climates and how athletes perceive them (Fisher et. al., 1982; Horne & Carron, 1985; Percival, 1971; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978). The amount of difference between the perceptions of coaches and players was mediated by factors such as sport, level of competition, and gender. Throughout this line of research, the incompatibilities in coach-athlete perceptions affected the cohesiveness of teams, team climate, and player satisfaction with the team, the sport, and the coach. The vast amount of information gathered from the reviewed literature has led to the development of two sport leadership models that provide a structural-functional theoretical framework to study leadership in sport (Chelladurai, 1980; Smoll & Smith, 1989).

Leadership Models

Chelladurai and Carron (1978) proposed a situational-behavioral leadership model that claimed a player's performance and satisfaction are determined by a coach's behaviors, characteristics, and the social and situational aspects of the setting. In 1980, Chelladurai refined his earlier model to include factors such as players' preferences for leadership style and coaches' perceptions of their leadership. The basic assumption of this model is that performance outcome and player satisfaction are positively related to the amount of congruence between leader behavior, players' preferences for leadership style, and required

leader behaviors. This model neglects the processes underlying the similarities in the perceptions of the players and discrepancies between the coaches and players' perceptions. Furthermore, this model does not take into consideration the difference between players' interpretations of the coach's behaviors and the actual behaviors and factors that mediate the players' interpretations of the coach's leadership style.

Smoll and Smith's (1989) model acknowledges the existence of the players' perceptions as a factor involved in the development of coach-athlete relations. The basic tenet of this model is that the coach behaves in a particular fashion and the players perceive the behaviors and react based on their evaluation of the coaches behaviors. However, this model does not address the interactive nature of the setting. Coaches are viewed as the actors and the players' as the reactors. Consequently the coaching behaviors that are affected by the mediating variables (variables related to individual coach and athlete differences, situational factors, and athlete perceptions) are not identified. It appears that understanding the communication process within the competitive sport setting would provide us with the key ingredient for an award winning recipe in the development of a cohesive, satisfied team.

Although the leadership models and results from traditional sport research have provided us with valuable information about the relationship between coaching behaviors and player satisfaction, self-esteem, and perception, we have a limited understanding about the attitudes and perceptions that motivate coaches' behaviors. These studies have consistently found that coaches exhibit patterns of differential reinforcement in relation to their expectations of a player's ability; there are distinct differences between coaches and athletes' perceptions about "team" factors; and coaches exhibit more negative than positive reinforcement. In order to understand the processes underlying these consistent findings, we must follow the lead of researchers utilizing the organizational culture perspective to study organizations and acknowledge the significance of social interactions within the setting, of one's past experiences, and of the context (Pettigrew, 1979). Our

conceptualization of communication must embrace the symbolic-interactionists' postulate that communication involves the interplay between the repeated social interactions within the setting and the pre-existing team structure as well as the participants' past experiences. We must move beyond the theoretical world of those who have examined communication as a concrete observable variable and investigate the process involved in communicating as the main ingredient in the recipe for a cohesive team, a collective "we."

Organizational Culture

From the symbolic interaction perspective, communication is the hub of an organization. Communication is viewed as an ongoing process, not a concrete feature of the organization. The organization evolves from interactions amongst and between the members. A basic assumption of this perspective is that communication and culture are something the organization is, not has (Smircich, 1985). Culture is the mutually understood ways that members of an organization make sense of situations, events, and objects. These shared meanings and understandings, norms, and values develop through social interactions and ongoing communication within the organization.

This approach views culture as a social construction that becomes an objectified reality for the interactors within the group (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Culture is learned. Culture is shared. There is a sense of collective "we" that develops through the social interactions within the organization (Schall, 1983; Schein, 1985). The basic assumption of the symbolic interaction perspective is that organizational culture is socially defined by the members, as a collective interpretation of the team events and activities. It is not an objective social fact that exists independent of the social interactions between the members (McMurray, 1994). Individual perceptions of the socioemotional climate of an organization evolve from the shared assumptions of the "organization."

Communication is the key to a strong, cohesive organization, with the coaches of the teams being in a position to exert the most influence on the direction, amount, and quality of information that flows within the organization. Coaches play a key role in the

development of the team culture, which in turn influences the players' perceptions of the coach and the experience (Shein, 1983; Shockley-Zalabak & Morely, 1994). The previous section demonstrated that coaches are unable accurately to assess the team climate, their own behaviors, and/or the players' satisfaction with the experience. In order to help coaches become more effective at positively influencing the development of the individuals into a cohesive group, we must understand the role communication plays in the evolutionary process of team development.

In an effort to understand the relationship between communication and effective leadership, we must adopt the perspective of those who believe that meaning is dynamic (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Blumer, 1969; Labov, 1980). From this perspective, our perceptions, meanings, and behaviors are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated through social interaction. Our interpretations of an event or object within a group are shaped by our perceptions of self in relation to others in the group (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1927-1982). In other words, the meanings one attaches to a team may change over time and as they move from one team to another. Through social interactions within the setting, members develop a collective understanding of the rights, responsibilities, roles, and positions of team members. From this perspective, participants take an active role in creating and shaping the team. This is quite a contrast to our traditional conceptualization that the pre-existing structure of team determines how participants act within the setting.

From the symbolic interactionist perspective, "the team" is the shared understanding by the members of the collective "we." As Charon (1979) most aptly stated, there is a "truth" or individual reality as well as shared meanings that are constructed and reconstructed through social interaction. Our profession is an excellent example of this postulate. The academic department reduced to a social fact by researchers is different than the social definition of the department by the faculty, staff, and students. Moreover, the social definition of the department changes over time. Like a team, an academic department is an ongoing, dynamic process.

Research from this perspective, provides evidence to support the assertions that culture is constructed and reconstructed through repeated face to face interactions within an organization (Fine, 1984; Harris, 1983; Hollingsworth, 1989; Sage, 1989b); there are multiple sites of culture in organizations (Gregory, 1983; Sackmann, 1992); rituals and stories are significant in the construction and reconstruction of organizations (Riley, 1983); and it is important to understand the perspective of the insider (Cutforth, 1995; Pettigrew, 1979; Singelis & Brown, 1995). Roles, norms, and values are seen as socially constructed classifications used by group members to make sense of events within the culture of the team (Foley, 1990).

A cultural analysis of a team should focus on the similarities and differences in the social significance of events, objects, and interactions within and between teams. We should examine the intraorganizational loci of culture (bench, starters, fielders, etc.) and the transorganizational loci of culture (schedule, philosophy of program, societal views of sport) to understand the organization. The potential benefits of adopting the organizational culture approach to study the team setting are innumerable.

First, examining sport teams from an organizational culture approach may be useful in explaining the “whys” behind the behaviors described by the traditional research within the physical education and sport settings. Second, we may begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between the pre-existing realities and the socially constructed “truths” of coaches and athletes as individuals and members of the group. Third, the triangulation of the results from traditional sport research and symbolic interactionism may help us in the development of sport specific organizational theory.

Dewar and Horn (1992) address this issue in their challenge to sport psychologists to step back and examine the way they come to know what they know. Dewar and Horn question the positivists’ basic assumption that there is an objective reality that can be discovered and presented in unbiased and non-judgmental manner. Their argument is that all knowledge is socially constructed. Therefore we must move beyond the positivist stance

of an objective reality, one way of knowing, and acknowledge the significance of how we, as well as our subjects, come to know. Their contention parallels the basic assumption of the symbolic interaction perspective: communication is the process through which we organize and define our “realities.” The competitive sport setting and theoretical “reality” cannot be reduced to universal “truths” independent of the interactions and beliefs of those who construct the knowledge, of those who participate in the settings.

Similarly, the underlying assumption of my study is that communication is the process through which the coach and players evolve into a collective we. Consequently the overarching question to be answered was, “What is the role of communication in the development of the team? More specifically, I focused on the following questions:

- 1) What role does the coach’s communication behaviors play in the evolution of the team?
- 2) How are the coach’s communication behaviors influenced by the players?
- 3) What types of factors influence the interpretation of communication behaviors within the setting (erg., position, years of experience, starter/bench, race, past experiences, etc.)?
- 4) How does the organizational structure/culture of the school influence the players, the coach, and the team?
- 5) What role does nonverbal behavior play in communication within the team setting?

In order to understand the role of communication in the development of the team, I entered into the world of the coach and players. I went beyond the positivist “reality” of the coach and players by becoming a participant observer where I could have access to any and all team activities as well as conduct in-depth interviews. These methodologies were best suited for understanding “why” the coach did what she did and “how” her communication behaviors influenced the team culture (Erickson, 1986; Fine, 1986; Gallmeier, 1989; Sage, 1989a).

As a participant observer, I became aware of the parallels between the process involved in conducting the study and how the players and Donna became a collective “we.” That awareness made me cognizant of the importance of acknowledging how the continual negotiation and renegotiation of “team” affected my relationships within the participants influencing my observations, interviews, and focus of this report. For that reason, I have chosen a narrative style for the body of the paper that acknowledges the existence of the multiple realities and voices within the setting, including mine (Foley, 1992).

Chapter 2

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter contains a narrative description of the investigative methods used in the study. I have chosen this style of reporting to demonstrate the importance of not separating the process of doing the study from the researcher being a part of the study. This reflects the position that the personal, as well as professional, experiences of the researcher are important in understanding the methodology and documenting the results of the study (VanMaanen, 1988). This style of writing allowed me to bring to the forefront my middle class background and past experiences as a coach, and to illustrate to the reader how those factors along with my experiences as a woman, might have influenced my relationships with the participants and the methods used in conducting this study. Through disclosure and analysis of these potential sources of bias, I feel I have been able to present a more objective report of the subjectivity of the participants.

I spent 155 hours observing the members of the Torrey West high school varsity softball team. During that time, I made the transition from a complete observer to a participant observer. The process of negotiation and renegotiation of access corresponded with the evolution through which 13 players and a coach became a team. Therefore, one cannot make judgment on the methodology used to conduct the study without understanding the process of being a participant observer in this setting.

Selection of the Coach and the Sport

Choices

Fast-pitch softball season was almost upon us and I was getting ready to name the coach who would be the main participant in the impending study. The selection process had been slow and frustrating. For over a year I had been investigating the plausibility

of conducting ethnographic research on how a coach's communication behaviors influenced the culture of a team.

My preference for this type of study was to do the research in a sport that I knew well enough that I could spend more time with the participants and less time learning the game. I had coached, played, and been an official in both basketball and softball. Basketball season was ending, while softball season was two months in the future. Consequently, time constraints influenced my decision to find a high school softball coach to join me in my research study. I say "join me" in the sense that just as I needed to become a participant observer, the coach needed to become my research partner, not merely someone to be studied. In a team situation involving the rights and privacy of both the coach and his/her players' personal space, the day to day negotiation of access would involve an incredible amount of collaboration on the part of the coach and myself.

I had decided that because the focus of the study was the role of communication in the development of the team, I wanted a school site that would reflect cultural diversity. Consequently, I selected an urban school district with three high schools. However, the softball program lacked the racial diversity that existed within the school. Of the 35 members of the three teams, only one player, a freshman, belonged to a minority group. She was Samoan. There were not any minorities on the varsity or junior varsity baseball teams. Where were all of the minority students? One day, the track team practiced in the gym with us. From that one observation, I would guess that the racial makeup of the track team was 70% minority (mostly African-American) and 30% Caucasian.

I actively pursued the varsity softball coaches at each school. The initial contact with two of the coaches was relatively simple. Both coaches were employed as teachers at the schools where they coached. The athletic directors at each school gave me permission to contact the coaches. I contacted both coaches at their respective schools. During the initial phone conversations, I engaged the coaches in discussions about their coaching

background, their teams, and the purpose of the study. Both coaches provided me with their home phone numbers and schedules for future discussions.

I preferred to select a coaching situation that would appear typical to the persons who would read this dissertation. Therefore, in my mind, I had already discounted the feasibility of these two coaches participating in the study. The first coach contacted had been co-coaching with a friend from his childhood for years. They had been friends since their early school days. I had accepted that I would have to take into consideration the influence an assistant coach would have on the team. However, I did not feel that the typical high school program has co-coaches and assistants. It was obvious from the record of this program that this arrangement was successful from a competitive standpoint. Yet I did not feel comfortable with the arrangement for the purposes of this study.

The second coach seemed arrogant and more interested in the boys' freshmen baseball team than the girls' softball team that he was coaching. My first impression was that I could not enter into a working relationship with this coach. However, there were times when I wondered whether I had made a rash decision based on one phone conversation. Those fears were later alleviated when the team I was studying played this particular coach's team. I was relieved to find that my instincts had been correct. This gentleman created a scene that suggested that his arrogance definitely superseded his concern for his players. As I sat on the opposing bench, I congratulated myself for not engaging this gentleman in another conversation. By eliminating these two coaches, I realized that I needed to contact the third immediately and to begin checking for other urban sites.

Behind Closed Doors

Making contact with the third coach was not quite as simple. The coach taught in another school district. Hence, during the pre-season her time at Torrey West was limited. The athletic director had been very helpful in providing me with times that I might contact the coach. The coach had organized workouts for the pitchers and catchers, but these

workouts were irregular. Each time that I called the school, workout times had been changed or canceled. Finally, I decided to go to the school and find the coach. I got directions from the athletic director and made my way to Torrey West to make contact with the softball coach in person.

As I turned the corner, my first thoughts were that I had gotten the wrong directions. The building I was approaching appeared to be a three story red brick prison in a state of disrepair. The building seemed cold and uninviting. And yet, the sign in front of the building indicated that I had reached my destination, Torrey West High School. By my calculations, school had been out for about 20 minutes. A few kids were milling around in the parking lot, but for the most part the premises were devoid of much action. I walked up to a set of red double doors and pulled. The doors were locked. Not only locked, but chained from the inside. As I tried another door, I read a notice on the glass window of the door. Basically, it stated that one would be fined if they were found on the premises without permission from the administration. I walked around the building pulling on every door I found. They were all locked. With each tug, I was experiencing an uneasy feeling about the school. There was no one around. As I walked back to the chained doors, I caught a glimpse of some young men inside. I banged on the window of the door. One young man pulled on the chained door and shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "It's locked." Through the crack of the door, I asked him if he knew where the softball team might be practicing. Raising his hand, he pointed to the west end of the building. As I glanced in that direction, I saw a person coming out of another set of red doors. I ran through the door just as it closed.

Finally inside, I was not sure whether I wanted to continue my search for the coach. Not only was I was afraid of being caught on the school grounds, I was experiencing great discomfort at the thought of being in a school where they lock the doors to keep students in and undesirables out. I had seen schools like this one in the movies and the news. However, those depictions did not prepare me for the reality of the situation. If

this was representative of an urban school, I was beginning to rethink my school site choice.

As I passed a man on the stairs, I asked if he had seen any teams practicing. He indicated that he saw some young men running through the halls on the third floor. I proceeded up to the third floor. As I opened the door, sounds of boys cheering and counting reverberated off the walls. There were four or five boys running to the end of the hall and circling back toward me. At the end of the hallway, one boy seemed to be resting. I walked down and asked if he had seen the softball team practicing. He pointed toward a door. I could hear girls yelling and screaming, but I could not find an unlocked entrance. As I turned to ask the boy if he knew how to get into the gym, I realized that I was the only one on the third floor. The silence was eerie. I wondered what it must be like to attend a school with such a seemingly oppressive environment. As I made my way down the stairs, I questioned my ability to conduct the study in such an environment.

Although I considered going to my car and leaving, I found myself making my way to the backside of the building in search of the gym door. I found two adults inside a door on the south side. They opened the door and questioned my presence on the school grounds. I indicated that I was looking for the softball coach. They thought that there was a girls' team practicing in the gym on the second floor. Even though I felt more at ease knowing that these two people were nearby, the walk up two flights of stairs was unnerving. My fears began to wane, as I heard sounds that seemed familiar. I could hear a woman's voice yell, "Get into your positions." At last, I thought, the softball coach. Yet, as I turned, I saw volleyball players. As I began to open the door across from the gym, a man came up and asked what I was doing. I told him that I was looking for Donna, the softball coach. He informed me that the softball coach was not there, nor had he seen her for a few days. That was all I needed to hear. I quickly made my way out of the building and to the parking lot. As I drove away from Torrey West High School, I found myself wondering what it would be like to conduct the study behind locked doors. Once I started

working with the participants, I found the participants' experiences to be so rich and without anxiety that I realized that my first impression of Torrey West was based on my past experience as a suburbanite.

The Coach

The next day I contacted the Athletic Director at Torrey West. I explained the difficulty that I was having contacting Donna at school. She offered to provide me with Donna's home phone number. My goal had been to avoid making the initial contacts with the coaches at home. However, I was not ready to visit Torrey West again. Consequently, I decided that I would accept Donna's number from the Athletic Director. That night I called Donna at home. I informed Donna of the purpose of my call and engaged her in conversation about her team and coaching experience. According to Donna, this was to be her second year as varsity coach. There had been three varsity coaches at Torrey West in the last five years. In Donna's view, she was developing a program, not just team. I was eager to meet Donna in person and discuss the possibility of her participating in the study. I wanted to know how a coach's communication behaviors influence the culture of the team, and here was a coach attempting to develop a program to fit her vision of what being on the varsity should mean to its players.

Donna and I agreed to meet the next day at the school where she taught. What a contrast to Torrey West! I arrived between class periods. When I entered the school, I had an easy time identifying with the rural middle class population and facility. The school looked inviting and open, with pastel colored hallways, windows looking outside, and unchained doors. As I walked down the hallway to her classroom, I wondered how coaching within the confines of Torrey West affected her. I opened the classroom door and saw Donna sitting at her desk. The classroom was neat and orderly. She rose from behind the desk and introduced herself. We talked for approximately one hour. I explained the purpose of the study. For the remainder of the time, we discussed Donna's past coaching experience, her coaching philosophy, and her vision for the team.

Donna was candid. She felt that she had a lot to learn. When she began coaching, she felt she had made a lot of mistakes. Half-way through the discussion, I asked Donna if she might consider participating in the study. Donna, seemingly confident in her decision, answered, "I'll do it." I was dumbfounded. I did not believe that Donna had fully considered the time and emotional effort involved in my observing her coaching. Consequently, I did my best to make Donna aware of the time and energy involved in such a project. We discussed the impact my presence might have on her and/or her players. I explained that I could not accept her offer to become involved in the study without knowing that she had considered the matter carefully. I got her address so that I could send her a letter explaining the study and the informed consent form (see Appendix B). We agreed that I would contact her one week after I sent the materials.

Even though I was a bit apprehensive that Donna might reconsider her offer to participate, I could not accept her initial offer to participate in clear conscience. I was not completely satisfied that she fully understood the impact of my presence. For the amount of access and time I was asking from her, I owed her the option to back out. I emphasized to Donna that she had the right to deny me access at any time during the study.

I contacted Donna the following week. We discussed the informed consent letter point by point. I explained that we would continually be negotiating and renegotiating interview schedules and observational procedures. Additionally, I tried to make it clear to Donna that my interactions with the players might focus on their interpretation of her communication behaviors. Consequently, the players might provide me with some unfavorable impressions of her behaviors which I might use in my dissertation. When all was said and done, Donna again agreed to participate in the study. I was elated. The selection of the rest of the participants was her responsibility. Tryouts would begin in a week and a half.

Donna's Selection of the Players

Tryouts

Although I had coached school softball for years, I had no idea what to expect at the first tryout. In all of my years coaching softball, I never thought about what it would be like to organize and run practices inside the confines of a gym. I was apprehensive about the negotiation of access. I knew I had to position myself so that I could hear Donna's interactions with the players and coaches. In order to select the least intrusive location, I arrived about 15 minutes early. Donna had assured me that the door would be open so that I could get inside without the uneasiness of my first visit to Torrey West. I saw a few girls huddled around a blue metal door held ajar by a broken bat. I walked over to the group and asked if the door led to the gym where the softball team was practicing. The girls told me to go through the locker room and up the stairs to the gym. I walked down two cement stairs and entered into a cement locker room.

There were approximately five rows of gray metal lockers with benches in between each row. The lockers were only about four feet tall. Along the left side, there was a brick wall that seemed to divide the room. I walked over and peeked around the corner. On the left, I saw the showers. On the right, I saw a few girls changing in a locker room surrounded on three sides by the brick wall. The young women were talking and laughing as they changed their clothes. School was not out yet, so I was not sure if the girls were changing after P.E. classes or preparing for softball tryouts. The girls glanced over at me, turned their backs, and whispered. I became aware of how I would feel if a stranger appeared while I was partially clothed. Inconspicuously, I quickly exited the small enclosed locker area. As I turned the corner, I saw three girls with softball gloves going up the stairs. I followed them into a gym where about 15 girls were giggling, talking, and milling around in one of two gyms on the second floor. As more girls trooped into the gym I moved quickly to the right of the doorway. My first concern was to bring as little attention to myself as possible. I quickly jumped up on the unopened wooden bleachers. As I began

to position myself between a pile of clothes and books, Donna walked over and set her notes, glove, and jacket down in front of me. She smiled at me and called to two women standing on the other side of the bleachers.

As they were walking toward us, Donna explained that the two women were the junior varsity and freshman softball coaches. When they arrived, Donna introduced me to Milly, the JV coach, and Martha, the freshman coach. Donna told the coaches I was conducting a study about softball and that I would be spending a good deal of time observing the varsity.

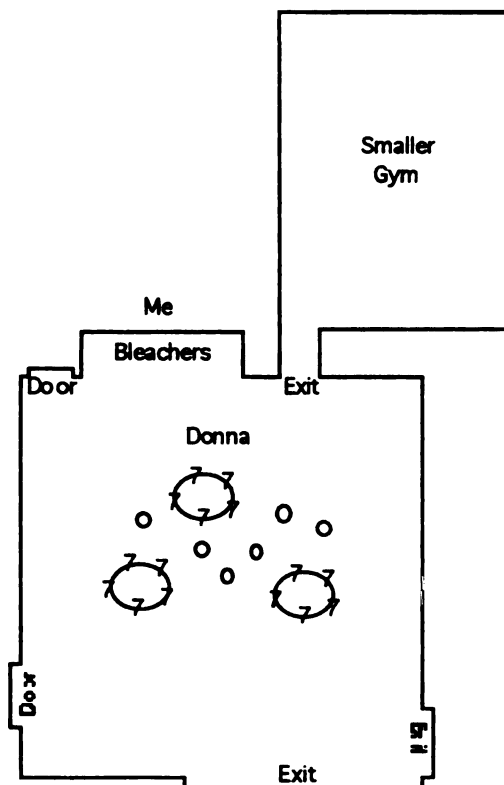
During our discussion, a young woman walked toward Donna. With a big smile on her face, Donna became engaged in an animated conversation with this woman. Donna turned and introduced me to Pam, her assistant coach. My first impression was that Pam and Donna were opposites. Donna seemed to be quiet, thoughtful, almost distant in some respects, while Pam appeared to be a good ole 'girl. She was talkative, quick in her movements, and seemingly carefree. I remembered that in our initial conversation, Donna said that last year the girls had a different, closer relationship with Pam.

The coaches moved away from the bleachers toward the girls on the gym floor. Donna moved over to the front of the group and asked everyone to come over and sit down. There were approximately 35 girls standing within the boundaries of the basketball playing area. As Figure 1 illustrates, the players broke up into three main groups with the rest of the people sitting amongst the distinguishable groups. This picture shows both gyms used during indoor practice. Donna stood in front of my bleacher with approximately 35 players sitting on the floor looking up at her. The first circular group of players consisted of a mixture of returning players and varsity hopefuls.

I was excited. The selection process for the rest of the participants, the varsity team, was about to begin. For the next four days, I was going to begin establishing a reciprocal relationship with Donna that addressed her personal and professional space, as well as my access needs. I fully realized that after the team was selected the negotiation of

access would be much more difficult. Access would continually be negotiated and renegotiated based on the dynamics of the group, relationships between each individual and myself, and the logistics of the events being observed. But for now, I was content to sit on the bleachers and observe Donna select the rest of the participants. As I watched the girls congregate inside the boundaries of the basketball court, I wondered which ones would be participating in the study.

Figure 1



The starting times for practices were dependent on sharing the facilities with the baseball and track teams. Hence, I do not remember knowing until the end of one practice what time the next would start. Our practice times were 3:00pm, 4:00pm, or 6:00pm. Practices lasted 2 to 2 1/2 hours. The last half hour was reserved for individual instruction for the pitchers and catchers. Donna seemed to be more interested in the development of the

pitchers and catchers. One explanation for the importance she placed in the pitcher/catcher drills was that she had been a pitcher in high school and college.

There were four days of hitting, throwing, catching, and baserunning drills. Due to the weather, all of the tryouts and a good portion of the regular practices were held inside two gyms. The practices always began with stretching exercises led by the girls. As I came to know the players, I realized that varsity hopefuls were the only ones to lead the stretching. I do not remember ever hearing anyone designate who should lead the exercises. After the stretches, one of the coaches would call out the number of laps that the girls were expected to run. With the exception of the first day, the freshmen would then depart from Torrey West to the neighboring middle school for their tryouts. Next the players would get into pairs and throw sideline to sideline to warm their arms up.

Walking behind the players, Donna called out general and individual instructive comments. For me, this drill, along with pitching practice, was very nerve racking. Balls would hit the floor, the bleachers, slap into the gloves, and, occasionally, hit the basketball backboards. Not only was the noise annoying, so was the fear of being hit. Whenever these drills occurred, one person in the pair would throw in my direction. Balls would whiz by my head, hit the brick wall behind me and rebound onto the bleacher. It was difficult to read the field notes taken during these drills, because I was always afraid to look down and see what I was writing. Time and time again, I would hear someone yell, "heads." That was the signal to dump my notes, duck my head, and hope the ball missed me.

With the exception of the first day of tryouts, players were asked to bat, field, throw, run, and catch in a variety of drill settings. The first day found the coaches spending a good portion of their time huddling together instead of evaluating the girls. This situation was created by two factors. First, two of the five possible returning varsity players were not present. Second, the number of players trying out was not sufficient to fill the three teams appropriately. Hence, one might say that there were only three days of tryouts where the coaches focused on the performance of the players. Generally, Pam and Milly were in

charge of the drills, as Donna moved amongst players observing their performance. Donna seemed to control the tempo of the practice session. Even though Donna seemed to have first pick of all of the players, she would continually ask Milly her views about particular players.

Although in most of the drills the varsity and JV lined up one team behind the other, the distinction appeared insignificant between what seemed to be the lesser skilled varsity hopefuls and the more skilled JV hopefuls. Consequently, it was difficult to make an experienced guess on who would actually be selected for the varsity. Donna seemed to be consistent in providing reinforcement, criticism, and instruction to all of the softball hopefuls. The girls, as a whole, uniformly reinforced the most skilled to the least skilled peer. There were players that received more hoots and hollers. Yet, there were not any players who did not receive tremendous support from varsity and JV hopefuls alike. By the third day, I had identified that Cathy, Tanya, and Polly were the returnees from last year. From conversations with Donna, I knew that Marlene and Sara would be selected for the team. Additionally, I felt that Tina, Kelsy, Babs, Popeye, Candy, and Nan would probably be selected. These feelings were based on observations of their performance and their interactions with Cathy, Tanya, and Polly. I refrained from asking Donna who would be included in her final selection of the varsity.

In part, I did not want her to feel that I was second guessing her. She was aware of my background as a coach, a researcher, and a player. During a discussion after the second practice, she asked me, "How do we look at this point?" I told her that I did not feel that I had been exposed to high school softball recently enough to know "How they looked." In addition, I reminded her that I could not answer questions that might influence the study. Incidents such as this would be part of our developing relationship. Donna had gone to great lengths after every practice to answer my questions and informally discuss events of the day. I had stayed close to the bleachers and not invaded the coaching territory. Yet, I noticed that Donna conducted many of her conferences in front of my position on the

bleacher. I knew that eventually I would have to begin moving around the team setting. However, I did not feel it was appropriate until I received consent/assent from the players.

During the last day of tryouts, the tone of Donna's comments seemed to indicate she was ready to begin coaching the varsity. Yet, it was also the first day that I witnessed Donna appear to relax with the girls. At the end of practice, Donna slid down on the floor with the players to explain the selection process, where the lists would be posted, and how she appreciated the effort of all the JV/Varsity hopefuls. After everyone except the pitchers and catchers had left, Pam printed out the list of names that would soon be known as the Torrey West Varsity softball team. The selection process was done. Donna had selected 13 girls for her team and my research project.

Players' Assent, Parents' Consent

I entered the locker room at 2:30pm to find Donna sorting the uniforms in a small room off to the side. She was placing the uniforms in piles of shirts, pants, and undershirts by size. As I walked in and said hi, Donna handed me the list of players. I was correct in my assessment that Babs, Kelsy, Tina, Nan, Popeye, Tanya, Cathy, Polly, Sara, Marlene, and Candy would be selected. The two unknowns were Cissy and Molly. I felt some uneasiness about presenting the project to the girls without the benefit of knowing something about each of them. However, official practices were about to begin and I needed to obtain the players' assent and the parents' consent.

Donna told me that she planned on passing out uniforms, introducing me, and informing the players of her expectations. I asked Donna where the field was in relationship to the gym. She indicated that the girls' softball field was below sea level about two blocks behind the school. The field lacked dugouts, fences, and access to restrooms. In order to drive, one had to leave the school grounds and enter a busy street. Donna also told me the roads leading to the field were dirt. Consequently, many a player and opposing team had gotten stuck or had to walk to the field during spring showers. This was quite a contrast from the boys' baseball field next to the main parking lot with a well-manicured

field, large bleachers, elaborate dugouts, and a chain-link fence plastered with the names of supporting advertisers.

As we were carrying on our discussion, girls began peeking their heads around the door. Most players wanted to know where to meet. Donna indicated that we would meet up in the gym. I helped Donna stack the last of the pants so that we could get to the gym before practice time. Donna was a stickler for being prompt.

When we entered the gym, I jumped onto my unopened bleacher while Donna stood on the floor going over her notes. As the players meandered in, they congregated into groups of three or four. These small groups seemed to be engaged in one of two activities, discussing boys or horsing around. Two members of one group, consisting mainly of varsity players, had actually begun wrestling on the ground. As I was observing the two girls entangled on the floor, I heard Donna call out to Cathy. The two girls on the floor stopped in mid grab and looked at Cathy. Cathy excused herself from the group and came over to the bleacher. Donna asked her, "Who do you think for captain?" Cathy looked back at the players on the gym floor and answered, "I don't know, a junior." Cathy explained to Donna that she was having a difficult time coming up with someone. The discussion ended with Donna telling Cathy to "get em going." This was a statement that I would hear time and time again. It came to mean "time to start practice."

Cathy walked toward the groups of girls and yelled, "Three laps." The small social groups of girls disbanded into a long line of softball players running the outer edges of the gym. As the players were finishing their stretching, Donna told the varsity players to gather up their belongings and meet her in the locker room.

I was the last one into the locker room. As I entered, the girls were organizing themselves on the benches, the lockers, and each other's lap. Everyone was present except Candy. The noise of their laughter was echoing throughout the locker room. Donna had to ask them to be quiet twice. As the players turned to face Donna, she welcomed them to the varsity. With big smiles on their faces, the players cheered for themselves. She told them

that practice was going to focus on organizational matters, such as assignment of lockers, uniforms, and a discussion about her expectations. Continuing, Donna said, "First I want to introduce you to Linda Lyman. Linda is a student at Michigan State University. She is working on her Ph.D. in Physical Education. She wants to use our team for her dissertation research." As I moved next to Donna, the players, still smiling, seemed to stiffen as they exchanged glances with each other.

I began by asking the players if they had wondered about my presence over the last four days. One player indicated that she thought I might be a reporter. A senior player was hoping that I was a college scout. I apologized for not being anyone quite so exciting and began my explanation of the purpose of the study. I told the players that I wanted to understand their team experience as individuals and also as team members. I pointed out that during the course of the study I might observe them doing something that was not considered appropriate team behavior. I assured them that the coach would not be provided with any information that I gathered about them. I explained that I was interested in "team things" and how they become meaningful. During tryouts, I had remembered that the varsity coaches had addressed Cathy as "Rock." When I asked Donna how Cathy got the nickname, "Rock," she explained that the year before an opposing team was so impressed with Cathy's unwavering spirit and performance that they gave her the nickname. To provide the girls with an example of team things, I began a discussion about the significance of Cathy's nickname. In the middle of the discussion, Sara blurted out, "I didn't know why I was calling her that. I just did it because everyone else did." I pointed out that Sara's statement was important in understanding the significance of the nickname "Rock" to this group of varsity players versus last year's team.

I made it clear that I would be present at practices, games, team meetings, and any other team functions. In addition, I tried to impress upon the players that if my presence bothered them they had the right to refuse participation at any time. I read aloud all of the points in the informed consent. I promised the players that I would provide them with as

much confidentiality as possible. I explained that one limitation surrounding the issue of confidentiality would be the number of people that they told about the project.

We entered into a discussion about the need for using pseudonyms for the purposes of reporting data gathered during the study. During this discussion, the players began joking with each other about possible names that might fit their individual personalities. In response to this joking, I told the players that they could select the name that would identify them in my notes and any reporting of the results. Each player verbally agreed to participate in the study. After the discussion, I gave each player a letter to the parents (see Appendix B) and an informed consent form (see Appendix C). I discussed the same issues with Candy the following day. Within a week's time, all of the players returned the consent forms.

The Familiar But Strange World

Twice during tryouts, the uneasiness of being in an urban school returned. The first time was on the second day. As practice ended, a few of the girls left out the side door. In a few minutes, they returned. There seemed to be some confusion as to whether a door had been left unlocked for us to leave the building.

The next unnerving incident was repeated two or three times during the course of the season. In the middle of Donna's announcement that she needed help taking down the batting cage, the lights went out. The gym became pitch dark. I was having a hard enough time feeling secure finding my way to the only unlocked door in the light. And yet, the players and the coaches took it in stride. For as many years as I had coached, I never considered the differences in structural constraints placed on coaches in different areas, i.e., weather, schedule, safety issues, etc. As I tried to understand how my informants made sense of their world, I too had to make sense of the familiar but strange world around me.

Inside

There is a fine line between intrusion and inclusion. I found this particularly true in the beginning as I tried to negotiate relationships with individual players, Donna, and groups of players. Not only did I have to identify and deal with the personal space of each person, I had to identify how the participants' interactions amongst themselves affected my relationship with individuals and groups.

My past experience as a coach seemed to hinder my leaving the bleacher. I continually evaluated the impact of my physical presence within the practice area based on how I might feel if someone were in my coaching space. I felt like I was spying on everyone. As I sat on my perch, I was not creating a reciprocal relationship with my fellow participants. I was not allowing them the opportunity to get to know me. I was at this point a complete observer, an outsider, and I needed to develop an insider perspective to understand how the players and Donna made sense of being members of the Torrey West Varsity softball team. I felt that Donna and I were in the process of developing a reciprocal working relationship. She had offered me unlimited access. However, my problem in leaving my perch was not only with how Donna might feel, but with the intrusion that the players might feel. Not only were the majority of players trying to negotiate a relationship with a new coach, they were also trying to secure a starting position.

I made my first inroads to becoming a participant observer when I helped the players set up the batting cage. On the days that practice was conducted inside, two long cables had to be stretched the length of the gym. Normally, the varsity and JV practiced at the same time; this created a situation where there were enough tall players to stretch the cables successfully. However, one day the varsity players had to stretch the cables without the assistance of the JV. Consequently, the task became extremely difficult. There were not enough tall players to support the long metal cables. Cathy was on the ladder pulling the cable when it recoiled so quickly that she almost fell. I jumped off my bleacher and held

onto Cathy's legs as she and the others attempted to hook the cable. Again, the cable recoiled. A man with a broom walked toward me and jokingly asked if the players got graded for participation. Everyone laughed. As we were all laughing, the gentleman slipped over and hooked Cathy's cable. He then walked over and hooked the cable to the other wall. As the players slid the netted batting cage along the cables, I walked back to my bleacher. I felt that I had made some connection with the players.

The next day, drills were organized in both small gyms on the second floor. Hence, I spent my time in the doorway separating the two gyms. As I was writing in my notebook, I was hit in the buttocks with an errant throw from the other gym. I turned just in time to observe Babs, the thrower, laughing and pointing in my direction. When she noticed that I had turned, she attempted to apologize through all of her laughter. Directly behind me, Candy, the catcher, turned her head away and began laughing. Both players asked if I was OK. Before I could answer, the lights clicked off and the gym became pitch dark. I could hear players yell, "I want my mommy." Through all of the yelling and laughing, Donna could be heard calling everyone to the larger gym. I made my way through the dark with Babs and Candy. We all stood in the dark together and listened to Donna's parting words. Each day I was provided with more opportunities to interact with the players before, during, and after practice. Two weeks into practice sessions, I had informally interacted with each of the players. I was ready to venture off my perch and into the practice setting.

During the rest of the practices inside the gym, I freely walked around the drill groups and observed the interactions between Donna and the players. Additionally, I observed the interactions between the players within their practice groups. These observations provided me access to discussions which led to an understanding of how the players were making sense of their practice experiences.

Although the players seemed to accept me, I still did not feel as though the players were comfortable with my presence. Occasionally I thought that I observed players refraining from talking as I moved within earshot. Other times I perceived that players

stopped exhibiting behaviors that might be perceived as goofing off. Early on I witnessed some players covering their mouths and apologizing when they swore. Not only would they look to see if I heard them, they would glance over to see if Donna heard. I learned very quickly to listen without looking. Towards the end of the season, the players began calling me antennae ears.

I felt like I was walking on a tightrope as I attempted to develop relationships with all of the participants within the team setting. Donna had been my sponsor into the team setting. She created an environment where I could openly engage in conversations with the players. Donna provided me with unlimited access and support for the project. And yet her sponsorship may have been a source of distrust toward me on the part of the players. The 10 new players appeared to be intimidated by Donna's presence. Hence her wholehearted support of me seemed to make the players wary of my allegiance to understanding everyone's perspective.

Outside

As the weather turned warm, practices were moved to the playing field. Most of the players got out of school an hour prior to practice time. Consequently, players would come to the field early. I tried to arrive at the field 15 to 30 minutes prior to practice. I believe that it was during this time that I developed a trusting relationship with the players. It was easy to engage them in conversations about topics seemingly unrelated to the study. I learned about their families, past experiences, classes, and their likes and dislikes. They asked me questions about the study. Through our conversations, I attempted to establish my neutrality within the setting. I felt that it was important to remind them that I had never met Donna before. I expressed my respect for her. I reminded them that it took a lot of courage on her part to allow me to engage them in conversations about her without censorship. At times, Donna would join in our informal discussions about boys, classes, and other things that the girls wanted to talk about. I seemed to be the buffer between the newcomers and Donna.

While the players warmed up, I would move from the bleachers to the first base bench. Donna seemed to enjoy my company during practice times. If she were observing a drill, she would sit on the bench with me and discuss how she perceived things were going. Knowingly or not, Donna explained most drills to the players in front of my bench. One practice she held three different coach-player conferences within ear shot of my bench.

Donna knew that I was focusing on communication. She seemed to be quite accommodating in providing me with access to her interactions with the players. One might wonder if this was not her way of managing or directing my observations to create a particular image. I do not believe that Donna consciously tried to direct my observations. Throughout the whole season, there was only one time Donna balked at my unlimited and uncensored access to the players. This incident happened during the sixth inning of a game. During the huddle, Donna told the players that they needed to get two runs and hold them. She never said that we were behind, but her tone suggested that it was a "do or die" situation. In actuality, we were two runs ahead. One of the players came up in the seventh inning and asked me the score. I told her the score. Within seconds, jaw tight, eyes glaring, Donna walked over and asked me why I told the player the score. Donna continued by saying that I had disrupted her plan to make the players think they still had to fight for the game. Donna seemed more frustrated than mad at my perceived indiscretion. Later she apologized. That was the only time that I perceived any conflict concerning access.

It seemed that both Donna and the players expected my sympathies for the frustrations they were feeling about their experiences. Donna would consult with me when she could not understand the actions of the players. The players would express their inability to understand the actions of Donna. More times than not, I felt insurmountable frustration at my inability to help the players and Donna understand each other.

The balancing act of negotiating relationships with all members of the team became increasingly difficult as games approached. As the evidence will show, this was due in part to the players' interpretations of some of Donna's behaviors. In an effort to maintain good

relationships with all participants, I made the decision to become more involved in the team. I began to help Donna carry the equipment bags and secure the bases. This provided me with the opportunity to engage Donna in informal discussions before and after practices. My team role was equipment mule. Additionally, I volunteered to help with a few of the drills when Pam was late or unavailable. I felt this helped to demonstrate my interest in the success of the team. I was crossing the line from observer to participant observer. The players and Donna began questioning me if I left early, arrived late or did not show up.

Prior to the first game, there were two events that suggested that I had been accepted as participant. The first event was Donna informing me that she was going ask the players if they thought I should be in the team picture. Donna felt that the players considered me a part of the team. I thanked Donna for the offer and reminded her that the issue of confidentiality prohibited me from being in the picture. The second event was during the team conference prior to the start of the first game. Donna presented the players and me with a piece of leather and a poem describing the leather's special significance to the team. One week later, Donna and one of the players chastised me for not attaching the leather to my shoelace as the rest of the team had.

Games

The access that I was afforded by sitting on the bench during games was incredible. As I sat taking notes, umpires would ask me if I knew the count or the opposing coach would provide me with their lineup card for the scorebook. By outsiders, I was mistaken for being a member of the coaching staff keeping statistics. The limited team area during games made it difficult for anyone to manage what I heard or saw. I was in optimal position to witness and hear the players' reactions to Donna's verbal and nonverbal behaviors. I was privy to the camaraderie that developed between the benchwarmers. I was surrounded by the negotiation and renegotiation of relationships amongst the participants.

More times than I can count, Donna slumped on the team bench so hard I almost bounced off. Numerous times, I picked up Donna's sunglasses that she had thrown during

an intense moment. Occasionally, a player would miss Donna's instructions and ask me what she was suppose to do. Donna would motion or call to me from the third base coaching box so I could give someone her instructions. Even though I had access to the most intimate and heated interactions on game day, the close proximity of the bench presented a problem that I had not contemplated. Players would strain their eyes to get a glimpse of what I was writing. To alleviate their fears or satisfy their curiosity, there were times when I would set my notes down or ask a player to hold them. At the tournament, one player asked if she could take notes. She wrote one sentence about the picnic and lost interest in writing.

Bus Rides

I traveled on the bus with the team to away games. I would sit with or near Donna on the way to a game. This provided me with access to individual player conferences. Prior to the game, she would discuss her expectations with key players. On the way home, my positioning was dependent on the social interactions during the game. Donna typically was sullen after a loss while the players seemed to rebound as they entered the bus. On the way home from a bad game, Donna would freely discuss her perceptions of the players' attitudes and efforts. The players were usually overly energetic after a game. The informal discussions with the players were not as valuable as the observations of their behaviors and interactions.

Tournament

My final interactive vantage point was accompanying the team to a tournament. I rode to the tournament with Donna and spent the night with her, a friend, and the scorekeeper. Not only did I have access to team meetings in our room, I had access to Donna as a person. The tournament supplied me with a different perspective of the team. Five games were played in the span of eight hours. Players played positions that they had not practiced during the season. A freshman pitcher was brought up to replace Candy, who was injured. Two or three sets of parents spent the night in the hotel with us. I sat in the

bleachers with the parents during one of the games. I served food to parents, players, coaches, and friends of the team at the picnic. For all of us, the tournament signaled the winding down of the season, the study, the relationships, and the hours on the game bench.

Data Collection Procedures

Observations

In the previous section, I described the unlimited access that I had to the team settings. On one hand, I was very thankful for freedom that I had in the team settings. On the other hand, I was overwhelmed with the unlimited observational opportunities. I could move freely, listen to conversations, and watch individual, as well as group, reactions to Donna's communication behaviors. However, to understand how the players and Donna made sense of their experiences, I needed to observe the social interactions amongst and between the participants in a variety of team settings. Not only did I observe directive behaviors of members, but also reactive behaviors.

It is difficult to know whether your observations are focusing on interactions meaningful to the participants. At first, you observe what you feel is important based on the questions that motivated the initial study. Then, your observations are guided by the continual analysis of the data. In the beginning, I focused on Donna's formal interactions with the players in drills, team meetings, individual conferences. In her first interview, Donna had expressed specific goals for the team. I attempted to understand how Donna reconstructed those goals throughout the course of the season. The development of the team culture was an ongoing process. The observational data seem to indicate modifications in the meanings Donna and the players attached to being a member of the team during the course of the season.

As the season progressed, I would focus on individual players' interactions with Donna. I found that observations of groups of players provided me with an understanding of how they interpreted Donna's verbal and nonverbal behaviors. I constructed sociograms

of the players in formal and informal settings throughout the study. During game situations, Donna was extremely demonstrative. Observations of her behaviors in relation to the performance of players and the score of a game highlighted the importance of context in understanding why and how people behave in the ways they do. Mid-way through scheduled games, I gave one of the players a ride home. We were discussing her feelings of disgust and dismay at Donna's behaviors at a particular game. I knew that I was observing interactions meaningful to the players when she described an incident involving Donna that I had highlighted in my notes: Donna was sitting on the game bench examining her fingernails instead of paying attention to the action on the field.

I found myself focusing on the behaviors of particular players as well as Donna. Observations of the interactions between these players and Donna were useful in understanding the importance of past experiences in the interpretation of communication behaviors. During the final interviews, the players and Donna described specific events that I had suspected were important in understanding how they made sense of their membership on the Torrey West varsity. Not only did I view the setting from the perspective of a researcher, I also integrated the roles of former coach and participant observer. Even though I found myself identifying team activities with the pronouns "we" or "our," I kept a distance that Donna and the players seemed to understand. During games I never demonstrated any frustration or glee about game situations. At the last game, a number of players invited me to attend games the next year to cheer for them, something I had never done.

The field notes taken during practices were in the form of direct quotes, sentences, diagrams, and brief descriptive paragraphs of specific interactions. Additionally, I would scribble notes to myself about factors that may have influenced my observations or questions that I might want to ask one of the participants. One instance that I remember clearly was on a practice day when the temperature was close to 35 degrees. Donna had the infielders practicing chasing down baserunners. In the outfield, Tanya and Popeye were

jumping up and down, running in place, and making comments about the cold weather. By the time Donna asked them to participate in a drill, they were unable to throw because their shoulders hurt from the cold. I focused my observations on how the cold weather seemed to alter the typical practice behaviors. My informal discussions with Donna and the players provided evidence for the assumption that the weather influenced the tone of practice.

The raw field notes were expanded into complete descriptive sentences and paragraphs. At the end of the expanded field notes, I would write myself memos reflecting on my day in the field. In addition, I was continually writing memos about methodological issues, what I thought I was finding, and how I should proceed. The expanded field notes contained observer reactions and questions guiding further observations, interviews, and analysis.

Interviews

Observations provided me with description of interactions between participants in many different settings. However, I needed to go beyond the world of observer and enter into the world of the players and Donna. I needed to know if my interpretations of the observed interactions were congruent with the perspective of the people experiencing those events. The interviews would provide me with the participants' perceptions of the behaviors I had been observing. The participants would help me to understand how they made sense of and constructed meaning in the world around them. My observations suggested that there were continual modifications in the participants' behaviors throughout the season. Interviews helped me to understand the nature of the modifications. The combination of formal and informal interviews helped me to understand how the participants constructed and reconstructed the meanings they attached to being a member of the Torrey West varsity.

I had intended to interview Donna formally three times. However, due to time constraints, I formally interviewed her only twice. The first interview was after tryouts and before the first practice. Donna selected a local hot dog stand as the interview site. The

taped interview lasted two hours. This interview was used to get acquainted with Donna and to get a sense of her expectations of herself, the players, and her team. I urged Donna to ask any questions concerning the study or myself. We also discussed the status of our relationship and future concerns. Donna seemed to be open and candid. She told me about bad and good past experiences she had had as a coach and player. Donna discussed her disappointment concerning the lack of returning varsity players along with a seemingly honest assessment of the ability of the team. The data collected in this interview was used as a baseline to provide possible explanations for Donna's observed behaviors.

Before, during, and after team events, Donna made herself available for informal discussions. I attempted to place myself in positions where I could interact with her during both stressful and joyous times. We seemed to develop a trusting relationship. In all the time I spent in the field, I did not witness her stop speaking or acting as a consequence of my presence. Donna discussed her inner most feelings toward the team and individual players. Continually, Donna surprised me with her candid and open discussions. I remember the day she agreed to participate in the study. She expressed a desire to help me understand the team setting, so that I could help her understand her strengths and weaknesses.

In June, after school the school year ended, I conducted the second formal interview with Donna. Our interview was held in an ice cream parlor where we had lunch and talked for two and a half hours. The taped interview was guided by tentative assertions and common themes and patterns resulting from continual analysis of handouts, formal and informal interviews, and field notes. The loosely structured interview guide addressed specific areas that I wanted to discuss without a formal question. This allowed me the freedom to integrate the topic into a discussion, not an inquiry. Not only did I address issues that I perceived to be meaningful to Donna, I allowed Donna the freedom to direct my attention to themes meaningful to her. Donna spent a good deal of time reflecting on how she perceived the players influenced her behaviors. We discussed her differential

treatment of players based on her perceptions of their ability, effort, and intensity. Donna discussed the social events that modified the meanings she attached to what it meant to be a member of her team.

I found it virtually impossible to interview formally all of the players prior to scheduled games. During indoor practices, no one could plan ahead because of the tentative practice schedule. Most of the players did not drive, so they had difficulty arranging transportation. Moreover with in inconsistency in and short notice of practice times, the interviews interfered with potential study and dinner times. Consequently, I had to rely on lengthy informal discussions before and after practices. In early April, I began to sense an underlying tension within the ranks of the players. Consequently, I intensified my efforts to interview formally some of the players. Five players were able to be manage transportation and time factors to be interviewed after school and before practice. The scheduled interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour. One player met me at the local deli while the other players met me in a small room in the locker room. I selected a returning varsity player, the sophomore player, one of the captains, a player who seemed to be receiving overt differential treatment from Donna, and a player seemingly accepted by most of the players. I believed that this group would provide me with a sense of how the team was coming together. The taped interviews confirmed my belief that there was a large subculture of players who had a different understanding than Donna of what it meant to be on the team. The interviews also provided evidence for my understanding of the meanings the players attached to Donna's behaviors. The data from these interviews helped to guide further observations and informal discussions concerning member's interpretation of each other's behaviors.

The season began in early March and ended in late May. The team played 32 games from April 11 to May 20. Toward the end of the season, the team played in 11 games in one week. The players complained about being behind in their school responsibilities. Consequently, I did not begin scheduling anyone for a lengthy formal interview until

school was out for the summer. Each player selected an eating establishment for the interview site. Taco Bell was the most often selected restaurant. I picked up most of the players and escorted them to the interview site. It became quite an undertaking to interview one of the players. I got lost the first time we agreed to meet. The second time, she became so engrossed in a nintendo game she forgot our appointment. Finally, we met at Taco Bell.

Each interview session lasted one and a half to two hours. The time span from the first to the last interview was approximately one month. The topics selected for discussion were generated from the analysis of the data. The loosely structured interviews tested the tentative assertions and common themes and patterns that evolved from my continual analysis of the data. Additionally, the interviews allowed the players to identify issues, events, and factors that had meaning for them during the season. Each player was asked to describe the team, the coach, and their teammates. During those discussions, the players would use specific interactions to describe how the meanings they attached to the team and Donna changed over time. In these final interviews, the players and Donna seemed to share an understanding about the "team" in late May.

There was a large group of players who through repeated interaction had developed shared meanings, perceptions, and understandings of what it meant to be a member of the team. The evidence supports the assertion that the players did not embrace Donna as a part of their team until late in the season. In the final interviews, the players seemed to be as open and honest as Donna. Players discussed their displeasure concerning some of the awards Donna presented. When asked about team jokes all but two of the players discussed a continual debate they had about Donna's sexuality. This topic and other discussions concerning the meanings they attached to Donna's behaviors demonstrated the trusting relationship that we had developed. I say this because all 10 of the players who could return planned on playing for Donna again. There did not seem to be any fear that I would report their discussions to Donna.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the field notes, the interview transcriptions, handouts, and other pertinent data was a continual process. It was difficult to expand the field notes completely on a daily basis. However, I never got more than a few days behind. Donna's formal interviews, along with the five players' first formal interviews, were completely transcribed within days of the interviews. The initial transcriptions of the final interviews were guided by the patterns, common themes, and tentative assertions that emerged from my ongoing data analysis to that point. In other words, aspects related to evidence to assertions important to the theme of the paper were transcribed completely whereas other discussions were earmarked with keywords and the number correlating to the location of the information on the tape for further transcription after further analysis. One example of this style of transcription involved the assertion that the players perceived that Donna was yelling at them instead of for them. The following is an example of how information on this topic was initially transcribed.

{supportive} I think she kind of I don't know I remember
one time she screwed up she told somebody to run It
might have been He{GL} she told her to run and
He got yelled at (524-527) discussion about
telling D a story (Initial transcription of taped interview
7/5/91)

The latter part in bold was eventually fully transcribed and used in the body of the chapter, "Coach, Them, and Us," to describe how Donna reacted when the players accidentally called her Donna. This procedure helped to reduce the transcription time without hindering the process of analyzing the data, because prior to the actual transcription, I had listened to the tapes twice, to get a sense of common patterns and themes emerging from the interviews themselves.

I drew diagrams and sociograms, and doodled with words in an effort to see what I thought I was finding. I listened to the tapes for intonation and intensity in the words spoken. Time and time again I asked myself questions about the validity of my reporting on the participants' perceptions. I began each day within the setting engaging the participants

in informal discussions of the meanings they attached to the common themes, patterns, and behaviors that were emerging from the data analysis. More times than not, my assessment of the meanings they attached to being a member of the team appeared to be similar.

A tentative assertion that emerged from the data suggested that the players were intimidated by Donna. As I began to search for evidence to support this assertion, I found that a few players did not feel this way. In the final analysis, three players perceptions provided disconfirming evidence to the assertion that the players were intimidated by Donna. These three players were the returning players. In analyzing the differences in the perceptions of that particular group and the rest of the players, I found the thread that runs through the entire analysis of the team experience. The returning players had been intimidated by Donna their first year. The analysis of this information led to the main theme of the paper, the assertion that the interpretation of communication behaviors is more important than the intended message. One's past experiences are influential mediating factors in the interpretation of the communication behaviors of others. Without the analysis of the contradictions in the perceptions of the two groups, I might never have understood the process involved in the players' different interpretations of the same behaviors exhibited by Donna. Disconfirming evidence from one day became evidence of a strong, valid assertion two weeks later. Not necessarily the original assertion, but a more substantiated claim supported by the analysis of disconfirming as well as confirming evidence.

The next section is a narrative description of the "team" banquet. This narration provides the reader with a description of Donna's portrayal of her team and the players at the end of the season. To understand the process involved in the development of the team, one must have an image of what "the team," the collective we, meant to the players and Donna. Where else to start than at the end, when there seemed to be a consensus on who they were as a team, unlike in the beginning? My reflections of past events and the description of the banquet set the stage for an analysis of the ongoing process involved in the development of "the team" presented in this narrative.

"The Team"

The following description of the Torrey West Softball Banquet sets the stage for the presentation of evidence to support the claim that the concept of team was constructed and reconstructed throughout the season. "The team" presented in this narrative is a result of the cumulative social interactions over the course of the season. The fun loving nature of the players existed throughout the season. However, the coordinated fun loving, group behavior presented in this section only existed after a major confrontation between Donna and the players concerning incongruence in the meanings they attached to appropriate member' behaviors. More specifically, the confrontation was a direct result of Donna not attending the huddles at the Bicknell game. Throughout the rest of this paper, I have labeled this crucial team event the Bicknell incident.

The last gathering of "the team" provides the starting point for an analysis of the role communication plays in the development of team. Throughout this paper, I will attempt to show the process through which thirteen players and Donna became the seemingly cohesive "team" at the banquet. This narrative is a combination of data from the actual field notes and my reflections as I observed the event on May 29, 1991, two and a half months after the first varsity practice.

The day was not reminiscent of all those evenings when I was so cold that it took hours to thaw after observing three or four hours of softball. To the contrary, on my drive to the park, I wished that I had air conditioning. Even though I was eager to see Donna and the girls, I dreaded attending the banquet in such heat and humidity. As I drove in the parking lot just minutes before the awards ceremony was to begin, I regretted that due to a work conflict I had missed the potluck portion of the event.

I knew I was in the right place when I heard the distinctive hoots and hollers of Tanya and Cissy as they engaged in their usual tugging and pulling on each other. The picnic area was populated by approximately eighty Torrey West softball players, family members, and friends. Four of the varsity girls were gathered around the front table. As I

moved closer, I heard them laughing and pointing at pictures someone had taken during the season. Donna and Pam were standing next to the girls arranging the certificates and letters that they were about to present to the varsity players. Donna was dressed in shorts, a collared cotton shirt, tennis shoes, and a gold necklace, much like she dressed on warm days during the season.

The table designated for the awards was situated next to the food table. Most of the food was gone. People were sitting on three long tables one right behind the other in front of the awards table. I waved to Donna and positioned myself next to some of the varsity parents directly in front of the award's table. I felt that I was in a position to hear Donna and the girls, as well as the reactions of the parents.

Donna walked to the front and asked that everyone be seated so that the presentations could begin. There was quite a bit of movement around the tables as people turned to face the awards table. As Martha, the freshman coach, rose to speak, Donna sat down at the food table with Pam. The girls had jokingly warned me that Martha had a history of being long winded in her banquet presentations.

Martha called the entire freshman team up to the front. Clapping and cheering for themselves, the noisy processional of girls moved toward Martha as she gave a brief summary of the season. Living up to her reputation of being long winded, Martha not only introduced each girl individually, but she provided us with a synopsis of each girl's talents, and personality, as well as her offensive and defensive statistics. About ten minutes into Martha's presentation, I heard noises from behind me. I turned to witness three varsity players talking and laughing. Almost simultaneously, Donna delivered her patented "look" to the group. Instantly, the girls became silent. During the rest of Martha's presentation, I heard intermittent whispering and laughing. Each time that I turned to see who was talking, the guilty parties would glance apprehensively over in Donna's direction as if checking to see if she had heard them. Reflecting back to the season, I remembered how long it took for the players' initial fear of Donna's reactions to subside. Although the players were

smiling, I sensed that even in a relaxed setting such as this, they were still lingering fears attached to the “look.”

When Martha finished, she turned the program over to Milly, the JV coach. Milly called each girl up individually and provided information about each one as a player and a person. Milly announced the winners of the team trophies, as she embarrassedly admitted that she had forgotten the trophies. After having spent three months with the team, I was not surprised that Milly had forgotten her trophies.

As Milly finished, Donna slowly rose from the food table and moved toward the awards' table. From behind and beside me, I heard catcalling from the varsity girls about Donna's sock line. During the season Donna wore calf high socks, now she was wearing anklets. The tan line from the higher socks was extremely evident. In unison, a couple of the girls yelled out to Donna, "Hey Casper." Hearing "Casper" reminded me of the first time that Donna had engaged in horsing around with the entire group of players. On that spring day, Donna teasingly grabbed players when they teased her about her non-existent tan. That was the first time that I observed Donna cross the boundary line between Donna, the coach, and Donna, the person.

The small groups of varsity girls located throughout the audience began making all kinds of whooping and yelling noises. Calmly, without any of the typical squelching looks or body movements, Donna began her oratory on the varsity season. “We had only eight wins on paper. However, we accomplished positive things. We had twice the number of games than last year that gave us more experience. Our total number of games was thirty-two. One of the most positive things was the feeling on my team. Additionally, five players had fielding averages of 90%.” All of a sudden there was excitement and pride in her voice as she announced, “One indication of how much the girls improved was the difference in errors made in the first game and the last game. On April 12, the team made fourteen errors, however on May 20 the girls only made five errors.

As Donna finished this statement, the whole audience clapped accompanied by much hooting and cheering from the varsity girls themselves. Donna paused while everyone celebrated one of the positive aspects of the varsity season, a drop in errors. I still remember the feeling of apprehension that permeated the gym the day after the first game. Because the players knew how she had handled game errors in the past. Consequently, they were not looking forward to seeing or hearing her the day after. As the noise died down, Donna's voice rose and, becoming much more serious, she acknowledged what made her most proud about the team, "Their undying spirit. No matter whether they won or lost, they continued to set goals. We laughed a lot, sometimes team meetings took hours. In the end, they were a team."

I remembered that night in the hotel room when players laughed until Donna tossed them out. That tournament weekend, along with the ill-fated Bicknell incident, were critical events in the development of "the team" Donna was portraying to the parents. From behind me, someone yelled, "Bust a sag." The varsity girls gave out a cheer. Donna got a big smile on her face and asked the varsity girls to join her up front. As the girls moved from their seats, Donna thanked the varsity parents for their support. The girls' cheers for their parents turned into their typical laughing and giggling as they congregated next to Donna.

Donna explained to the audience that the varsity parents were instrumental in helping raise money for the materials to build the dugouts on the varsity field. She continued by spelling out the next phase of the program. "As you are introduced, I would like you to shake my hand and give Pam a hug." Even tonight, there seemed to be a boundary line between "Coach" and Donna. "Coach" was providing them with guidelines for appropriate greeting banquet greeting behavior.

With that stipulation, she began her introductions, "Sara Morrow, the only sophomore." Sara moved away from the girls, shook Donna's hand and then Pam's hand. As Sara finished shaking Pam's hand, I heard Milly ask, "Don't I get a hug?" Sara gave her what seemed to be a forced hug. Donna continued, "Sara has a lot of potential and I am

glad that I get to have her on my team for two more years." I found that comment to be interesting, in that Donna had benched her for a bad attitude at the end of the season. As Sara moved slightly behind Donna and Pam, Donna called out, "Cissy Katy."

Cissy Katy moved from the group, shook Donna's hand, and then hugged her. As I watched Cissy walk her distinctive pixie walk, I heard Donna in the background, "Cissy did a good job at second." Before Donna could finish, all the girls cheered and laughed at the same time. As the noise died down, Donna called out, "Nan Dodi."

Nan Dodi shook Donna's hand and hugged Pam. While she moved beyond the table toward Sara and Cissy, Donna told the crowd that Nan D. did a good job in the outfield. Her stats were impressive enough that Nan would play there next year. Kelsy Henry was introduced next.

Simultaneously, as Donna announced Kelsy's name, the varsity girls in unison yelled out "Keslie." The girls during the course of the season had fooled both Donna and me into thinking that Kelsy's name was Keslie by continually interchanging Kelsy and Keslie. Eventually, I asked the girls what Kelsy's real name was. The girls found it amusing that they had confused us. Kelsy, with a big smile on her face, made her way over and shook hands with both Donna and Pam. Donna praised Kelsy for ability to play both right outfield and catch. I was disappointed that Donna neglected to mention that Kelsy ended the season as the starting catcher. Nan D. moved away from the other players and gave Kelsy a big hug as Donna quickly introduced Babs.

With the introduction of Babs Larsen, Cissy screamed, "Hos." Babs jauntily moved toward Donna and demonstrated the "Bust a sag" pant position to the audience. The girls were laughing while Donna and Pam both gave her a hug. Cissy, Nan, Sara, and Kelsy all moved toward Babs and touched her hand. While watching the players rejoice, Donna became quite animated as she told the audience that Babs was a catcher. She recounted a story about the time Babs played right field (although it was center field). I remembered the incident vividly. The ball flew out to left centerfield and Babs looked over

at Popeye (left fielder) as if to say, "Please, Popeye, catch the ball." In the background, Pam and the girls were hooting and hollering as Donna finished her story. Babs strutted directly behind Donna and made faces. Donna finished by telling the audience, "Babs will catch for me again next year." Hearing that statement brought back memories of what I called the "catcher controversy." I could not believe that Donna still considered Babs her catcher. I wondered how Kelsy felt upon hearing these comments.

Tina Ecke, one of my favorite participants, lumbered toward the front, as Donna told the crowd that Tina's nickname was "Turtle." Continuing on, Donna presented Tina to the crowd as one of the most awesome hitters in the league. All the girls hooted and hollered as Tina stationed herself next to her buddy Kelsy. With Tina in position, Donna began her introduction of the player that I believe was most instrumental in the creation of the "team" being described in this narrative, Candy Rice.

Candy walked up to Donna and shook her hand. As Candy walked past Donna to join her teammates, Donna whispered, "Are you coming back next year?" Without any eye contact or answer, Candy joined her teammates. I doubt if most people heard Donna's question. Only team members and I would understand the significance of this interaction between Candy and Donna. I was so engrossed in my thoughts about the implications of Candy's lack of eye contact that I almost missed Donna's introduction of Marlene Mitchell, as Merle, a nickname that Candy started when Marlene would pitch.

Donna introduced Merle as someone who "played anywhere I wanted her to play." Donna vividly described a diving catch that Merle made during one game. She finished by telling the audience that Merle had the third highest batting average. While everyone was clapping for Marlene, Donna called out "Popeye."

With a big smile, Popeye Peters' little body bounced toward Donna. Popeye hugged Donna. As Popeye joined her teammates, Donna gave her credit for being a reliable, smart left fielder. This was quite a compliment from a coach who seemed to expect perfection. Quickly Donna moved right into her introduction of Molly. With a big smile on

her face, Molly moved toward Donna. Donna animatedly told the audience that Molly had the highest batting average on the team. Donna explained that this was quite an accomplishment for someone who had never played organized school sports. The girls, Donna, Pam, and the audience gave Molly a big hand as she moved behind Donna. Tanya, Cathy, and Polly were left to be introduced. These three players were the only returnees from the previous varsity team. Moreover, they were all seniors, along with the last two players introduced, Popeye and Molly.

With a smile that filled her face, Donna called out, "Tanya White." Tanya was the only player that Donna regularly called by her first and last name during the season. Typically, there were two distinct reasons why one would hear Donna's raised voice call out "Tanya White." First and foremost, Donna called out Tanya's name when she was less than pleased with Tanya's behavior. Second, if Tanya performed at a level that pleased Donna, she would praise Tanya with, "That's you, Tanya White, that's you." More times than not, one would hear Tanya's name because Donna was frustrated with her. Donna introduced Tanya to the audience as the centerfielder and a big hitter. As Tanya passed Donna, she gave Pam a huge bear hug, practically lifting her off the ground. I expected Donna to provide more information about Tanya, however, she continued on and called out "Cooooop."

Polly Coopenheimer's nickname was "Coop." Donna dragged the word Coop out as Polly made her way up front. People were clapping and laughing at the same time. Coop reminded me of the cartoon character, Gumby, tall, lanky, and limber. Donna made glowing remarks about Polly's fielding percentage of over 90% at first base. As Polly joined her teammates, I noticed Cathy was the last one to be introduced. In Donna's mind, I believe she was saving the best for last. It seemed that Donna accepted more indiscretions in performance from Cathy than any other player. Additionally, Donna relied on her advice, as in the instance of selecting the second captain.

Donna took a deep breath, smiled and called out "Rock." The significance of the nickname "Rock" was related to Cathy's performance the previous year. Everyone in the audience cheered as Cathy sheepishly moved next to Donna. Cathy Sales was a popular young woman; quiet, hardworking, and friendly. As the cheering died down, Donna said, "This is Cathy's second year as captain." She continued by telling that Cathy had eleven stolen bases and exclaiming "what an arm!" As Cathy joined her teammates, the audience cheered and clapped for "Rock." Donna turned and told the players to go back to their seats. The girls passed by the table with the team pictures and carefully picked them up.

Donna paused until all the girls had returned to the tables before she began her presentation of the All-League Awards. She explained to the players that the performance of those selected was recognized by "my peers and your own peers." We had two people selected for honorable mentions. Donna called out Marlene Mitchell. Marlene made her way up to the front. Her mom was whooping and cheering as Marlene moved beside Donna. The varsity players were cheering; however, I sensed a lack of sincere enthusiasm from them. Donna shook Marlene's hand and gave her a certificate. The second player to receive a certificate was Molly. The varsity players hooted, whistled and hollered as Molly made her way up to accept her certificate. Donna reminded the audience of the magnitude of such an accomplishment for Molly, "not bad for someone who has never played organized, competitive ball before."

The next presentation was for Second Team All League. Donna began the presentation by expressing her pleasure about this award. "I am real proud of this player, she worked real hard." Raising her voice, like a proud parent, she practically screamed, "Tanya White!" The varsity players were going crazy as they clapped, cheered, and whistled for Tanya. Tanya paraded up to the front posturing herself in a way that stated "I've arrived." She shook Donna's hand, and accepted her certificate. While Tanya was making her way back to her seat, Donna began talking about the First Team All League winner. She remarked that this player's strength was when she was up to the plate.

I had guessed that it was Tina. I was sitting next to Tina's parents when Donna called her name. As usual, they were as unassuming as Tina. She walked up rather shyly with a big smile on her face. Donna shook her hand and presented her with a box containing a plaque of some sort. Tina looked so pleased as the crowd cheered and clapped at her accomplishment. As Tina was showing off her trinket, Donna proclaimed her excitement at being able to present "four awards that I got to choose."

The first award was for Best Offensive Player. The winner of this award was not much of a surprise, considering Tina had just received the league award for hitting. Tina was still engrossed in showing off her previous award when Donna called out her name, "Tina Ecke." As Tina made her way back up to the front, people she passed slapped her hand and congratulated her. Donna moved into her presentation for best defensive player by discussing the fact that the team had its share of defensive woes. I expected her to name Cathy as the Best Defensive Player. Actually, I had already written her name in my notes, when Donna called out Coop's name. Everyone clapped and cheered as Coop slowly made her way up to receive her award. With a big smile on her face, Coop reached out to Donna and gave her a big hug. As Coop lumbered toward her mother, Donna announced that the next award would be for Most Improved.

I wondered if the player would be Cissy, Kelsy, or Popeye. These three players had been starters at integral positions on the team. My vote was for Cissy. In the first practices and during interviews, there was quite a bit of discussion about Cissy's ability to sit on the bench, let alone start on the varsity. As I was looking around to capture the reaction of the players, I heard Donna call out, "Tanya White." There was a momentary pause prior to the contained cheering and clapping. I wondered what criteria guided Donna's selection of Tanya as the most improved player. Donna commended Tanya on the improvement that she had made in her two years as a member of the varsity. Donna specifically complimented Tanya on her ability to read the same sign twice in a row. I heard the chuckles of the varsity girls peppered throughout the crowd. They were all well aware

of the trials and tribulations created by Tanya's short attention span. As I was reflecting on the players' reactions to Tanya being named Most Improved, I was brought back to the presentations by the cracking sound in Donna's voice. She was crying. Apologizing for her inability to continue, Donna took a deep breath as if to inhibit the crying. As Donna stopped in mid-sentence, everyone at the tables seemed more attentive to Donna's display of emotion, so contrary to her day-to-day tough person demeanor.

Struggling for control, Donna continued, "I am proud to be able to present the Coach's Award, an award that goes to the player that has been an integral part of the team, a hard worker, a leader, and a friend, not only to the girls, but to me." During her description of the Coach's Award, Donna again became visibly shaken. Her voice cracking, she apologized for choking up over honoring this person. At this point, Donna began to cry again. She reached out and pointed toward Cathy. The audience had been extremely quiet during Donna's show of emotion. When I looked around to observe the players' reactions, I saw the same quiet, empathetic expressions that were on the players' faces when Donna confronted them during the Bicknell incident. That was the only other time that Donna dropped the emotional wall between Donna, the person, and Donna, the coach. That event, the Bicknell incident, was not a happy occasion for any member of the team. And yet, without that direct confrontation between Donna and the players, Donna may not have been so proud to state, "In the end, they were a team."

When Cathy reached Donna, they embraced and patted each other on the back. Donna described how much she relied on Cathy for two years. Presenting Cathy with the award, Donna told her that she would miss her as a player and a friend. The audience began clapping, while the varsity players whistled and cheered for Cathy. Donna then turned to Pam and embraced her. As Donna began to thank all the parents, family, and players for coming, Babs quickly ran up to the front with two packages.

Babs handed a package to Pam and one to Donna, thanking both coaches for their effort and help. Pam, like a little kid, eagerly ripped open the package and pulled out a pair

of yellow cotton shorts. Instantly, I heard her yell, "Bust a sag!" She turned the shorts around so we could see "Bust a sag" screened across the bottom of the shorts. The varsity girls cheered and laughed as Donna held up an identical pair of shorts. Choking back their laughter, Donna and Pam made another attempt to thank everyone for coming to the banquet. At first, the saying "bust a sag" was a descriptor of the way in which three of the players wore their pants. As the evidence in Chapter Four will show, through repeated interactions, the significance of the saying moved from a joke to a symbol of the team culture. When I left, Donna and Pam were holding their "bust a sag" shorts while members of the audience took pictures.

The banquet provides a fairly accurate picture of the fun loving nature of the players. From the first day of tryouts, I was impressed with their noisy, seemingly unconditional support, for each other. The image created by Donna's synopsis of the varsity was one of unison, undying spirit, and fun. From her joyful reflection of team meetings that were full of laughter, one might assume that Donna enjoyed the fun loving nature of her players. To the contrary, the seemingly aloof, fun loving nature of the players, particularly the first year players, was a continual frustration to Donna until, as Donna proudly stated, "In the end they were a 'team'."

Donna's animated, reflective depiction of her players and the season, along with her crying, could provide outsiders with the impression that Donna and the players had a personal, as well as professional, relationship. The players, Donna, and I knew differently. I can remember only one other time during the season when Donna allowed her personal emotions to cross the boundary line that she had intentionally established between Donna and "Coach." That event, the team meeting after the Bicknell incident, was crucial in the development of "the team" that Donna presented at the banquet. They had come so far. And yet, interactions such as Donna's individual presentations of Kelsy, Babs, and Sara; Candy's lack of eye contact with Donna; and Donna's display of what the players called, "the look" seemed to indicate that some remnants from the past still haunted "the team."

The following results and discussion chapters will document some of the key social interactions that either hindered or facilitated the development of a cohesive team culture. Chapter Three, "Coach, Them, and Us," focuses on the influence that the participants' past experiences had on the early group dynamics. Chapter Four, "Yelling Out of Intensity, Not Anger," describes and analyzes events, like the Bicknell incident, that were critical to the evolution of "the team" at the banquet. Chapter Five, "Kelsy's Story," critically examines the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon in relation to Kelsy's performance as a catcher.

Chapter 3

COACH, THEM, AND US: THE BEGINNING

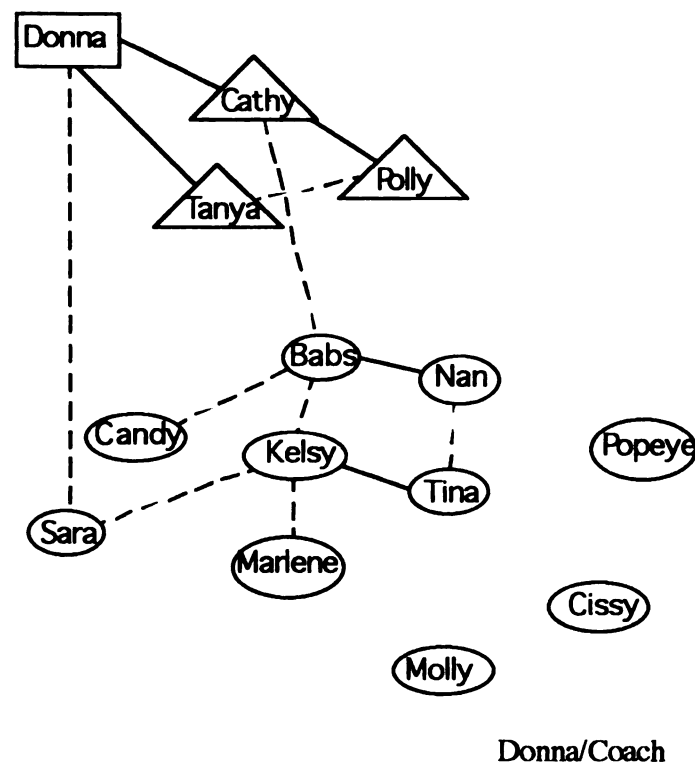
On March 8, thirteen girls and Donna gathered together for the first official day of varsity softball practice. On that day, there were two main subgroups of players and Donna. I labeled the largest subgroup “Us.” Although this group consisted of the players that had not been coached by Donna, most of these players had specific expectations of her behavior. In the case of Babs, Kelsy, Nan, Popeye, Marlene, Candy, Tina, and Sara, their expectations of Donna’s coaching behaviors were based on their observations of her coaching the previous year and on hearing stories told by the returning players. The two outliers of this group, Cissy and Molly, had not played softball the previous year. Hence, they entered the situation with few specific expectations of being coached by Donna. However, after interactions with Donna and the stories from members of the “Us” group, Cissy became an active, if not influential, member of the group. Throughout the season, Molly attempted to remain neutral.

The “Them” group consisted of the three returning players, Cathy, Polly, and Tanya. Their expectations of Donna’s coaching behaviors were similar to members of the “Us” group. However, the returning player’s interpretation of the expected behaviors were mediated by their past experiences with Donna. Hence, early on, what distinguished members of “Them” and “Us” groups was the differences in the way they interpreted and reacted to Donna’s interactions within the team setting. What appeared to be intimidating to members of the Us group seemed to be routine for the returning players.

The sociogram that follows shows the relationship between “Coach, Them, and Us” on March 8, the first day of official varsity practice. These links between players illustrate the avenues of informal communication that led to the development of similar

interpretations of Donna's communication behaviors. This sociogram illustrates that Donna was the gatekeeper of the organizational communication. There were strong links between Donna and the Them group. The core of the Us group consisted of the seven players moving up from the Junior Varsity. The links connecting these players were a result of past experiences within the Torrey West interscholastic system. The subsequent sociogram (pg.100) will show that flow of communication and membership in the networks changed with the links connecting the subgroups becoming more formalized. Then after the events surrounding the Bicknell incident, the strong subgroup links dissolved providing more interactional communication between Donna and all of the players.

Figure 2



Prior to being hired at Torrey West, Donna had coached freshman softball, JV softball, and JV volleyball at other schools. She was entering into her second consecutive year of coaching the varsity at Torrey West. This program had seen three different coaches

in five years. During our initial phone conversation, Donna explained to me that her intent was to develop a program, not just a team.

Our first meeting was at the school where Donna taught. As she moved from behind her desk, my first impression was that she was an athlete. Donna's physical presence exuded a sense strength and confidence. She appeared sturdy and fit. Not a hair was out of place; the same held true for the organization of her classroom. Her smile filled her face. And yet, there seemed to be a strength in her face that suggested hardness. She was friendly, but distant. On the first day of tryouts, I saw the distance that I sensed at our first meeting.

Call Me "Coach"

As the softball hopefuls sat around her, Donna explicitly introduced herself as "Coach Andrews." The tone of her voice, her upward, stiff body position, her taut jaw and focused eyes seemed to indicate that she had separated Donna, the person, from the title "coach." In addition, I had a sense she was establishing a division between player and coach. Continuing, with a big smile on her face, Donna introduced Pam, the part time assistant, as "Pammie" to the softball hopefuls. As she introduced Pam, I remembered something that Donna had said in our initial discussion about the previous season. At that time, Donna stated that her assistant coach Pam had a closer relationship with the players. During this discussion of team relationships, I thought I detected what appeared to be a feeling of disappointment on Donna's part at not being closer to last year's players. Yet, as the statement below demonstrates, Donna intentionally wanted the players to relate differently to Pam.

And I do that way for them. I want them to know that she is the one to pal around with during practice. She's going to buzz around them, chat, and talk with them. While I am up there going {imitates giving orders to the players}
(Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna's definitive instructions to be addressed as "Coach" Andrews not only created a distance between player and coach, but also created a boundary line between

Donna, the “Coach” and Donna, the person. Pam would be her liaison to the players and Donna would keep her distance. Pam was the one to pal around with. Donna was the one to give the orders. The players were expected to address her as “Coach,” not Donna.

Donna seemed to believe strongly that it was necessary to create a distinction between coach and player. Occasionally, players would accidentally call Donna by her name instead of “Coach.” Typically, as the player finished pronouncing the “ah,” the player would shoot a fearful glance in Donna’s direction. If Donna heard the player, she would direct a glance or verbalization toward the player in a way that forewarned others not to make the same error in judgment. Cissy’s recollection of the time that she wrote Donna’s name on a Torrey West Varsity Softball poster demonstrates how adamant Donna was about separating Donna, the person, from “Coach” Andrews.

No, well I remember one time. I did well. I didn't do it (verbally call her Donna). It was that poster I was making. This poster with all the pictures on it. And I didn't know how to spell her last name (laughs) So I wrote Donna down, but I didn't write her last name. Because... I had every intention of doing it. I remember I showed her the poster. And she went “DONNA!” I never (laughing) I will never forget that. It was like.. DON'T YOU DARE!
(Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91)

Donna perceived that being addressed as “Coach” was more professional. Her assumption was that if the players addressed her as “Coach,” they were showing her respect. However, the evidence will show that Donna did not earn the respect of the newcomers until after the Bicknell incident when there was a direct confrontation between Donna and the players about expectations for members of “the team. After that event, the players seemed to address Donna as “Coach” out of respect for her as a teammate as well as a coach and person. As Cissy’s quote suggests, prior to that event, they addressed Donna as “Coach” out of fear.

Donna's firm insistence on being called “Coach” created an uncomfortable situation for me when I was introducing the study to the players. As I was speaking, I found myself wondering how to identify Donna. I caught myself before I said Donna and referred to her

as "Coach." As a result of this incident, I approached Donna the next day and asked her how I should address her in front of the players. Choking back the laughter, Donna told me that she did not mind me addressing her as Donna while we were in the presence of the players, nor did she have a problem with my identifying her as Donna in private conversations with the players.

I was surprised by the adamance with which Donna's insisted being called, "Coach." Based on our informal discussion, prior to the start of tryouts, I perceived that Donna would present herself as a team member. Instead, she presented herself as an authority figure. After her first formal interview, I began to understand why Donna had such strong feelings about the separation between the personal and the professional Donna. Reflecting back to her first coaching and teaching experiences, Donna described why she separated Donna, the person, from the players:

That came from the very first year that Cookie and I had. We said "We're your pals. Call us, Donna and Cookie." And it did not work. We made the mistake of we want to be your friend in our very first year and so the rest of the season was ruined because they didn't understand that we had to draw a line because we were their FRIEND. So that made a huge difference the first year.....I think I had the same kind of idea my first year teaching. I told the kids to call me Donna, instead of Miss Andrews. But now, there's no way. I would prefer that they call me Miss A. Just so they know from the start that I'm in charge and later I'll become their friend
Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

It appears that Donna's past coaching and teaching experiences were instrumental in the modification of her perceptions and meanings concerning the coach-player relationship. Additionally, her past experiences influenced the meanings she attached to her role as a coach and as Donna, the person. Hence for Donna, the coach and the person had to become two different entities, at least early on in the season. The term "coach" gave her a sense that she was in charge.

Donna felt so strongly about creating a distance between self, "Coach," and player that she planned on discussing the situation with Martha, the freshman coach, and Milly,

the JV coach before the next season. The following excerpt provides evidence for the assertion that Donna expected an unequivocal distinction between coach and player:

...I'm going to give them (the coaches) a list of things that will be different next year. With specific things like you don't call them (the coaches) by their first names. You call them "coach." You know those kinds of things..to instill a little respect.. a little more differentiation between authority and player and not pal (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna expected a distinct differentiation between authority (her) and the players. Donna perceived that part of the difficulty that she had in connecting with the players was due to the players' past experiences with Martha and Milly. In her mind, those coaches had not drawn an irrefutable line between the authority of the coach and the players. Donna suspected that the difference in coaching styles may have made the transition from Martha and Milly to Donna more difficult for the players. Later evidence will show that Donna's suspicions were correct. The new players' past experiences with Martha and Milly mediated their interpretations of Donna's behaviors, making the transition period difficult.

Respect as a Right

Early on, it became evident that Donna expected the players to respect and obey "Coach." The following vignette from the second day of tryouts illustrates how Donna dealt with a situation where Sara did not conform to Donna's expectation of automatic obedience without question.

In the far corner of the gym, Donna was on the floor providing instruction for a infield drill. The ball was rolling slowly toward Sara. She leaned over and plucked the ball up with her glove. Donna yelled out to her, "If it is on the ground dead, use your hand." Sara, in a confident tone, expressed her belief that it was better to use her glove. Donna attempted to explain the logic of her instruction. Sara continued to question the wisdom of Donna's advice. Suddenly, the tone of Donna's voice changed. The instructive statement turned to an order. She abruptly walked toward Sara and told her in no uncertain terms under what conditions she was to use her hand to field the ball (Field notes 3/5/91).

The tone of Donna's voice, her abrupt movement toward Sara, and her direct order suggested that Donna had interpreted Sara's questions as a challenge to her authority as the coach. Although Sara seemed to carry the discussion beyond a point of clarification, one might expect a player to question differences between how Donna expected a skill to be executed and how former coaches taught the player to execute the skill. Donna's whole demeanor seemed to communicate that questioning her instructions was inappropriate behavior.

Donna's first formal interview was two days after I witnessed this incident with Sara. In her discussions about her experiences as a player, it seemed quite evident that Donna had never questioned her coaches. She expected the same behaviors from her players:

I don't think I ever paid attention to what the coach did with other players. I guess just because I was so softball focused that I thought whatever the coach did is what we did period. You don't question it. You don't ask her. You don't bring it up. You know she does what she does and so I really didn't pay attention to what she did with the other players (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna's perceptions of the "Coach" as an authority figure seemed to have been influenced by her past experiences as a player. Remembering back to the incident with Sara, I asked Donna if she expected her players to react toward her in the same way she responded toward her coaches. In the following statement, Donna explained that she expected her players to accept her decisions, instructions, and teachings without question, as she had done with her coaches:

Pretty much, yea. I think they better do what I say, period. Just because I have played longer than the rest of them. Hopefully, I know a little more than the rest of them. Um, I guess if it were after the fact, if Sara had just said to me, OK I understand what you say and do it and then come to me after practice and ask me. I guess I'm pretty picky about it. It would have to be a particular tone it would have to be a very specifically "I'm just curious" kind of tone. Not "I'm questioning you kind of tone." I will always try and explain why I want them to do something or the way I want them to do something. I expect them to hear me out and just do it. But right on the spot, No, like the way she (Sara) did. No.

...If she does it again she probably will get me, because I do not want her to keep doing it (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

According to Donna, she had been playing softball "forever." Donna seemed to have been socialized to believe that players do not have the right to question the coach. Moreover, she was more knowledgeable. The players should value and respect her knowledge as the coach. In her explanation of how she expected the players to respond to her communication behaviors, Donna was quite clear: she did not expect the players to question her verbal instructions or decisions. If perchance a player had a question about "Coach's" verbal messages, Donna believed there was an appropriate time, place, and tone for the question. Under no circumstances was a player to request an explanation prior to attempting to follow the letter of Donna's message.

Noisy Chatter as Sign of Support and Involvement

During tryouts, I noted that Donna's physical presence seemed to affect the behavior of the players. As she meandered in and out of the drills, it was apparent that the players riveted their attention to her nonverbal behaviors. The first time I observed this phenomenon was during the stretching exercises. The following excerpt occurred in the first fifteen minutes of the first day of tryouts.

Cathy and two other players were leading the stretching. The leaders were counting the number of repetitions completed of each activity. In the beginning, everyone seemed to be chiming in on the count. As the players neared the end of the exercises, only a few people were counting with Cathy. Donna moved away from my bleacher and stiffly walked over and faced the players stretching. She reached her hands up and held on to her ears, as if to say "I can't hear you." At the mere sight of this gesture, the number nine reverberated off the wall (Field notes 3/5/91).

I found this interaction to be quite interesting. Everyone seemed to be engrossed in executing the stretches. And yet, the counting became louder without a word from Donna. I could not tell if everyone understood her gesture or if a certain group of people initiated the increase in volume. It appeared that Donna expected the players vocalize involvement in the activity. On the second day of tryouts, it became quite evident that the amount and volume

of vocal support for teammates was extremely important to Donna. In the following vignette, Donna had been leaning against the bleachers observing the players execution of the drills that Milly was conducting.

Occasionally, Donna called out terms of encouragement such as, "Come on *buddy*, you can, you can" and instructions such as "Heads up, I don't want you to get hurt." As the infield drill progressed, the only noises that could be heard were the ping of the bat hitting the ball, the hollow thud of the ball hitting the floor, and the sound of the fielders' throw slapping into the baseperson's glove. With a slightly raised voice, Donna called over to the infield hopefuls, "Let me hear you get excited now! We're going back around." Simultaneously, Milly hits a grounder to the first baseperson and calls "Get 1." The player scoops up the grounder, touches her imaginary bag, and makes a crisp sounding throw back to the catcher. Again, the only sounds were those of the bat, a thud to the floor, and the slap of the glove. All of a sudden, Donna bellows out **"HEY! When your teammates make a play let them know it. Let them know it."** The only movements during Donna's firm insistence on noise were Donna's as she moved away from the bleacher area and the players uncomfortably directing their attention toward her. Although the silence seemed like forever, it was only seconds before Milly hit another ball and the players began feverishly cheering each other on (Fieldnotes 3/5/91).

Up to that point, I found Donna to be soft-spoken in her directions and enthusiastic encouragement. There were a few times when she had raised her voice, but never with such fervor. Her verbal rebuke resounded off the walls. At the time of Donna's outburst, she was positioned directly in front of my bleacher. Much like Milly's brief hesitation in continuing the drill, I momentarily stopped scribbling my notes and froze. Within seconds, as if nothing had occurred, Donna enthusiastically called out to the second baseperson, "Come on *buddy*, chest high."

By the third day of tryouts, it became evident that everyone understood that Donna expected a high level of noise during drills. Players standing in a drill line would identify a decrease in the noise level and a whisper, "She's going to start yelling if we don't talk it up," moved from person to person. As the whisper moved down the line, there was a dramatic increase in the noise level. Not only could the players predict when Donna's

expectations were not being met, I would make notations in my book about the decrease in noise just prior to Donna or the players addressing the issue. The importance Donna placed on the amount and volume of chatter was interesting. During her chastisement of the players, she would emphasize the need to show teammates support. But it seemed that her expectations of loud, noisy chatter went beyond just demonstrating support for one's teammate.

Donna's Perceptions of a *Ballplayer*

Donna's description of a *ballplayer* provided evidence for the assertion that loud was related to her perceptions of about one's intensity level, involvement in the sport. Donna's perception of Cathy was that she had the ability, but not the intensity, to be a "*ballplayer*." To Donna, someone was not a real "*ballplayer*," like herself, unless she was loud:

..I think she is good enough. Uh, as far as intensity, I think she has a really good attention span. And I think she can stay focused really well, but I guess when I think of intense.. I think of you're loud and you're um well I guess I just don't ever hear her get loud. I think she's intense enough for her own playing. But she's got to be able to rub off on other people, because they aren't always going to get intense just because I am (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Loud noisy chatter was more than just a vehicle to show support for your teammates. Donna seemed to equate loudness with intensity. I asked her to clarify if her requests to the players to keep chattering was similar to the loudness she had described. Jokingly, but sincerely, Donna responded, "I don't ask them to do that. I tell them!" As the evidence will illustrate, Donna measured a player's commitment to softball by how closely her behaviors matched the meanings that Donna attached to "*ballplayer*." The following quote illustrates that Donna's past experiences as a *ballplayer* played a critical role in her preinteraction expectations of her players.

I guess I expected everybody to be real *ballplayers* like me, ya know. Why else are you out (chuckling) if you are not a *ballplayer*. I mean what do they decide to do? One day, oh, softball sounds like fun. I'll do that this year (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Admittedly, when she first started coaching, Donna expected everyone to be a “*ballplayer*,” that is, someone so focused on softball that she needed little guidance from the coach. After her first year of coaching, Donna perceived that there were very few *ballplayers* as intense and committed as she was and is. It is evident from her description of a *ballplayer* that she did not expect many of the new varsity players to meet her criteria for an intense, self-motivated *ballplayer* like herself.

Well, I guess you know it's kind of like having a softball sense. If it is real matterful for you whatever he (coach) says. It makes sense and I could pretty much go out and do it. But for the rest of the girls and there were probably three or four of us who were real *ballplayers*. And for the rest of them he just was there for them and I mean I would not call him a really good coach. But he was good for me just because I was a *ballplayer*....That's kind of the way it is with our team too. Cathy, I know Cathy is going to follow me no matter what I'm saying and the rest of the girls I'm going to have to pay a little more attention to what I say so they do follow (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

By the end of the first week of practice, Cathy was the only player who Donna thought had any softball sense. Although to her, Cathy lacked the loudness to be considered a true “*ballplayer*.” Donna knew that she would have to guide this group of players as she did not expect many of them to have any softball sense. Consequently, Donna was prepared to provide them with the tools they needed to understand the concepts and to execute the skills needed to be a member of her team.

Expectations Meeting

On the first full day of varsity practice, Donna held the first of many meetings to familiarize the players with her expectations of them as team members, their rights and responsibilities, and what they could expect from her as their coach. In our informal discussion prior to practice, Donna stated that it was important to her to help the players make sense of their interactions with her and their teammates. The following vignette shows how explicit Donna was in her deliverance of her expectations.

Everyone began gathering in the locker room. Donna moved over toward the shower area and asked the players to sit.

Someone beside me called out, "I won't sit there. There is pee on the floor. As the players straggle in from the gym, Donna discusses issues like uniform exchanges, emergency phone numbers, and other organizational matters. Finally, Donna says, "move in a little bit." As the players scoot toward her, she begins the first of many group gatherings discussing her expectations of the players as members of her team. I wanted to talk to you about some expectations "that I have of you and you can have of me. **I can sum it up with one word 100% effort.** That translates into things like eating a good lunch each day. When you come to practice, I expect you to give 100%. I expect you to sweat and be able to keep going. Know yourself and know what to eat to give me 100%. Be prepared! This is what I mean. A day like today, we'll go outside so have both sets of clothes. Be prepared with your sweats. Make sure you have your cleats ready. I expect cleats. Get enough sleep. If I say run 10 laps and you are yawning....{the intonation in her voice suggested trouble if one was caught yawning} I expect enough rest. The rest of the team is relying on you. They expect you to give 100% in your performance. Grades, I expect everyone to have at least a 2.0 GPA. If somebody really good..If Tanya was really good with math, I would expect her to help others. And the rest of you should expect that help from your teammates. If I can help you, especially juniors and seniors, I will (Fieldnotes 3/11/91).

Donna was explicit and direct in explaining what she meant by 100%. She left nothing to the players' imagination. She expected cleats, attention to one's eating and sleeping habits, and a minimum 2.0 G.P.A. It was apparent that Donna expected the players to consider how their actions might impact their teammates and the team. Donna continued her discussion with an address on what the players might expect from her:

I haven't done it much today. But I will! I yell out of pure intensity for the love of the game. I am not yelling out of anger." As the declaration came out of her mouth, Tanya, Hoop, and Cathy broke out in laughter. I looked around and the rest of the players had little smirks on their faces as if to say, "right!" Without asking any questions, Donna continues outlining her expectations for the team. "2 strikes and you get a strike out." Looking directly at Cathy, Donna asks, "What do I do?" In a matter of fact way Judy answers, "You yell." Attempting to clarify, Donna questions Judy, "Don't I call you over? I won't embarrass you in a game. I expect those things from you and you can expect them from me. Is everybody OK with me yelling? Let's clear it up now." No one said anything (Fieldnotes 3/11/91).

Donna was direct and honest. She would yell at the players out of what she perceived to be her intense love of the game. In the same breath, Donna made it clear that she would not embarrass the players in a game. The evidence will show that this statement came back to haunt Donna. The silence was unnerving when Donna asked the players to respond if they had a problem with her yelling. Without much hesitation, Donna continued on her quest to help the players understand her expectations of members of her team:

“Our credo, who knows what the credo is?” Tanya answers, “I don’t know, but we had one last year.” Donna begins passing a stack of papers around. “I’m going to give you several things on paper. Take a copy of each.” Donna begins reading the credo out loud. While reading the type written words on the handout, Donna provides the players with examples of what she perceives the words and sentences mean. As the last word on the handout rolls off Donna’s tongue, she finishes her presentation with a declarative statement, “This is kind of our constitution. Take it home, sign it, and tape it inside your locker.” The large attentive group of players appears to disperse while Donna starts to hand out more papers. All of a sudden, Donna calls them all toward her, “Let’s have a yell!” Donna puts out her right arm and players begin the reach in as they scream at the top of their lungs, “Team!” (Fieldnotes 3/11/91)

Donna was articulate and concise in her efforts to transmit to the players the meanings she attached to being a member of her team. Donna stressed the importance of reciprocity of respect, support, and affiliation between members of the team. The boundaries were being established. This meeting, along with the credo (see Appendix E), was Donna’s initial attempt at acquainting the players with the meanings and perceptions that she attached and expected the players to attach to being a member of the Torrey West Varsity softball team.

The previous vignette provides an excellent example of how clear, concise, and thorough Donna was in presenting her expectations to the players. Donna’s articulate presentations to the players were a result of the time and effort she put in to dissecting her general philosophy about coaching into a definable mission statement about what she wanted out of the team experience for herself and the players. The following statement by Donna demonstrates that she understood the role communication would play in

reconstructing the players' perceptions of "team" to coincide with the meanings she attached to being a member of her varsity.

Handout things, I get you know, um, knowing right away that one of the things I was lacking was being personable..I'm so softball that I cannot be personable. I thought that I would sit down and decide what I really wanted them to get from the season. Um what do I want them to get from me and I came up with all these things. We have a credo, which is just nice. "I care about you da da. " and it goes on to list the things I reckon I want them to get from the season. ..They will have to sign the bottom of that... some sayings and things that I will have them put up in their lockers. And I'll have each of them make a sign or pairs of them make signs to put up in the team room to make it our(varsity softball) team room. My role is mostly to make sure that they get those things the fun things...that they learn about reliability and they learn about themselves and they learn about the other kids, they can count on me whether we win or not. Um, they gain a little self-respect (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna perceived that her role was to make sure they learned about themselves, others, and had fun. Donna knew what she wanted "team" to mean to the players. She had devised a plan to provide the players with the information needed to help them construct similar meanings and perceptions of what it meant to be on this team. From giving the players quizzes on the softball strategies to clarifying how loud is loud enough, everyday Donna attempted to provide the players with clear, concise messages about the meanings she expected them to attach to being a member of the team. As one can see from my copy of the credo (Appendix F), Donna provided the players with operational definitions of what she perceived the typewritten words meant. The following quote provides evidence that Donna believed that the handouts, the credo, and her nonverbal and verbal behaviors would help to develop a team identity:

I think probably..... those little sayings are going to and I don't know what it would be I don't know if I could give it a word or a two word title but yea, yea there probably is a personality that I want the whole team to have. And it looks like it is going to be easier this year than it was last year (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna envisioned that a team personality could be developed through her meetings and giving the players handouts outlining her expectations and passions on issues such as catcher/pitcher responsibilities, captain's responsibilities, visualization, and a poem on self-esteem. These were things that Donna perceived to be important in the development of shared meanings and perceptions about being a member of her team, a collective we.

Leather Ritual

Donna made the pinnacle presentation of what being a member of her team should mean to the players just before the first game. The following vignette describes Donna's attempt at making the players understand what they meant to her. Her presentation of a small piece of leather seemed to bring all of us together minutes before the first competitive game:

The players appeared nervous. They kept watching the pitchers from the other team. Every once in a while, I would catch bits and pieces of ohs and ahs as the ball smacked into the opposing catcher's glove. This was their first game as varsity players. One could cut the tension with a knife. Standing by the team bench, Donna calls out, "Can I get everyone over here, please?" While the players pack together, Donna passes out a piece of leather to everyone, including me. Quizzically everyone looks around. Donna continues, "Tie the piece of leather on your left shoe lace." Without question, the players bend over and tie the leather on their shoes. As I looked down at the players shoes, I noticed that Cathy already had a piece of leather on her shoe. Donna bends down with the players and states, "Pull real tight or have another player help you." Just as Donna began reading the memo aloud, she glanced up from my shoe to my hand where I was tightly clutching my leather while taking notes. I felt as though she expected me to participate in the ritual. As she began to read the memo, I felt a sense of belonging to the group. Yet, I did not tie the leather on my shoe (Field notes 4/12/91).

This team ritual seemed to signify the culmination of a month of repeated interactions within the team setting. The players' silence and attentiveness to Donna as she read the memorandum aloud seemed to signify that they had a shared understanding of the moment. The following vignette is a description of Donna reading aloud the memorandum as each one of us followed along on our own sheet:

“Here is a simple piece of leather but something very special to me as you slip it in your shoelace. It is as special as each of you are to me, and as softball is to each of us. You see, it speaks to each of us of our nature. You notice it is entwined in a knot, intertwined and bending as our personalities have been. Yet, it has left an opening, an opening to be attached to something else--perhaps a team--perhaps for security. It's leather because leather is an amazing material. It adapts to the temperature, sometimes cool, sometimes hot. It is durable and can withstand wear and tear. It can be bent, it's flexible yet it maintains it's original composition. It is simple, yet has class--like all of you. Wear it in good health as we enter our season with a positive expectancy for the future. Best of luck team. LET'S GO FOR IT!” Without a word, the silence turned to continuous cheering and touching of hands. Then all of a sudden, the players and Donna bellowed, “Puritans!!” (Fieldnotes 4/12/91)

For the first time, I felt as though the subgroups were beginning to integrate into a group with a shared understanding of it's identity. We were all (Donna, the players, and myself) sharing a team moment that defined what it meant to be a member of the Torrey West Varsity. My body tingled with excitement for the group and myself. We were entering another phase of team experiences. It was game time. From that moment, the players and Donna began their marathon schedule of thirty-two games in a month. Little did any of us know that the events of the next few days would challenge and reconstruct the meanings and perceptions that were just shared in this team ritual.

Later evidence will substantiate the claim that the strengthening of Us was a result of the players' interpretations of Donna's verbal and nonverbal messages that she exhibited during games. The players perceived that Donna's behaviors contradicted the messages that she transmitted in her meetings, handouts, and informal discussions about the rights, responsibilities, and roles of members of her team. One of the most prevalent forms of perceived contradictory messages was the difference between Donna's explanation for her yelling and the players' interpretations of her yelling.

Yelling Out of Intensity

Prior to the first team meeting, Donna expressed her concern to me that the players might not understand that her yelling stemmed from her love of the game. Donna perceived that it was important to the development of her relationship with the players to make them understand that her yelling was a result of intensity gone awry, not anger at them. Repeatedly, Donna tried to make the players understand that she was not yelling at them, but for them.

At the first expectations meeting, Donna explained to the players that she would yell out of her love for softball. Donna assured them that she would not embarrass them. She knew that it would be difficult for them to understand and accept her explanation of why she would yell. Hence, she believed that it was important for her to show support for the players in other ways. The following quote about her use of the term *buddy* provides evidence for the assertion that Donna understood the importance of conveying a consistent message of support to counter possible misinterpretations of her yelling:

Consciously most of the time because I want them to know that even though I'm yelling I'm not yelling at them. I yelling to them, like for them. I don't know if they can understand any of that if I say that to them. They would probably still think that I'm yelling at them.. So I want them to hear me say *buddy* when I've just been blowing off steam at them for so long. So that they get the idea that I still like you. You're still OK. I'm still OK (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna's use of *buddy* seemed to be effective in conveying a message of support. Throughout the season, Donna regularly used the term *buddy* to offset her intensity. As the season progressed, the players themselves began using her favorite terms of positive reinforcement, "*Buddy*, that's you, you can, you can." In their interviews, all of the players identified Donna's use of *buddy* as a form of positive reinforcement. Donna suspected that even with her continual explanations of her yelling and her use of *buddy* the players would still perceive that she was yelling at them. The following quote describing a

good male and female coach from her past demonstrates that Donna understood that her intense nature could have a negative impact on her relations with her players:

She was always up front. I always saw her trying to improve herself.....she knew when to be intense and how intense to be. And I don't know how she did that because I probably still am not very good at that. I am always at "intense".. when I could just be you know this intense and make them work this hard instead of this hard..... But I learned a lot of about the game from him even though he was not real personable. I guess a combination of those things being the right intensity, being up front, still being personable and still being able to teach me something (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna believed that a coach should be up front, personable, able to teach, and in control of his/her intensity levels. Evidence presented in the next chapter will substantiate the claim that Donna's heightened intensity levels in games influenced how the players interpreted Donna's verbal and nonverbal communication. Earlier it was shown that Donna believed that there was a difference in the intensity levels of "*ballplayers*" like herself and other softball players. On the one hand, Donna perceived that her players needed to be more intense. Intensity was to her a sign of commitment to the team and your teammates. On the other hand, Donna's inability to balance her intensity levels was incongruent with her perceptions of being a good coach. Even with her awareness of how her intensity level may affect communication with the players, Donna believed that there would be fewer problems associated with her yelling this year:

I think partly because they know me. They know what to expect. And I think they like it that a coach is going to get excited about the game and practices. [difference in expectations this year vs last] I don't think they expected to get all those things out of it that I wanted them to get out of it. I think that my expectations were a lot higher than theirs. It was a real adjustment for them. But this year, I think they know coming into it. They know and that's going to make things a lot easier. And the girls have talked and they have a little more idea of what to expect. And I meant to start right off during tryouts. Get them going, doing the right kind of stuff during tryouts (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

Donna's perception that the interactions would be smoother this year stemmed from her belief that she had done a better job of preparing and implementing her plan to transmit her expectations, perceptions, and meanings to the players. In addition, she began conveying her message in tryouts so that all potential varsity players were exposed to her views. More specifically, Donna perceived that the majority of players would have some realistic expectations of her coaching from either playing for her or observing her coaching the previous year. More importantly, Donna expected the players, new and returning, to exchange information about the experience, thus making the transition easier. Yet the evidence will support the claim that the newcomers "realistic" expectations made the transition difficult.

Perceptions of Anger

Even though Donna continually reassured everyone that she was not yelling at them, the evidence will support the claim that the newcomers did not attach the same meanings to Donna's yelling as she did. In my first interview with Donna, I asked her the question, "What cues do you think the players pick up on when you are mad?" As Donna began to answer, I realized, like the new players, I perceived that Donna's yelling outbursts signified anger:

Well, first, I hope they don't see it as mad, I hope they see it as intense. And I even go through that with them at some point. I'll tell them, "You know you'll hear me yell A LOT but it isn't because I'm angry it isn't because you've made a mistake. Because I know you're going to make them I expect you to. I just have such a love for this sport that I can't imagine giving less than 100% to it." And I can't expect them giving less than 100% to it. So I sure hope they see it as intensity. I hope they don't see it as anger...I thought about that last year because they would see me ...drop my hands and put my head back on the 14th or 15th error. Before this year I was thinking gosh they can see me when I do that and guy I always tell them, "Never say die, never quit, never say die." And they can see me drop my hands and plop my head down, so I'm probably giving mixed messages. But I don't know what they are going to get. The girls that are used to it from last year will know that it just means keep going. Let me do my thing (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

She expected the returning players to “let her do her thing.” She believed that they understood that her yelling was not a result of being mad at them, but a result of her love for softball. Donna seemed to be aware of the possibility that the players could interpret her behaviors as contradictory to the team slogan of “Never say die.” The behaviors she described herself doing are behaviors that she identified to the players as unacceptable for members of her team. Although Donna did not label her yelling and intense nonverbal behaviors as anger, she did recall one time the previous when she was truly angry at the players. The incident that she discusses below was described by every newcomer that played on the varsity and JV the previous year.:

They did see me once last year in true anger. This team was winless until they played us and I was so irate after the game that I said, “You all really owe me big”...This is when we had our big discussion about how I was different from whoever else they had. Kitty spoke up and said, “Well coach you know you said at the end of the game that we really owed you...We did not know what to expect. We were really scared and all that.” I knew her as part of the team and we owe each other. I was so mad I said, “We’ll have to talk a little bit later. You run, I’ll yell.” So they were running their laps (for each error) along the infield and I was standing at the pitchers mound yelling at the top of my lungs. I kind of surprised myself that I let myself get so angry in front of them and to them (Transcription of taped interview 3/19/91).

On one hand, Donna perceived that this was the only time she was angry at the players. On the other hand, the evidence will substantiate the assertion that the players’ interpreted her yelling outbursts as anger, rather than supportive intensity. However, subsequent recollections of this particular incident by the returning players and the newcomers will substantiate the claim that this was the defining event in the development of the preinteraction expectancies of members of the Us group.

As the competitive season approached, Donna yelled more. She continued to counter the yelling with statements such as, “That’s you Tanya, that’s you” or *Buddy*. Donna had been consistent and persistent in her attempts to inform the players why, how, and when she would yell. As the evidence will show later, the players’ initial interpretation

of Donna's yelling was a critical factor in the maintaining of the US-against -Coach -and- Them attitude of the Us group.

The evidence in this section supports the assertion that Donna was clear and concise in her verbal messages about what the players should expect as members of her team. Additionally, Donna's actions were congruent with her verbalizations about how she planned to transmit her expectations of herself and the players. If one were to examine the communication sections in most coaching education programs, Donna was following the recipe on how to effectively communicate with the athletes. Donna's proficiency in transmitting her message about team rights and responsibilities to the players was a major factor leading to the miscommunication between Donna and members of the US group.

Donna consciously worked at helping the players make sense of her expectations of them. There was a major huddle at the end of every practice or game. I never heard anyone direct the players to participate in these team rituals. They just did. If a player did not tap Donna's hand hard enough in the huddle, in front of everyone, Donna would call the player back and demand, "Do it harder." Consequently, without specific reference to the significance of the tap, the players learned how hard to hit Donna's knuckles after the team yell. As game time approached, it appeared that the new players were adopting the meanings and perceptions that Donna attached to "team."

The evidence will show that for most of the season, Donna, the gatekeeper to the inside, was considered an outsider by the newcomers. Hence, the person with the majority of power was the odd person out on the "team" that existed prior to the Bicknell incident. Interestingly, Donna attached a similar meaning to her membership on the team.

When Donna read the credo, she reminded the players that she was a person, not just a coach. Time and time again Donna emphasized to the players how important it was to her to be considered a member of the team. During all of Donna's "expectations" meetings, it appeared that Donna's theory of reciprocity applied to the coach as well as the players.

And yet, as the following quote demonstrates, Donna perceived that the role of the coach was much different than that of the players.

No, I think I just expect them to take it as part of that division, coach and player. Even though I tell them I'm part of the team, and I truly am, I still have a whole different role and so we don't live by the same rules. Mostly I think they get to play. I just get to try and tell them how. And they only have to carry what they do and I have to carry what all of them do, individually and collectively. And so I guess I cut myself a lot of slack in thinking that I get to deal with that in whatever way I feel I need to, even if that sends out every once in a while a contradictory message (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Throughout the season, Donna provided the players with verbal and nonverbal messages that she was a teammate, as well as a coach. It appears from this quote that she expected her behaviors to contradict her favorite team slogan, "Never say Die!" She would become silent, drop her head, and appear to give up or die. Yet, the players had to maintain their loudness, their intensity. Donna had left very little unsaid about the rights, roles, and responsibilities associated with membership on the team. However, until the Bicknell incident, she never attempted to explain to the players why some behaviors that were unacceptable for them were acceptable for her as coach. While these contradictions between Donna's actual behavior and her prescribed behavior for team members seemed to strengthen the tension between the Us group and Coach, members of the Them group found the atmosphere created by Donna's behaviors to be relaxed and acceptable.

Them

Cathy, Polly, and Tanya were the only returning players from the previous varsity. Cathy was a quiet, no nonsense player. Occasionally, I would see her joke around and laugh during a practice. However, she never exhibited such inattentive behaviors in Donna's presence unless Donna had given them permission to relax. It appeared that she got along with everyone, especially Polly. Cathy was Donna's confidant within the ranks of the players.

Polly did not interact with many people. She kept to herself, always asking thoughtful questions to clarify things she did not understand. Very rarely did she exhibit any jovial behaviors during official team events. Tanya caught my eye the first day. She carried herself in a manner that set her apart from all the rest. She was always testing Donna, messing around whenever possible, and yet was serious about the game of softball. She wanted a college athletic scholarship for softball. Of all the returning players, she was the only one openly to embrace (in Donna's presence) the fun loving attitude of the Us group. Her frustrated outbursts resembled Donna's animated nonverbal and verbal displays of intensity. During the course of the final interviews, most players named Cathy and Tanya as Donna's favorites. As a group, they seemed to have an allegiance to "Coach" that separated Them from the new players.

The Role of the Returning Players

These players were the ones to pass on the team rituals, traditions, and stories that evolved through their social interactions with Donna and other players on the previous varsity team. Every day of tryouts, Cathy, Polly, or Tanya led the stretching exercises. I never witnessed anyone telling them what types of stretches to lead. I never saw anyone telling them how many repetitions were to be done. They just moved to the center and began directing the rest of the softball hopefuls, as if they knew what was expected of them. In the following quote, Donna discussed the role she expected the returning players to take in transmitting her vision for the team to the new players:

I just wanted it to be one of those things (hitting fists at the end of practice or game) that carries through year to year. And that the girls expect when they get there. And so I specifically didn't explain it. It's a small thing. But it's a varsity thing and you know small things are all we can do. But I knew the girls from last year would come (to the huddle) and the others would pick it up (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna expected Cathy, Polly, and Tanya to send verbal and nonverbal messages to the new members that signaled appropriate behaviors for Torrey West Varsity players. It appeared that they did an excellent job of conveying information about the huddle. I never

observed a formal discussion of Donna's expectations for a team huddle at the end of every practice and game. And yet, everyone went to the team huddles. None of the new players could tell me how they knew to go to the huddle. The players seemed to know that they were to hit Donna's fist. As established earlier, Donna taught them how hard was hard enough.

Cathy, Polly, and Tanya's responses about the huddle were similar to those of the new players. Tanya perceived that "it was a tradition thing. We just did it." Cathy and Polly both perceived it as something passed on from one group to the next, "We just did it from last year." Whether they realized it or not, Cathy, Polly, and Tanya were living up to Donna's expectations of Them. They were passing on the stories, jokes, and rituals that helped the new players develop a shared understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and roles as team members.

It appeared that Donna expected Cathy to be the overall leader. On the first day of tryouts, Donna called out "Get em going, Cath." That was all it took. Cathy was leading the run while cheering on every person behind her. Listening in on a coaches' meeting that included Cathy, I found out that she had been selected by Donna to be team captain her junior and senior year. The coaches, Donna in particular, seemed to value Cathy's opinion and ability, relying on Cathy to select the junior captain.

Their Perceived Relationship with Donna

In the previous section, Donna described Cathy as not "loud" enough. The description of Donna's presentation of Cathy at the banquet and later evidence support the assertion that, loud or not, Donna had a different relationship with Cathy than with everyone else. However, Polly and Tanya both thought Donna treated all of Them differently than the new players. Polly's explanation of how Donna treated Them differently than members of the Us group highlights the importance of one's past experiences with a person:

Um, not really different. I mean it wasn't like you could see it. But in a way because she knew us better. And she knew

what we were capable of doing more than the rest of them. In a way, it was (different), but not apparent. It's not like she made it apparent or anything (Transcription of taped interview 6/28/91).

Polly perceived that they were treated differently because Donna knew Them from their history together as team members. Donna knew what to expect from Them. Polly viewed their relationship with Donna as different, but not noticeable to others. However evidence presented in the next section will substantiate the claim that Donna's relationship with the returning players was obvious to the Us group.

Because of their shared past experiences with Donna, the returning players seemed to understand the intention underlying Donna's coaching behaviors. Even though Cathy, Tanya, and Polly passed down stories to the new players that evolved into common expectations of Donna's coaching behaviors (i.e. yelling, silence, game behavior, practice behavior), their interpretations of Donna's verbal and nonverbal behaviors were different from those of the Us group. Donna lived up to the preinteraction expectancies of the new players. Cathy, Polly, and Tanya were pleasantly surprised that Donna was more mellow, less strict, less intimidating than they expected.

Relaxed Compared to Last Year

A common theme emerged from Cathy, Polly, and Tanya's reflections of their experiences with Donna from the previous year to the present. All of Them perceived that Donna was more relaxed this year. They ran less. They perceived that the new players were less intimidated by Donna. Cathy's recollection of the previous year provides an accurate summary of Tanya and Polly's descriptions in contrasting the past to the present:

Um, difficult (laughs) {why} Just because, we had a new coach and it was like kind of like..What's going on? Last year it just..She came off a lot different than she did this year. Because it was like last year we were like, I don't know, people. I guess it had a lot to do with the people that were on the team. I think because people had a lot of attitudes last year on our team or I thought we did. I think that like Tanya picked a fight but, um, she just seemed more,.. I don't know more tough last year (laughed). It was kind of I think she had more of more people scared than she did..You know, we had a lot of respect for her and

everything, but she also had us like if we don't do this right (laughs) We're going to run for our lives (laughs). Because it was really..We did a lot of running last year. But, I don't know that's probably the main thing that she did different this year. She, it seemed like more relaxed and stuff (Transcription of taped interview 6/20/91).

They expected to run for their lives for every error in a game. They did last year. Cathy, Tanya, and Polly expected her to be more strict, tougher. They were pleasantly surprised by what they considered a drastic change in temperament. Members of the Them group perceived that people were less intimidated by Donna. However, as will be shown later, the intimidation factor was influential in solidifying the boundaries between the subgroups Coach, Them, and Us.

Neither Cathy or Polly could pinpoint whether it was Donna who was different or that the new group of people made her seem different. The following quote by Polly best describes the feelings she and Cathy shared about the differences in Donna's demeanor from the previous year:

Well, I think it was..Well, when she first came, I think it was kind of a two way street. Because she was a different coach for us, and we were a different team for her. So I think that she just tried a lot of things out to see what worked and stuff. And I think this year, she figured out a lot of stuff that didn't work (laughs) and decided not to do it anymore. {like} LAPS She..the year before that she was more, I don't know.. She was a little more competitive and got a little bit more angry at things. But this year, she seemed to kind of level off about it. Yea, lightened up. Just because she wouldn't make us do more exercises and laps and more (pause) She didn't YELL at us as much (Transcription of interview 6/28/91).

Polly expected the yelling to be more intense (anger) and more frequent. Like Cathy and Tanya, she expected much more running. Polly thought maybe Donna learned what worked and what didn't from the previous year. It seemed as though Polly and Cathy appreciated that Donna was less strict. But, as the following quotes from Tanya demonstrate, not all of the returning players shared the same feelings of relief that Donna yelled less and made Them run less.

I liked her right away, personally. You know she yells and that's what a lot of people complain about. But I've always been used to it. So it didn't really bother me. Take personally-- No, that's the way I coach and that's the way my mom coached (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Running for every error does help. It (running) makes you think about it. I think it really helped last year. She was out in the middle screaming at us (Transcription of taped interview 7/22/91).

Tanya perceived that making people run and yelling were appropriate and effective coaching behaviors and she proudly declared that her mom coached the same way. More importantly, as a beginning youth sport coach, Tanya found such coaching techniques to be useful. According to Tanya, she was not as affected by yelling as were many of her teammates. She was used to it. Although Tanya never directly mentioned the intimidation factor associated with playing for Donna, her statement that she was not as affected by the yelling indicated that she may have been aware that players were bothered by Donna's yelling.

Ramifications of Making Game Errors

Tanya was surprised that Donna did not make them run as much as previously. Tanya had vivid memories of Donna standing in the middle of the field yelling at Them as they ran for every error they made in a game. Both, Polly and Cathy had clear recollections of the same incident that Tanya and Donna had described to me when they ran for every error while Donna yelled at them. As the following quote demonstrates, Polly perceived that Donna's response to players' mistakes this year was more effective because the players did not have to be as fearful of making errors.

This year (laughing) {more effective} um, (pause) I think (hesitation) this year even though we didn't win a lot. {why} Just because people were more relaxed about it. They didn't get so worried that if they made a mistake. It would be all over. (laughs) and um (pause) (Transcription of taped interview 6/28/91).

Polly's assessment that Donna's more relaxed attitude created a less intimidating atmosphere echoed the feelings of both Cathy and Tanya. To Them, last year, if you made

a mistake, it was all over. This year it seemed to Them that people were not as fearful about making a mistake. And yet, the players' fearful anticipation of practice the day after the first game suggested that all players (new and returning) worried about Donna's reaction to mistakes.

After the first game, I remember Cathy laughingly warning the new players that they would be running forever. The team had made fourteen errors in the game. In the following quote, Cathy described the past experience that led her to warn the new players. Not only is this the same incident that Tanya, Polly, and Donna referred to in previous quotes, but this is the one incident that influenced most of the new players' fearful preinteraction expectancies of Donna as a coach.

Yea,because last year everyone was, oh my gosh, she **MAKES** us run **FOREVER**, you know, because one day one game that we had.. It was actually like I think it was the first game that we had we made like 13 errors just in one kind of setting and so we ran 13 laps and everybody was like, "Oh my gosh!" We don't want to have to deal with this and stuff. But it was a lot more relaxed this year than what it was last year I think people came in scared and then they realized, you know (Transcription of taped interview 6/20/91).

Last year, Donna stood in the middle of the field and screamed at them as they ran around and around the field. This year it appeared to Cathy, Polly, and Tanya that Donna was able to control her intensity. The returning players perceptions that Donna was less intimidating seemed to be influenced by their construction and reconstruction of the meanings and perceptions they developed through a year of repeated interactions as members of Donna's team. They believed that the new players came in scared and then realized how much easier it was this year, as they had. Forgetting, how they much they feared Donna last year when they moved from Milly's coaching to Donna's.

Cathy, Polly, and Tanya admitted that they were intimidated by Donna the previous year. To Them, their new teammates did not have reason to be intimidated this year. Polly's response to my question about whether she worried about making mistakes best summarized Cathy and Tanya's discussions about their fear of making mistakes:

No, {did you the year before} Yea after the way we found out the way she HANDLED things. Sometimes but not this year. I mean there was nothing I could do about it. If I (laughing) missed it if I missed it I missed it. {taken a different attitude} yea! (Transcription of taped interview 6/28/91)!

They now understood how Donna handled things and attached different meanings to her behavior. Hence, they felt less intimidated by Her. Earlier in this section, Donna indicated that she expected the returning players to understand that her yelling was frustration, not anger. She expected them to “Keep going and let me do my thing.” It appeared that the returning players had learned to deal with the way “Coach” handled things and take Her in stride. The returning players had done a good job of passing on information about team rituals and other team events. However, Cathy, Polly, and Tanya were unable to identify that members of the Us group interpreted Donna’s behaviors similarly to the way they had the previous year. Hence, the two subgroups of players seemed to have different interpretations of the team climate and Donna’s coaching behaviors.

Us

The Us group consisted of the ten first year varsity players. Five of the players, Nan, Tina, Marlene, Candy, and Kelsy, had played on the freshman and junior varsity softball teams together at Torrey West. Three other members of the group had played interscholastic softball with the aforementioned core members of Us: Cissy on the freshman team, Popeye and Babs on the junior varsity. Hence, at one time or another, eight members of the Us group had played together in the Torrey West softball program. Sara, the youngest member of the group and team, was making the transition from freshman level competition to the varsity. She had participated on other recreational teams with five of the six core members of the Us group. The final member of the group, Molly, had never played interscholastic or recreational softball with any member of the team. Molly and Cissy were the only two members of the US group to enter into the setting without specific

expectations of what it would be like to play for Donna. The rest of the of the Us group had observed Donna coaching the previous year.

Sara, Nan, Kelsy, Babs, Marlene, and Tina had participated in other extracurricular activities such as band, interscholastic volleyball, basketball, tennis, and recreational teams with Tanya, Coop, or Cathy. None of the members of the US group had any experience with their former teammates and friends on a team coached by Donna. They did not have any direct past experiences with Donna as their coach, nor did they have any experience competing at the varsity level. In this setting, they were outsiders trying to understand their roles within the existing varsity structure created by repeated interactions between Donna and the returning players the previous year.

Initial Interactions with Donna

Donna indicated in her initial interview that she had designed team meetings, handouts, and slogans to help the new players understand the meanings she expected them to attach to being members of Her team. The following general description of the interactions during the early “how to make sense of your experience” sessions shows that Donna may have inadvertently reinforced the new players sense of being outsiders.

These meetings typically began with Donna passing out handouts that supplemented her explanations of the roles, rights, and responsibilities of players on her team. A pattern of interaction between Donna and the returning players emerged in these meetings that supported Polly’s assertion that Donna treated Them differently. During these “make sense of your experience” discussions, Donna would single out Cathy, Coop, or Tanya to verify her verbal description/outlines of what the players were to expect from her (i.e. yelling, intensity, etc.) and what she expected of them. In many instances, the returning players seemed to take the words right out Donna’s mouth and finish her sentences. One example would be Donna’s insistence on making the returning players corroborate her descriptions of when or how she might yell at players. After a returning player confirmed Donna’s

message or related a story of her own, she would completely fall apart laughing at Donna's continued insistence that she yelled out of intensity, not at someone.

These specific interactions among Donna, Cathy, Polly and Tanya were typically filled with laughing and joking about previous team events or future consequences if one did not live up to "Coach's" specified expectations. Conversely, few, if any, of Donna's early interactions with the new players resulted in even a smile. Donna's different communication styles with the returning players and the new players were understandable. After all, Donna had a past history with Cathy, Coop, and Tanya. She knew very little, if anything, about the new players. Inadvertently, these meetings seemed to reinforce the new players' preinteraction expectancies of Donna. Donna would yell. They were outsiders to Her way of doing things.

An analysis of the interactions amongst the players supports the tentative assertion that within the first week a division existed between the returning players and the new players. Daily, situations arose where one of the new members could not hear or did not understand Donna's directions. As a rule, the player would ask for clarification from a member of the US group, never Donna or any of the returning players. This pattern of behavior was interesting, in that prior to practice, the players seemed to interact amongst each other freely. Then, as soon as Donna called practice, it appeared that there were two distinct ways in which the players conducted themselves in practice.

Members of the Them group seemed to take on Donna's persona. Their presence, expressions, and attentiveness to drills seemed to distance Them from the new players. The new players had a different way about them. While Donna was near them or looking in their direction, they were as focused and attentive as Cathy, Polly, and Tanya. However, when Donna was not looking or there was a break in the action, members of the Us group engaged in messing around and chattering behaviors. Even if they were caught in the act, the new players continued to have fun while practicing. The distinguishable differences between the behavior and patterns of interaction amongst and between the newcomers and

the returning players supports the assertion that the division between Them and Us was much more involved than just the new players making sense of their experience.

As the evidence will show, members of the Us group believed that the returning players just went about their business without any concern or acknowledgment about the fears of the Us group. After all, to Them, Donna was much more relaxed and less strict. The evidence will also show that the newcomers found Donna to be less strict than expected, yet their interpretations of Donna's behaviors were clearly different from those of the returning players. These differences would be consistent with one of the postulates of the symbolic interactionist perspective that one's past experiences play a critical role in how one interprets the behaviors of the other.

At first glance, the emergence of the subgroup of Us was simply a matter of the new players bonding out of a common feeling of uncertainty associated with the expectations of a new coach and the process of becoming varsity ballplayers. However, as the earlier sections illustrated, Donna did a good job helping the players make sense of their varsity experience. I sensed that the underlying tension associated with Donna's presence was more than new players being intimidated by the unknowns of playing for a new coach. As I began to develop relationships with the players, informal discussions before, during, and after practices substantiated the assertion that membership in the Us group was more involved than just being a new member to the varsity.

It is difficult to separate and analyze the factors underlying the multi-dimensional process that transformed the intimidated newcomers into the Us against Her and Them bunch. At the surface level, the initial basis for membership in the group was the shared common goal of becoming "insiders" on Donna's team. With the exception of Molly, the new players were much like job transferees. They had participated in the Torrey West interscholastic softball program and had been promoted. Hence, in their minds, they were being asked to perform tasks they had already learned, but at a higher level. Through repeated interactions with the same coaches, most of the players had developed schemas for

appropriate softball skills, practice/game protocol, and coach-athlete relations. Their perceptions of appropriate and acceptable softball player behaviors had been constructed while they were members of the freshman and junior varsity teams. The following section will highlight the role the newcomers' past softball experiences played in sustaining the divisions between Coach, Them, and Us.

Past Experiences with Other Coaches

Seven of the ten players had played for Martha, the freshman coach. My first impression of her was that she was someone's mother. She was probably late forties, early fifties, gray hair with a plumpish figure. During tryouts, all of the players went out of their way to interact with Martha - quite the contrast to earlier descriptions of the manner in which the players responded to the mere presence of Donna. When the newcomers discussed their early relations with Donna, they continually alluded to the difficulty of adjusting to Donna in relation to their experiences with Martha and the JV coach, Milly. Cissy's recollection of Martha summed up the other players descriptions of their freshman softball experience:

And I guess Coach M.. I mean it was just like ..I don't know, Coach M was like a grandma to you. You would totally screw up and she would say, "Ah, that's OK."
(Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

Martha seemed to take errors in stride. This was in sharp contrast with the newcomers' perceptions of their present experience with "Coach." Seven of the newcomers had past experiences with Martha's relaxed, accepting style of coaching. Now they were playing for Donna, who had stated several times that she expected physical, not mental errors. She would be the one to decide whether a player made a mental or physical error. Donna made it clear that she would yell. Something was O.K. when Donna deemed it O.K.

Not only were most of the newcomers used to Milly's relaxed, accepting style, most had played on the JV for Milly. As evidenced by Kelsy's comparison of her JV experience and her early experience with "Coach," the players moving up from the JV were also used to a relaxed, accepting atmosphere:

It's a lot more serious than..I mean I don't know if anyone told you but we used to play duck duck goose to warm up sometimes last year....We had so much fun. The practices weren't that serious. We worked hard. Yet, they (coaches) weren't that serious and we'd get into a game situation...when we'd get down they would say, "You guys can do it. You guys can do it." And this coach practically gives up (Transcription taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy's perceptions of her past and present softball experiences paralleled those of the other six players who moved up from the JV. Six of the seven players that moved up from the JV also played freshman softball together. Through shared experiences within those settings, one would expect these players to attach similar meanings to the differences between Milly and "Coach." In the following quote, Nan's description of the difficulty making the transition summarizes the feelings of all the newcomers who had previously played JV and freshman softball at Torrey West:

Yea, especially for volleyball, my volleyball coach loved me and from last year on JV..having Milly just be one of the girls. You know it's hard to make the change.....I think I liked Milly, but she was too friendly. And our "COACH" is just the opposite...I know this is really mean, but she says how much she really cares and how much she wants to be our friend. I don't think she acts like it at all in the way she's coaching. A lot of people feel uncomfortable around her, because she's like, "Do everything perfect or don't do it at all!" (laughing) (Transcription of taped interview 4/15/91).

The similarities in these three reflections on the differences between their previous two coaches and "Coach" were remarkable. The players depicted their previous coaches as relaxed and accepting of them, with or without mistakes. The players used words like *uncomfortable*, *serious*, and *perfect* to describe their experience with "Coach." Although Molly did not have any previous coaches to compare her experience with "Coach," the following quote indicates that her perceptions of "Coach" closely matched those of her teammates:

I didn't really know what to expect, because I had never experienced it before...Being so like in charge, so not strict, but like if you don't do this you're going to suffer the consequences. People were I don't want to say people were, afraid of her, but in a way they were (Transcription of taped interview 7/16/91).

Molly saw “Coach” as the person in charge. Molly, like the others, perceived that “Coach” expected perfection or else. Molly seemed to attach similar meanings to Donna’s behaviors. She believed that her teammates were intimidated by Donna’s take-charge, no-nonsense presence. Admittedly, there were times when Molly was intimidated, but for the most part she expected worse. After all, she had never played on an organized team before and now she was expected to perform at the varsity level. Hence, her membership in the Us group seemed to be based on her quest to understand what it meant to be a Torrey West varsity softball player.

Membership in the group was much more involved for the seven players who played freshman and JV softball together. Not only were they trying to become accepted members of Donna’s team and adjust to the different coaching styles, but they perceived that they were having less fun while being less successful. The following quote by Babs epitomizes the concerns of her former JV teammates.

I mean we were 16-1. We were sweet. But there was not pressure to make the perfect play or whatever (Transcription of taped interview 4/17/91).

Babs perceived that “Coach” expected them to make the perfect play. The core members of Us perceived that they had to contend with “Coach’s” more serious attitude toward softball with a less fulfilling outcome. Seven of the ten newcomers were used to messing around in practice and still being successful, winning. As freshman and JV players, they had lost only a total of four games. This team had already lost four games.

These players attached strikingly similar meanings to the atmosphere created by Donna and their difficulty in adjusting to the differences between the past and the present. Although Molly, Cissy, Sara, and Popeye had not shared the same past experiences with the core members of the Us group, their views paralleled those of their teammates. The one factor that everyone unanimously agreed upon was that at some level they were intimidated by and/or fearful of Donna.

Intimidation Factor

I mentioned earlier that I sensed that the newcomers seemed to be intimidated by Donna's presence. The subsequent evidence will substantiate the claim that the newcomers' preinteraction expectancies of Donna were the source of the fearful atmosphere surrounding Donna's presence. As I interacted freely with the players, I heard comments like "Do you dare me to try on Coach's glasses? Watch out She's looking in our direction" or "Oh, She's going to be mad." The newcomers always seemed to have one eye on the task at hand and the other on Donna.

As established earlier in the section about Donna, she expected the transition period for the new players and herself to be easier this year. Donna believed that the newcomers would enter into the setting with more realistic expectations of what to expect from their experience on her varsity team because most of them had observed her coaching the previous year. Unlike their predecessors, these players would not be shocked by her high expectations and her propensity to yell.

Donna was correct in her assessment that the newcomers entered into the setting with preconceived ideas about her coaching based on actual observations of her coaching and stories from the returning players. However, those preinteraction expectancies fueled the tension that existed between Donna and the new players prior to the first game, not the key to a smooth transition. As evidenced by Sara's explanation of her hesitancy to become a varsity player, the newcomers' observations of Donna's coaching the previous year were influential in the development of the Us against Her attitude of the newcomers:

One reason was because of the coach. Because I didn't care for her. But I didn't know her that well. I only knew from what I heard...And..We (the freshman team) were watching them(varsity) and were cheering and she(Donna) didn't want us to (Transcription from taped interview 3/27/91).

Sara knew what to expect. Donna was firm and had different expectations than her former coach. For that very reason, Sara almost declined Donna's offer to play catcher on the varsity as a sophomore. Sara admitted she did not really know Donna. Nonetheless, her

interpretation of that incident made her apprehensive about playing for Donna. Not only was Sara apprehensive about playing for Donna, but so were the former JV players. In her discussion about her expectations of her varsity experience, Popeye used the word *fear* to describe the her perceptions of the feelings that existed as she and her JV teammates entered into the setting:

Coach was like, I don't know, we all came in with fear that(laughs)... We(last year's JV) would be sitting on the JV field and we could hear her yelling at them, screaming at them. And then we'd watch them, and one time we watched them, they started to run laps because they lost the game before and had lots of errors. They were running at the beginning of our practice and we were done they were STILL running(laughs). We were like, OH MY GOD (Transcription of taped interview 8/28/91)!

The event that Popeye referred to was described by every player on the team with the exception of Sara, Molly, and Cissy. Each and every newcomer who witnessed this incident admitted to being afraid of Donna while the returning players used the incident as a point of reference to illustrate Donna's metamorphosis from the strict, intimidating coach from last year to the more mellow, less demanding coach of the present. Earlier in this chapter, Donna identified this incident as the only time she recalled yelling at players out of anger, instead of intensity.

Through repeated discussions of this incident and stories from previous varsity members, the core members of the Us group attached meanings to Donna's coaching style that led to them bonding because they were intimidated by Donna. Candy's retrospection of the social interactions early in the season supports the assertion that the subgroups of Coach, Them, and Us existed within days of the first practice. Additionally, her description of how and why the players came together summarizes the sentiment expressed by all of her former JV teammates.

We used to talk about it in class all the time (laughs). We got together and talked about "Coach." I think it was the only thing that kept us together...I'm glad we talked about it because, if not, it would have been thirteen people individually, not thirteen, because the varsity ones...like Cathy and Polly were kind of off on their own and Tanya.

But the rest of Us were like scared people. It was good that we had someone to console each other.....They(varsity ones) were just like THAT'S THE WAY SHE IS. I think they dealt with it in their own way. They never told US. We all just pulled together cowards (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

They came in apprehensive, and then they fed from each other's fears. Eight of the ten new players entered into the setting fearing Donna. Candy perceived that members of the Them group (returning players) dealt with Donna in their own way, leaving those who feared Donna to fend for themselves. Thus, began the early inception of the intimidated Us group. Through repeated interactions that reinforced their preinteraction expectancies and stories from the past, the intimidated core of eight evolved into a cohesive group of ten, which resulted in the Us against Her and Them atmosphere that prevailed until the confrontation between Donna and Candy, Cissy, and Popeye (representing all of the players' views about Donna's behaviors) in the meeting after the Bicknell incident.

Cissy's recollection of the early team dynamics relative to "the team" summed up the sentiments of her cohorts in the Us group. According to Cissy, the assimilation of the Us, Her, and Them subgroups into "the team" at the banquet was painless relative to the evolutionary process involved in transformation of the intimidated newcomers into the Us against Coach bunch.

Because at first, it was really strong. Because it was like THE TEAM versus COACH. it was like two different things and um I don't know....It's kind of weird just because we all came together ragging on the coach and then it was like ALL of us and that was kind of cool (Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

Cissy perceived that the early patterns of interaction divided the group along the lines of everyone against Coach. Eventually, as if by magic, all of them came together, to become "the team" at the banquet. From Donna to the last player interviewed after the banquet, the one word used to describe "the team" was fun. Yet, as this chapter shows, the collective understanding of team and fun did not just happen, it evolved as a negotiated version of Donna's vision for her team and the players' vision of a team. Prior to

development of a collective “we,” the meanings that each participant attached to team and fun were more influenced by their past experiences as a member of other teams, with other coaches, as a coach, and as a member of one of the subgroups. Over time, the meanings and perceptions that they attached to their shared experiences created a collective understanding of what it meant to be on this team i.e., rules, values, norms, language, and expectations of members (Blumer, 1969).

Summary of Chapter

The evidence in this chapter supports the major tenets about communication and social order of the symbolic interactionists. Communication is an ongoing, dynamic interpretive process. People act toward the meanings that they attach to events, objects, and behaviors, not to the actions or things themselves. The meanings that people attach to such actions evolve from social interaction. Consequently, the meanings that evolve from one's past experiences and from interactions within particular reference groups affect one's interpretation of one's direct interaction with an object, event, or person (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Social order evolves from people acting upon their environment through the creation, maintenance, and exchange of symbols that lead to an understanding of the “reality” of the institution in which one interacts.

This chapter illustrates the role the participants' past experiences played in the interpretive process of communication. Most of the newcomers entered into the setting with knowledge of the sport, the program, and definite preinteraction expectancies of what it would be like to play for Donna. Their past experiences influenced the meanings that they attached to the team events, objects, and human behaviors that they initially encountered within the team setting. What was communicated by the behaviors of another participant correlated more with the meanings and perceptions that one developed through past experiences than with the actual behavior or event. Consequently, even when Donna's behaviors conflicted with the players' preinteraction expectancies, the players still

interpreted her behaviors as intimidating and pressuring because her communication style was different than previous coaches.

From this perspective, communication is a product and process of being a team. The continual changes in the communication networks within the team support this premise made by organizational culture theorists. Early on, the formal lines (pre-existing reality) of communication were downward, with one's power coming from linkages directly connected to Donna and with Cathy being the only direct link. Later, strong informal lines of communication developed as the newcomers bonded in response to their fear of Donna. The informal lines of communication became sites where players like Candy, Cissy, and Popeye gained enough personal power to challenge Donna's decision not to attend the huddles in the Bicknell incident. The continual changes in the communication network (formal and informal) evolved out of the social interactions between and amongst all of the participants within the setting. On this team, the informal lines of communication were instrumental in the negotiation process that led to "the team."

The evidence in this chapter, along with the following chapter, suggest that an area of research that we should pursue in the future is network analysis. Network analysis could provide us with valuable information about the social order of a team. Conducting observational studies focusing on the interactional patterns within the team setting could provide us with the information about the purposefulness of informal and formal lines of communication; the impact that factors such as years experience, attitudes, power, centrality, position, etc., have on the development and strength of networks; and the effect networks have on the coordination of group and individual goals (Salanick, 1995). Moreover, this type of research could help us understand the interplay between social and task communication networks and how they impact the cohesiveness and performance of the team.

The findings within the body of this chapter also lend support to the research showing that preinteraction expectancies persist despite actual disconfirming face to face

interactions (Burgoon & LePoire, 1993). There was an ongoing tension within the team due to the differences between Donna's actual behaviors and the players' interpretations of them based on their preinteraction expectations of her as a coach. Those preinteraction expectancies were based on stories of Donna's past coaching behaviors, observations of Donna coaching, and the difference between Donna's coaching style and the players' past experiences with other coaches. Until the newcomers' confrontation with Donna about the Bicknell incident, the players' interpretations of her behaviors were more influenced by their membership in the Us group, than as a member of "the team."

The evolution of "the team" was an ongoing process that was a result of the modification of the initial meanings and perceptions of team held by the participants into a shared understanding and acceptance of this team. The interpretive process of communication was the process through which the individuals and subgroups integrated into a collective "we." In Cissy's mind, in the end they were a team. Cissy's perceptions concurred with Donna's announcement at the banquet, "in the end they were a team."

The following chapter will describe and analyze some of the events that transformed the dissident newcomers, the frustrated coach, and the ambiguous returning players into the fun loving group at the banquet.

Chapter 4

YELLING OUT OF INTENSITY, NOT ANGER

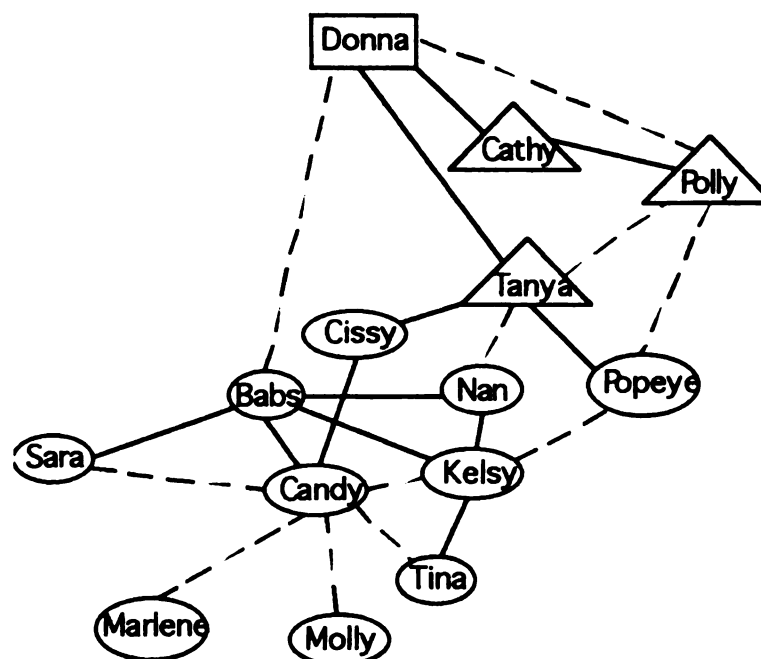
In the previous chapter, the team was described as an organization divided along the lines of how people perceived they should and/or would experience being members of the Torrey West Varsity softball team with Donna coaching. The meanings and perceptions that each member attached to their preinteraction expectancies were influenced by their past experiences as members within the Torrey West interscholastic system. The intimidation, almost fear, that the majority of the newcomers experienced in Donna's presence was a result of two factors. First, eight of the ten had observed Donna yelling and screaming at the previous varsity and had heard war stories from former varsity members about their experiences with Donna. Second, as the players began to interact with Donna, the difference between the laid back coaching climate of former coaches and Donna seemed to reinforce their preinteraction apprehensions about Donna's tougher, more demanding style of coaching.

This chapter will describe and analyze key events that led to the assimilation of the three subgroups into the team at the banquet. The pre-game "team" was a result of the incongruence between the meanings and perceptions Donna attached to being a member of her team and the past experiences of members of the US group. As the players began to adopt the meanings and perceptions that Donna attached to team, their interpretations of Donna's nonverbal and verbal behaviors were instrumental in maintaining the division between Donna and members of the US group. Although the players were still fearful of Donna's yelling, the underlying tension associated with her yelling was replaced with the players' perceptions that Donna's behaviors contradicted their understanding of her messages about what it meant to be a member of their team. Through team meetings,

huddles, “sign day,” and other team building activities, Donna’s presentation of “TEAM” conveyed to the players that the “expectations of a team member” meanings that Donna and the players negotiated applied to everyone, including Donna. Consequently, the players’ interpretations of Donna’s verbal and nonverbal game behaviors as incongruent with their understanding of her expectations of them as team members led to a climate of hypocrisy and betrayal. Evidence in this chapter will support the assertion that “team” is a dynamic process that is constructed and reconstructed through repeated interactions within the setting. In this instance, this team moved from “her” team to “their” team, and ended as “our TEAM.”

The earlier sociogram (pg. 59) representing observations of tryouts and the first day of practice illustrated that the Us group was a loosely knit communication network with numerous outliers (Cissy, Candy, Sara, Marlene, Molly, and Popeye) and a few strong friendship bonds (Tina and Kelsy; Nan and Babs). The following sociogram constructed from observations of players before, during, and after practice through March 25 portrays a much different set of relationships.

Figure 3



Candy was becoming the informal leader (hub) of the communication network for the Us group. Not only were the links within the Us group becoming formalized, there were also meaningful communication networks emerging within and outside the boundaries of the Us group. Tanya had developed a strong friendship relationship with Cissy and interacted regularly with Nan and Babs. The friendship dyads of Tina and Kelsy, Nan and Babs, and Cathy and Coop were still strong. Tanya and Popeye developed a relationship on the basis of their experiences as the only regular fielders on the team. There was also intermittent interaction amongst all of the seniors, Tanya, Cathy, Hoop, Erica, and Popeye.

The most significant relationships that formed were the bonds between Candy and Cissy, Candy and Babs, and the catcher triad of Sara, Babs, and Kelsy. In this and the next chapter, evidence will be provided to substantiate the claim that these three social networks were the main channels through which the perceptions and meanings of the Us group were constructed, reconstructed and transmitted to Donna and members of the team. Even as the tension associated with the differences between Donna and the Us group became more defined, the “team” as a whole was continually negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the team, their team.

Getting Accustomed to Each Other

In the previous chapter, I described indoor practices where Donna’s mere presence seemed to create a sense of intimidation in the newcomers. Daily, it appeared that the division between Donna and the newcomers was weakening. There was more joking amongst Donna and all of the players with few yelling outbursts by Donna. A prime example of this assertion is the following vignette of the first day of outdoor practice. Although it was warm enough to go outside, it was too wet to practice on the field. Donna decided to go outside and practice in the school parking lot.

By the time I left the gym, everyone was outside. Cissy and Candy were missing. Donna sent the girls on a run to the end of the school and back. Cissy showed up just as they finished running. As she walked up to the group, in a tone

that made no excuses just stated the facts, Cissy breathlessly blurted out, "I had to walk. Hoop drove right by me." From every direction, jokes start flying about "poor Cissy had to walk" or "yea Hoop drove right by saying oh there's Cissy, I'll make her walk." All of us were laughing, Donna and Cissy included. Until Donna innocently said, "I think you all owe me something from last Wednesday, right here by the no parking sign." The group moved over to the no parking sign and lined up to run the 11 sprints they owed Donna for dropping balls during warm-ups on Wednesday (Fieldnotes 3/15/91).

There were not any of the usual signs of interactions between members of the Us group in reaction to Donna's presence or directive. There was not any groaning, just acquiescence to the directive "right here by the no parking sign." They were quite a sight. Molly and Cathy were wearing shorts while Marlene was wearing ear muffs. Everyone else, including Donna, was bundled up in sweatpants, sweatshirts or jackets. Tina and Donna were wearing sunglasses. During the running of the sprints, there was very little talking, only heavy breathing. After the last sprint Donna called the players over to her car. For the first time since the varsity had started practicing, "Coach" seemed to integrate the personal with the professional.

As the girls walked toward the car, they were breathing heavily and struggling with holding their gloves, taking off their sweatshirts, and keeping their T-shirts on. Donna called to them, "Get a partner. A different partner than the one you usually warm up with." From behind me, I heard someone say, "I feel like I just gave birth." There was no joking as everyone seemed to be struggling to breath and walk at the same time. Finally they partnered up and began to warm up their arms. As she opened the driver's door of her car, Donna jovially asked, "What station do you like?" There was a momentary silence and then you could hear numbers flying through the air, "92.5, 95, 100.6 and so on." With a smile on her face, Donna turned toward me and said, "I guess I'll put on mine, 92.1." Tanya shrugged her shoulders, wrinkled her nose as the music began to blare, "Oh my God!" (Fieldnotes 3/15/91)

During the first four inside practices, there had been some joking between Donna and the players. Two days before, Donna informed me of a nickname she had thought up for Candy, "Fonzie." However from all of my observations and conversations with Donna, I would not have expected her to allow music during practice. From the players'

silence prior to responding to Donna's radio station request, it appeared that they were also surprised. Other differences in this practice from the previous ones was the recurring confusion about language and drills. Due to the space constraints of practicing in the gym, Donna was introducing certain drills for the first time. It appeared that Donna expected them to have a certain base level of knowledge.

Donna assigned players to the landmarks that she has designated as bases (i.e. grease spot for first, someone's sweatshirt for second, etc.). Then she explained that they were going to work on the specifics involved in covering bases. As everyone moved toward their assigned position, Donna said, "When Candy presents that will be the cue for third and pitcher to hustle in." Candy pitched the ball and Babs threw to the outside of firstbase. Candy commented, "Oh, oh wrong side." Donna called out, "Hoop give her an inside target." As Hoop threw the ball back to Candy, Tina asked, "How many times do you want us to do it?" Answering Tina, Donna said, "once." Then she directed her attention to Candy, "Do your present better." Candy went into her pitching motion and seemed to exaggerate the windup. Loudly, Donna called out, "That was not a present!" Looking directly at Donna, Candy asked, "What do you mean by present?" Without any suggestion that such a question was stupid, Donna replied, "Touching your ball to the glove is a present." At that point, Donna turned her body toward Erica and said, "When she presents, you square to bunt." Other times during this drill, players missed their cue to run the bases or play a position because of misunderstanding about the drill. Each time, Donna patiently clarified the roles and responsibilities of the players (Fieldnotes 3/15/91).

This was the first time that I witnessed a situation where there was a misunderstanding about a word. Candy's rise as the leader of the US group seemed to be connected to her willingness to question or challenge Donna's instructions and/or directives. In this instance, there was no apparent tension or conflict between Candy and Donna, however as the games began, it was difficult to assess if Candy and Donna were battling each other as individuals or members of the subgroup they represented. The practice was fairly uneventful until a situation arose that Donna seemed to identify as a mental error. Donna had made it clear in many of her "expectations" meetings that a certain number of physical errors were acceptable, but no mental errors.

Donna walked toward Cissy and supportively said, "Cissy, you've got to scoop up the ball, come on buddy." And then all of a sudden, Donna exploded, "DO WE KNOW HOW TO DO SHORT HOPS? DO WE BACK AWAY?" From around the field, I heard, "No." Donna continued her tirade as she walked toward Cissy to demonstrate the proper way to scoop the ball up, "PLAY THE BALL DON'T LET IT PLAY YOU!" Everyone was silent, while Donna worked with Cissy (Fieldnotes 3/15/91).

The outburst from Donna shocked me a bit. I quit writing my notes when she began yelling. The first part of the practice had been very positive and instructional. She had joked with the girls during warm-ups, let them listen to the radio, and entertained questions about the organization of the drills. After her outburst, the practice continued with the players making jokes, laughing, and horsing around whenever Donna wasn't looking.

During one drill, Donna laughingly said, "Better low than high." She continued, "Should we get a bumper sticker that says that? It would go for drugs as well as softball. We could sell them." Everyone joked about the possibilities of such a venture. The practice ended with the announcement of Donna's selection for the junior captain. As the following vignette shows, the players and Donna seemed to feel more comfortable interacting with each other.

"In here, as you know Cathy is the team captain and we (Donna, Cathy, Pam) have talked a few times about who should be the other captain. I would hope that you will applaud who we chose, Babs Bar." Everyone cheered as Babs wiggled around. Donna continued, "Cathy please go through the handout that I have distributed with the captains' responsibilities." Cathy read the responsibilities out loud to the group as Donna interjected her own comments about particular items. When Cathy finished reading the captains' responsibilities, Donna took over the conversation. "In volleyball, you got to drive to games. Not here, you will ride the bus." With that statement, Donna passed out a sheet specifying the exact departure times for each game. "I want everyone (varsity) to sit together. Where do you want to sit?" Sara answered, "The back." Two or three more comments of "the back" were heard within the group of players. Donna announced without further discussion, "OK, we will sit in the back of the bus together." Donna began the statement, "If we go undefeated..." Then everyone started talking. Nan asked, "Do we get to put TW in your hair (shave initials in it)? Popeye yelled out, "Blue and gold in it?" Donna was answering, "No!" as quickly as they came

up with ideas. Then she announced, "If you go undefeated, I'd write Torrey West in my hair. I know this is a short practice. Does everyone have a ride?" Jokingly she quipped, "Everyone can ride with Cissy." The practice ended like all the practices to date with everyone grouped together to yell, "Team" and touch Donna's knuckles (Fieldnotes 3/15/91).

The joking and playful interaction between Donna and all of the players was atypical. In this practice, Donna seemed to balance the fun aspect of participation with her role as leader. Even though she raised her voice to the point of stopping practice for a brief moment, Donna engaged in much more interaction with all of the players, not just the returning players. Donna seemed to bring more of Donna, the person, to this practice. There was little, if any, interactions that suggested that members of the US group were intimidated by Donna.

Importance of Team

Donna's announcement of the Babs as the team captain was a combination of joking and business. The selection of captain was important enough for Donna to require that everyone listen while Cathy read Donna's handout entitled team captain responsibilities (Appendix F). In addition, it appeared that Donna considered it critical that the players sit together as a team on the bus. The concept of team seemed to be extremely important to Donna. To date, after every practice, the players huddled, yelled "team," and then knocked knuckles with Donna. As the following quote shows, Donna started the "knock knuckles" activity with the concept of team in mind.

I started to last year. And I meant to never have to explain it again. I just wanted it to be one of those things that carries through and that the girls expect when they get there. As so I specifically did not explain it...But I knew the girls from last year would know what it was and they would come and the others would pick up on it. And again I think I did it just to remind them that I'm part of the team and even though I yelled at you today I still believe in you. No I didn't explain it on purpose (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna had not only formulated her lesson plans for her practice sessions, but she also had a game plan for the development of a collective understanding of being a member of her team. This plan was much like that of a large corporation to get employees to identify

with the mission of the company. Donna's plan for the huddle was purposeful and calculated right down to what they would yell in the huddle. Donna's perception of the lack of success that she had with the previous varsity players coming up with meaningful yells had her reevaluate how to handle the situation. This year the players would not be allowed to select a phrase or term until she believed that a some sense of team:

So, I thought this year I would just decide especially in the first part of the season. And then I would start asking them, "What do you want to say?" Or if it was a particularly easy day let them decide what they wanted to say (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna decided that until they had some experiences on the team that she would select the phrase or word to be yelled in the huddle. To clarify my understanding of the huddle, I asked Donna, "So the purpose was to pull the team together and you consciously decided what to say. Am I right?" Her response was, "Yea. Yea." Donna would decide what to yell until she deemed the players capable of selecting phrases or words that were significant to the development of "the team." Interestingly, the first practice that Donna deemed the players knowledgeable enough to select an appropriate yell for the "knock knuckles" huddle was also the practice that seemed to reinforce players' fears associated with Donna and her yelling, three days later on the varsity field.

First Day on the Varsity Field

There was no easy access to the varsity softball field. One had to drive out of the parking lot onto the main street, then go around the block and turn on to a one way street, while trying to determine which driveway-like dirt road provided access to the field. After entering onto the correct dirt road, you hoped your car did not drop into one of the many deep ruts usually filled with mud. I missed the driveway twice in the first week outside. Two players were late the second day outside because of their inability to navigate the busy streets and find the dirt road. Just before a game, Tanya got her car stuck so deep in the mud that many of the freshly cleaned white uniforms turned into brown polka dots while trying to free Tanya so the visiting team and spectators could get to the field. Another time

an opposing team had to carry their gear the two muddy blocks from the school, because their bus could not maneuver around the mud holes.

Early in the season, Donna had spent one of our pre-practice informal sessions bemoaning the difference between the boys' varsity baseball field and the girls' varsity softball field. The boys field had dugouts and was surrounded by a fence supplied by sponsors. The location of the boys' field was next to the main parking lot on high ground within walking distance of the gymnasium. As we drove to the field, I understood her complaints about the "swamp."

I rode with Donna in her car to the field. From that day on, I took an active role in helping with the equipment and/or bases each practice. I found that by taking care of the equipment prior to practice, helping players hook the bases, and picking up the equipment after practice, I moved from pure observer to participant observer. During those times, the players or Donna would provide me with their inner most reflections about practice and feelings in general, or clarify information for me.

Once we unloaded the equipment, Donna isolated herself from everyone. The players straggled in one by one. Molly and Marlene were the first to arrive. As I sat listening to Molly and Marlene talk about putting on their cleats for the first time, my attention was distracted by the rumbling of Tanya's black car literally bouncing over the bumps. As we moved from the bleachers to observe the ruckus, Marlene and Sara set the wheels in motion for a shared understanding of the "Bust a sag" slogan on the back of the shorts the players presented to Donna and Pam at the banquet.

A small import car drove up and as it parked, Nan, Babs, Cathy, Coop, all get out laughing wildly about Tanya's driving. Marlene moved away from the bench with her sweatpants so low on her waist that the crotch was practically down to her thighs. She seemed to be imitating the new basketball style of low baggy shorts. Kelsy and Sara showed up wearing shorts. Sara sat down and made a comment about how dumb she felt because her new cleats were so white. As I was observing the players prepare for their first field practice, Donna called out to everyone, "Let's go. Get your cleats on. Let's get ready." As Sara moved away from the bleachers, I noticed that she had put her

sweatpants on in the same low baggy manner as Marlene. Sara's plaid shorts were quite prominent above the waist line of the sweatpants. Tanya called out to her, "Do you have your pajamas on underneath there? Sara just smiled and in the background Donna asked, "Where are Cissy, Popeye, and Candy?" At the same time the girls were explaining to Donna that those girls had a late class, I could see Cissy and Popeye running toward the field. It was 3:15. They were late. Candy was walking behind. Just as Cissy and Popeye reached the field, Donna made everyone start their laps. While they were running Donna turned to me and said, "Cissy is a kick. Yea, I don't see her getting much playing time." Donna seemed impatient to get started. Her body posturing was much like the first day of tryouts, distant and strong (Fieldnotes 3/20/91).

Donna had removed herself from the action prior to the official start of practice. She did not interact with any of us until she called out to the players to get ready. At every previous practice, Donna had provided me with access to her plans and thoughts for the day prior to the start of practice. Except for the drive to the field, I, like the players, was kept at a distance. Her impatience and frustration that Cissy, Candy, and Popeye were not there when she expected them was evident by her puffing, the change in tone of voice, and her slumping body posture. Even when Donna joked with me about Cissy, she was watching her watch and glancing at her list of drills/ topics to cover. She seemed almost pressured to get started. I felt as though I was at the first day of tryouts. Donna seemed to be distancing herself from the coach the players were becoming accustomed to and reestablishing herself as "Coach A."

After the girls finished their run, they stretched in the grass behind first base. I could hear "ugh, rabbit pellets." Donna called out, "Hey guess what? Guess what? I saw someone only do half (pushup). Do twenty again." After stretching, they moved over to the infield to run the ten sprints that they owed Donna from the day before. As each girl finished her tenth sprint, she breathlessly waited for a throwing partner and they began warming up their arms. The air was devoid of any talking; the only sound was of the ball hitting the gloves. What I noticed the most was the lack of the annoying sound when the

balls hit the bleachers or the wall. It was so nice not to have to keep one eye on six balls and the other on my paper.

The drill began at approximately 3:30 pm. Approximately seven minutes into the drill, I could hear Tanya and Popeye chattering away. As I looked over at the players, I assessed that the throws were not quite as accurate as they had been just minutes before. I had barely written “throws going way high” when Donna let the players know that she was watching them.

“Hey, I want throws chest high.” The duo of Popeye and Tanya seemed to be the loudest in chatter and the ones who were throwing the highest balls. As Popeye threw a blooper to Tanya, Donna bellowed, “I DON’T WANT RAINBOWS!!” Tanya made another bad throw. Donna just glared at her with what the players called “the look, you know Linda the look.” Then Popeye made a bad throw. After she hit the ground with her glove and said, “Why can’t I? She raised up and practiced her throwing motion without the ball. As I’m watching Tanya make another bad throw, I heard Marlene say to Babs, “Ask everyone if they are warm.” Babs, the dutiful captain, polled all of the players down the line and called out to Donna, “We’re all warm.” As if someone had challenged a direct order, Donna flippantly inquired, “Did I ask you?” Without the previous chatter, everyone turned and continued to throw back and forth. As the ball rolled toward us, Donna sarcastically asked, “If you are all warm, why do I see you miss throws?” While she was letting them continue to throw until she decided when they were warm enough, I noticed that the girls had moved closer together and were throwing much slower. At 3:45pm Donna walked over and picked up a bat and called out positions that the players were to assume instead of warming their arms up (Fieldnotes 3/20/91)

In the indoor practices, Donna made the players run a sprint for every ball they dropped during warm-ups. Although she stressed the importance of “chest high” throws during previous practices, she did not usually scream at the players for throws that were on target. Donna seemed to be establishing or reestablishing that she was in control.

There was one other time that Donna had become frustrated with a player for making her own decision. That player did not understand when she was supposed to rotate during a drill. Consequently she made the decision to rotate out after two trials. Donna challenged her right to decide when to switch much like she challenged Babs’ decision to

poll the players. However, this time I sensed an urgency from Donna. It was almost like the field represented competition, not practice. She seemed to need to control the situation, the players. After all, the players needed to be ready to “play ball” in a matter of weeks. Donna was more like the “Coach A” that the players expected than the “Coach” that they had been negotiating the meaning of “the team” with. The following vignette is an example of what was to become typical field practice behavior for Donna prior to the start of games.

Donna finished assigning each player to a position. Kelsy was catching with Sara backing her up. Donna called out, “OK we’re going to get one. Watch this dirt. The ball will roll slow or hop.” Her first hits were bunts to the catchers. As each catcher picked up the bunt, Donna gave her instructions on proper glove position based on the speed of the ball. From out of nowhere, Donna looked out at the other players and literally screamed, “I WANT TO SEE CHEST HIGH THROWS. EVERY TIME WE OVERTHROW THEY GET A BASE.” (Fieldnotes 3/20/91)

Donna was patient and detailed in her instructions to the players down to the dirt factor. During the season, Donna tried to provide the players with detailed information that the players would need to perform to the best of their ability from the dirt factor to the proper execution of blocking the sun. Donna went from the calm, instructional teacher working with the catchers to a loud (yelling) authoritarian when addressing the fundamental aspects of “chest high” throws. Although she was voicing her expectations of their performance, her presentation of this expectation was much different than her tone and demeanor when working with the catchers. She seemed to be commanding them to make chest high throws instead of giving the hows and whys of making accurate throws. The practice continued with numerous bouts of Donna vacillating from a calm instructional coach to a coach emotionally frustrated with the players inability to execute the slightest of skills.

Within about ten minutes, there were several other incidents that highlighted the animated frustration that Donna was demonstrating in this practice. Nan and Cissy had been having trouble executing at second base. They either misunderstood who was making the cutoff or they were not turning their bodies in the direction Donna expected. During this

period, Donna had dropped her bat in frustration and gone out to demonstrate physically the proper techniques and positions for those situations.

Through it all Donna had not raised her voice or verbally admonished Nan or Cissy for their inability to execute. Her body language and bat wielding seemed to say it all. Donna was frustrated at their inability to follow her instructions to a tee. As the following vignette shows, she saved her verbal outbursts for events that conveyed to her that the players were not attempting to follow her directions.

Just as Nan and Cissy seem to be executing better Coop threw a ball directly to Marlene and she dropped it. Donna firmly called out, "Come on Puritans. Let's go. Let's go." As she finished the statement, Donna hit the bat against her head. Everyone seemed to look down and around. Donna directed her attention to hitting the ball to the fielders, "Get two!" The first ball went over Tanya's head and she made a good throw to second. The next ball sailed over Popeye's head without much chance for stopping someone at second. The cutoff called out, "Go three." The throw was right on target at third base. Donna screamed, "HEY, I called two. We will change it when I change it." Upon finishing her directive, Donna took her finger and pointed at her self, as if to make sure they knew who was in charge (Fieldnotes 3/20/91).

This was unlike any practice to date. In each previous practice, Donna would find occasion to raise her voice and provide the players with loud, yelling, frustrated directives. However, the impatient, do or die attitude, with each ball was different than all other practices. What had been instructions inside were directives on the field. Donna's vacillation between the patient, instructional coach and the frustrated, controlling, instructional coach during this practice was representative of most of the outdoor practices leading up to the competitive games. The evidence will show that the emotionality of Donna's behaviors at this and other outdoor practice was a precursor to Donna's animated, emotional displays on game days. Other yelling bouts in this practice included statements such as, "DID EVERYONE SEE WHAT I DID?," or "You guys better be ready to yell for seven innings!! If Pam and I out yell you, you will really owe us." It was almost like

being on the varsity field put pressure on Donna to control the players and focus on practicing to compete, instead of practicing to become skilled.

At approximately 5:21, Donna had all the girls sit on the bleachers for a recap of practice and for general team information. Donna clarified the players' roles in plays such as delayed steals, sliding, and cutoffs. When going over the laws of offense and defense, Candy made a minor challenge to Donna's authority, in jest, but subtle. Late in the meeting, Donna asked if anyone had any questions and Candy raised her hand to ask the sign for the delayed steal. Although, this interaction seemed harmless, the tension and subtle challenges made it seem as though Candy and Donna were sparring.

"What's the signal for delayed steal? I don't remember."
Donna answered, "Remember we have two indicators and then the sign. Right shoulder, left arm, signal." Candy continued her questioning, "Do you have a signal for I don't hear you?" Donna responded patiently, "If it happens a few times, I will talk to you." "Then they'll know something is up, right?" Donna responded jokingly, but with authority, "Right! Then you'll hear from me tomorrow (meaning next day)" (Fieldnotes 3/20/91).

The sociogram earlier in this chapter established that Candy was becoming the informal leader of the US group. Candy was the only player to repeatedly respond to Donna's calls for questions after a team briefing or instructional session. Many times, Candy's simple request for clarification of a point seemed more like challenge to the meanings that Donna attached to coach-athlete interactions. Like this one, Candy pushed Donna until she could point out the possible flaws in Donna's explanation. This was just the beginning of the battle of wit and words between Donna and Candy.

This section on the first outdoor practice substantiates the claim that Donna's communication behaviors became erratic in nature. Within minutes, Donna's response ranged from calm and instructional to emotional and controlling. In previous practices, Donna had shown her propensity to become frustrated and animated as a result of the players' digressions from her expectations. This was different. These outbursts were more

frequent and more intense. It seemed as though the players' inability to perform to her expectations was a signal to Donna that she was not in control.

Even though Donna seemed frustrated with the players' performance in practice, she handed over the responsibility for selecting the yell for the "knock knuckles" huddle to the players for the first time. That dichotomy made this practice significant for two reasons. First this practice introduced the players to the coach they had expected when they entered the setting. Second, as evidenced by the following vignette, Donna perceived that the players were team oriented enough to select the yell for the huddle.

The conversation moved on to establishing where and when practice would be dependent on the weather. For the first time in the season, Donna asked the players, "What do we want to yell?" A few phrases were tossed out and then everyone agreed on "Feel the Breeze." As we were riding back to the gym, Donna said, "Candy, I can't read her. I am usually good at reading kids, but Candy is so solemn" (Fieldnotes 3/20/91).

Here was a practice where Donna seemed frustrated, almost angry at times, and yet, she passed the responsibility for selecting an appropriate phrase or word to yell in the huddle to the players. In the section on Donna, she had stated that one of her flaws was her inability to control her intensity. The huddle was her way of saying, "Even though I yelled at you today, I believe in you." By giving them the ability to select the yell, she was giving them more of an investment in their team.

Sign Day

Five days later, Donna provided the players with another opportunity to actively participate in constructing the meaning of "the team." In the first chapter, I described the first "expectations of you as a member of my team" session when Donna passed out the credo (team constitution) and told the players to tape it to their locker. It was time. Volleyball season had ended so softball had full rights to the locker room. Donna was ready to check and make sure everyone had signed and taped the credo to their locker. Additionally, Donna expected the players to make and post signs to identify the area as

property of the varsity softball team. Today she would meet the players in “the varsity” locker room and inspect their lockers and the locker area.

I arrived at 2:40 pm, earlier than normal. I wanted to observe the process of transforming the dull gray corner of the locker area into “team” territory. As the following vignette illustrates, the players seemed to carry out the assigned task out of fear rather than an acknowledgment of the significance of the project.

The climate in the usually dreary locker room was tense. Four players with Babs at the helm were feverishly working to get the materials to make signs. Sara and Kelsy were working on a large sign, “Feel the breeze.” They were laughing from the insecurity of not knowing whether they would be done in time. Sara fearfully commented to Kelsy, “Maybe she’ll hit us.” The statement was made in jest, but the tension told the story. Not one of the players had signed or taped the credo to her locker. Kelsy, Sara, and Popeye were rushing around to find a clean copy of the credo and a copy machine because they could not find their credos. Tanya entered the locker room and left as she exclaimed that she had forgotten everything at home. Marlene made the same claim. The two of them rushed out the door to go home and retrieve their signs and credos (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

The tension in the locker room was high. Although they were laughing and joking about the possibility of Donna yelling at or hitting them, there was definitely a sense of fear in the air. Their colored marker strokes on the signs were rushed and imprecise. They were running to the copy machine, running to tape the credos to their lockers, and practically ripping off their street clothes to be changed and ready before Donna came in. It seemed that the players’ concern about Donna’s reaction to their procrastination or lack of initiative went deeper than just this event.

I sensed that the increase in Donna’s animated emotional outbursts during the recent outdoor practices was reinforcing the players’ preinteraction expectancies of how mean and scary Donna could be as a coach. Since those practices, there was an increase in interactions between members of the US group that suggested that the underlying tension associated with Donna’s yelling was alive and well. The following vignette, describing the

reactions of both newcomers and the returning players to not being prepared, suggests that at some level all the players feared Donna.

I was walking around the tiny section of the locker room where the players placing the signs marking their territory. Nan sheepishly walked up to me and explained that she could not find her locker combination. She was smiling, yet, her eyes had difficulty meeting mine when she almost beggingly asked, "Do you think coach will be mad?" I told her that I was not sure, but I doubted that she would get mad over such a thing. She looked at me as if to say, I hope you are right. She walked away to help the players wallpaper the area with their rushed masterpieces. At 3:07, players were crawling on the lockers as they attempted to get the signs hung before Donna arrived. By 3:10, players were trying to get dressed, eat popcorn, and get all of the signs hung and talk at the same time. Cathy came in with a squeal as she realized she did not have any of her stuff. The noise and activity were almost unnerving (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

Nan was genuinely concerned about Donna's reaction to her inability to remember her locker combination. She was acting more like one of the intimidated newcomers than someone who was in negotiations with Donna and her teammates to define team. The players' fearful anticipation of Donna's entrance into the locker area was similar to their reactions to Donna's mere presence early in the season. Except for Cissy and Marlene, none of the players had started their posters until 2:30 pm. For the sake of peace and harmony, a player would agree to say that other players collaborated on her sign so that no one suffered Donna's wrath.

It was 3:00 pm before any of the players taped a signed credo to a locker door. From observing the process, it did not appear to me that creating a team space and taping the credo on one's locker had any significance to the players except to escape reprisal from Donna. However as the following vignette illustrates, Donna interpretation of the outcome of the frenzy was different than my observation of the process.

At 3:13pm, Donna entered the team territory. Her eyes lit up as she exclaimed, "Gotta like it!" Players were still dressing and on top of the lockers putting the finishing touches on their taping job. Donna walked around the block of lockers with a grin from ear to ear, "Now it's looking like a softball locker room." As Donna finished her christening of the area, Nan walked toward Donna. Glancing over at me, she

quietly asked Donna, "Can you tell me what my combination is, please?" Donna lifted a page on her clipboard and pointed to a spot on the paper. As she moved her eyes from the paper, Nan looked over at me with a big smile and a head nod. Coach did not get mad. Donna called out to the players, "Going outside, too nice." Cissy meandered over to Donna and asked, "Do you have an extra credo?" Donna cheerfully replied, "Yea, but not here." Continuing without barely a breath, "Varsity, let me see your locker doors." As if on a mission, Donna checked each locker door for a signed copy of the credo. From behind the block of lockers, I heard her call to Candy, "Candy, got to sign this bud." Candy moved in front of Donna to sign her credo. While signing it, Candy said, "Coach, I have a banquet tonight, I might have to leave early." I could hear Donna question her, "What for?" Proudly, Candy stated, "Cheerleading." Nan and I were standing next to each other as Molly came up and in frustration claimed, "I need my combination." Nan laughed and looked directly at me as she announced, "It's no problem." From behind me, I heard Donna call out, "OK, OK, let's get together on the benches in the center." Players positioned themselves on the lockers, on the bench, and on each others' laps (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

Donna appeared to be elated by the results of the players' frenzy to comply with her wish to claim the locker room as their territory. She never stopped smiling. Nan, Marlene, and Molly had all forgotten their combinations. Many of the players had been afraid to approach Donna for something so simple as a locker combination. Their fear was for naught; Cissy forgot her credo and nothing was said. Donna was too busy admiring the players' masterpieces. The signs seemed to communicate to Donna that the players were becoming invested in their team. The session began with Donna proclaiming her glee at the players' efforts in creating a team space.

"First of all, EXCELLENT job on the signs. I love them. Never say die is my favorite." The players clapped and cheered for themselves. Hardly containing the excitement that she felt as she looked around her, Donna blurted out, "Great, EXCELLENT, they look good." The players smiled, laughed, and looked at each other as if they had gotten away with something. Yet, they seemed to take pride in the joy they had brought to "Coach" (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

"Never say die" became the slogan for the accepted team attitude. One month later at the banquet, Donna commended the players for their "never say die" attitude. The result of the players' fearful frenzy to complete the assigned task was a team slogan. It seemed that

the results of the players' "claim the locker room activity" conveyed to Donna that the activity was as significant to the players as it was to her. As the evidence will substantiate, the meanings that the players attached to Donna's promotion of "never say die" as the accepted team attitude played an important role in the players speaking up at the Bicknell incident.

In their final interviews, the responses of the players supported the assertion that they had not put much effort into making the signs or claiming the locker room. Cissy was one of two players who had actually made her sign prior to practice. She had cut out her letters and pasted them on the sign. Cissy was the only player who did not have a credo by the time Donna entered the locker room. Cissy's discussion of the significance of the credo and marking the locker area as team territory was similar to the responses of many of her teammates.

Not really, because, we didn't really not really. In fact it was kind of a pain because I lost mine. (chuckles) And here is coach going around checking your locker and I'm going like.. Oh Hell I don't have it. (laughs) It(credo) was. It HUNG there, but we all had our own little individual little thingies that got us going.... I don't think really it had an effect on us. I think the little leather thing was kind of nice. The credos were kind of like whatever yea. We'll just pretend yea yea just to please her. The signs .. I don't know the sign was kind of a pain too. [Nobody did it until the last minute] Right! It was too.. Mine was like the night before, two in the morning (Transcription from taped interview 7/5/91).

To Cissy and many of her teammates, the credo just hung on their locker doors. None of the players could remember the credo. Tanya in her final interview acknowledged that they had a credo but she could not remember any part of it. She, like Cissy, found little significance in the credo hanging on their lockers. Many members of the US group perceived that that the credo had the capacity to play a role in the development of a team attitude. However in their minds, Donna did not focus enough of her or their attention on the philosophy of the credo. The following quote by Kelsy's was representative of the collective attitude of the US group about the significance of Donna's "team" activities.

Yea (was significant), but you have to act them out. You can't just write it down on a piece of paper and say this is our creed. You have to follow it too. Well, I was talking to Candy the day after our first game and she's like how can we come together as a team if when you're screaming and yelling at US. And I could I have respect for you and how can you have respect for me (Transcription from taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy's statement was made after the first game, an event that was critical in reinforcing the players' preinteraction expectancies that Donna was intimidating and she yelled at you, not for you. However, the statement is important in that it provides evidence for the assertion that there was more than the yelling factor playing a role in the strengthening of the Us group. As early as the first game, the players seemed to interpret some of Donna's communication behaviors as contradictory to her the messages she was conveying to them about "team." The evidence will show that this perception of incongruence between her message and her behaviors was due to the shared understandings developing through events such as sign day.

Kelsy's statement highlighted Candy's role within the US group communication network. As the evidence will show, Candy was instrumental in constructing and reconstructing the meanings members of the US group attached to Donna's behaviors. Throughout this chapter, members of the US group, like Kelsy, used discussions with Candy or paraphrased her words in discussions with me to describe their feelings about Donna.

Most of the players found no significance in the credo. There were two reasons cited for the credo not being perceived as significant in defining team. First, as Kelsy claimed, the credo was never mentioned again after "sign day." However Donna did mention the credo one other time, during the Bicknell incident. Second, the players perceived that Donna's behaviors contradicted the words written on the sheet. Actions seemed to be more significant to the players than written and verbal words. Although the credo and signs did not appear to have any significance to the players, the interactions during the rest of this practice suggest that the process of making, taping, and identifying

what Donna wanted may have brought the players and Donna closer to attaching similar meanings to being a member of their team.

After the meeting, the players loaded up in cars. I rode with Donna down to the field. I took the bag of equipment over to the backstop as Donna passed out handouts on the signals. The girls were looking at the sheets and talking incessantly. Donna called out, "We really need to use our time wisely. We need to be done by 5:30pm." Babs standing shoulder to shoulder with Donna blurted out, "Oh good!" As if she had been stung by a bee, a sharp whence came across Bab's face as Donna turned to face her. Almost simultaneously, Babs said, "I'm sorry," and Donna hugged her. Donna sent the girls on their run while she sat on the bench with me organizing for the practice (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

Donna's response to Bab's excitement over the announcement of a shortened practice was much different than in previous practices. In other practices, the message had been clear don't watch the time. Practice would end when Donna was ready. Instead of giving Babs the "look," she gave Babs a hug. Donna very rarely touched the players, let alone hugged them. Donna seemed to understand or accept that Babs was joking. Members of the US group, Babs in particular, were always joking.

Not only did it seem that Donna was beginning to understand or accept the culture of the US group, it seemed that the players were beginning to understand and value the meanings that Donna attached to team. Evidence to support this assertion is illustrated in the following vignette where the players begin to use Donna's terms to show support for each other.

Candy was in the batter's box. From the field, I could hear, "Come on Candy, can do, can do." I thought that the verbalization came from Popeye, but I was not sure. Within ten minutes of this incident, Coop was hit in the crotch by a bunted ball. Candy as she laughed hysterically, rushed over to Coop and said, "Can do, Coop, can do." Coop recovered from her run in with the ball and stood back in the batter's box. From the first base side, Candy was cheering, "It's OK Coop, you can, you can, be yourself." While Candy was supporting Coop in her effort to get a hit, Molly was providing support for Marlene, the pitcher. "Relax, you can. You can" (Fieldnotes 3/25/91).

Three members of the US group used the terms that Donna coined to show support for the players in their trials and tribulations. In the section on Donna, she specifically stated that she used such terms to counter her yelling and show the players that she was there for them. They had come to know the meaning Donna attached to those terms and words. This assertion is further substantiated by a discussion I had with Bab's about her use of the term "buddy."

You mean that she's behind you. "Oh buddy." Yea, I like "buddy" because it's like she has confidence in you. "Come on buddy. You can do it" and stuff...It calms me down. I know she's behind me. I like it it's cool. I never noticed I say it but I do say it now that you pointed it out. And when she says, "Come on buddy," it's like that she's pulling for you (Transcription of taped interview 4/17/91).

This interview was after the first game. Babs had been using the term "buddy" to cheer on her teammates in last few practices and the game. Babs had not realized that she was doing it. Yet, she knew that when Donna said, "Come on buddy, you can do it," she felt like Donna was behind her, pulling for her. Donna's use of those terms and phrases made her feel good. That was Donna's mission, to develop a common understanding of the meanings she attached to being a member of the team.

The importance of hanging the credo and claiming the locker room seemed to be associated with how Donna and the players interpreted the significance of the activity from the perspective of the other. Prior to this practice, I had not observed any member of the US group using Donna's word to support one of their own. Nor had Donna ever allowed a joke about practice policy. It appeared that this practice was important in the acknowledgment and acceptance of the perspective of the other. There was a distinct tension evolving from the development of the perception of a shared understanding of what it meant to be a member of the team and the actual socioemotional climate.

In her first formal interview, two days after sign day, Sara spent a good deal of time discussing her perceptions of Donna as a coach. From her interview, it appeared that Donna was being successful in conveying her interest in the development of a cohesive

team. However, Sara's interview also supports the claim that members of the US group perceived that Donna was yelling at them, not for them.

That's one of her weaknesses is like she doesn't like you to do anything wrong. Then she's going to yell at you or you're going to have to run at the end of practice..So you're like threatened during practice. If I have done anything wrong, I'm going to get into trouble. Or she's going to yell at me...I feel she needs to work on that maybe try a different tactic or maybe having a conference at the end of practice or something. [her strengths] She's very into team. You need to be a team to be able to play well (Transcription from taped interview 3/27/91).

Sara believed that Donna's main weakness was yelling directly at someone when they make a mistake. It appeared that Sara felt threatened by the anticipation of Donna's reprisal if she made a mistake. Maybe Donna should talk to them individually, instead of yelling at them in front of everyone. It seemed that Donna had not been successful in transmitting to Sara that she was yelling out of frustration, instead of yelling at her. Yet, it appeared that Donna's use of handouts, the "expectation" meetings, sign day, the huddle, and other tools were successful in developing a shared understanding of the importance of "team." Sara had no doubts about Donna's commitment to the team.

Academics and Athletics

To Donna, the essence of team was showing support for your teammates. The credo stressed friendship, the importance of reciprocity in respect and trust. In her team meetings, Donna spent a great deal of time asking about and stressing the importance of the players' grades. She assured the juniors and seniors that she would contact college coaches on their behalf, if they maintained good grades. She told the players that they should seek each other out when having difficulty in a particular subject. Donna stressed the fact that they were students first, athletes second.

As this chapter has shown, Donna seemed to be more emotional and authoritarian since practices had moved outside. Her focus seemed to be in controlling the players in an effort to get them ready for competition. Her mission of teaching them and letting them have fun seemed to have gone by the way side as the date of the first game got closer.

Another sign that she may not have been acting on her own words was her announcement of the practice times during break.

Just prior to the “knock knuckles” huddle, Donna announced, “Monday, you’ll be here at 10 in the morning.” A collective “ugh” filled the air. Nan called out, “For biology, we have to water our plants. We can only go between 10 and 11.” Almost challenging, Donna responded, “How many times do you have to do this? How many of you are in this?” Popeye, Nan, Babs, and Candy all answered, “Everyday.” Sara asked if anyone wanted to practice earlier. No one answered. Donna repeated her statement about the time of practice, “10:00am and you guys get on the stick. Get on your horse about it.” Candy, Babs, Nan, and Popeye looked angry. Not one of them looked at Donna. They mumbled amongst themselves. I could hear little snips of the conversation, “School first, right.....I thought she said...”(Fieldnotes 3/28/91).

This incident had minimal impact on most of the players. However, Candy, Nan, and Babs played key roles in disseminating information that maintained the HER against US attitude of the US group. Consequently, their perceptions that Donna was contradicting her own words had an impact on the meanings and perceptions that all US members had of Donna. Months later in her formal interview, Candy still used this incident to justify her reservations about Donna.

Half of us had bio together that like added hell to our lives (laughing). That kind of ticked us off too. Coach was like academics first well you better go do that in five minutes. [Couldn’t get slides done] That ticked us off. Whoa. Nan was going forty-five miles an hour. I stood there for a whole hour..blah blah..(laughing the whole time) (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Candy was the information hub within the US group. Consequently, the seemingly minor incident over the biology slides added fuel to the tensions seething underneath the surface of a seemingly cohesive group of people. Not only had the increase in her yelling seemed to pull the US group closer together, but the players’ (i.e. Candy’s) interpretations of Donna’s behaviors as contradictory to her message of what it meant to be a member of their team was beginning to play a role.

Busting a Sag

Two days later, the team was outside getting ready for another chance at their first game as the Torrey West Varsity. Off and on, since the first practice on the field, Nan, Sara, and Marlene had been wearing their sweatpants in the low crotch fashion described earlier in this chapter. Donna had commented to me numerous times that she did not understand the purpose of even putting on the pants. Little did she know that the term used to describe this clothing fashion would become the engraving on the present the players gave her at the banquet. This banquet illustrates how the term became meaningful to all members of the team.

Donna had just finished remarking to me that she did not understand what would make the players want to wear their pants that way. Hearing her remark, Nan came over and explained that they were imitating African-American guys who wore their pants in such a manner to be cool. It was called "busting a sag." Later in practice, Pam came over and commented, "I want to know why they are wearing their pants that way." Donna walked toward her and stopped in front of home plate, "It's called "busting a sag." She attempted to place a heavy accent on busting. Everyone around her began laughing. Candy jumped off the bench and yells out, "Coach said, "busting a sag." Pam, always willing to join in yelled out to all of the players, "That should be our team cheer!" As usual, Donna redirected everyone's attention to the task at hand by hitting a ball over Kelsy's head. As Kelsy attempted to back pedal, instead of turn and run, Donna just leaned back on the bat without saying a word about Kelsy's attempt (Fieldnotes 4/11/91).

Sara and Marlene had probably worn their sweatpants in that fashion five or six times before Donna addressed the nuance with any of the players. Nan was more than willing to provide Donna with the information. Those players' dressing behaviors had become part of the team culture, an accepted deviation from the norm. Donna had accepted it by not making them pull their pants up. The players had accepted it by not teasing them after Tanya's initial pajama question to Sara. The significance and meaning of the terms "bust a sag" and "never say die" are not in the words, but in the shared interactional experiences of the group as a team.

The following section will provide further evidence for the assertion that Donna's plan had been successful in helping her and the players develop collective understandings of the meanings Donna attached to loud noisy chatter and being a member of their team. However in her success, Donna neglected to take into consideration that the players' interpretations of her game behavior was based on their assumption that what was expected of them as team members was expected of her.

First Game as a Team

Today was the day, the day of the first game. For a month, Donna and the players had been rehearsing for this, the first of thirty-two performances on a softball diamond. Today was the day that Donna and the players would bond through the leather ritual, but also fragment through the players' interpretation of Donna's game behaviors as contradictory to the essence of "team" as defined through negotiations in interactions such as the ritual. Today was the day that the underlying tension associated with the players' fears of Donna's yelling were augmented by their feelings of betrayal by "Coach." As the competitive portion of the season progressed, the tension between Donna and the US group was associated increasingly with the players' perceptions that Donna's game behaviors violated the shared understanding that they had with Donna about acceptable behaviors for a member of their team. It appears that Donna was successful in developing a collective understanding of what it meant to be a member of the "team." Her own words were coming back to haunt her.

For two days, Donna had set up situations where the players would practice actual game protocol. The players had been assigned a designated area to conduct all pre-game stretching and warm ups. There were rules about walking on the infield and talking to the opposing team. Now, it was time to test the players' ability to execute the protocol and play ball.

I arrived just in time (2:33pm) to help Donna unload the equipment from her trunk. As we were walking over to the backstop, Donna informed me that she was nervous. The team they were playing was from the school where she was

a teacher. When I left to mingle with the players, Donna was carefully putting the helmets and the bats in neat lines along the backstop. The first four to arrive were Candy, Cissy, Babs, and Popeye. As they walked over toward the field, Donna warned them, "Don't walk across the infield!" She had been adamant in her preparation talks to the players that no one was to walk on the chalked lines or across the infield until the other team began warming up. While I was sitting on the team bench listening to the players, I frequently heard the word nervous throughout their discussions (Fieldnotes 4/11/91).

The players, like Donna, were nervous about the upcoming competition. The days of preparation seemed to pay off in the execution of game day protocol. The players met at the designated area. With the exception of Tanya, no one walked across the infield. Everyone was on time and prepared to play. As they arrived, the players seemed to cling to each other as they discussed the upcoming jewelry check, the opposing team, and their nervousness. The small groups were broken up by Donna's request for everyone to join her at the "team" bench.

At 3:07 pm, Donna called out to all of the players, "Can I get everyone over here please?" Before I knew it, I was surrounded on the bench by Donna and the players. I rose and took my place within the huddled group. Donna handed each of us a piece of brown leather and told us to tie it on our shoelace, as she read her poem that linked the significance of the leather ritual to the meanings she attached to being a member of her team. The ritual ended with the players and Donna clasping hands in the center of the huddle and yelling, "Pilgrim!!" (Fieldnotes 4/17/91).

This ritual was described in great detail in the third chapter (pg.72). That moment seemed to synthesize all of the meetings, huddles, handouts, and other team events that Donna had specifically planned to construct a collective understanding of what it meant to be a member of "the team." I was excited for Donna and the team. When they left this huddle, I sensed a feeling of unity. Two and a half hours and two games later, everyone left the traditional "knock Donna's knuckles" huddle frustrated and confused about what it meant to be a member of this team.

Forty minutes after the "leather ritual," the players were ready to take their positions for the infield drill. The temperature was in the low forties and dropping. The other team

was wrapped in blankets as they observed our infield practice. Donna was upbeat and positive through the entire ten minutes of infield. As the last player ran in, Donna yelled exuberantly, "Good blue, looks real good today." The starters, the benchwarmers, and Donna huddled prior to the starters taking their positions on the field to begin the game. Donna, again very positive, cheered the players on with this comment, "Hey, we looked good out there on the warm-ups. I saw some really good turns." My wooden bench practically shook as "TEAM" reverberated from the team huddle as the players ran out to take their positions as the Torrey West Varsity softball team.

The chill in the air seemed to be dampening everyone's spirits a bit. The players were barely able to move freely with the layers and layers of clothes that they had on. Donna kept reminding them that the other team was just as cold. The fielders stood in the field with their hands in their pockets. Parents brought me hand warmers to keep my fingers from freezing as I jotted down my notes. As the following vignette illustrates, Donna found a way to generate her own heat.

Candy was pitching. Even though she walked the first batter in four pitches, Donna was constantly calling out, "Come on Candy, buddy, come on." After walking the first three batters, Candy struck the next player out. Nan caught an infield fly on the next pitch and forgot to look at the runners. From beside me, Donna lightly said, "God dammit." While she venting at Nan's apparent oversight, Nan looked up and threw one of the runners out. The inning was over and no runs scored. Nan was first up. She had the dubious honor of being the first newcomer to break one of Donna's cardinal rules, never, strike out without swinging, or else. The "or else" in this case was being ordered over to the coach's box on the third base side, "NAN, NAN right over here." With her head down, Nan walked over to the third base line where Donna pointed to the chalk line and told her to stop. Then she let her have it, "What do you do on two strikes, swing or anything?" Everyone could hear the conversation. Donna looked and sounded angry. Nan dejectedly walked away without looking over toward the bench. She found a place along the fence and stayed there until time to take the field (Fieldnotes 4/11/91).

Donna, as in the recent practices on the field, was providing the players with a barrage of messages. She was supportive, frustrated, and maybe a bit angry. It was only

the first inning. Donna had sworn loud enough for the players on the bench to hear her. She had yelled at Nan in front of everyone. In her first “expectations” meeting, Donna had assured the players that if they struck out without swinging they would pay, she would yell. However, in the same meeting she assured the players that she would not embarrass them in her yelling, she would call them over to her. Donna did call Nan over to her, but you could hear Donna across the field. This scene was recreated many times over the course of the season. Not only did the yelling become the focus of the players’ discontent, the act of being stopped at the chalk line became significant to members of the US group. In her first formal interview, Babs discussed the act of being called over to the coach’s box.

I mean it’s like Candy is picking everything out like the coach. When she wants you, she’s like BABS!!! Like we’re some kind of dog {points like Donna did to Nan} She doesn’t say Babs can you come here, I want to talk to you. She says Babs {points downward} and you know you do that to your dog. You know sit!!! I mean Candy is picking every little thing out that the coach does that’s negative (Transcription of taped interview 4/17/91).

This interview was conducted the first school day after the first game. These were not Babs words. Babs used Candy’s words to describe how the players’ were interpreting Donna’s behaviors. Nan and Cissy also used versions of this description to discuss their discontent with Donna after games started. As the following quote illustrates, Babs herself did not believe that Donna was intentionally making personal attacks on anyone during her tirades.

She’s so intense. She doesn’t even see it’s YOU. It’s just like a person, a body figure is there and they did something wrong and I’m going to yell at them. I know she’s not going BABS!! I mean she might say BABS, but I don’t know how people can just God she called my name. She hates me. And I mean it’s stupid that’s not that way. It is I mean, she likes everybody on the team (Transcription of taped interview 4/17/91).

Whether Babs believed Donna was making personal attacks or not, when she was with members of the Us group she espoused the party line, Candy’s words. When I had

informal discussions with Babs, she, like Candy, seemed to interpret every little thing the coach did in a way that seemed to strengthen the US against HER attitude. Babs was the captain, Candy the informal leader of the US group. They were instrumental in constructing and reconstructing the relationship between Donna and the US group.

The depth of the meanings and perceptions that members of the US group shared was reflected in the similarities in their descriptions of specific incidents such as Babs using Candy's words to describe what happened to Nan. Earlier, Kelsy used her discussion with Candy to explain why the credo did not hold any significance for her. It appeared that Candy had actively stepped up as spokeswoman for the US group after her interactions with Donna in the first game and the meeting.

Earlier in the chapter, I suggested that Candy's seemingly innocent challenges to Donna's instructions were just the prelude to a battle between Donna and Candy. The battle began in the first game when Donna got in Candy's face in front of everyone and turned into a full blown war when Donna did not go to the between inning huddles at the Bicknell game. The lines had been drawn long before the first game, but the events of the first game created a situation where members of the US group became more inclined to vocalize their displeasure with status of their relationship with Donna.

Donna's outburst at Nan was only the first of many emotional encounters between Donna and members of the US group. Right after Nan struck out, Tina and Cathy both had good hits. Donna praised them for their efforts and patted each one as they returned to the field for the second inning. They were in the field forever. The players made error after error. Donna was pacing around the bench, stomping, kicking the dirt, and making sarcastic comments. The comments were never loud enough for the fielders to hear, but always within earshot of the four players on the bench. However Donna's nonverbal behaviors were visible to everyone, parents, opposing team, umpires, and her players.

Although her animated displays of frustration seemed disconcerting to the players, the nonverbals that the players mentioned the most in discussions with me and amongst

themselves were “the look” and her lack of interaction with the players and involvement in the game. As the evidence will show, Donna was behaving in a manner that nullified any collective understanding the players negotiated with her about “team.”

Candy ended up on the receiving end of three of Donna’s frustrated tirades. In two of the incidents, Candy had to make decisions on where to throw the ball in situations that involved more than one baserunner. Donna had drilled into the players that the first law of defense was “when in doubt, get the out.” In the second inning, Candy did get the out. However a runner scored because Candy fell as she was running a player down.

Candy walked the batter. The player ran to first and rounded the base before Babs returned the ball to Candy. Instead of throwing the ball to a baseperson, Candy ran the runner down and tagged her. Just as her glove tagged the runner’s leg, Candy fell on her shoulder and the runner on third scored. Candy slowly rose and brushed herself off as she made her way back to the pitcher’s mound. I could hear loud thumping noises behind me. Donna was stomping around the bench with the “look” on her face and her arms crossed over her chest. A runner stole on a passed ball and Tanya fell and missed fielding a ball. Donna had become very quiet, her hands were in her pockets. Occasionally she would call out to Candy, “Come on Candy. Come on six.” The inning finally ended with Tanya catching a fly ball for the third out. Donna called out, “Right her blue.” As the players make their way to the third base line, Donna challenges Candy, “CANDY, what did we do in practice? (rundowns) Candy responded, “Run at her..” Donna forcefully explained that she should have tried to get the player on third to run (Fieldnotes 4/12/91).

The inning seemed to last forever; hardly a player was spared from making a mental or physical error. Donna’s nonverbals seemed to convey to everyone that she was frustrated with the players’ performance. Now, she was singling Candy out in the huddle. The tone of her voice and her body language suggested that she was challenging Candy’s decision and serving notice that she would make an example out of her.

Donna’s spirits were lifted when the team scored a run and got the opposing team out in three batters. At the end of that inning, Candy initiated a ritual of slapping mitts with each of her fielders. Candy seemed to be the spiritual leader. Donna’s upbeat and

supportive behavior ended two innings later when Candy chose to throw home on the third out.

The ball was hit to Candy. There were runners on second and third and two outs. The runner on third had committed to home and was almost there. Candy threw the ball high and the runner was safe. From beside me, Donna jumped up and screamed, "CANDY HOW MANY OUTS? Come on!!!" The players on the bench all turned away from Donna while I turned to see her pacing behind the bench. Her face was contorted and red. As she stomped behind the bench, her hands moved from her pockets to her hips. Occasionally, I could hear an "ugh" or a huff, but not one word about the action on the field. Molly was trying to salvage the moment by supporting Candy as she pitched three balls in a row after her error, "Can do, can do, Come on Can." Donna took over from Molly and called out to Babs about a play. As the third out is called, Donna called out, "Right here blue. We're in fourth or fifth inning. We need some runs, come on." They huddle up and yell, "STICKS!" As everyone begins to move toward the bench, Donna demanded, "Candy come here! Candy we should have been out of the inning without any runs, instead they got five." With that Donna walked away and kicked a paper cup sitting beside the bench. Candy put on her jacket and sat next to me on the bench (Fieldnotes 4/12/91).

Donna's demeanor seemed to rise and fall with the score of the game. Candy again was the target of Donna's fury or intensity. Time and time again, Donna had warned the players that she would yell. Not only was she yelling, she was yelling at them in front of everyone. From my perspective, it seemed incomprehensible that the players would remember or believe that Donna was yelling out of intensity and not at them. Candy seemed to maintain her composure during both interactions with Donna. However her outward objectivity and emotional control did not survive the next encounter that she had with Donna.

Tanya was on second. Candy hit a ball passed first base. Tanya did not leave her base until the ball reached first. She made it all the way home because of an error by the firstbaseperson. As she crossed home plate, Donna yelled, "Tanya, come over here and talk to me!" Tanya slowly walked over to the third base coach's box. When she returned, Popeye asked, "Were you being congratulated or did you do bad?" Tanya explained that she did not take off because she was waiting for a signal from Donna. She was in trouble. My attention was redirected to the field when the

players on the bench started groaning. Coop had struck out and ran on a passed ball. Candy stole third and rounded the base. The catcher threw the ball to third and Candy was caught in a pickle. She was the third out. The inning was over. Donna marched over to Candy on the third base line. She positioned herself, face to face making direct eye contact, and screamed at Candy about rounding the base. The look on Candy's face became pained. She was beet red. She was visibly shaken by the incident. Donna walked away leaving Candy alone in the middle of the field, in front of everyone. She began to walk toward the bench for her mitt. Babs intercepted her and handed her the mitt. As she made her way to the pitcher's mound, her teammates called out, "Shake it off. Shake it off." Donna was discussing the situation with Pam, as Candy was trying to regain enough composure to pitch (Fieldnotes 4/12/91).

This incident was one that I never forgot, especially the look on Candy's face as she stepped on to the mound to pitch. She had to pitch after being embarrassed in front of approximately thirty-five fans, the umpires, the coaches, and all the players. My sense was that she was about ready to cry as she tried to wind up for the first pitch. Months later, Candy confirmed my suspicions in her discussion of the incident.

RIGHT AFTER THAT I had to go out and pitch. I was the 3rd out. I was out there I was in tears I was fighting back tears I was about to cry. I never had I never had that happen before. Because we were down and I could have been a run or something like a really good run and I rounded it she said I can't remember what she said I don't know if she said round it or run or something like that. But I ROUNDED it and I'm the type of person BUT SHE DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO I'M GOING!!! (laughs) and she didn't say NOTHING she said round and then she didn't say NOTHING so I was like I'm going (laughs) and then I looked and catcher had the ball and I ran back to third and I slid and that time I sprained my ankle on that play. I hurt my ankle, that's when I hurt my ankle. And I didn't even know it. I was so upset with myself and then she came and like screamed at me. I didn't even realize it until about third or fourth batter and I was like trying to shake my ankle I was like oh it hurts. When I got home it was all swollen up and everything (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Candy was so shaken that she did not realize that her ankle was hurt. Even as she limped in after the inning, she never mentioned it. Nor did Donna ask if she was all right. Candy was angry with herself. Donna seemed to make the matter worse by yelling and

screaming at Candy prior to pitching. Candy alluded to the fact that Donna did not know her well enough to know that she normally would go in that situation. Donna seemed to expect the players to understand what she wanted without any attempt to understand their past performances in such situations. She continually reminded them that they were to pay attention to her, not the play, when on the bases. They were not to make baserunning decisions on their own. However, Donna had never addressed the issue of what to do in cases of miscommunication on the bases. This type of controlling atmosphere was foreign to members of the US group as evidenced by Candy's description of the players' preinteraction expectancies about Donna and how this situation helped to reinforce her initial fears of Donna.

[did that give you a negative attitude] Yea, because before the first game before that first game, we were all talking. Like Kelsy and I were like are you scared? And she was like "yea." We were all scared going into that game, of her yelling. We're like I'm not really scared about playing. I know I can play ball... I played ball, you know, whatever for years. They were just scared. We were all scared that she was going to yell and SHE DID (laughs). And it was like (laughs) our team from the year before have you ever been to a JV game? this is what K would tell me "go pitch do your best" And I was totally relaxed on the mound and I had a really good year pitching I mean personally I had a good year. Everybody got along everybody did fine it was totally relaxed and we were totally at ease with everything (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

According to Candy, the players were scared about playing because of Donna's yelling. They wanted to play ball. But, they were more worried about making mistakes than playing ball. They were not used to Donna's style of coaching. Her discussion of the incident provided further evidence to support the assertion that the players' past experiences and their fear of Donna's yelling were important factors in the initial development of the US group. They had been afraid of Donna's yelling and coaching style prior to entering the setting. Donna and the players were in the process of constructing a shared understanding of team. So far her bark had been worse than her anticipated bite. However their first

encounter playing in a game under Donna reaffirmed their preinteraction expectancies. She would scream and yell at you.

Candy walked the first batter in four pitches. Her teammates were continually calling out words of support to her. An inning later, the game ended with 14 errors and a score of 3-13. One could cut the tension with a knife. As this vignette shows, the battle lines between Candy and Donna were being drawn.

Nothing was said everyone walked away from the team area to the bleachers to find friends and relatives. Donna called out to Candy, "Candy be ready to pitch the next game." Fifteen minutes later, Donna gathered the players and gave them a pep talk in preparation for a tougher pitcher. They huddle and yell, "YES WE CAN. YES WE CAN." Donna moved over near Candy and asked, "Do you feel like you can throw another game?" Candy did not look at or answer Donna. My sense from her body posturing was that Candy did not want to pitch again today. As the players took the field to warm-up, Candy jumped up on the bench and screamed, "Who wants it?" The players all screamed back, "We do!" Without much notice, Tina was the pitcher for the next game (Fieldnotes 4/12/91).

The game ended without a huddle without any interaction between Donna and the players. When they regrouped, Donna was upbeat and supportive. She did not order Candy to pitch. Candy did not make eye contact or answer Donna's direct question, yet Donna knew that Candy would not pitch. Through it all, Candy remained loud and verbally supportive of her team. Candy's ability to continue in the face of adversity and her loud, supportive involvement seemed to show her "never say die" attitude. Based on earlier evidence, one might expect Candy to be Donna's poster child for a "ballplayer." Instead, as the following evidence will show, Donna defined Candy's independent spirit as an "attitude." In doing so, the battle between Candy/US group and Donna turned into a war.

These games had been on Friday. The next practice would be on Monday. The players were not looking forward to seeing Donna. In the final inning, Kelsy turned to Sara on the bench and said, "I don't want to show up on Monday." I asked why. She answered, "We're going to be running." Earlier the evidence supported the assertion that a crucial factor in the players fear of Donna was their observations of her making the

previous varsity run all practice while she screamed in the middle of the field. They did not want to experience the same sort of humiliation. To their surprise, they would not even practice, let alone run forever.

I had interviewed Nan prior to practice. Consequently, I missed much of the pre-practice interaction. Everyone was playing around when I entered the gym. Jokes were made about bruises Kelsy got in the game. Babs was thumping people in the neck while Tanya and Cissy were trying to throw each other to the ground. No one talked about the upcoming practice. They just messed around with each other until Donna walked in and said, "Locker room please." The players walked down the stairs into the varsity locker area. They positioned themselves on the lockers, the floor, and the benches. Molly was missing. The noise from the players' discussions about boys, school, and friends was loud. The noise instantly died down when Donna walked in.

"I want everyone to sit down, not on the lockers please." The silence was unnerving. "We obviously won't be doing anything today that is why I am not dressed." While she was talking, Donna was passing out the stats for the first games. She continued, "First though we'll be talking about the game Friday. I want to talk about the positives that I saw. The positives I saw were a lot of cheering I only had to remind you a couple of times to keep it going. When the person up to bat, when the pitchers are struggling they need all the support they can get...I don't expect you to sing in fact I hate singing (girls all laugh) not singing but singing for softball. You know what I mean." The girls start discussing other teams yells. Donna interjects, "I don't expect you to be talking and yelling 100% of the time but pretty close. But all I really expect is positives for your teammates. Always cheering each other, OK (Fieldnotes 4/15/91)?"

Donna did not like the players singing for their teammates. She expected them to continually support their teammates no matter what was happening in the game. Donna commended the players for their verbal support of each other. Yet during the games, she sat on the bench and looked at her fingers or talked with another coach when she seemed frustrated with the action on the field. After she yelled at Candy, Donna did not provide her with any support as she attempted to pitch. As shown in Chapter Three, Donna made it clear to me that she had different expectations for herself as a team member than the

players. However Donna never explained that to the players. In all of her discussions, handouts, huddles, and team defining activities, she presented herself as a team member. Not once did she allude to her perception that unacceptable behaviors for the players were acceptable behaviors for her.

Donna was patient and calm in her explanations of her observations of the games. She praised the players for their offensive power. They had as many hits as the other team. She was pleased with the number of physical errors. Donna explained to the players that one error does not make a game. Her suggestion to all of the players was to learn from their mistakes and don't do it again. And then Donna moved on to the negative aspects of the games.

THE NEGATIVES I just decided to sum it all up into one was mental errors. ABSOLUTELY, HIGH AND ABOVE EVERYTHING MENTAL ERRORS and yes I know it was our first game, but it was not the first game of our life. You know it's not like we had never been there before. In those situations where they got us confused we've gone over those situations!!!!.. We need to keep in mind ALWAYS where the lead runner and yes Candy did the right thing when she ran after that girl. Remember? There was a girl at first the girl at bat got walked and so she kept going when the ball is in the circle when she stops she can only go one direction and yes I told Candy to run at her and that was right for her to do. My assumption was that she was going at third just enough to pull this girl off third and throw that girl out....remember how we practiced it?...And I did tell Candy First Law of Defense "when in doubt get the out." At the very least we did get an out out of that, but it shouldn't have happened the way it did. Donna, nor Candy, looked directly at each other during this part of Donna's speech (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

Mental errors were the key to their downfall in Donna's mind. In practices, Donna had covered each one of the situations that created problems for the players in the games. She had setup the same situations for them to practice in. These were mental errors not physical errors. Babs had several errors at catcher involving passed balls and steals. They had practiced those situations time and time again prior to the game. But as established earlier, the players entered the game afraid of making mistakes because they would get yelled at. They seemed to be more worried about the consequences of a mistake than the

rewards of successful execution. Could worrying about making a mistake cause you to make a mistake? They had fourteen errors in the first game. Donna did not address Candy directly about the incident. Yet, she searched Babs out to discuss her mental error.

Um, help me some other mental errors. There were plenty of them. Babs! Where's Babs? BALL FOUR BALL FOUR!! Throw to first with runners on? All of the girls begin to laugh with Donna. There were plenty, I mean..we could come up with lots of mental errors. That really cost us because up to the fourth or fifth inning we were in it, 3-2, we were in it (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

Bab's error was as mental as Candy's, yet, Donna teased Babs about the absurdity of the decision. The team had one bad inning. Candy's decision at least followed the First Law of Defense, "when in doubt, get an out." Babs' decision was absurd. Donna made it clear there was an acceptable range of errors that she would accept and then:

I do not expect us to do it perfect. By the further stretch I do not (inaudible) In fact I expect about three errors a game. PHYSICAL ERRORS we far out did ourselves (girls laugh) but mental errors..The high school level we can expect every team to make two or three physical errors. We won't see them make mental errors the way we did. And so mental errors will be the thing that makes or breaks us. EXPECTATION IS 2 OR 3 PHYSICAL ERRORS. I wasn't quite sure how I wanted to approach talking to you today. I was soooo angry on Friday. I was sooo angry um not just at you though I guess I was (pause) evaluating me too and what I've done and whether or not I've done the right thing the right way and whatever it is difficult thing this morning to walk in say hello to Joe and watch him smirk at me. He did. He did...Nan laughs and says "bet you wanted to kill"..everyone laughs (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

Donna expected two or three physical errors in a game. She did not want any mental errors. Donna was upbeat and patient as she discussed her anger and self-evaluation related to the games. Donna admitted that she was angry at the events of the day, at herself. If she had stopped at that sentence, she may have won some of the players over, but she continued by explaining how embarrassing it was to go to her school and see the coach after the players' performances. Kelsy's statement indicates that the players believed that she was more interested in her embarrassment than theirs.

This is high school softball. This is not I mean I'm here to have fun. To have fun and get better. It doesn't make one happy to get yelled at and get put down. You know I don't think it should have anything to do with it. I mean we should work hard but that's not the main goal to win every game, I don't think. I mean she came back after the TW game and she works at TW and she knows the softball coach and she's like "yea, I was ready to go into work, so he could smirk at me or something and he did." and that's what she said. I was just like coaches play that game it was just that he gave her smirk because they beat us. I think that's stupid. Grownups, I don't think I'd do that..(Transcription taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy thought that they were there to have fun, learn, and win. With the exception of Tanya and Sara, every player on the team believed that having fun was the most important aspect of participating. They liked playing softball, a loss was not the end of the world. In an earlier quote, Donna stated that helping the players learn about themselves and making the experience fun were important to her. Yet as the competitive portion of the season approached, Donna seemed to focus more on winning and how the players' performances reflected on her as a person, a coach. To the players, Donna's behaviors suggested that she expected perfection and would only be happy if they won. Additionally, she seemed more concerned with her embarrassment from their loss than their embarrassment from her yelling and animated outbursts in front of family, friends, and opposing teams.

Subsequent to Donna's explanation of being surprised by the inability of the players to win one of the games, Popeye, an outlier in the US group, seemed eager to present their view to Donna. Donna expected the players to understand and accept her explanation for the behavior. It was a result of the difference between what she expected out of them and what they actually did. Yet as the following vignette illustrates, she did not seem to give much credence to Popeye's explanation for the way they felt.

"I'm not making an excuse or anything but I know personally and I know a couple of other girls were maybe Tanya (inaudible) returning players.. I was petrified at thought of playing a VARSITY game (chuckling behind) last year was so different because like there's no pressure it was just like you know go out have fun and that's what we did

and I mean it was like we sat there and we were 16-1 last year. And then we came up to bat trying to do it again and it was a varsity level and well I was really scared.” Behind Popeye, the players are all mumbling in agreement. They were scared. The pressure was different. Donna jovially responded, “You have to remember and you may want to mention this to your JV players as you see them and stuff. Just because you beat somebody your freshman and/or JV year DOES NOT mean you are going to beat them your varsity year. Players nervously laugh, I hear a “for sure.” It is a whole different game especially when you talk about going from whomever coaches JV or freshman to Joe. Joe will get THE best from his players always...But not to make excuses we certainly beat ourselves there’s no doubt....I want you to have fun I really do. And after I calmed down Friday night I did have a few smiles on I thought of Cissy. Cissy did an awesome job second game, second game.” Everyone clapped and cheered (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

Like Donna, Popeye was explaining that the players expectations of the pressure and the outcome were different than the actual happenings in the games. Playing under such different conditions may have accounted for the unexpected performances of the players. Donna did not blow Popeye off, but she did not address the issue of the difference between her coaching style and their past experiences with their former coaches. Skirting the issue of the difference in her coaching and past coaches, Donna continued with her oratory about other interactions with players that made her smile.

There were some things I could smile about um when Tanya really acknowledged what I say (laughs) that makes me smile. Everyone laughed. Um meaning, NO NOT ON THE BASES, because that didn’t happen but (big laughs) meaning afterwards when I had something to say to her. She really looked at me. She really listened and she really acknowledged me and she is going to hopefully put what I say to use and that makes me smile. UM, Cissy did the same thing really good about looking me right in the eye when I had something to say to her. Nan, Um, Popeye on strikeouts they looked me right in the eye and they acknowledged me...I did still have fun. I was soo mad for two or three hours and then after that I relaxed a little bit and I realized it was for fun. I hope you guys still had fun, even though we got whomped. I do not want to get whomped again. Players calling out, “no way.” Laughter peppered throughout the group as Donna continued, “Because it would certainly be easier to have fun if we didn’t...Anyway I did not know if I wanted to yell today or just talk LOUD or what...so I decided to be calm about it, look at our numbers and talk about the situation. We can’t practice today, because I think

practicing inside.. We can't practice defensive situations inside (Fieldnotes 4/12/91).

Donna's was open and patient in her conversation with the players. The tenseness in the air had left the locker area. The players were listening and reacting to her comments. They were joking amongst themselves and with Donna. It was extremely important to Donna that players look her in the eye when she talked to them. She praised Nan and Popeye for looking her in the eye, acknowledging her, while she chastised them for striking out. Donna assured the players that she had fun even though they got whomped. But she did not want it to happen again. She did not ask them if they had fun.

Donna's explanations of sliding, baserunning, and fielding situations that happened in the game were detailed and calm. She fielded and answered all of the players' questions. Although the players seemed to be accepting Donna's differential treatment of players' indiscretions, Candy's question and Donna's response seemed to negate any benefit of Donna's unexpected calm rational discussion of the games.

"Any questions?" Cissy asked a question about positioning of infield when bases loaded. Donna explained to Cissy that her position would be different because of her weak throws. Then everyone started laughing and joking about Cissy's position on one play where she was almost in center field. The noise in the locker room was almost unbearable. When the noise died down, Donna asked, "Any other questions?" The locker room was devoid of any noise for a few seconds and then in a low voice Candy asked, "Are you going to yell as much next game?" Quickly seemingly without much thought Donna responded, "Probably, with fourteen errors don't you think I have a room to yell?" Silence. In the back, someone said something and Donna responded, "I know I think I've calmed down since last year." Cathy laughing calls out, "IMMENSELY." Mumbling amongst the players, Donna again, "Fourteen errors I think I have plenty of room to yell. I'll give you two or three like I say two or three physical mental errors I mean that's fourteen errors without counting mental errors...Yea I'll yell but remember I brought that up in the very first week if you don't like to (inaudible) yell you probably don't want to play for me. if you don't like to HEAR ME yell. That's just part of it. it's just intensity it's not a personal thing. Everybody understands that right?" No one responds, the silence was deadly. "YES EXPECT ME TO YELL!" (Fieldnotes 4/12/91)

Donna did not want the players making the baserunning decisions. She explained to the players that if they listened to her she would accept responsibility for their mistakes. As in later games, Donna willingly acknowledged her mistakes related to strategy and positioning. The players relaxed a bit as she accepted responsibility for her mistakes. The joking and messing around was loud and unruly until the interaction between Candy and Donna. Silence and tension returned to the locker room for a brief, but seemingly long period of time. Donna assured them that she would yell. She was not yelling at them. She was yelling out of intensity. The yelling was not personal. If anyone did not like yelling, she should consider not playing. Candy never made eye contact or engaged in the laughter about the yelling with her teammates.

In the final twenty minutes of the meeting, fundraising, tournament arrangements, grades, and other team events unrelated to competition were discussed. Just prior to the team huddling Donna announced, "If the game is canceled, we will not practice. I HATE indoors!" From the huddle, I heard Donna say "team." Loud and strong the huddled bodies yelled, "1,2,3 TEAM!!" The locker room was emptying out quickly. Tanya asked Donna for a copy of the stats. As Donna walked over to her office, she called to Candy, "I want you to hang out until I get back." Candy and I were left in the locker room alone waiting for Donna. When Donna entered the area, I felt uncomfortable being there. Donna's demeanor had changed from calm and relaxed to distant and firm. There was the same tightness in her face that appeared early in the meeting and when Candy asked about her yelling.

Donna sat down beside Candy and began with, "You had trouble looking in the eye on Friday." Candy in her defense replied, "I don't take yelling very well and get frustrated with myself." Firmly Donna interjected, "How do I interpret such behavior? Let me tell you how I interpreted it. An ATTITUDE about six feet tall. You even held a grudge in the second game. You would not look at me. You rolled your eyes, like now!"Candy went on to explain that she did not find yelling to be a form of positive reinforcement. Donna replied to Candy's explanation without addressing Candy's concerns, "I'm not going to change me. I am going to ask you to change. As a coach, I have a license to yell.

I'm going to get intense and if you cost me a run!!!!"
(Fieldnotes 4/15/91)

Without much warning, Donna accused Candy of having an attitude. This is a player who during practices and games continually cheered on her teammates. Candy made a special point of providing support for players that had been yelled at by Donna. Furthermore, Candy never talked back. She always seemed respectful of Donna and her teammates. Yet, she did not make eye contact with Donna.

From my observations, I noted that Candy did not make eye contact with many of the adults. At first, I thought that my presence made Candy uncomfortable because of her lack of eye contact with me. Later, I assessed that Candy only made eye contact when she got to know someone. Donna's interpretation was that Candy had an attitude, a lack of respect. Candy did not question Donna's belief that coaches had a license to yell. However she tried to explain to Donna why she could not make eye contact. She had never been treated by a coach the way Donna treated her. Firmly, Candy reminded Donna how the yelling affected her.

Firmly Candy reminded Donna how the yelling affected her, "You were in my face screaming at me and then I had to pitch. I have never had a coach like you before. I never had a coach yell...My head tells me in one ear and out the other. Out there, the play rounding the base, I watched." Donna informed her, "I will watch for you! Key on me. Do not hold a grudge it will make you pitch worse." Candy mumbled, "It did" (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

Defending her behaviors, Candy described the incident in the game when Donna yelled at her in the middle of the field. Without commenting on the issue of how hard Candy was finding it to adapt to Donna's coaching style, Donna cautioned Candy about the effects of holding a grudge, of holding on to feelings that arise from difficult interactions. Yet, Donna's accusations that Candy had attitude seemed to arise from the difficulty Donna was having in interpreting Candy's verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The discussion appeared to be a battle of words with neither side listening to the other. Yet, as the conversation wound down, it appeared that Donna was listening. In her summation of the

situation, Donna reminded Candy that whether she really had an attitude or not if Donna interprets it as one, it is an attitude.

“My yelling is in the heat of the moment that’s what it is..simple..Listen to what I say. You cannot avoid me or roll your eyes. I interpret it as an attitude whether it is or isn’t. Acknowledge me! Do the things I ask.” Candy defends herself, “I try. Why get mad if I mess up even when I try?” Donna answered, “Yea sometimes I’m going to yell just use what I tell you. I’m so mad.” Candy, “Me too!” The tension had all but left the room. Donna ended the conversation with a final warning, “If I see an attitude or what I interpret as an attitude, I cannot play you. Shall we start new tomorrow?” As she was getting up to leave, Candy said, “Yea.” They gave each other a pat on the arm and Candy left Donna and me in the locker room (Fieldnotes 4/15/91).

There was an explanation for Donna’s yelling or so Donna believed there was. In Donna’s opinion, there was no explanation for Candy’s lack of eye contact. Much like there was an explanation for Donna’s game behaviors, but not for the players’ performance. Donna repeatedly professed to the players that she was one of them. The assumption by the players and myself that what was good for them was good for her. Now as the games began, Donna was saying do as I say, not as I do.

Candy was the player who made sure everyone was cheering in the game and at all practices. One time in the gym she started the wave to get everyone going. This was the player who continued to pitch and support Donna after being singled out three times in the game. This was also the player who huddled the players when Donna neglected to show up to a between inning huddle, late in the first game. Donna and Candy parted agreeing to start over the next day, their first away trip.

The next day, the interactions between Donna and Candy seemed more cordial, less tension filled. However Candy was never placed in a position to commit the errors that she had in the first game. In the last inning of the second game Donna commented to me, “Candy did better today. It’s amazing what a talk can do.” Donna assumed that the talk changed Candy’s attitude. However in Babs’ first formal interview the next day, she provided me with information that suggested otherwise.

Candy? No, but the coach does. Candy does not look the coach in the face anymore. She can't look her in the eyes. [Candy tell you she had a talk w/coach?] Yea and she said Candy has an attitude. And I was like I don't think that's Candy. Candy's got an attitude because of coach. She doesn't like yelling and she doesn't like coach anymore (Transcription of taped interview 4/17/91).

Babs assessed that Candy's attitude was in reaction to the coach's yelling. Candy had told her that she did not like Coach anymore. Donna assumed that Candy had changed her attitude because they did not have a falling out in those two games. With or without quoting Candy, members of the US group were similarly interpreting Donna's behaviors as evidenced by Kelsy's discussion about Donna after the first four games.

...(JV and Freshman coaches)..You could see they weren't worried that we and when we got down they say, "you guys can do it you guys can do it." They never doubted it. And this coach practically gives up on us during a game. She just sits back and starts talking with friends. I mean it's like she's not it's just like she's only interested if we're winning. I think a coach should be interested in the team ALL of the time. I don't know I mean I think she...Personally I cannot take YELLING at me. It's not going to help me do better in a game (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy's description of the climate they were used to playing in was similar to the statement Popeye made in the meeting after the first game and to earlier statements by Candy. These players were not used to the yelling. They interpreted the yelling as a personal attack, not the impersonal fits of intensity that Donna described. The players believed that Donna's involvement hinged on the score of the game. The players seemed to place more credibility in Donna's nonverbal messages than her spoken word.

Every player mentioned Donna's lack of involvement when things were bad. One week after this interview, Cissy mentioned Donna's typical behavior of leaning back on the bench and watching her fingers instead of the game. I had noted that behavior quite frequently in my fieldnotes. Yet they were expected to maintain their involvement and yell in support of each other. If they did not, she would yell at them. After the first game, I formally interviewed Nan. She alerted me to the fact that Candy had written a five page letter to Donna about her yelling and the perceived contradictions in her behavior and her

“team” message. The letter was written prior to Donna accusing her of having an attitude, however, the letter was mentioned by players right up to the Bicknell incident.

Practices: A Time for Negotiation

After the four practice games, the team had a period of relaxation. They were able to practice on the field three times in a row before the first league game. Donna was late to the practice after the losses on the away trip. The players were joking, wrestling, thumping each other in the neck, and just having a good time. Tanya, Cissy, and Babs seemed to be the instigators of the bulk of the rambunctious activity. Babs sported the “bust a sag” fashion statement with green sweatpants, a yellow shirt, and blue shorts. At 3:21pm, Sara called out “Here comes Coach.”

The players had just grouped to decide on how many laps to run. Coop said, “Here she comes act like we’ve been running.” By the time Donna reached the bench, the players finished one lap and began the next. Cathy reminded everyone that after their performance in the away games they will be doing twenty more laps. Donna called out and stopped them, “Everyone on the bleachers.” Stopped in their tracks, the players jubilantly ran to the bleachers. Donna cheerfully thanked the players for their initiative, “Thank you for getting started. I appreciate it. Who smells like cocoa butter? It smells good” (Fieldnotes 4/17/91).

The players were their usual fun loving goofy selves of old. The same type of joking and teasing was prevalent on the bus ride home the night before. Donna did not threaten them with laps for their errors as Cathy had predicted. They had lost both games. They had ten errors in one of the games. The only running they did was the one and a half laps they chose to do on their own.

This was the first actual practice in four games. Donna was more instructional and less emotional than she had been at any practice on the field. As the practice ended, Donna smiled at Cissy and said, “ Hey, Cissy I expected you to be here like Dolly Parton today.” Cissy shyly laughed, “I forgot.” Players were bending over in laughter. Donna’s joke about Dolly Parton was an extension of a joke about Cissy’s flowered bra she wore in the games the day before. On the bus, Cissy had endured ribbing from everyone, including

Donna, about whether she was ready to move into something other than a training bra. Donna seemed to be acknowledging that she appreciated the fun loving nature of the US group, much like she had done off and on in other practices.

Casper

All three days of practices seemed to provide a forum for constructing and reconstructing a shared understanding of team, of bridging the gap created by Donna's yelling and the players' interpretation of her game day behaviors. The second day of practice was on the freshman field. The significance of the players calling Donna "Casper" at the banquet was related to this practice. As the vignette demonstrates, the players approach to the team seemed to be influencing Donna's perceptions of the boundaries between Donna, the coach and Donna, the person, as well as, between Donna and the players.

Practice was out on the freshman field. It was warm and sunny. Everyone seemed unusually upbeat. Donna arrived in shorts and the teasing began. Players were yelling out, "Casper, hey Casper." The players were sent for one big lap around the field. When they returned Donna smiled and said, "You all know the MOST IMPORTANT RULE. Don't make fun of the coaches legs." Sara quipped, "Tanya called you 'Casper.'" During the stretches, Tanya called out, "Oh Casper." All of a sudden, Donna ran toward the stretching players and literally tackled Tanya and laid her out flat on the ground (Fieldnotes 4/19/91).

Donna had never rough housed with any of the players. Although she had a different relationship with Tanya than most of the players, she had never crossed the line from enjoying watching the players rough house to participating in the antics typically representative of the US group behavior. Although Tanya was a member of the Them group, she spent most of her time with the rowdiest of the US group, Cissy, Nan, Babs, and Popeye. Donna seemed to be negotiating an acceptable time and place for messing around. The catchers initiated a joke about Donna as a math teacher. Everyone joined in by discussing their grades in the subject and their favorite and least favorite teachers. Even when Donna did have a bout of yelling or an animated tirade over a mistake, the climate

was different. It was less intense, less judgmental. There didn't seem to be the "do it right or else" feeling to it.

Prior to the four games, the practices had been organized around the competitive aspect of the team. Donna reacted to every mistake as if it was an error in a game. These three practices, by contrast seemed to be organized around learning, having fun, and getting ready to compete. Donna's approach seemed more balanced and less controlling. Although there were frustrated outbursts at mistakes, they were few and far between relative to the field practices prior to the games. Outwardly, it appeared that the team was coming together. The underlying tension seemed to be dissolving. Donna had been patient and supportive after each set of losses. So far, the players' expectations of Donna's reactions were far worse than Donna's actual response to their losses. Donna seemed to be loosening up. This assertion was supported by Kelsy's interview, the day before the first league game.

No not really she seems unapproachable like..She seems to be getting a lot better though recently. In the last couple of days, she like jokes with the team, a lot. I think she likes our team. I don't know. She knows her stuff, but I mean I like her personally (in real low voice)..[Are you afraid of Coach] Basically yea. [Afraid to make mistakes] DEFINITELY DEFINITELY, but now I'm getting more relaxed at catching. I'm like oh she doesn't even look at me soo..(Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Although Kelsy perceived that Donna was unapproachable, she believed that she was getting better. She was messing around with the players more. Kelsy liked her and Kelsy perceived that Donna liked the team. But, Kelsy was terrified of making mistakes. As indicated in an earlier quote, she could not take being yelled at. This interview became a good indicator of the feeling of the team. Kelsy had been the starting catcher through her freshman and JV softball years. To date, she had not caught in a game. As the next chapter will show, she was a victim of Donna's differential treatment of her in relation to Babs and Sara. Consequently, Kelsy seemed to have reason to harbor bad feelings toward Donna, as did Candy. Yet, she was willing to admit and acknowledge the positives associated with

Donna coaching the team. Her assessment of Donna's contribution to bringing the team together shows the dissonance that existed for the players in how they felt about and how they seemed to want to feel about Donna.

We goof around a lot. And we're like none of US are very serious people. And I think we should have...She helped a lot...[How?] When she huddles and meetings and stuff, so we can..you can tell she's very INTERESTED in the team and she's trying hard and maybe it's not exactly what we want but the way she does things but I guess we have to live with it (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy perceived that through her handouts and other team activities Donna had helped the goof off group come together. Donna had gotten her message across to Kelsy. She was very interested in team. Kelsy perceived that Donna was making progress and they could live with that. In the same interview, Kelsy had discussed the insignificance of the credo because Donna did not live up to the meaning of the words. Even though Nan agreed that Donna's nonverbals and yelling contradicted the meanings the players' perceived Donna attached to team, she found the "knock knuckles" huddle significant when she was not mad at "Coach."

And our coach, Coach A is just the opposite. I think because she... I mean she's nice and she says all this stuff(emphasized). I know this is really mean, but she says how much she cares and how much she wants to be our friend and stuff. I don't think she acts like it at all in the way she's coaching. I mean (Transcription of taped interview 4/15/91).

Nan liked the coach, but did not like her coaching. Her coaching did not seem to be congruent with Nan's interpretation of all the stuff (handouts, meetings, and words). As Nan's answer to my question about the significance of "knock knuckles" huddle illustrated, Donna was successful in creating a shared understanding about the huddle with Nan.

Sometimes if I'm mad at her I just like(imitates ignoring as hit & laughs) if I'm not I think it's kind of like a bond sort of between just you and the coach (Transcription of taped interview 4/15/91).

The players seemed confused. They liked Donna. They did not like her yelling. They perceived that her behaviors did not match the meanings and perceptions she attached to team. After three practices in a row, Kelsy believed that things were getting better. From my observations, the relationship between Donna and the US group seemed to be getting better.

First League Games, We Won

The afternoon started out in a goofy, US group fashion. Tanya got her car stuck dead center in a mudhole. Nan, Babs, Popeye, Cathy, Molly, Kelsy, Candy, and Cissy all tried to help her get out. When they returned at 3:22pm, Tanya had mud all over her face and shoulders. Cissy was muddy from head to toe. The rest of them had mud splatters all over their uniforms. They laughed until their clothes dried. Donna did not admonish them or commend them for their antics.

The bus carrying the opposing team could not navigate the road. By the time the opposing team walked the two blocks to the field, Donna was already conducting the pre-game infield drill. While the other team warmed-up, Donna held a team meeting to discuss strategy and positioning. Just prior to the players going out onto the field, Donna screamed, “Hey, I feel a win today.” They huddled and my ears rattled as they screamed, “DEFENSE!”

Torrey West won both of the games. The first game was touch and go at times. During those periods, Donna either yelled, screamed, kicked, and threw the infamous sunglasses or she just sat back and ignored the action on the field as she had done in the first games. In general, her use of terms like “buddy, you can and that’s you!” was more frequent than in the first four games. The second game was a blow-out, consequently, the outcome of the game did not hinge on one error or a strikeout. Even though Donna had bouts of intensity, the players did not seem as intimidated by her outbursts. At the end of the second game, Donna called Candy over and reached out to her. They hugged and patted each other on the back. Smiling at Candy, Donna called out to the players, “I hear we are

undefeated in league.” Everyone cheered, clapped, hugged and smiled as they basked in their accomplishments as a team. As they rushed off, Donna called out, “3:15 pm tomorrow, wear your uniforms for the pictures.”

The Day after Winning

This was team picture day, the day after their first wins. The players had come in their uniforms expecting a team meeting ending with their pictures being taken. Instead, Donna planned on practicing. Except for the players disbelief that they would practice in their uniforms, this meeting seemed to provide a setting for revival of the team attitude, “never say die.”

Donna went to her car to put on her sweats, Sara sarcastically and angrily announced to players straggling in, “We’re practicing before pictures which I think is lame.” The other players mumbled in disbelief but no one seemed to mind much. Donna returned from her car with the blue sweatpants and yellow sweatshirt that she usually wore at the games. She called out, “Everybody on the bleachers and we will get started.” We all distributed ourselves on the three rows of bleachers facing Donna. With a big smile on her face, she loudly greeted the players, “Good afternoon you bunch of winners!” The players whooped and clapped for themselves. Candy looked at Donna and asked, “We were in the paper, did you know?” Donna chatted about some unfinished business and then started her oratory on the games, “First of all, I’ve got to say we have an awesome offense. I think we’re just getting to potential. We are really good at the plate. So that’s keep that going to carry us through.” Donna continued by pointing out the people that missed signs and explained to everyone the importance of watching for and knowing the signs. She made a joke by imitating Candy’s reaction to Donna when she realized she did a slap bunt instead of a surprise bunt. The whole group was laughing as Candy imitated Donna imitating her. As usual Donna covered each situation that arose in the game. She addressed the negative as well as the positive aspects of each play (Fieldnotes 4/24/91).

Everyone was in good spirits. There was an abundance of joking and laughing amongst the players and between Donna and the players. Donna made it clear, however that even though they won, they still had lots of things to work on. Just as she did when they lost, she pointed out the positive and negative aspects of the day. It was important to her that the players understand how to execute their skills properly in wins and losses. As the

following vignette shows, the safety of the players was important to her also. However her messages of concern seemed to be nullified by the intensity of the messages.

Quietly but firmly Donna addressed the issue of sliding, "Lots of sliding but none very good. Coop I thought broke both elbows and her butt. You must angle your body back sooner. Keep your hands up. I told you I knew someone who broke their elbows. As soon as I saw Coop go down, I saw it all over again." Popeye spoke up, "The first thing that Coop said when she came to the bench was, 'She's mad at me. I slid wrong.'" Seemingly surprised that Coop would think that Donna was mad, Donna informed the players of her concern, "I was not mad. I was concerned for your safety" (Fieldnotes 4/24/91).

The players were whispering and snickering when Donna brought up Coop's slide. It was almost as though they did not quite believe that her display the day before was out of concern for Coop's safety. Yet, in my notes, I wrote, "caring, concern for injury, but chastised." I believed Donna's words, because she had spent so much time in early practices teaching the proper technique for sliding. Each time they practiced sliding, she cautioned them to keep their bodies back and fingers up to prevent injury. Each of them seemed to place more value on Donna's intensity than her words. To the players, her teammates, the act of yelling concern at Coop was more powerful than the words she spoke, "What kind of slide was that? What kind of slide was that? You could have broken your arm." Coop had been safe. Why would Donna be mad at her?

Donna commended Kelsy for her performance as catcher in the first game. Everyone clapped and cheered. Then Donna proudly praised all of her team members for their "never say die" attitude.

I want to commend you on your "never say die" attitudes. You did not give in when they got runs. Several people commented on that and I commend you highly for it. The players were quiet for a second. Then a collective sense of pride seemed to vibrate through the bleachers. No one cheered for themselves. Everyone seemed to understand the significance of the moment (Fieldnotes 4/24/91).

That moment was as inspiring as the leather ritual. The tone of Donna's voice and her posturing signaled to the players that Donna was proud of their resilient spirit,

individual and team. The roles had changed Donna's uncontrollable enthusiasm at the players' "never say die" attitude was much like their usual uncontrollable cheering, laughing or joking. The players were quiet and stoic in their acceptance of Donna's pride in them as members of her team, their team. Donna's validation of the players' "never say die" attitude was also a sanction on the fun loving nature of the group in general.

None of the players gave up in a game and none of them, including Donna, gave up trying to negotiate a shared understanding of what it meant to be a member of this team. The "never say die" attitude constructed through their shared experiences made the negotiation of the "TEAM" at the banquet possible. No one was willing to give up on the other, no matter how frustrated, angry or hurt they were. The evidence to support this assertion is in the depth of the feelings that were expressed by Donna and the players in the Bicknell incident.

The Bicknell Game

The Bicknell team was the reigning champions of the division. All three Torrey West teams were traveling together to Bicknell. The bus ride was unusually quiet. Players were studying and sleeping. Even in the warm ups, the players were not their usual chipper playful selves. Of course these games would be their third and fourth in two days, the third double header without any practice.

In the first game, the score was close. Candy's sore shoulder seemed to be affecting her accuracy. Down the stretch, there were quite a few steals on passed balls. Donna's reaction to mistakes and situations such as Candy's inability to pitch accurately was more indifference than intense yelling bouts. Donna would sit on the bench, sigh, look around, and not pay attention to the action. However her nonverbal and verbal messages were much more indifferent than in the last few games. The "look" with her hands on her hips said it all in this game until the players left for their between games break. As soon as the players left the dugout area, Donna began throwing her clipboard and anything not tied

down. She groaned, “ I’m so frustrated, OH!” I left to use the rest room and when I returned she was slamming her clipboard on the bench while pacing in the dugout.

Marlene had to pitch in the second game. Her pitching was fast but inaccurate. Games seemed to last forever when she pitched. Today she had to pitch. Candy was barely able to hold her shoulder up. Marlene’s pitching and the errors in the field allowed the Bicknell team to bat around in the first inning. While the players were in the field, Donna’s behavior ranged from huffing to silence. She seemed extremely frustrated, almost agitated. When the players came in, she attempted to be upbeat and supportive, “Only first inning so lot’s of time. Let’s stick the ball!” Donna’s role modeling of becoming quiet and uninvolved when things were down seemed to be contagious. The players were not laughing, cheering or talking. Cathy and Candy were the only players who continued to cheer and yell during the good and the bad.

The beginning of the end started when Babs did not slide at home. She was the third out in the first inning. Donna walked over and yelled at her much like she had done to Candy in the first game. From that point on, the battle seemed to turn into a war of frustration for Donna and the players. It was 10-0 before the other team had three outs in the second inning. Donna had thrown her sunglasses, sat on the bench so hard I bounced, put her hands on her head covering her eyes, and leaned back and picked her fingernails. After eleven batters, the players finally showed up in front of the dugout for the huddle where Donna usually provided some support or instruction. Only this time, she decided to walk away.

Donna was sitting next to me on the bench as the players dejectedly made their way toward us. As they grouped, Donna never looked in their direction. I looked to Donna and then the players. They were standing there waiting for her. The pained looks on their faces said it all. Cathy stepped up and said, “Right here! Right here!” Donna left the bench and walked away toward the coach’s box at third. Everyone saw her. No one except Cathy made a noise, she reminded them about the need for a “Never say die” attitude. That was their half hearted cheer. Sarcastically, Nan said, “I like her “never say die” attitude!” Popeye made her way next to Nan and

whispered, "I agree with what you just said" (Fieldnotes 4/30/91).

Donna's intensity had not shown through the entire day. The players' unconditional support of each other did not shine through today. To the players, Donna's not coming to the huddle violated the norms and values of the team. She was giving up on them, on the team. The emphasis that Donna put on loud vocal support of a teammate seemed to place her in an awkward situation. No matter what statement she was trying to make by not showing up at the huddle, she was contradicting her stated expectations of all members of the team. Although the following vignette shows that Donna was interested in what was happening on the field, it seemed as though she had decided to let the players think she was not interested.

Coop sat beside me and said, "That must have been the longest inning in history." Four batters and no runs later, Donna sat on the bench and chewed her fingernails until Marlene made a fake throw toward a runner. Donna eyed Marlene. Candy asked Donna why she was mad at Marlene's attempt. Candy believed that they were an actual play. Donna explained that she did not consider fake throws sportsmanlike. Consequently, she did not want her players to initiate such a play. After that discussion, Donna called out to Marlene and another fielder. When the players came in, Donna sat on the bench and called Marlene over to discuss the fake throw. The players huddled without Donna or Marlene, "Gank it!" As the players entered the dugout, Donna got up without a word and went to the coach's box. We had six players go to bat. The players seemed to be bouncing back a bit. There was whispered laughing and joking. People other than Cathy and Candy were cheering. Donna called out supportive statements to players for the first time in innings. Her voice was tentative as though she was not sure whether she had the right to speak. The players were excited as they ran in from the field, finally an inning where the other team did not score. Yet, Donna did not huddle with the players for a third time. Judy took charge suggesting hits and runs for the cheer. The players joked about the ump and about Donna having to dodge a ball in the box. As the players collected their mitts to take the field, I heard the players complaining about Donna's "never say die" attitude. One player claimed, "She only cares about us if we're winning!" (Fieldnotes 4/30/91)

Donna's act of uninvolvement in the game was hard to watch. It seemed as though she had placed herself in a position where she felt uncomfortable with what she had done.

And yet, she continued to stay away from the huddle. The players seemed to be hurt by her lack of interest in them. Donna had told them after one of the games that in good or bad they should always support their teammates. To Donna, the players seemingly unconditional support of each other had been a positive. This was not positive for anyone. Donna's absence at the huddle spoke to everyone who knew this team. Tanya's mother entered the dugout to show her support.

Donna attended the last two huddles. As if she had never been missing, Donna walked in and took charge. Their happiness at her return could not displace their feelings of distrust and hypocrisy. She had helped them come together as a team through her diligent negotiations between the meanings and perceptions that she attached to team and the meanings they attached to team, the result being their shared understandings of "Never say die," "bust a sag," and the playful nature of the group. In the players' minds, Donna was acting in ways they understood to be unacceptable for a member of this team.

Bicknell Incident

The meeting was not held in the team locker area. This meeting was different. The essence of this team had been denigrated by Donna not coming to the huddles in the Bicknell game. The mood was sullen, the air thick with anticipation and frustration. Prior to everyone gathering on the benches and lockers in front of the coach's office, I heard comments about, "the letter" that Candy had written after the first game. Other than that, no one was saying much of anything. Donna stepped up in front of the benches between the two lockers and made the only noise that was audible in the room. I stood back from the group as she began the most important oratory of the season.

Her voice firm, almost pleading, Donna started what I call the Bicknell incident. "Listen to me and I'll talk. I really don't mind losing if we play well. Our defense is improving. Our offense had gone to pot!" The silence was deafening. The players' bodies seemed to tense even more at the last statement. Donna continued, "At this level, I should not have to repeat myself!" Donna explained that when she had to continually correct their fundamental mistakes, "it takes the fun out of it for me." The players looked everywhere but toward Donna. Donna's tone had changed. Making an

indignant plea, Donna reminded the players they were in this together. "I put in as much time as you, probably more and yet, when I try to give you some information YOU look through me, roll your eyes rather than say "yes." In an attempt to make her point about how she felt, Donna put her hands on her hips, looked over the group of players and rolled her eyes. The players were all watching the demonstration, but no one made a sound or acknowledged the gesture. Her voice almost shaking Donna seemed to make a demanding plea, "I have the same emotions. Treat me like a member of the team. I would like you to put yourself on the receiving end of one of those looks" (Fieldnotes 5/1/91).

Even though Donna was discussing the game, everyone knew the discussion went deeper. This discussion was going to meet the underlying tension between Donna and the players head on. In most discussions and handouts concerning "team," Donna stressed the importance she placed on being treated as a member of the team, as one of them. Now she seemed to be accusing the players of leaving her out of the group, of looking past her, not respecting her contribution to the team or her position. Normally the players would have made jokes about Donna's imitation of their reaction to her, but not this time.

When Donna asked the players to put themselves on the receiving end of their looks, all I could think about was her patented "look," her body at attention, arms crossed across her chest, and her eyes (with or without the sunglasses) drilling holes through whomever was the target of the glare. This was the one every player identified as an indicator that Donna was mad. The evidence in this vignette supports the earlier assertion that Donna felt like an outlier on her own team. Donna asked them to treat her like a teammate. Yet, in their minds, she had violated the "team" attitude they had constructed together as a team, "Never say die." Donna moved from the personal to discussing goal setting.

"You need to set self expectancies and goals. I want no strikeouts without even swinging. If you are having difficulty following signs, make seeing the signs your goal. We are still 500 in the league. Even if we were in the bottom, if we were playing our best it would be OK. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON, I GAVE YOU THE CREDO WE DO NOT NEED TO WIN ON PAPER TO BE SUCCESSFUL. WE NEED TO SET GOALS AND

STRIVE TO DO OUR BEST. I BELIEVE IN THOSE THINGS (CREDO). MEETING THOSE GOALS IS WINNING. If we played our best, I could take it so easily." The only noise in the room was Donna and the still silence. I felt for everyone in the room. They had been so close to breaking the barriers between Donna and the US group, and now.... Donna went from her loud reminder of her stated philosophy to expressing her concern about what others thought, "When you don't do your best, it is a reflection on me. It goes through my mind, did I cover? WHAT THEY SEE YOU DO, THEY THINK I TAUGHT YOU. Another part of winning is sportsmanship, class. We don't talk to the opponent unless it's positive; good catch. No bantering with the umps. Keep your wits about you at all times. What you project is what people think I taught. Even when I argue with the umps, I call them sir or mam, that is all part of sportsmanship." Still no noise or visible movement from the players (Fieldnotes 5/1/91).

Similar to every team meeting after a loss, Donna reminded the players that their performances and behaviors were a reflection of her as a coach. Her concern for how others perceived her by the actions of the players seemed to make her forget how the players felt making errors and losing. The structure of the competitive setting seemed to put pressure on Donna turning her into someone other than the "Coach" the players were beginning to like.

Donna brought up the philosophies that she professed early on in the season when she handed out the credo. On my copy of the credo, I scribbled the words she used to express her personal beliefs about team, "I'm a coach, but also a person. I want to get to know you enough to care about you. Things to gain other than winning. I have feelings. We all do" The credo, Donna's verbal messages, and team activities prior to games placed a great deal of importance on reciprocity, teamwork and friendship. The players seemed to adopt Donna's vision of team. Their interpretations of Donna's behaviors as contradictory were influenced by what they believed was a negotiated understanding of the expectations of team members through her words and their repeated interactions. In her negotiations with the players, she forgot to inform them that she had different expectations for the players as team members than she did for herself, the coach.

And so I guess I cut myself a lot of slack in thinking that I get to deal with that in whatever way I feel I need to even if that sends out every once in a while a contradictory message (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

This statement explains much of Donna's indifference to exhibiting behaviors that seemed to contradict her explicit expectations for a member of the team. When Candy challenged Donna about her yelling in the first game, Donna told her that she had a "license to yell." That was the first time Donna had addressed the issue of her belief that she had different expectations for her as coach. Prior to that, Donna made it seem as though she and the players were in the trenches together. "Never say die" was the attitude for all members of the team, herself included. Now she was accusing the players of not including her in "team." She was accusing them of not remembering that she had feelings. Yet she was the one that did not attend the huddles. She yelled at them without considering their feelings.

Donna always stressed good sportsmanship. The players were never to address the umps. That was Donna's job. The credo stated, "Showing a temper is disrespectful to me and to your teammates. Don't do it!! Be patient with yourself and others." The comments Donna made about this statement were, "We're going to get some crappie umpires. When it happens let me talk to them." Many times Donna's displays of animation or uninvolvedness were due to her dislike and frustration with the umpires. Tanya and Sara were the only players to ever lose their temper. When they did, they paid. Both of them were pulled out of games and verbally admonished. Donna could exhibit similar behavior without an apology or an explanation to her players of why she could and they could not act in such a manner. Moving from her appeal that the players accept her as a person as well as their coach, Donna broke the silence by expressing her pleasure at the fun loving nature of the players.

"Win on the inside. I am proud of what I do. You should be proud of what you do!!" Donna looked down at her sheet and continued, "My aim is to give you a good, fun softball experience where you learn sound softball skills. I really like watching you laugh and play around together (tone of voice has changed to upbeat enthusiastic, proud). You all keep Linda and I from getting bored, because we laugh about you

all the time.” The girls all started laughing and giggling. “It is more fun to lose a game by 2-1 than 23-3. Everybody gets along. There are no cliques. Everybody picks on everybody. I REALLY believe that we should not lose a game 23-3.” The noise had died down, but Candy was nodding her head in agreement with Donna about the score and the unity on the team (Fieldnotes 5/1/91).

Whenever the team had one of these meetings, Donna reminded them that she wanted them to have fun. She never asked them what having fun meant to them. Yesterday the players interpreted Donna’s act of not coming to the huddle as a sign that she only cared about them when they were winning. Today, she answered their accusations. She stated that losing a well played game was just as good as winning. It seemed today that she was trying to explain yesterday’s behavior without mentioning it.

Donna loved to watch the players wrestle, joke, and thump each other. She enjoyed their togetherness. Donna was always telling me how much she liked the players, the team. This was the first time that Donna told the players she valued their antics. The ice had been broken. The players could stretch their bodies and breath.

The Bicknell incident went much deeper than just the events at the Bicknell game. For all of them, the tension arising from the incongruence between their past experiences in sport and their present experience had not been resolved. One day Donna was patient and thoughtful in her interactions. The next day Donna was exhibiting the very behaviors they feared when they entered the setting. However they were more hurt than scared, because they had all come to know and understand each other at some level. The team had played six games without any social interactions not related to competition. As the evidence has shown, much of their practice time was spent renegotiating misunderstandings that occurred during games and negotiating a shared understanding of their daily experiences.

This was the first time that the players made a direct challenge to Donna. This was the first time that the players had addressed their concerns about the hypocrisy of her behaviors. They wanted Donna to acknowledge them, to understand where they were

coming from. It seemed throughout the season that they (Donna and the players) wanted the same thing. They wanted to break down the barriers and be a team.

However Donna had not explained the most important aspect of “team,” the difference in her expectations for them and for herself. And the players had never conveyed their displeasure at Donna’s contradictory messages. Now was the time for the underlying tension to rise to the surface and be dealt with.

Donna concluded with a plea to the players, “Be receptive to me. Try not to make me feel like an outsider on the team. Be classy.” Then as usual Donna asked for questions or comments. Candy began speaking for the group, “You talk about being part of the team. It really hurt us that you did not come out to the huddles.” Defensively, yet, calm and patiently Donna replied, “That was the first time. There were two reasons why I did not come out. First, I was frustrated and tired of repeating myself. Second, it wasn’t working I thought maybe somebody else could...Yea for three or four innings I did it. I felt funny. It didn’t work. It was the only hand I had to play. Probably it looked bad to all of you, but I DOUBT THAT ANY OF YOU COULD SAY THAT YOU WEREN’T FRUSTRATED. Anything else?” The volume of the message had risen along with the defensive posturing of her body as she finished the word “frustrated. Speaking in a low, but firm voice, Popeye responded to her question, “After a while you did not give a sign. You stopped giving signs. What is a bunt going to do when we’re down by 15?” (Fieldnotes 5/1/91)

The silence after Popeye’s comment was eerie. The underlying tension haunting this team was in everyone’s face. This was not the first time that Donna did not go to a huddle. She did not go to a huddle in the first game. Candy organized the huddle and led the cheer. That was the first game. This time was much different. The meaning and significance of the huddle had not been defined at that point. Now through the repeated social interactions as team members, the huddle seemed to signify everyone coming together in support of each other in good and bad. As Candy and Cissy explained, Donna’s actions were viewed as contrary to the “never say die” attitude of their understanding of “team.”

Donna tried again to ease the tension, “I understand your point of view.” Candy jumped in almost challenging that Donna understood, “Well it looks like to us that you have

given up. You are not supportive of us.” Popeye chimes in, “No signs, no support.” Apologetically, Cissy interjected her feelings on the situation, “We don’t mean to gang up on you. We as a team we’re not suppose to give up. You kind of give up in other games.” Cissy paused. It seemed like she expected help on this point. No one was saying anything, she continued, “Only I personally.” Before she could finish her qualification of the earlier accusation, someone from the group called out, “yea, other games” (Fieldnotes 5/1/91).

After the first game, it appeared that the players’ fear of Donna’s yelling was a secondary factor in maintaining the Us against her attitude of the majority of the team. What fueled the tension between Donna and the players was their interpretation that her behaviors contradicted the essence of “team” as they understood it. Her silence and uninvolved in the action seemed more frustrating and hurtful to the players than her yelling. I had heard it many times before. Donna had no idea that her behaviors were hurting her players. The players were not confrontative in their statements. The challenge was made. Donna was faced with explaining why she was not living up to their expectations of a her as a teammate.

Donna’s voice was shaking with emotion almost crying, yet, defiantly she responded, “I get to have that emotion. You can be mad. I’m still in the coaching box. You can hide yourself. Anything else?” “Yea,” Candy in a very upbeat tone, “I thought our defense was good.” “I did too, but our offense slacked off,” replied Donna. That was the end of the discussion. Other team business was discussed and then the “knock knuckles” huddle. The cheer was appropriately “TEAM.” It appeared that everyone made sure that the knuckle knock with Donna was longer and harder than usual. As everyone was leaving Candy rushed over to show “Coach” her report card. Within minutes, Donna and I were left in the locker room. Donna was visibly upset and indicated that she did not want to talk about it, she was “mad” (Fieldnotes 5/1/91).

Donna did not explain away the problem. She just told them. In her mind, she had different expectations for herself because she was in the coach’s box where everyone could see her. Donna perceived that by virtue of being “the Coach,” she had the right to exhibit behaviors that she considered unacceptable for the players. This seemed to partially explain Donna’s preoccupation with how people viewed her based on the players’ performances in

games. Nothing more was said about the issue. The interactions within the huddle suggested that some issues may have been resolved through the discussion. However Donna's mood after the players left made me wonder what would happen the next day at the games.

The Day after Bicknell

I arrived early to see if I could hear any comments concerning the confrontation yesterday. No one arrived until 3:00pm. The players were their usual loud, talkative selves as they ran and warmed up their arms. Until about 3:43pm, Donna spent most of her time with the other coach and the umpires. Consequently the pre-infield drill interactions between Donna and the players were almost nil until she called everyone together for the following pre-game meeting.

Donna approached me on the bench and said, "I don't have the lineup. I was super organized when I first came here." Without waiting for my response, Donna yelled to the players, "Blue team let's go. Let's do a quick infield. Then talk about the goals briefly before we get started." Everyone was upbeat and loud in the infield drill. As the last person came in, Donna walked toward the bench and called out to the chattering group of players, "Right here blue. Let's go." So intent on chatting about the opposing team's infield drill, the players did not instantly come to the bench. Donna firmly repeated her directive, "LET'S GO!!" Within seconds everyone was grouped around Donna. "OK let me ask you your goals. I will tell you my goals for the team. Three or four fewer errors per game through Ocean City. Better communication." Donna went on to explain that better communication included more chatter, the infield talking to each other and pitcher-catcher communication on passed balls. Then she informed the players of her individual goals for herself, "Correct you, I will correct you. I will allow myself some emotions but I will control my mannerisms. I will not repeat fundamental things. Use what I tell you. Don't just say I know. I will use the bunt and hit and run a little more." Now it was the players' turn to announce their individual goals. The goals ranged from broad statements to specific, "Play better than last game; more contact; solid contact; no errors" (Fieldnotes 5/2/91).

Two things related to the Bicknell incident happened in this meeting. First, Donna carried through on her decision to focus on individual and team goal setting. More importantly, Donna acknowledged the players' concerns about her game behaviors. She

would try to control her nonverbals. She will still show emotion. But, she would try. The tempo of the meeting and the day stayed upbeat even as they lost. Donna became enraged at Tanya when she threw her bat. There were instances of her giving players “the look,” her calling players over to the box and pointing at the line, and her yelling. However, the mood in general seemed less sensitive to the perceived idiosyncrasies of the other. As the evidence will show, the players’ interpretation of her behavior in this game and the remainder of the games was based on a combination of the openness with which Donna addressed the concerns that the players voiced at the meeting after the Bicknell incident and the actual confrontation where the players felt comfortable enough to tell Donna how they felt. The underlying tension was dissolving with each successive day of interactions as team members.

They had a goal setting session two days later at the Ocean City tournament and one at the Jiles Tournament the next weekend. The team played nine games from the “day after” to the Jiles tournament. The session in our hotel room at Jiles was the prelude to the event that seemed to chip away at any remaining barriers between Donna and members of the US group.

Jiles Tournament

The players entered our hotel room at 10:33 pm. They plopped on the two king sized beds with their hands full of mountain dew, cokes, and cookies. The drum of their voices through the cookies was like a group of dogs growling. The sounds were so loud Donna cautioned them about the noise rule in the hotel as the meeting began.

“We’re ready. We’re ready. We don’t want to spend too much time. They have a noise regulation here.” Sara blurted out, “We walked to TCBY and Tanya almost got us kicked out for being too noisy.” The other players were trying to “Sh” her because she was practically yelling. Donna began as the noise dyed down, “Molly do you think you will feel better early or late?” “Late, I am not an early person.” Molly was recovering from a mild case of mono and wanted to play in one of the five games. Donna turned to Candy and asked, “What can you do or can’t do?” “I can throw overhand. I can do everything,” Candy eagerly replied. Her shoulder had gotten so bad that the doctor would not let her

pitch. Donna had not allowed her to play anything since the diagnosis. "Let me put it another way. I don't want you to do anything that you shouldn't," Donna firmly stated. Candy did not respond. The rest of the group was laughing and bouncing around on the beds like two year olds (Fieldnotes 5/10/91).

Although the US group seemed to be dissolving, there were still signs of tensions between Donna and the players. More specifically, Candy and Donna were still openly engaged in a battle of wits and words. Candy had gained personal power through Donna's badgering of her, yet, Donna still had the formal power to treat her differently. The interaction surrounding Molly's illness and Candy's injury were different. Donna was firm with Candy. Candy did not respond. For them, things seemed to be the same. The other players seemed oblivious to the interaction between Donna and Candy. Donna attempted to get their attention, but to no avail. Much like a student in a classroom, Donna raised her hand and asked permission to speak. The players acknowledged her request.

Donna raised her hand and said, "My turn, at Big Hollow game we had really good contact. Our baserunning is still stinko. We had seven or eight errors. Please pay attention to me that's why I'm in the box. Cathy you had no errors at Big Bend. The first time all year. Let's set some goals for the tournament." Sara eagerly called hers out first, "Less errors." Donna reminded them all, "Must be more specific." Sara refined her goal, "Three or less." Candy quipped from, "Seven errors to four errors." Donna interjected, "I think we can be in the game with anyone so what do you think, first goal?" In unison, "four or less" is called out from each corner of the beds. Molly chimes, "Second goal, I think should be get all the signs." "What if you don't?" Questioned Donna. Tina yelled, "Then Molly has to run." Donna quickly agreed, "OK." Tina looked around and said, "I was just kidding." The beds shook as everyone laughed at Tina. Donna tried to speak but began laughing so hard she could not get a word out. As the laughing turned to gasping for air, Donna said, "We need one more goal." Instantly, Cissy yelled, "To be louder." "Yea, that's a good one. You have been too quiet. You don't need to sing and spell." With her announcement that Cissy had selected the third goal, the players became extremely loud. Cathy firmly whispered, "Shut up." Cissy returned the directive, "You shut up." And the uncontrollable loud giggling started again. Out of the blue, Candy stated, "I fart in my sleep." Tanya's face became wrinkled with tension. She started screaming and whining, "Don't say that."

Donna could hardly keep herself from falling off the bed with laughter (Fieldnotes 5/10/91).

Donna was providing the players with an opportunity to negotiate the “team” goals. She was not mandating them. They were everyone’s goals, not just hers. Through the laughter they came up with three team goals, personal goals, and discussed situations that had arisen in the week that needed clarification or further instruction. They left at 11:15pm without their drinks and cookies but still full of noisy chattering. Donna left and visited with the parents for about five minutes. The first thing out of her mouth when she returned was, “Gotta love them.” This was the first time in a week that they had gotten together in a noncompetitive team setting. They had played nine games in six days and were getting ready to play five more tomorrow.

We met at six forty-five in the morning for breakfast. The first game was at eight. Everyone was as chipper as could be expected after going to bed at midnight, and up at 6:00am. The softball marathon was about to begin. After losing three games, there was a picnic with parents, friends, and siblings. We spent an hour playing football, cooking hot-dogs, eating, and hanging out together. In the fourth game, Donna was listing the players in the scorebook by either nicknames she had created through interactions with the players or nicknames the players used for each other. From that day on, the interactions amongst and between the players and Donna suggested that the subgroups that existed within the varsity had merged into “the team” at the banquet.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, the Torrey West Varsity softball team was transformed from a group divided by differences in how the participants’ perceived they should and/or would experience being members of her team into “the TEAM” at the banquet. Even though the reduction of the participants’ differences was an ongoing process, the players mentioned three specific events that they believed helped in the integration of Her, Them, and Us into “the team” at the banquet; the practice after the first game, the Bicknell Incident, and the tournaments. I would like to use the players’ reflections on the events to summarize the

evidence within this chapter that supports the premise that team culture and team are residues of the social interactions within the setting. Coaching and team seem almost synonymous with communication.

Communication is the process of interpretation. Communication takes place after one has gathered information by attaching meaning to a situation of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of someone (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Krebs, 1990). The meanings that the players and Donna attached to team events and the behaviors of the other were influenced by their past sport experiences, past interactions within the setting, the context, one's position on the team, etc. The descriptions of the dynamics of the relationship between Donna and the players lends support for another major premise of the symbolic interaction perspective: the meanings people attach to behaviors events, objects, and others are social definitions, not social facts (Louis, 1981). The meaning of an event or object is dynamic and ever-changing. This tenet is supported by the modifications of individual and group definitions of team, fun, "Coach," as well as the team climate throughout the season. People behave in reaction to the meanings they attach to an event or to the other (Blumer, 1969; Berger & Luckman, 1967). As the meanings and perceptions that the participants attached to events (huddles), objects (third base coaching box), and behaviors (Donna's yelling, the players' goofing off) were modified, people reacted differently to the same events, objects, and people. If this study had reduced communication to a concrete act, there would have been a distinctly different portrayal of "the team." Not only do the players' recollections of these specific events support the principles of the symbolic-interactionist perspective, but their descriptions also highlight the complexities involved in understanding the interplay between the multiple realities of the participants and the context.

The first event was the practice after the first games. They had committed fourteen errors and lost both games. All of the players, returning and new, expected to run forever after such a dismal performance. In chapter three, Donna and most of the players provided detailed accounts of their memories of Donna standing in the middle of the field yelling at

the previous varsity team as they ran and ran for their game errors. This one event was critical in the development of the fearful preinteraction expectancies the new players had concerning their interactions with Donna. As the evidence in this chapter illustrated, the players' worries were for naught. Donna had a calm, instructional meeting, no yelling, no running. Donna was calm, presenting the positive and negative aspects of the game.

Based on the players' formal interviews, the difference between what they expected and what happened was significant in the reconstruction of the players' expectancies of Donna. Eight of the ten newcomers identified this incident as one of the times that made them see Donna in a less strict or fearful light. In her response about when she thought they began to accept Donna, Popeye laughed and joked about how they began to redefine Donna's yelling.

Not having to run after games. She liked softball a lot, not just coach. [accept her part team] After we figured out, we didn't have to run laps for making mistakes. Then I mean it was a lot easier. We accepted her more. I mean we knew she was going to yell. We just had to deal with it (laughs) Her yelling was helpful in a way. It made you do better so she didn't yell at you anymore (laughs) (Transcription of taped interview 8/28/91).

They had to deal with it. She was going to yell. But she was not going to focus on every little error. Some of the pressure was off. Sara's recollection of the event highlighted how important the meanings the players' attached to Donna's behavior were in the reconstruction of coach-athlete relations. Sara touched upon the tension associated with the players' fears of Donna. Sara was specific in explanation of how she perceived how the meeting influenced their perceptions of Donna:

Yea I think everybody was with that many errors and all the things that we did wrong everyone thought we'd be paying for it the next day. That's all we talked about in school. We thought we were going to be running our butts off and then we didn't even do anything. And that's what made everyone think about coach in a different way. She doesn't work you to death when you make mistakes (Transcription of taped interview 7/23/91).

In her first interview, Sara had identified that she was more concerned about making errors than making the play. Now she believed that they could focus on making the plays. These recollections of the event revealed that this event was important in the process of reconstructing the players' preinteraction expectancies of Donna as a unrelenting, frightful coach. Popeye perceived that everyone was coming to terms with Donna's yelling. They knew they had to live with it. Donna told them so in that very meeting, "If you don't like to (inaudible) yell you probably don't want to play for me." They did not have any power to change Donna's directive. Yet, in the end, they did seem to have an impact in modifying Donna's game behaviors.

Sara and Popeye's responses closely matched those of many of their peers. They were beginning to be less intimidated by Donna. Yet as Candy's response indicates, even with the players' reconstructing their perceptions of Donna, there were still some unexplainable reasons for the preinteraction expectancies to mediate their interpretations of her behavior.

OHHHH, we were like, I don't want to go to practice. She's going to yell. She's going to yell. She's going to yell. [she didn't yell did she?] She didn't yell. We were all like, oh my gosh. [surprised] Yea, me and Cissy talked about that. We were like.. We thought that was kind of cool that she didn't yell. We were kind of shocked. We were like OK. We were really shocked. It was like maybe there's some good in her you know. She didn't yell. Maybe she has some kind of control. But...(Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Even though Donna accused Candy of having an attitude that practice, the difference between what she expected from Donna and what Donna did had a fleeting positive influence on Candy's perceptions of Donna. The players' interpretations of Donna's behaviors within this context played an integral role in modifying the players' expectancies of Donna. Yet, there was a hesitancy in her trust of Donna's changed ways. When I asked Candy about her pause, "but," she alluded to the confusion they were feeling over Donna's inconsistencies in behavior. One minute she was joking with them. The next,

she was “nah, nah, nah.” These inconsistencies in Donna’s interactions with the players were mentioned by every player.

As one read through this chapter, it was easy to detect the inconsistency in Donna’s behavior. This inconsistency existed at two levels. First, it was virtually impossible for the players to predict accurately when Donna would blow up about something or when she would ignore and accept the same situation. One minute she was one of the “gang,” the next she distanced herself and became the boss.

More importantly, Donna’s game behaviors seemed to be inconsistent with Donna’s expressed expectations for members of her team and with the players’ expectations of Donna in relation to their negotiated understanding of acceptable team behavior. Although her game behaviors did not fall within the parameters of acceptable teammate behavior, most became normalized because they were predictable, making them in some ways acceptable, “that’s the way she is.” There seemed to be two Donnas: Donna, their Coach and teammate, and Donna, the authoritarian that seemed to distance herself from the players through control measures.

The effect of Donna’s approach-avoidance behavior is illustrated on a timeline (see Appendix H) of the season. When Donna was providing the players with some investment in the team (sign day, practices, tournament, etc.), there seemed to be reciprocal negotiations of “team.” They seemed to be a team. However, during games or when Donna felt she had crossed a boundary line, Donna controlled the players and the team. As the timeline shows, the participants’ struggle for a team identity was directly related to Donna’s wavering between being a member of “the team” and being in control of the team. As the boundaries between Donna, the coach, and Donna, the person, seemed to dissolve, the boundaries between Donna and the players strengthened. The development of a shared understanding of “team” would take one step forward and then two steps backward. It was not until the players confronted Donna at the Bicknell meeting that the boundaries between

Them, Us, Donna, the coach, and Donna, the person, broke down enough to make every day a step forward in the development of "the team."

The findings in this study provide support for Gersick's (1988) findings that groups do not follow prescribed stages, sequences, or phases as they evolve into a collective "we." Gersick (1988) pointed out that it would be virtually impossible for every group to go through the same stages. After all, the interplay between the social interactions within a group (athlete-athlete relations, coach-athlete relations, player-coach-parent relations), environmental constraints (number of practices, games, etc.), group resources (qualified coach, players), and requirements of success are different for each and every group. In Gersick's (1988) study the decision making groups went through transitional phases of "punctuated equilibrium." Groups enter into one of these phases when the group members assess that they need to bring themselves into a state of equilibrium in order to accomplish their task in a timely and successful manner.

Although the concept of "punctuated equilibrium" seems to describe the ups and downs of the development of "the team" in this study, there are some distinct differences in the groups studied. First, the groups studied by Gersick (1988) were decision making groups. Members within these groups had some decision making power, unlike the athletes. Second, the groups' progress toward their ultimate goal was triggered more by the members' awareness of deadlines and time than by how much work they had completed toward their goal. In the case of a competitive sport team, a team's success is measured by each and every game. If progress were triggered by deadlines and time, the team's highs would seem to correlate with games and go into periods of inertia during practices. In this study, the players seemed more cohesive and in tune with each other, on and off the field, and during practices. The team's progress toward becoming a unified group working toward the same goals was more evident during team events such as sign day, than on game day.

In order to generate theory that pertains specifically to the competitive sport setting, we must follow the lead of researchers in the area of team building and spend more time in the field observing and interviewing members of teams to find out the “hows” and “whys” associated with individual decision making and team development. We need to find out what factors trigger the “punctuated equilibrium” that was evident in the development of “this team.” Moreover, we need to understand the processes underlying the decisions that players and coaches make that effect team development, performance, and satisfaction.

In the instance of the meeting after the Bicknell incident, Donna decided to address the incident in that meeting and the players decided to challenge Donna’s authority and bring up the issue of her inconsistencies. They wanted her to be included in “the team.” The players (mostly members of the Us group) had discussed it amongst themselves and decided the repercussions would be worth “getting it out in the open.” Both of these decisions were crucial to the development of “the team” at the banquet.

The Bicknell Incident was the event that every player mentioned at length as a key turning point in their perceptions of Donna as a coach and member of their team. This was the one topic that elicited pro-Us group views from the returning players. They had seen it happen the year before, none of them questioned it. In the following quote, Tanya expresses her belief that Donna’s behaviors hurt them because her behaviors contradicted her verbalizations about what she considered appropriate member behavior.

Oh yea, I expected that from her, because I think she did that a couple of times last year. It’s kind of like she wants to keep to herself away from us because she doesn’t want to get mad and ruin our... You know like hurt us more and put us in a more negative perspective or whatever. But then she doesn’t hang with us. I could see the coach’s reasons behind why she didn’t do it. I just wish she would have tried you know.[what happen to one of you not go to huddle] Probably pull us right in, because she’s done that to me before. She pulled me by my right arm, right in
(Transcription of taped interview 7/22/91).

Tanya had seen it happen last year. She expected it. However this year she was willing to express her displeasure. Due to the changes in personnel, the social interactions

within the setting had changed and so had the meanings that she attached to Donna's decision to not go to the huddle. In Cathy's discussion about her disappointment in Donna's decision to not attend the huddle, she pointed out that last year's team members would not have challenged Donna. All and all, she agreed with Candy, Cissy, and Popeye's perceptions that Donna's behaviors signaled her lack of involvement in the team:

I noticed right off. People got mad because she had an attitude. It surprised me. I didn't think it was good, but we did it ourselves. It's not up to her. We had to realize the reason that she was mad, because we couldn't do good. [when came in how feel] Didn't know what to do. We needed a huddle. [why] Because brought us together. It kept people's minds on the game. It made me mad after. I didn't think anyone would say anything. But, we had a more vocal team this year that said what they wanted. I agreed in part but then THAT'S HER. I think it came off rude. They got their point across. I don't like to say anything. I think that it helped that they did say it. But at the time, it added to the frustration. I think it made her more aware of her behaviors and it seemed like she did try and keep them under control. But it's JUST THE WAY SHE IS . You know that's just what's going to happen..(Transcription of taped interview 6/20/91).

Tanya and Cathy agreed with Candy, Cissy, and Popeye; however, they defended Donna: "That's her." The meanings they attached to Donna's behaviors were similar. Their interpretations of Donna's behaviors were different. Consequently, their reactions to her behaviors were different. They had two full seasons of repeated social interactions with Donna. They only had a few weeks of integrated interactions with everyone. As hurt and angry as Tanya and Cathy were about Donna not attending the huddle, they publicly accepted her behavior. Even though members of the US group understood "that's the way she is," they wanted more unity. They wanted an inclusive team, a group that valued and accepted each others' differences as well as their similarities. Cissy's recollection of the event supports the assertion that they wanted to include Donna, not exclude her as she thought.

That was the day, we were all looking at the letter. Because Candy had written this letter and she found me in the morning. She said Cissy I wrote this letter I want you to read it. We had 7th hour together. So I read this letter and

said yea yea get her. (laughing) And I remember saying you know what we need to is we need to.. It was really ironic because that's what we did I said what we need to do I said Candy. It can't just be YOU because a lot of people feel this way. And I said you've got a major (inaudible) over it. I said we need to sit down and talk about it. And I said I guess nobody needs to be afraid of what Coach thinks because nobody is going.. Nothing is going to get accomplished unless we actually talk about this. I said maybe she doesn't realize I said maybe she does and doesn't care you know. We're never going to know. And we sat down and Candy I love Candy She sits right next to me (chuckles) and she said something about "well this is how I feel blah blah blah" and I think I think Popeye said something and I was like oh hell here we go.(laughs) It did it started up and I think Coach was kind of surprised I don't think she knew we thought that way (Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

Candy and Cissy had decided that the issue had to be discussed. Cissy pointed out that nothing was going to get accomplished until they addressed the issue, talked to her. Cissy seemed surprised that Donna apparently did not know they felt that way. Yet, Donna was an outsider to the US group. She was not aware of the existence of the well organized and powerful US group. Donna believed that through her negotiations with the players they had developed a collective understanding of the differences in expectations between coach and athlete. The evidence in this chapter supports the research showing that coaches are less cognizant of the team climate, cliques, and their own leadership style than the players (Chelladurai, 1984; Kenow & Williams, 1992; Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1978, 1979). The players thought that they had constructed meanings similar to Donna's about the rights and responsibilities of a member of their team. The depiction of the incongruencies in perceptions between Donna and the players concerning factors such as the team climate, the existence of cliques, and coach-athlete relations provide support for the assertion that the magnitude of the incongruencies affects the cohesiveness of the team (Carron, 1982; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). The following quote by Nan echoes the assertion that the players wanted Donna to be part of "the team" as much as she did.

Oh yea, gosh, that's what made me change toward her. I mean gosh that was some of the things that you just wanted to hug her or something and say I'm sorry you know. I mean, I didn't know she felt that way because she surely

didn't SHOW IT. I mean she should have tried to be more friendly toward us in the hard times of the games to make us feel like we could fit in with her. I mean because I think too after one of our games after we lost we were all trying to cheer up on the bus and she yelled at us for cheering up. We're like it's OVER. If you would have practice, then we could talk about the things that we did bad. But we aren't going to sit around here and mop around for the rest of the day like you're going to do (Transcription of taped interview 7/23/91).

Each and every player felt differently toward Donna after that meeting. She had pleaded with them to treat her as a member of "the team." To them, her nonverbals in game situations always conveyed the message that she was a fair weather teammate. That was not what they had negotiated with her. That was not the message conveyed by her leather ritual, huddles, expectations meetings, and most of her verbalizations. Their understanding was that "never say die" applied to everyone and represented the attitude of the fun loving team they had all come to know, like she said at the Bicknell Incident.

When asked if they believed Donna changed her behaviors after the "Bicknell Incident," the responses ranged from Candy's skepticism as to why her behaviors changed to strong affirmative responses. As the following quote indicates, Candy thought her behaviors changed because she gave up on the team.

She didn't yell as much but I think it was just because she gave up. I mean she yelled I mean the last game she's like she said what have we got to lose? Just go out there and you know any other game and that would have been a totally relaxing thing but to me it was like she'd given up on the whole team like we'd lost so much there's nothing more we can lose I mean it was like she didn't even care. Yea that would be one thing she'd get less intense. I totally disrespected her. I just had no respect for her. In the beginning, I was unsure I didn't know what to think. She kept throwing different things. She'd throw this poetry crap at us and then she'd sit there and scream at us. I mean what are you suppose to think ? I mean you're confused. So in some ways, I think she's good and in some ways I think she's really bad (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Candy was sure that Donna's mannerisms changed after her challenge at the Bicknell Incident. She was confused by Donna. On one hand, she had no respect for Donna. On the other hand, she believed that Donna had both good and bad qualities. Later

in the interview, Candy attempted to explain how she knew Donna's behavior changed after the Bicknell Incident.

She said she was going to try and do better. I mean coaches aren't perfect. I know that. They're people too. Just that she tried I mean that says something. [what made you think she tried what happened] I don't know. I mean, I don't know. I can't tell you why, but in my mind, she tried, in my mind (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Candy and Donna still had issues to resolve. But throughout most of the interview, Candy spoke about Donna the way one would speak of a friend, by pointing out the negative, but somehow making it known that you take the bad with the good. She acknowledged that she liked Donna. She just didn't always agree with her. There were no more discussions of being treated like a dog or accusations that Donna did not care about them as team members. She, like all of her former Us members, knew "that's the way she is." Yet they all wanted to play for her the next year.

Cissy thought that the real event that brought the team together was the tournaments. Cissy had the pleasure of riding with Donna to one of the tournaments. That experience is what convinced Cissy to turn in her US group membership card.

Probably just because of everything, just everything I think the team finally got suddenly organized, Coach A kind of opened more, and she I just I totally saw her in a different light when we went up to when we went to the tournaments. Because we drove up with her I think it was the first one but I totally saw her in a different light. [More as a person] Uh, uh, exactly !!! Oh that was exactly what I wanted to say and I was trying to think how to say it (excited) because when you're on the field you see her as oh god I messed up let's not look at the coach maybe she won't look at me (intonation) laughs and then when you're riding somewhere with her and then she's joking around with you and like we were in the back seat You know it was cool and so (Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

Cissy's responses to questions about "the team" seemed to synthesize the less descriptive responses of her US group peers. Everyone of them brought up the meeting after the first practice, the Bicknell Incident, and/or the tournaments as influential events in the process of breaking down the barriers of the Coach, Them, and Us subgroups. As the

barriers broke down between Donna and the US group, the players felt connected to Donna as one of them, a teammate. The following quotes support the assertion that in the players' minds the barriers separating Donna and the US group did not exist at the end of the season.

I liked our team and I liked how we were. We had so much fun when it was like tournaments. We had so much fun because everyone was good friends and I mean EVEN Donna (Transcription of taped interview 7/23/91).

I'm glad I tried out. Just all the fun we had. A lot of things.. I learned just from playing softball about TEAM (Transcription of taped interview 7/16/91).

The players' interpretations of Donna's actions in the Bicknell Incident and of her behavior after the event led them to believe that they had finally negotiated an understanding of what it meant to be a member of "the team." To them, the war was over and everyone won. The players had such a good feeling about the team that two of the seniors discussed their feelings of sorrow that they would not get to be a part of the team next year. Their major regret was not being able to play for Donna. The rest of the players, even Kelsey, were eager for their next experience with Donna. I say Kelsey, because Donna's expectations of Kelsey led to her having such a bad experience early in the season that she considered moving down to the JV.

The following chapter examines the dynamics surrounding Donna's selection of the starting catcher and the catcher rotation. Kelsey was one of three catchers. The evidence will substantiate the claim that Donna interpreted Kelsey's natural overt behaviors as incongruent with those of a catcher on her team. Consequently Kelsey was not given a fair chance to work her way into the rotation. Not only did Kelsey identify Donna's differential treatment of her, but so did her teammates. This chapter, along with the description of Donna's presentation of Kelsey at the banquet suggests that Donna's low expectations of Kelsey's performance at catcher were as persistent in the face of disconfirming evidence as the players' fearful preinteraction expectancies of Donna as a coach.

Chapter 5

KELSY'S STORY: THE EMERGENCE OF EXPECTANCY EFFECTS IN THE SELECTION OF A CATCHER

One of the most consistent and supportive social networks within the organization of the team was the threesome of Kelsy, Babs, and Sara. These three players were members of the Us group and vying for the position of catcher. Due to two logistical factors, I had more contact with these three players than anyone else on the team, besides Donna. One reason for their prominence in my fieldnotes was the proximity of their drills to my observational vantage point during outdoor practices. I conducted my observations along the third or firstbase line, consequently, I was always within range of hearing as well as seeing their interactions. The second factor that led to these three players becoming my key informants was that at least one of them was always on the bench with me during the games. Although the story of Kelsy's struggle to be a catcher did not directly affect all members of the team, this story illustrates the interplay between team development and dyadic relationships, be they coach-athlete or athlete-athlete.

From previous descriptions of the strong bond amongst the Us group, one would expect these players to find common ground even as they competed for the same position. Indeed, these three players, as a group, seemed to epitomize the fun loving supportiveness that I witnessed and illustrated throughout this paper. Not only had Babs, Sara, and Kelsy become my gatekeepers to other players and insider information, but their fun loving attitudes made my hours of observations interesting and enjoyable. Their "let's try this while she's not looking" spirit permeated the whole culture of the team. In her team discussion about the Bicknell incident, Donna acknowledged that she also enjoyed being entertained by the fun loving behavior of members of the Us group, the catchers in

particular. Because of the spirit and joy that seemed to be transmitted from the antics of this group of players to myself and the rest of the team, it was difficult for me to witness the following process that was involved in selecting a catcher and the catcher rotation.

From the first day of practice until the last game, I never witnessed any sign of jealousy or disdain toward each other on the part of Babs, Sara, or Kelsy as what I labeled “the catcher controversy” unfolded. During indoor practices, I had identified that Sara, Babs, and Kelsy were all vying for the position of catcher. As a former softball coach, I perceived that each player had different strengths and weaknesses with no one jumping out and capturing the number one spot without a challenge. However, Donna had no difficulty selecting her number one catcher.

Of the three catcher hopefuls, I knew the least about Kelsy until her first formal interview. She seemed introverted around people she did not know. I had ascertained that she and Tina were good friends. She warmed up with Tina, caught for Tina, and messed around with Tina. Other than her jovial, prankster behavior with Tina, Kelsy just seemed to blend into the setting.

I knew about Sara because of Donna’s attempts during tryouts to convince Sara to move up to varsity as a sophomore. In Donna’s first interview, she indicated that if Sara had not been so hesitant about taking the leap from the freshman team to the varsity Donna would have made her captain. Hence I assumed that Donna perceived that Sara would be a talented and valuable asset. Sara continually asked questions of Donna and occasionally challenged her ways of doing things. Although she stood out in the crowd, Sara was an outlier within the Us group and the team. In the final interviews, every person, including Sara, identified her as having an bad attitude.

Babs appeared to be a very likable, gregarious person. She was always joking and playing around with anyone who would engage in such behavior. Babs always smiled and seemed eager to get on with it whatever it might be. Countless were the times when she was willing to test Donna’s ability to “hang loose” by exhibiting such behaviors as

belching, goofing off, not tucking in her shirt, or not paying attention. Donna spent much of her time following Babs around to correct her seemingly unsoftball-like behaviors. Babs always complied to Donna's requests with a smile.

An examination of the sport backgrounds of the three catcher hopefuls paints a picture of three self-motivated students who enjoy participating in competitive sports. Kelsy had been the starting catcher on the freshman and JV softball teams at Torrey West. During that time frame, the teams that she caught for lost only four games. To fine tune her skills, Kelsy played softball in the summer and attended summer camps. She played on the JV and varsity tennis and volleyball teams at Torrey West. Kelsy was a three sport athlete at Torrey West.

Babs started playing softball her sophomore year. She was Kelsy's understudy as the catcher on the JV team. Her sport was basketball. She made the varsity team as a freshman. This year she was captain of the varsity basketball team. Her goal was to play basketball in college. Babs perceived that volleyball did not have enough action, consequently, she limited her participation to softball and basketball at Torrey West. She was the junior captain on the softball team.

Sara had played softball since she was six years old. Her goal was to play softball in college. Like Kelsy, she played in the summers and planned on attending softball camps. Her original position in softball was left field. Sara played on the freshman and JV volleyball and basketball teams, as well as participated in band. Sara, like Kelsy, was a three sport athlete at Torrey West. Unlike the other two, Sara, did not consider herself a good student. All of these young women valued their sport experiences. Kelsy had played on teams with both Sara and Babs. Kelsy was the only one of the three who did not have aspirations of playing a sport in college. She was also the only one who had not been a member of a varsity team as a sophomore. The feeling one got from watching and listening to the catchers was that they viewed themselves as package deal: they got yelled at as a group, they messed around as a group, and they were ignored as a group. But whether

they were in the group or being evaluated separately, a pattern was emerging that directed my observational focus toward the interactions or lack of interactions between Kelsy and Donna.

I perceived that Donna was marginalizing Kelsy's effort and ability. The cues were so subtle during the indoor practices that I could not find enough evidence to support my tentative assertion that Donna was differentially reinforcing Kelsy in relation to Babs and Sara. As a former coach, I found a distinct difference in the way I viewed Kelsy's ability and effort and Donna's treatment of Kelsy's throwing and catching attempts in relation to Sara and Babs. But until practices were moved outdoors, the tentative assertion that Kelsy was being marginalized was loosely held together with circumstantial evidence of Donna's lack of interaction with Kelsy or her use of a particular tone when interacting with Kelsy.

Earlier evidence supported the assertion that Donna valued noise and rambunctious behavior. Sara and Babs stood out. Babs was the team goof-off. Sara was seemingly confident enough in her skills to challenge Donna. With the exception of Kelsy's joking around with Tina or the other catchers, Kelsy just did what was asked of her and blended into the group, the setting. She was not overtly loud or seemingly enthusiastic in relation to Sara and Babs.

As stated earlier, the tentative assertion that Donna was marginalizing Kelsy was based more on supposition than evidence until the practices moved outside. The following vignette is an excerpt of the first outdoor sessions that led to the emergence of identifiable indicators that provided substantial evidence that Donna marginalized Kelsy's effort and abilities as a catcher. This vignette provides evidence that Donna's interactions with Kelsy were qualitatively different than those with Babs and Sara.

In the first drill in practice, Donna has Sara and Kelsy catching for her as she hits both to the infielders and outfielders. Donna has Kelsy practice picking up a bunted ball and throw it to first. On her first few attempts, Kelsy scoops up the ball and raises up on her tiptoes as she throws high arching balls to first. Donna is continually talking as Kelsy does one after the other, "What are those rainbows?"

Better low than high...Get off your tiptoes!" (fieldnotes 3/20/91).

Kelsy's throws were looping, but accurate. She did appear to have a peculiar way of stepping into her throw in relation to Babs and Sara. Yet, she was accurate. When Babs and Sara attempted the same drill, Donna provided an occasional comment but not the continual chatter she provided Kelsy. The tone, the frequency, and the type of comments that Donna directed toward Kelsy were qualitatively different, but not enough to make a valid claim that Kelsy was being discriminated against in her attempt to be a catcher. The players' responses to Donna's comments were as different as Donna's communication with them.

In my notes, I wrote that "Kelsy seems to pay attention. She adjusts in accordance to Donna's comments and instruction; however, there is not any postural or facial changes that indicate that she is listening. Outwardly it appears the comments just roll off of her." In contrast, Sara and Babs either made excuses for their actions or asked questions to clarify. Kelsy's overt response to Donna's instructions and corrections was different from Sara and Babs. Were Kelsy's overt behaviors initiating a pattern of differential reinforcement or in reaction to Donna's differential treatment? In the expectancy literature, we do not address whether the coaches are differentially reinforcing players based on their early perceptions of a player's ability level; a player's changing ability; or on an assessment of the coachability of a player (Horn, 1986).

In the same practice, the catchers found out that their secondary position would be right field. I never heard Donna specifically discuss the issue with the catchers. She just placed each and every one of them in right field during the course of the practice. Sara was a left fielder turned catcher. Babs had been a utility player as well as Kelsy's understudy. Kelsy had never played field. The following vignette suggests that Donna's differential treatment of Kelsy was not solely related to Kelsy's seemingly aloof attitude in reaction to Donna.

After Sara's third successive missed balls, Donna slams the bat on the ground and yells out to Sara, "Come on you can!" Sara finally catches one and then overthrows it. Donna appears to be frustrated as she pounds the bat on the ground and yells, "Overthrow and they get two!" I hear her say to herself, "They're a lazy bunch." Sara comes in and Kelsy moves out to right. Now all of the catchers have played right field. Donna hits a grounder to Kelsy and it goes between her legs. Donna gets quiet. Sara starts chuckling as Donna puts the bat on the ground and asks Pam, "Have you done the drill..? (Fieldnotes 3/20/91)

Sara missed several balls prior to the overthrow that seemed to upset Donna. Even then, Donna used supportive statements such as "You can" to push Sara to continue. Donna hit the bat on the ground and yelled in frustration at Sara's overthrow, not at Sara. Sara was called in to play catcher. Donna's frustration after one miss by Kelsy stopped the whole practice for a few seconds. Although Donna did not pound the bat in frustration, she discontinued the entire practice because the ball went through Kelsy's legs. By asking Pam if she had worked with the fielders on blocking the ball with their body, Donna displayed her sense of frustration in Kelsy. This was the first practice outdoors. Pam had not taught the fielders anything. As the drill continued, Donna's comment to Nan about Kelsy's lack of abilities suggests that Donna did not have much confidence in Kelsy's throws from outfield, providing more evidence to substantiate the assertion that Donna was differentially reinforcing Kelsy.

After the outburst, Kelsy completed all of her catches and throws. Donna calls out, "Fielders to three!" The ball goes to Kelsy and she tosses a high dying throw that makes it to third, but not crisply. Her second attempt is better, but still barely makes it to third. The throws are accurate but slow. Donna calls out to Nan at second, "Nan keep in mind that Kelsy can't get it to third so cut it off." Babs misses the catch. Her throw rolls to third and nothing is said. When Donna calls, "Outfielders to home!" All but one of Kelsy's throws were good enough that a cut off was not needed. Donna tells Kelsy, "nice job Kelsy." Bab's throws were not as accurate but much faster. (Fieldnotes 3/20/91).

This had been a practice of error after error on everyone's part. The comment about Kelsy not being able to get the ball to third was said in front of the entire infield. Donna had not pointed out the inadequacies of any other player. This was the first time that the

catchers had been asked to play in the outfield. Bab's throws were more crisp. Her body movements appeared quicker than Kelsy's. Yet, overall, Kelsy had been more accurate. Kelsy had never played field while Babs had. There was a definite difference in Donna's treatment of Kelsy in relation to Babs and Sara in both positions.

Donna did provide a favorable comment for Kelsy's throw to home, but she never mentioned Bab's mistakes. Sara had spent the rest of the practice catching due to her inability to follow orders and her lack of enthusiasm to play right field. Consequently she was being rewarded for making mistakes and not trying while Kelsy was ridiculed for making the effort to play a position that was foreign to her.

At the end of practice, Donna sat beside me and discussed the events of the day. The first words out of her mouth were, "We are defensively weak." She continued by expressing her surprise at the players' lack of defensive skills. I prompted her to talk about the outfield positions. Her statement about right field provided more evidence to support the assertion that Donna was marginalizing Kelsy: "Mentally, Sara was my first choice, but not in skills. Babs would be my first choice, but Babs is the first catcher." Donna never mentioned Kelsy during the discussion either as a catcher or a fielder. Much like at the banquet when Donna acknowledged Kelsy's efforts at catcher while providing a running commentary on the contributions of Babs and Sara.

There were only two other practices outside prior to spring break. During those two practices, Kelsy spent more time in right field than at the catcher position. During break, the players were placed in groups for circuit training. Some groups were for the development of physical fitness, others for skill training specific to one's field position. When Donna spent time with the fielders, the catchers spent their time alternating between on task behaviors and messing around behaviors. To date, the cues that implied that a pattern of differential reinforcement was emerging included Kelsy's lack of practice time at catcher, the difference in how Donna addressed Kelsy's mistakes, tone and inflection in verbal interactions, and Donna's lack of interaction with Kelsy.

On several occasions, Sara and Babs had demonstrated an ability to get down on themselves and seemingly give up when not performing a skill well. Additionally, from their body posture and argumentative behavior when in right field, it appeared that they did not want to play the position. Kelsy seemed to try equally as hard at catcher and right field. It was not until after the fourth game that Kelsy seemed to get down about Donna's differential treatment. From my notes and comments by her teammates and Donna, it never appeared to anyone that Kelsy tried harder at catcher than at right field.

On April 8 while the girls were warming up their arms, I heard several girls discussing how well Kelsy was doing. From the tone and inflection of their voices, it seemed as though they were surprised that Kelsy was doing so well. Yet, she did not play catcher until April 22. This discussion was interesting in the sense that all of the people involved were on the freshman and JV team with Kelsy. They had played on league winning teams with Kelsy catching. I wondered why they were surprised at her ability.

Two days later, Donna walked over to a group consisting of Tina, Kelsy, and Babs and asked, "Let me see your glove." The following vignette was not important in itself. However, the state of Kelsy's glove and further interaction between Kelsy and Donna concerning the glove are important in understanding how players interpret coaches' behaviors as a sign of support or lack of support of one's efforts and ability.

Babs proudly holds hers up and announces, "Mine is the best." Tina chimes in with, "Mine's sweet." Donna turns toward me and laughs at the girls eagerness to display their gloves. Donna takes Kelsy's glove and suggests that she oil it. Loudly and proudly, Kelsy announces, "I love this glove guys!" As Kelsy demonstrates that she could turn the glove inside out, Babs is laughing so hard she can barely hear her words out, "She loves this glove." Without any hint of defending her attachment to her glove, Kelsy questions the others, "Don't you love my glove? It's been through a lot. I've had since fourth grade." Donna casually walked away from this interaction and told everyone to take down the equipment (Fieldnotes 4/10/91).

This was the first time that I had observed Kelsy be so aggressive in front of Donna. Typically, the outward appearance of any assertive or animated behavior from

Kelsy happened either before Donna came onto the floor/field, when the catchers were horsing around, or when Tina and Kelsy were doing their pitcher/catcher rituals. Never before had I seen Kelsy so animated with such a confident body posture while in Donna's presence. Donna's response to Kelsy's directed interaction was to walk away without comment. The next day, the day before the first non-league game, Kelsy spent the whole practice in right field. Two times when Kelsy made mistakes, Donna literally screamed directly at her. Babs and Sara alternated between playing catcher and messing around on the bench with the pitchers. I wondered who would be catching the next day.

Donna made it perfectly clear who would not be catching as we sat on the bench watching the girls warm their arms up for the first game of the season. Donna was sitting on the end of the bench working on the batting lineup when she turned to me and said, "I'm afraid to let Kelsy catch. She's too slow for my blood." Babs caught both games. Kelsy played right field the first game. Sara did not play at all. The team lost both games. In one game, they had fourteen errors.

Two days later, we traveled to a game site where the backstop seemed miles from home plate. I noticed the distance as soon as I walked onto the field. As we were sitting on the bench watching the players warm up, the scorekeeper asked Donna, "Kelsy catching?" While looking out at the players, Donna answered, "She wants to be catching, but a little too slow for me, especially with the backstop so far." So Kelsy played right field in the first game. Sara played catcher for the last few innings of the second game, while Babs remained unchallenged as the starting catcher. The team lost both games.

At the next practice, Donna commended Sara on her first varsity game as a catcher. Prior to the start of practice, Donna had confided in me that she was pleased with Sara's performance, but Sara needed to work on her throws and coachability. While all of the players were warming up, Donna had a discussion with Sara about her attitude. The following vignette, of a drill conducted after their discussion, illustrates that Sara continued

exhibiting inappropriate behaviors. Moreover, Kelsey was beginning to exhibit some behaviors that could be construed as an attitude.

Donna told everyone to get to their positions. Kelsy goes out to right field. Donna calls out, "Kelsy come on in here." The drill begins with Donna pretending to pitch to the catchers so they can practice throw downs to first base. Babs goes first. Babs makes an accurate throw. Kelsy moves into position and overthrows first base. She tries again and overthrows Coop again. I hear her say, "What the heck." This is the first time that I observed Kelsy show any sign of not caring if she executed properly. Sara moves into position and catches the ball. She fumbles around with the ball and looks to Donna, "I can't get the ball out of my glove." Pam quickly and firmly replies, "You can!" Questioning, maybe even challenging Pam's statement, Sara snaps back, "I can? I didn't!" The drill continues without participation of the catchers. Consequently they revert to their horsing around behaviors. Donna hears them using Kelsy and Keslie interchangeably, she turns to Sara and Babs and says, "Look you have me calling her Keslie." With a twinkle in their eye and a fairly straight face, they say, "That's her real name." "Is it? Donna asks with much surprise. "Yea it's on her birth certificate." Donna turns to Kelsy and asks her. Everyone that has heard the discussion is almost rolling on the ground with laughter. Donna really was not sure whether Kelsy's name was Keslie or Kelsy. After that exchange, Donna sent Kelsy out to right field (Fieldnotes 4/17/91).

This vignette provides evidence to substantiate the claim that Kelsy was being affected by Donna's differential treatment. Kelsy's attitude seemed to be changing. She did not appear to strive to master the task at hand. Although she never looked excited when she practiced, I had never heard her verbalize any negative comments regarding her prowess. Sara, on the other hand, continued to exhibit the very behavior that Donna had just cautioned her about, defensive, sometimes challenging statements. Pam had repeatedly complained about Sara's attitude. This time apparently Pam decided to challenge it, to no avail. Sara could or would not curb her frustrated outbursts.

One other issue arising out of this interaction was that Donna did not know whether Kelsy's real name was Kelsy or Keslie. They had been together as a team for over a month. I wondered how that made Kelsy feel. Within a half an hour of the aforementioned incident, Kelsy kicked a post as she came in from right field. Her body posture and overall

withdrawal from all interaction suggested that she was unhappy. Except for that one drill, she had been excluded from participating with the catcher group.

Donna gave Sara and Babs pointers on catching technique without looking to see if Kelsy was anywhere to be found. Kelsy's statement, "What the heck!" and the post kicking supported the statement made by Babs two days earlier that Kelsy did not feel that Donna was giving her a fair chance at catcher. In her first formal interview, Babs voiced her concern that Donna was not giving Kelsy a fair shot at catcher. She told me, "Kelsy wants to go on the JV. Yea, she has a hard time with the coach not giving her a chance." Two days later, the tentative assertion that Donna seemed to be differentially reinforcing Kelsy as a catcher was transformed into a valid assertion.

The rain had made the road to the varsity field impassable so practice was moved to the freshman field. It was the warmest day since the season had begun. The practice began with Donna showing more camaraderie with the players than she ever had before. Donna seemed more relaxed than usual, less distant. Two things happened that were out of the ordinary. First, Donna asked Kelsy directly which position she preferred, catching or right field. Second, Kelsy initiated conversation with Donna to discuss Donna's suggestion that she get a new glove. As I watched these interactions unfold, I was elated at the prospect that Donna and Kelsy were conversing. However, I was saddened by my interpretation of Donna's actions and wondered how Kelsy had interpreted their interaction.

Donna calls out, "Get in your positions." Sara, Kelsy, and Babs hang back to catch for Donna as she hits to the infield. As she hits to the infield, Donna asks Kelsy, "How do you like right field? Do you prefer catching? Kelsy sullenly nods her head to acknowledge that she prefers catching. A few words were exchanged during this interaction that I could not hear. Later the pitchers and catchers were sent to work together. Kelsy and Tina pair up as usual. Candy and Tina decide to practice catching so they reverse roles with Kelsy and Babs. Balls are going over the backstop. Donna makes her way over to the dirt area where the pitchers and catchers are supposedly practicing. Kelsy, making full eye contact, walked toward Donna and said, "I talked to my mom about a glove and she said that if I'm not catching, I can't get a new one." Reaching out for Kelsy's glove, Donna says, "OK." Once Donna had sole possession of the glove, she began

tightening and adjusting the laces on Kelsy's glove she's had since fourth grade" (Fieldnotes 4/19/91).

Kelsy seemed confident in her attempt to discuss her glove with Donna. One interpretation of Kelsy's forwardness is that she was reacting to Donna's direct question that seemed to signal that Donna was interested in Kelsy. Another interpretation of the incident is that Kelsy was testing Donna to see if she had a chance at being a catcher. My interpretation of Donna's fixing Kelsy's glove was that Kelsy should not waste her money on a new glove. She was not a contender for catcher. As the evidence will show, my interpretation of Donna's actions was similar to Kelsy's. Kelsy's first formal interview was three days later.

Kelsy's Interpretation of Donna's Communication Behaviors

Kelsy's main topic of conversation was her perception that Donna did not have any confidence in her as a catcher. Kelsy and I had already developed a rapport through our informal discussions and my closeness to the catcher group. We discussed her past sport experiences and her family. Then I asked her about Donna's request that she get a new glove. Her reply substantiated the tentative assertion that Kelsy was losing hope for playing catcher after her interactions with Donna such as those described in the previous vignettes:

Well, I've been catching for the last two years. And I've been kind of shut off and she doesn't look at me basically for catcher. I'm just there you know. And she's like telling me to buy this \$100 glove..I don't think I want to spend a \$100 for a position I'm never going to play. She said she'd like me to..not like GO or make a command...I always feel bad enough not catching. She wasn't even thinking of playing me (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy made it clear that Donna suggested that she get a new glove, not directed her to do so. Kelsy did not believe that it was worth buying a new glove. She perceived that Donna was not even considering her for catcher. She was never going to play catcher. Kelsy's recollection of her discussion with Donna about her preference for right field or catching illustrates that players perceive that they can identify when a coach has confidence in them.

Yea, I told her catcher that's what I've been doing. I'm confident in that..I mean outfield. I've never played outfield before. You have to build up confidence for that..But so in catching, I'm losing my confidence because I haven't done it. And she doesn't have any confidence in me. I can tell she hasn't had any (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy perceived that she was losing her confidence in catching because she was not doing it. Donna did not have enough confidence in Kelsy to play her. Kelsy's lack of confidence in catching seemed directly related to her perceptions that Donna did not expect her to be a catcher. They had played four games and she had not caught in any of them. In practice, she spent most of her time in the field. Events such as the glove incident, provided Kelsy with enough evidence to assert that Donna did not have any confidence (expectations) in her as a catcher:

I don't know. I can't quite describe it in like exactly how I mean. But I know she doesn't. I mean especially for a sophomore to play over me. It's just like something is always wrong. I don't..I don't..I'm not really bursting with confidence and she can read that and so she feels she knows that. I feel like she hasn't given me a fair shot. I have not even worked. I feel like I've even gotten worse at catching. Because last year Babs and Marlene played on the JV right? I caught..I think Babs caught two games. I caught all the rest of the games. And I mean it was like it was just like OK! (Transcription taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy's tone of voice during her discussion of Donna's lack of confidence in her ranged from despair to anger. She could not put her finger on all the factors that made her think the coach did not have confidence in her, but she knew. In her mind, a coach's expectations could influence the way in which a person perceived herself as a person or player. Kelsy perceived that the primary reason Donna did not have confidence in her was because of Donna's perceptions that Kelsy was not bursting with confidence.

It's how I am. I don't have... I think cockiness is like the worst thing. I've gotten out there and made a catch and she(Donna) is like oh be a little more excited Kelsy. She came and watched me play this summer. She was like "oh good job catcher." And stuff like that and she watched me play before and she liked me...She said, "You did a pretty good job." And then Babs comes in loaded with confidence and just knocks me down. I think she likes people that have (inaudible)..It doesn't mean I can't be a good player just

because I don't. I mean. That's when I enjoy being catcher because you get behind the mask and no one can see you (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy's perception was that Donna placed a great deal of value on one's overt cockiness or confidence. This supposition is supported by the evidence in the earlier chapters. She did not feel that Donna selected Babs over her because she was more skilled, but because she carried herself more confidently. From Kelsy's perspective, Donna did not have any confidence in her because she did not posture herself confidently. As Kelsy continued with her assessment of the situation, she provided me with some valuable information about herself. She needed assurance from coaches that they had confidence in her. Other coaches had provided her with the support that she needed. Kelsy's past experiences with coaches was mediating her interpretation of Donna's verbal messages:

You know it's like well. I don't know. I do my job and I don't expect to get paid, but I don't expect to get knocked down either for what I do. I'm not a real confident person. I need coaches to give me confidence. That's what Milly did. She knew what she wanted me to do. It's like when I did things wrong it wasn't like I didn't know what I was doing. I knew I did it wrong. The coach is acting like I don't know (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

To Kelsy, you are on the field to do a job and you just do it. She did not expect any special recognition when she excelled or degradation when she made a mistake. The distinction that she made between the way she interpreted Donna's correction of her mistakes and former coaches was succinct and to the point. On one hand, she perceived that Milly knew that she could do what was asked of her. She just made a mistake. On the other hand, Donna did not think Kelsy knew what she was doing. Donna was treating Kelsy differently than former coaches and differently in relation to Babs and Sara.

Kelsy continued to explain what affect Donna's differential reinforcement was having on her. She had already mentioned that she believed she was getting worse. The following statement seemed to explain why she kicked the post and made her "What the heck!" statement. This quote supports the tenet underlying expectancy effects. If a player

perceives that she is being marginalized, it can have an adverse affect on the player's self-perceptions about her capabilities (Horn, 1984).

It's like I don't think I'm gaining anything this year. I'm getting scared to death to catch. I'm really scared you know. She says I turn away and stuff. It's because I haven't caught I'm scared of the ball. I'm just going to take it now, you know. I'm just going to play softball because I like the game. I guess I don't know what I'll do next year (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Babs and others had alluded to Kelsy's desire to move down to the junior varsity. She never mentioned it. Kelsy was giving up on playing catcher. The evidence seemed to substantiate her claim that Donna did not expect much from her. And from her own statement, as a result, she felt less confident in her own skills as a catcher. She perceived that she was getting worse.

This was a difficult interview to conduct. From my observations as a former coach, Kelsy appeared to be more consistent and less disruptive and moody than Sara and Babs. As a participant observer, I had insider information that may have helped bridge the gap between Donna's perceptions of Kelsy's intensity and the researcher's version of the reality of the situation. Yet, I was unable to step in and clear up a situation that eventually led to negative experiences for Donna, Babs, Sara, and Kelsy.

I asked Kelsy if she thought anyone on the team had an attitude. This question arose from her discussion of Donna's favoring people with outwardly confident and cocky body language. This discussion led to more details about how players detect when a coach has high or low expectations of a player.

Maybe Marlene. We were really good friends. I think it's because Coach likes Cathy a lot and whatever Cathy does she's (coach) not going to think any less of her. We all know that so Marlene, OK so I guess I don't have to try because I won't ever play short. That could be basically it (her attitude). But I guess I do the same thing too. I'm never going to catch. [how do you know that] Because she told me I would catch the second Loa game (Transcribed from taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy perceived that Marlene had an attitude. Kelsy perceived that Marlene's attitude was a result of believing that the coach was not playing her at short stop because Cathy, Donna's favorite, also played that position. She mentioned that Sara was developing an attitude due to her lack of catching time. Kelsy continued this discussion by describing how she could tell who a coach's favorite players might be.

Like when they do something really bad, it's like "Oh come on you can do it." Her tone and intonation suggests a plea to keep trying. They (coaches) never lose confidence in them. [on this team?] Yea, Cathy and Sara. I think both of them have the same confidence that she (coach) likes. It's one of those things (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy began her description of how one can tell a coach's favorites in general terms. Then she made specific references to players that she perceived to be Donna's favorites, Sara and Cathy. As we continued our discussion, I reminded her of the many instances when Donna had yelled at these two players. Kelsy's comparison of Donna's yelling at the perceived favorites and her focused on the differences in tone and quality of the interactions.

It doesn't seem like the same way. She's yelling at them it just seems different. The way she YELLS. It's like I remember when Cathy missed a grounder. It's like, "Come on Cathy, I know you can do it. What's wrong? What's up?" It's like yes, she's mad but she KNOWS she can do it (raises voice to make point). I mean if she got mad at me she'd be like acting like "Don't you know what you're doing out there?" (sarcastic tone). WHEN SHE yells at Cathy, I feel she's yelling for her, but when she yells at me, it's to put me down (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Kelsy perceived that Donna used a different tone and type of message when she yelled at her favorites. To Kelsy, Donna seemed to be yelling at and for the favorites while she yelled at Kelsy to put her down. In Kelsy's mind, Donna was putting her down in relation to the favorites and the other catcher hopefuls. Interestingly, in her final interview, Kelsy told me that she believed Donna had been supportive of everyone in her yelling. "You just had to get used to her way." Kelsy's interpretation of Donna's yelling had changed in a month.

Kelsy seemed to have a negative attitude toward Donna. I decided to engage her in a conversation that would demonstrate if she perceived that there were other players being marginalized or if she believed that Donna was only picking on her. Kelsy mentioned a number of instances that she perceived to be cases of Donna's differential treatment of players. The following statement about Donna's treatment of Molly was the most detailed of her illustrations. Her explanation of Donna's substituting Tina for Molly in the batting lineup illustrates how powerful Kelsy perceived the expectations of a coach were on an athlete.

Molly, she just took Molly out of the batting order and put Tina in. I'm sorry, I'm sorry but if she (coach) keeps repeating that Tina is a power hitter and Tina. IF YOU KEEP TELLING SOMEBODY THAT YOU KNOW THEY'RE GOING TO BE A GOOD HITTER, it's how you look at something. I mean, I could be a (inaudible) if..I don't think a coach should have expectations of a person. Basically people used to think I was good, "Oh yea Kelsy doing a good job." Then everybody's attitudes changed about me (Transcription of taped interview 4/22/91).

Tina was Kelsy's best friend. Yet, she vehemently and almost jealously believed that Tina would become a good hitter because "Coach" kept telling Tina she was a hitter. Although inaudible on the tape, my notes indicate that Kelsy said she could be good at anything if those were the expectations. Kelsy perceived that the players' attitudes changed toward her abilities based on Donna's expectations. Earlier in this section, a passage highlighted Kelsy's peers, her teammates for two years, being surprised at how well she was doing. Kelsy perceived that her demise in the eyes of her peers was related to Donna's differential treatment of her in relation to the other catchers. Kelsy assumed that Tina would become a good hitter because of the messages Donna sent to Tina by replacing people in the batting order. Kelsy perceived that she was getting worse at catcher because of lack of playing time. Kelsy believed that her lack of playing time was a direct result of Donna's lack of confidence in Kelsy as a catcher.

An overwhelming amount of evidence was surfacing to support Kelsy's assertion that Donna was marginalizing Kelsy in relation to Sara and Babs. Why did she suspect that

Donna was marginalizing her? Kelsy suspected that Donna did not have any confidence in her as a catcher. Donna used a different tone, a different style of structuring her sentences. She vacillated between either ignoring Kelsy's attempts or focusing on Kelsy's mistakes. More importantly, Donna was not playing her at catcher. Kelsy spent more time practicing at right field than Sara and Babs. Kelsy perceived that Donna's differential treatment of her in relation to Sara and Babs had to do with personal characteristics, not ability.

Kelsy never complained, nor did she seem to find playing right field to be demeaning. The other two players, Sara and Babs, seemed to half-heartedly take their turns at right. There were times in practice when either Pam or Donna would allude to their suspicions that Sara, in particular, but also Babs, may not have tried as hard in right field so they would not have to play the position.

Her Teammates' Views on the Catcher Controversy

Was Kelsy less skilled than Babs and Sara? As illustrated earlier, Donna thought she was too slow. Donna's basis for that belief may have been what Kelsy perceived as Donna's attention to one's overt eagerness; facial expressions, noisy support, nonverbal behaviors. The following speculations by other players about why Kelsy did not play early in the season seemed to confirm Kelsy's assertion that Donna's basis for not playing her at catcher was related to her lack of outward cockiness or confidence, i.e., personal characteristics rather than ability. I engaged every person on the team in a discussion about the catching rotation in her final interview. Without exception, the players believed that Donna placed a great deal of value on one's outward appearance of enthusiasm and softball readiness. The following section will substantiate Kelsy's claim that Donna seemed to base her lack of confidence in Kelsy on the difference in her outward signs of enthusiasm, intensity, and commitment in relation to Sara and Babs.

In the previous chapter, Candy had been accused of having an attitude by Donna, based on her lack of eye contact. Not one player believed that Candy or Kelsy had an attitude. Candy was the informal leader of the team, more importantly, the Us group. Kelsy

and Candy spent much of their time together as students (juniors) and in practice because of the pitcher-catcher relationship. In the following statement, Candy asserts that Donna misread Kelsy's intensity level.

Kelsy's cool. I love Kelsy. As far as a player, she's real timid. She doesn't have a lot of confidence and so you got to constantly feed her with confidence. And she's a good player. She can be a really good player. She never thinks coaches like her. [fair in rotation?] Yea, I mean she would try give each one a chance. I think she made a good call with Kelsy. She kind of said that she didn't think that Kelsy was ready. I think if she would have given Kelsy more support, as far as, I think you can do it . Kelsy needs a lot of support. I think she started working with her toward the end because Kelsy starting catching more. Coach is the type of person that if you're not like YEA I'M READY then she expects you as not being so supportive. Yea and Kelsy is not that way Kelsy would be like, "Yea, I'm ready (low mumble). But really inside Kelsy would be like, "YEA!! I'M READY NAH NAH NAH." Kelsy is just not the type of person that gets really hyped outwardly (Transcription of taped interview 7/24/91).

Candy, like Kelsy, believed that Donna placed a lot of emphasis on overt demonstrations of enthusiasm/intensity. Candy perceived that Donna had not shown Kelsy enough support to prepare her to catch early in the season. For that reason, to some extent, she agreed with Donna's decision not to play Kelsy early on. Candy believed that Donna's lack of initial support was due to her focus on one's outward appearances.

In the section about Donna, the evidence supported the assertion that loud signified intensity and involvement to her. With few exceptions, the players and Donna used "quiet" in their description of Kelsy. Interestingly, those closest to her used the word in a context similar to this: "Kelsy is not as quiet as everyone thinks. Everyone thinks Kelsy is quiet." Even if a player described Kelsy as quiet, she would mention that Kelsy was a hard working, team player who never gave up. Cathy's description of Kelsy as a teammate was typical of the players' descriptions of Kelsy.

I don't know. The biggest word I can think of is quiet because she never says anything. She's a good player and she's always trying. And she always wants to do as well as she can do . She wasn't really upset when she didn't get catch she thought everybody has to have a time to try and

everything she didn't mind playing outfield which I don't think she ever played before. She'll go with whatever. If you tell her to do something she'll do it. She's like she always she wants the team to do well she's just not loud like everybody else (Transcription of taped interview 6/20/91).

Cathy described Kelsy as a player who did what she was told without any discussion or argument. Kelsy always did what was best for the team. Interestingly, Cathy perceived that Kelsy accepted that she was not playing catcher. This perception may due to the difference in interactions amongst the Them and Us group. Except for the events leading up to the Bicknell incident, I could not find one instance in my notes where negative discussions about Donna were made by members of the Them group or by members of the Us in front of Them. For that reason, Cathy's views on that particular topic might be considered an outsider's perspective. She was not privy to the meanings and perceptions that members of the Us group attached to Donna's behaviors.

Cathy's description of Kelsy closely matched Kelsy's own description of herself. Kelsy saw herself as a team player who did her job without any expectations for extra rewards. Cissy's assessment of which catcher was better provides more evidence that Kelsy was intensely involved in "team."

Each did one thing better than the other. Totally all and all probably Kelsy because Kelsy simply because Sara used to get really mad and she'd let that interfere with her catching. Babs just kind of did stupid stuff sometimes (laughing). She wouldn't really pay attention you know. And Kelsy could be so mad and she could be getting screamed at, but she would just kind of zone everybody out. She didn't really care, and she would still be able to catch (Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

No matter how disheartened Kelsy got, Cissy perceived that Kelsy never let outside factors affect her catching. Cissy perceived that all of the catchers had their strengths and weaknesses. The players seemed to have a great deal of respect for Kelsy's intensity level and ability. Cissy thought that Kelsy lacked the "beasty arm" of a catcher. From that standpoint, Cissy could understand why Kelsy may not have played early in the season.

She lacked the stereotypical aspects of catching- a “beasty arm” and the “Grr” to intimidate people.

But I think everybody was like that. Because I know I was like that. Just because Kelsy doesn't come across as being as aggressive and as - when you think of catcher, you think of this person who has this BEASTY arm and GRRR. Sara is loud and Babs is loud and Babs would give looks to people on third and Kelsy is so laid back and is so quiet. I think that was one of the reasons just because she's not really BEASTY. But she's good (Transcription of taped interview 7/5/91).

Cissy assumed that everyone, including Donna, had similar expectations of a catcher. Kelsy did not seem to live up to those expectations. Sara and Babs were loud. Kelsy was not. Donna believed that “ballplayers” were loud. Yet Cissy believed that Kelsy was as skilled as the others. The following quote by Nan provided more evidence to support Kelsy's assertion that Donna's differential reinforcement of her was based more on Donna's interpretation of Kelsy's outward appearance than her ability.

I love Kelsy. A remarkable catcher I think. She kind of got gypped out of her year. She's a very good catcher Kelsy. Works real hard, too, at least through my eyes. She's always working hard, and Kelsy will get down easily. [Why think D no confidence?] Yea, and well we were kind of being mean about this. But I mean Babs is very athletic and so is Sara. I mean Kelsy is, too. But Babs and Sara have that look about them. The short haired, uh, tough look. Kelsy is a pretty little girl. She dresses all nifty and stuff you know. And I think when coaches see that like maybe for D that's how I feel that she thought she couldn't expect that much from Kelsy, not as motivated (Transcription of taped interview 7/23/91).

Nan was blunt. Kelsy got gypped out of playing. Nan's best friend on the team was Babs. If Kelsy played more, Babs would play less. Yet, Nan believed that Kelsy may have lost out because Babs and Sara “have that look about them,” supporting the assertion that Donna was differentially reinforcing Kelsy because of factors unrelated to catching. Kelsy dressed all nifty. They had that “short haired, uh, tough look.” Nan perceived that Donna expected less from Kelsy because she did not outwardly appear to be as motivated. She did not seem as involved. Kelsy was not overtly loud as defined by Donna.

Although Babs did not specify why Kelsy did not play more, she did allude to Kelsy's overt calmness. Babs perceived that she had a better arm, but they all had their strengths and weaknesses. Bab's discussion of why Kelsy was being marginalized suggests that Kelsy was not playing because she was not a favorite:

Well, with all three of our catchers there's a good point like I sort of think I have the best arm going to second and.. Quiet (Kelsy), like do anything told, you can't tell when do (Kelsy) sweet play. The coach, well see, Kelsy wasn't like.. You know how most of us joked around with the coach? And I think the coach like picks the people she likes I mean she likes everybody, but then she (Donna) has favorites (Transcription of taped interview 7/16/91).

Kelsy was quiet. She would do what she was told without expecting attention for doing a sweet play. Babs perceived that Donna had favorites, and Kelsy was not one of them. She never mentioned that Kelsy was not ready to catch. She just did not interact the same with "Coach." In the following statement, Babs echoes Kelsy's tenet that a player lives up or down to her perceptions of the coach's expectations of her:

Yea, a little bit. She didn't even play Sara. I don't think she had confidence in her. [In you?] Yea, she did. I hope she did. I don't know. I went up there thinking she did. Because if I wouldn't have, I would have done worse probably (Transcription of taped interview 7/16/91).

Babs perceived that without knowing that Donna had confidence in her she probably would have played worse. Kelsy perceived that she was doing worse because Donna did not have any confidence in her. Babs mentioned that Kelsy was quiet and that she did not mess around with coach as much as the others, suggesting a lack of interaction. She did not directly link those factors to Donna's selection of favorites or starters, but she alluded to those factors as differences between Kelsy and Donna's favorites.

Kelsy thought that Donna had a lot of confidence in Tina. However, Tina was never mentioned as one of Donna's favorites by any player. Most people described Tina as quiet and a loner. She thought Kelsy was loud. She also thought that Kelsy did not get a fair shot at playing catcher. In the following quote, Tina described Kelsy and why she believed that Kelsy did not get a fair shot at catcher.

Everyone thinks she's quiet, but if YOU GET TO KNOW HER. She's louder than anyone else I know.(laughing)[treated fairly] NO! But maybe that's just because she's my friend. I don't know. She, well, she never started her until like the middle of the year. I don't think. She put her in right field most of the time which she never played before, but she did all right. I don't know. It just seemed like she favored the other ones. I don't know. She just worked with them more and gave them more chances if they messed up. In practices and in games (Transcription of interview 7/18/91).

Tina believed that Donna favored Sara and Babs over Kelsy. She qualified her statement by saying that she was Kelsy's friend. Maybe she was a bit prejudiced. However, Tina identified some of the same cues that Kelsy and other players had in determining if Kelsy was differentially reinforced: quality and tone of interaction, playing right field in practices and not playing catcher in a game until the middle of the season.

Somehow in her discussion, Tina brought up an incident when she stole a base without permission from Donna. The following quote shows that even though a coach may differentially reinforce a player in a way that signals a lack of confidence, players don't always live down to those expectations.

Yea, but I'm too slow. Why should I go in the first place? [who said] SHE (Donna) did !! [do you think slow] I must be from everyone telling me. I am. I started thinking. Yea, I think I'm slow. I'm not. I think for my size, I'm not slow. But I think I'm slow compared to other people. [others look at your size to determine] I think the way I run. Look like I run slow to you? (asks me) I run funny. I don't know. [on BB court] Yea, I run pretty fast. (Transcription of taped interview 7/18/91).

Tina stole base without permission from Donna. She knew that she would get in trouble. However, she did it anyway. Tina perceived that Donna would never send her because Donna thought she was slow. Everyone told her she was slow. Consequently, she was beginning to think she might be. She decided to go for it. Tina was safe. If she had not been safe, Tina acknowledged the consequences would have been monumental. Unlike Kelsy, Tina perceived that she could do it without any affirmation from Donna. Tina may have attempted such a feat because she had been gaining confidence from Donna's differential treatment of her as an awesome hitter.

To my knowledge, only one other player challenged Donna's control on the bases - Cathy. Cathy had over 50 errors at short stop during the season. Every player, with the exception of Cathy, named Cathy as Donna's favorite player. Although she was going against Donna's control on the bases, Cathy's past history with Donna may have provided her with the confidence to attempt the steal or she may have thought that her consequences would not be as monumental as Tina envisioned. None of the players was allowed to steal without a sign from Donna. Neither one of these players had challenged any of Donna's directives previously, but both had confidence in their ability to steal. Donna's high expectations for their hitting or leadership skills may have given them the confidence to challenge Donna.

Donna's Perceptions of the "Catcher Controversy"

In her final interview, Donna candidly discussed the catcher situation. As with the players, I asked Donna to describe each player. The following was Donna's description of Kelsy. The quote provides evidence to support the assertion that Donna seemed to differentially reinforce Kelsy because of her perceptions that Kelsy lacked the enthusiasm and intensity to play catcher.

Slow (drop out low tone) slow in aggressiveness. I guess. She'll get up, and she'll make the throw. She won't be in a particular hurry, and she wants to get them out but doesn't want it enough to make her do it quicker enough to sweat, you know. (attitude?) OK except for she wouldn't look me in the eye. She was so quiet...I didn't I don't have much on her. I didn't get to know her a lot. She would never even look me in the eye. The one time she did come out and give me a straight answer I asked her "Do you prefer outfield or catcher?" But that's because I asked her a very specific question, and she had to give me an answer. Usually kind of shrugging her shoulders and that was that (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna did not perceive Kelsy eager enough to sweat. She seemed slow in aggressiveness. She never looked her in the eye. Donna did not feel she got to know Kelsy. She remembered that Kelsy gave her one direct answer because she asked Kelsy a direct question. Otherwise, Kelsy usually shrugged her shoulders. That was the extent of

their knowledge of each other. There was no mention of her lack of skill, only her apparent lack of intensity.

I pushed Donna by asking if Kelsy's perceived lack of intensity had anything to do with her not catching in the beginning. Her response provided evidence to support the assertion that she differentially reinforced Kelsy because of her outward signs of readiness, not skill. When Kelsy was finally put into the catching rotation regularly, it was not because Donna realized that Kelsy was capable. This point is illustrated in Donna's discussion of the impact Kelsy's overt signs of readiness had on her early decision to not play her.

Thinking of her as so mellow? I think it probably did influence it. When I saw how quiet and slow she went about everything I decided there was just no way she could be a catcher. That's why she was the one out in right field. And then I figured out that Babs was going to be real lazy and that Sara just wasn't going to last long. And I tried her again. I figured, you know, what the hell, nothing to lose by now after getting whooped so many times. She knocked a lot of things down. I was pleased with what she did (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna never mentioned any differences in skill level. Initially, Donna did not play Kelsy because she perceived that Kelsy's overt characteristics were not compatible with the position of catcher. Kelsy got to play because Sara and Babs had not lived up to Donna's expectations. They were not living up to her expectations. Along with all of the inner struggles within the catching position, Donna was dealing with the team losing more and more games with a final record of 8-24. Donna believed that she had nothing to lose putting in Kelsy. When Kelsy played, Donna was pleased with what she saw. Yet at the banquet, Donna expressed her glee at Babs being "her" catcher and the prospect of having Sara on the team for two more years.

Earlier in her final interview, Donna discussed how she would interact with the freshman and JV coaches differently the next year. I asked her if there were any other things she would have done differently. The following statement indicates that upon reflection Kelsy should have been catching earlier in the season. Donna's perceptions of

Kelsy had changed, but not drastically enough for Donna to gloss over her accomplishments at the banquet.

I would have started Kelsy. And from the beginning , I would have started Kelsy even though her throw was a little bit weak. But at the beginning of the year that might not have hurt us so much with everybody not quite into it. And (pause) I may be would have left Sara on JV. And just worked Babs harder (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Babs got lazy because she was handed the starting role. Sara may not have been ready for the move to varsity. Sara's lack of playing time may have fueled her attitude that put her out of the rotation. Consequently, everyone involved in the catcher controversy may have been hindered in their quest to be a catcher.

Kelsy was given a chance, and she came through. Donna liked what she saw when Kelsy caught. Kelsy eventually became the starting catcher. One could see her body posture and outward demeanor become louder with each game. Donna was finally putting her in the rotation. Eventually she was playing over Babs and Sara. This must have been a sign to Kelsy that Donna had confidence in her. However, in her final interview, Kelsy was not sure why Donna played her more.

I don't think I got better. I think she gave me a few more chances, and I don't think I was any worse than them. So I mean, I know I don't have an awesome arm. But I don't think any of us do. And, um, [any more fair in end] I couldn't believe she let me catch for pre-districts. I mean, she hardly ever let me catch. I'd be like... at first I thought she's like put the three of us rotating. But then Babs would get more time. And I'd always seem like I would be the last one in. I was like I don't understand why she let me catch. I mean, I was happy and everything but.. [show had confidence] I wasn't sure....you know the fielding averages for the catchers. I sat and there worked it out, and I had better percentages on amount of bases stolen on me and put outs. I had a much better percentage on put outs and a little on bases stolen. And I was the only catcher to throw anybody out at second even. And it was right there, I had a better percent. And I only caught two less innings than Sara and quite a few less than Babs (Transcription of taped interview 7/23/91).

Even though she finished the season as the starting catcher, she caught less than Sara and Babs. Kelsy had done the math. According to her calculations of the catchers' fielding percentages, Kelsy was more accurate than Sara and Babs. From that standpoint, it seemed logical to Kelsy that she was playing. She was not sure that Donna had more confidence in her, but she was happy that she was catching. Not only did she get to catch in the pre-district game, she got to catch for Tina in a game. Kelsy's excitement upon hearing that she got to catch for Tina shone through her mellow, quiet, slow, exterior like a ray of light from a lighthouse. Whether Donna had more confidence in her or not, the act of placing her at catcher helped to build back up Kelsy's confidence in her catching. Kelsy attended a softball camp that summer. According to Kelsy, she could hardly wait for softball to start, to play for Donna. Kelsy was eager to show Donna that she should be the one Donna presents as "her" catcher at the next banquet, not Sara or Babs.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I attempted to provide a detailed description of the pattern of interaction between Donna and Kelsy that influenced Kelsy's attitude about herself, Donna, and the sport. Moreover, I wanted to provide the reader with a better understanding that communication is not just an observable act, it is the process through which the players and team coordinate their efforts to become a team. Communication is shaped by team and the process of becoming a team, a dynamic changing process. Consequently, one's perceptions of self in relation to the other can change one's meanings and behaviors (Colomy & Rhoades, 1983) as did Kelsy's and Donna's in relation to the meanings the attached to the behaviors of the other. Although Kelsy did not appear to conform to Donna's initial expectations of her performance as a catcher and "ballplayer," her story provides strong evidence for Horn's attempt at defining the process involved in some players living up or down to their coaches initial expectations of their performance, attitude, or fortitude.

Through her own research and a review of the literature, Horn (1986) has proposed the most comprehensive outline for understanding the processes underlying the Pygmalion Effect. The material in this chapter provides the reader with evidence to support Horn's model as well as providing some insight into the mediating factors that influence uses to illustrate how a coach's expectancies of a player may influence his/her performance and psychological growth. Horn divides the process of a coach's expectations of a player becoming a reality into four steps. First, a coach develops expectations about the athlete that the coach uses to predict the quality of her performance and behavior during the season. These expectations can be based on personal attributes or performance attributes and may be accurate or inaccurate. Second, the coach's expectations of the player affect his/her behavior toward the player. There will be a pattern of behavior that signals difference in the type, amount, quality, and frequency of the interactions between that player and the coach in relation to other players. Third, a coach's differential treatment of a player can affect the players' performance, self-perceptions, and psychological growth. Last, but not least, the player's conformity to the coach's original expectations is the final stage of the self-fulfilling phenomenon. Kelsy's story provides us with strands of evidence to connect Horn's four basic ingredients into a more precise instrument to analyze, describe, and predict the existence or potential emergence of expectancy effects between the coach and a player.

Throughout this thesis, and in this chapter in particular, my description of the communication within in the setting highlights the basic premise underlying the symbolic-interactionist perspective. Coach-athlete relations are a series of interactions, not isolated acts. The dyadic interactions between Kelsy and Donna had an direct impact on Sara, Babs, Kelsy, Donna, and at times the performance of the team on the field. The trials and tribulations associated with Kelsy's quest to catch for Donna paralleled the neogtiations between Donna's vision for this team and the players' vision of a team.

The findings of this study provide evidence for the premise that the meanings that members of interscholastic high school softball teams attach to “the team,” the behaviors of the other, and their behaviors emerge from their interpretations of their perceptions of self by the other and the meanings that they attach to the behaviors of the other. More importantly, the evidence in the body of this paper supports the assertion that context plays an integral role in one’s interpretation of objects, events, and behaviors of the other. Consequently, one must hypothesize that the evolutionary process of becoming a “team” will be qualitatively different dependent on the sport, the level of competition, gender, and organizational factors such as number of games, practices, resources, etc. Based on this theoretical assumption, the team that Donna and the nine players are looking forward to returning to will be qualitatively different than “the team” at the banquet.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

Unlike our vision of “coach,” our conceptualization of an interscholastic sport team seems more perceptible. An interscholastic team is a group consisting of players and a coach volunteering to work interdependently toward the common goal of competing against other interscholastic teams within a district/league. While competing, this group expects to have fun, learn new skills, and develop friendships in their quest to do their best. The steps to becoming a team are pretty straightforward. It all begins when the administration hires a qualified coach. From then on, the coach is in charge. She/he designs and prepares to implement a program that provides the players with the opportunity to develop their physical, mental, and emotional skills in the competitive arena. She/he selects the best available student-athletes to compete within the structural framework of the school, the league, and the state association. When the list of selected players is posted, the coach and the players officially become a team. We envision that if a coach provides clear and concise messages and more positive than negative reinforcement, she/he will successfully coordinate the players into a team that has fun, learns, and wins.

According to this definition, Donna and the players became a team on March 8, 1991, the first day of practice. Donna was hired the previous year to build an interscholastic softball program at Torrey West High School. She was rehired based on her desire to continue and her demonstrated ability to coach the previous year. She held tryouts and selected the best available thirteen players to become members of the varsity softball team. She posted the list and the next day they met in the lockerroom. Each and every participant mentioned three specific goals: have fun, be competitive, and learn about themselves and softball. They were a team.

No one will deny that they were a team on March 8, 1991; however, the body of this paper presents evidence to support the claim that the team on March 8, 1991 was different than “the team” at the banquet. The differences were not only in the quality and quantity of the interactions between and amongst Donna and the players, but also in the meanings individuals and groups of individuals attached to objects, events, and others over the course of the season. Through negotiation and renegotiation within the setting, a collective “we” evolved that seemed to understand and philosophically agree on what it meant to be a member of “the team.” Yet as the interviews show, even within the collective we, individuals behaved differently in relation to the meanings and perceptions they attached to objects (third baseline, bench), events (games vs. practices, cheering), and others (Donna, Candy, Kelsy).

Within the body of this paper, there is evidence to suggest that factors such as “coach-athlete interactions,” “culture,” and “communication,” which have traditionally been depicted as stable features of a team, are a dynamic set of changing relationships that shaped and were shaped by the pre-existing reality (school, league, district, association rules, societal stereotypes) of the team (Griffin, Skivington, & Moorhead, 1987). For these reasons, it would behoove us to apply the conceptualization of organization described by Shein (1985) to the concept of team. From this perspective, teams would be viewed as communication phenomena, that is, groups developed and maintained through continuous communication (interacts and interpretations) among its participants. This corresponds to the evidence portraying the Torrey West softball team as a result of constant negotiations of meaning amongst and between the participants. The team on the first day of practice was very different than “the team” after the Bicknell incident.

This assumption about “team” correlates very well with the basic assumptions of the symbolic-interactionist perspective that the construction of meaning is dynamic and ever changing. We are continually negotiating and renegotiating our meanings and perceptions through social interaction (Blumer, 1969). We act on the basis of our interpretations of the

meanings that we attach to objects, events, and the behaviors of others, not in response to actual actions. Our meanings are affected by our experiences within a particular reference group and are constantly being modified through repeated interactions (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Mead, 1927). This was evidenced by the continual reconstruction of the meanings that Donna and the players attached to team and their perceptions about their experiences within the team.

One specific example of how the players' meanings changed through repeated interaction was the difference in the meanings the newcomers attached to Donna's behaviors in the beginning (almost fearful) and in the end (that's her). Based on this change in their interpretation of Donna's behaviors, their behaviors changed. Likewise, as Donna's interpretations of the players' messing around behaviors changed, so did Donna's acceptance of such activities as bust a sag and the general jovial attitude of the players. The fun loving nature of the players became as normalized as Donna's "look" or her yelling.

From this perspective, communication is the process of interpreting the meanings that one attaches to the behaviors of the other. The meanings that one attaches to events, objects, and the behaviors of the other are mediated by factors such as past experiences (preinteraction expectancies, socialization through/into sport-coaching, etc.), context (games, practices, meetings, winning, losing, etc.), and factors such as position, years of experience, bench or starter, etc.

The findings in this study also provide strong validation for the premise that communication is an interpretative process. Viewing communication as a process enables us to conceptualize "team" as an organization in a continual negotiation of the ebbs and flows created by the human interactions within the setting. This basic premise of symbolic-interactionists is the thread that runs throughout the entire body of this paper. From March 8, 1991, to May 29, 1991, the meanings and perceptions that each participant attached to objects, events, and the behaviors of the other were interpreted as "reality." There were multiple realities and multiple sites of culture on the team (Fine, 1984; Gregory, 1983;

Sackman, 1992). This supports the premise that because of the interpretative nature of communication a situation is created where there may be subcultures within an organization that make up the universal culture of "the team." The universal culture of the team is the interaction between the assumptions and theories the leader brings to the group and what the group learns from their subsequent experiences with each other (Louis, 1981; Gregory, 1983; Shockley-Zalabak & Morley, 1994). Even though, as the coach, Donna held the most the most influential role in promoting her vision of team culture, the newcomers played a critical role in the negotiation process leading to the culture of "the team." In other words, the culture is the shared understanding of a symbolic system of beliefs, values, expectations, and assumptions that allows the participants to coordinate and act as a team. Culture is transmitted through modeling, imitation, instruction, negotiation, rituals, storytelling, and confrontation (Harrison & Carroll, 1991).

The collective "we" that evolved was an outgrowth of the constant negotiations between Donna and the players, more specifically Donna and the newcomers. The changes in the socioemotional climate of the team paralleled the evolution of a shared understanding of what it meant to be a member of "the team." McMurray (1994) found that the organizational climate directly relates to the communication climate within the organization. The results of this study lend support to this assertion. The satisfaction of the players with their coach and their experience improved as the sense of "we" began to evolve. The results of this study make a valid argument for understanding coach-athlete relations as just that, the relationship between what is observed and what is interpreted by the participants. We need to acknowledge that the social definitions of the participants are necessary to build our theoretical "truths" (Fine, 1985).

The initial differences in expectations and assumptions between Donna and the players were affected by the meanings and perceptions they had developed through past experiences in sport. Donna's assumptions about what it meant to be a member of her team and what it took to be successful were directly related to her past experiences as a

“ballplayer” and a coach. She learned to coach by playing and coaching. Through those experiences, Donna had an unmistakable vision of the relationship between the coach and the athlete. Communication was the expression of clear concise messages by Donna, the coach. What she said was what she meant, even though she knew her nonverbals contradicted her verbal messages about yelling, never say die, etc. She was in charge. Her success as a coach was related to their performance on the field. Athletes did not question the experience and knowledge of their coach. Athletes showed respect by calling her “Coach” and making eye contact when she was talking to them. Communication, to Donna, was the act of Donna coaching. The players needed to be coached.

Based on these assumptions about communication, Donna accused Candy of having an attitude; marginalized Kelsy’s efforts at catcher; expected the players to accept her yelling; expected the players’ to accept her exhibiting behaviors that were unacceptable for them to exhibit; and allowed Cathy to play throughout all fifty errors. Donna’s treatment of Candy and Kelsy was greatly influenced by Donna’s definition of what it took to be a “ballplayer.” She believed in the power of clear concise messages, yet her interpretation about a player as a person and a “ballplayer” was greatly influenced by the nonverbal behaviors of the player. Horn (1986) addressed the fact that personal attributes of a player can influence the coach’s expectations for that person as an athlete. This study shows that Donna’s expectations for players were based more on the nonverbal indicators (i.e., personal attributes size, hair length, etc.) of involvement in the sport than in actual performance.

Furthermore, this study shows that Donna’s differential treatment of high and low expectancy players was directly related to the meanings she attached to “ballplayer.” Her expectations for a player were constructed in relation to others on the team and her recollection of herself as a “ballplayer.” In the same way that the players’ interpretations of Donna’s behaviors were directly related to their past experiences with other coaches, they were constantly comparing Donna to Milly and Martha. Moreover, their persistent

preinteraction expectancies of what Donna would be like as a coach prevailed over her actual behaviors. Much like the situation with Kelsy, her actual performance was negated by Donna's lack of confidence in Kelsy. In the face of disconfirming evidence, those meanings and perceptions bent, but did not disappear. This evidence confirms Hollingsworth's (1989) and Sage's (1989b) supposition that one's conceptualization of coaching/teaching develops through socialization via the system and is fairly resistant to change. A shared understanding of what it means to coach (occupational culture) evolves from going through the system, informally discussing the acts of coaching, and observing others. Both researchers caution that without an understanding of the strength and origins of the meanings and perceptions that coaches attach to their behaviors, it will be difficult to change their leadership and teaching styles. With that caution in mind, future research should focus on understanding the processes involved in shaping coaches that exhibit behaviors that are attributed to the stereotypical ranting, raving. Until we understand how coaches interpret and justify their own behaviors, our abilities to change their behaviors in coaching education programs will be limited.

One of the most pervasive findings within the body of this paper was the role nonverbal behaviors played in dyadic and team relations. From Donna on down, everyone made judgments about others based on eye contact, "beasty arms," hair length, looks, noise level, and perceived speed. Not only did the interpretation of nonverbal behaviors provide instrumental information, but more importantly, relational information. The players seemed to take Donna's yelling personally even though she stated otherwise. Many times, her yelling was accompanied by "the look," a kick, or change in body posture. In game situations, when she was not yelling, she became silent, seemingly uninvolved with the struggles of her players, on and off the field. The players appeared to pay more credence to their interpretations of her nonverbals than to her verbal behaviors. A future line of research in the area of communication within the competitive sport setting might focus on possible gender differences in exhibiting and interpreting nonverbal behaviors. More importantly,

we need to pay more attention within the field to the role nonverbal behaviors play in dyadic and group relations within the sport setting.

Donna perceived that Candy and Kelsy “had attitudes” toward her and the team because of their lack of eye contact. Donna’s lack of attention to games, not going to the huddle, and her kicking during games were interpreted by individual players as a sign of not caring for them or the team. Based on differences in communication amongst the Us group and between Donna and the Us group, she felt left out of her own team. In almost every instance when a player or Donna described a case of feeling hurt or concerned about what someone thought of them, nonverbal behaviors were mentioned as the main indicators of their assessment of their relational status with another person.

This confirms the findings of Burgoon and Hale (1984). Nonverbal behaviors play a key role in the conveying relational information. I would propose that the influence of nonverbal behaviors in the competitive sport is augmented by the nature of the setting. First, coaches and athletes are usually not within speaking range. Consequently both learn to attend to the others’ nonverbals for information gathering purposes. Second, in game situations, people’s frustrations with themselves and the context are highly visible and open to interpretation by others who are also influenced by the instability of competition. From this study, one might claim that nonverbal communication plays a key role in the development of the team.

The competitive sport setting is distinctly different from all other organizations. We have done very little to formulate a theoretical framework that can be used to predict behavior within the competitive sport setting. We have very little understanding about the relation between “coach,” “communication,” “players,” and “team.” This is due in part to our traditional way of thinking about communication. To date, within our field, communication has been studied as a concrete variable instead of the process through which the coach and athletes negotiate the art of coaching. There is no denial that the coach is in the most influential position on the team. The role of the coach is the leader of the

team. However, there is a lack of understanding on how the coach and players negotiate that role and how the coach coaches. In this study, roles not only shaped the behavior of Donna and the players (bench, catcher, favorite, etc.), but the people in those roles modified them through interactions within the setting (Colomy and Rhoades, 1993).

Team Building Research

In the future, we need to follow the lead of the researchers working in the area of team building and, like this study, conduct research within the field focusing on not only the social interactions that lead to the development of a “team mind,” but also attempt to understand what type of relationship between the coach and the athletes would lead to decisions that effectively coordinate the needs of the team and the individuals (Dyer, 1987; Hare, 1992). Within the team building literature, there are two main lines of research. One group of researchers investigates the processes underlying decision making by the leader and the group (Klein, Orasanu, Calderwood, & Zsombok, 1993). The second group within the discipline focuses on group development (Gersick, 1992; Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995). Our knowledge base about the competitive sport setting might be greatly enhanced if we were to adapt theoretical frameworks and methodologies from this perspective for use in the competitive sport setting.

As the researchers in this discipline have done, we must place equal value on the results from studies using qualitative and quantitative methods. More importantly, we need to be integrating methodologies in an effort to provide a comprehensive triangulation of data. The results from this study suggest that measures of cohesiveness, leadership preferences, satisfaction with team, sport, and/or coach should be given at different points and time in the season and in different contexts. Consequently, the next step in this line of research is to use quantitative and qualitative methods equally and in tandem to study men coaching boys, and men coaching girls/women in an effort to develop sport specific theoretical frameworks pertaining to leadership, organizational development, and the interplay between the social definitions of the participants and the pre-existing reality.

We know very little about the processes underlying the decisions that coaches make on and off the field. We do know that coaches seem to view an organization as more important than the sum of its parts. Yet, results from studies in the area of team building suggest that the most successful groups are the ones where the leader acknowledges the assets of the individuals within the group and attempts to lead, not control, his/her people within the group (Gersick, 1988; Hare, 1992; Woodcock & Francis, 1994). I would assert that the term Gersick (1988) coined for the transitional periods of group development, "punctuated equilibrium," could be used to describe the ebbs and flows of this team's development. However, the factor that seemed to trigger the transition periods was not time as in Gersick's (1988) research. As illustrated on the timeline (see Appendix H), the highs (periods of negotiated "team") corresponded to events when Donna either crossed the boundary between Donna and "Coach" or when she provided the players with more opportunity to feel as though the team belonged to all of them (Donna and the players). The lows seemed to correspond to times when Donna exerted authoritarian control and distanced herself, as "coach" from the players.

Approach-Avoidance

Fear of Being Labeled

There are a number of possible explanations for Donna's approach-avoidance behaviors. The first explanation is related to gender. I had noticed throughout the study that Donna very rarely touched the players. At the banquet, she stated that the players were to shake her hand and hug Pam. That request by Donna surprised me. Pam had not been present for most of the practices and games. Her career had kept her from fulfilling her duties as an assistant coach. One would expect that Donna was closer to the players than Pam and that the players were closer to Donna than Pam. If there was going to be hugging, why not between Donna and the players? Although I did not ask that specific question, Donna did provide one explanation for her distancing Donna, the coach, and Donna, the person, from the players. The following quote is of Donna trying to recollect why she

accused the players of not including her as a member of "the team" at the meeting after the Bicknell incident.

There must have been something specific that they were doing that they..I guess, you know? I have this whole paranoia that they all want to stay this far away from me because they're afraid. Uh..of me being gay. Like I say it is a paranoia. I think. In fact we were talking about that at the banquet. The reason that I shake their hand and I don't touch them is because I don't want any of their parents to think anything whatsoever about anything I do or say. And so you know there's always going to be and even if it's only because of me and what's in my own mind. There will always be a gap but I want to make it as small as possible (Transcription taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna continued this discussion by describing the measures that she perceived that she had to take to dispel what she considered the natural assumption that softball coaches were lesbians. Not only did her paranoia of being labeled a lesbian affect her relationship with the players, but the paranoia dictated the style and length of her hair, how she dressed, and her topics of conversation. In the following quote, Donna explains that her paranoia was out of fear of being labeled a lesbian, possibly leading to losing her job as a teacher.

And I think if I weren't a teacher, I wouldn't be as paranoid as I am. In general, people expect it from a coach....They expect a teacher to be a square..pure, honest, true (Transcription of taped interview 6/19/91).

Donna knew of coaches, softball coaches in particular, where the assumption of being a lesbian cost them their job. She liked teaching and coaching. But teaching was her career. Donna's perceptions that people assume that softball coaches are lesbians affected not only the dyadic coach-athlete relationships, but also seemed to affect the team development. The evidence shows that every time Donna and the players began to make headway in negotiating their relationship, Donna would pull back when she caught herself joking, touching, and becoming close to "the team." They wanted to include her. She wanted to be included. But, in her mind, the gap between Donna, the coach and person, and the players could never be closed, just narrowed. Her paranoia prevented her from giving the players what they seemed to want, a part of her. Each time that she gave them a

little glimpse into the human side of Donna, the negotiations toward “the team” seemed to progress (i.e., day selected captains, sign day, Casper incident, Bicknell meeting, tournaments). Then without notice, Donna would distance herself from the players, “the team,” and turn into the authoritarian coach.

In chapter four, Donna seems to be the female version of Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde. Her paranoia of being labeled a lesbian seems a viable explanation for her approach-avoidance behaviors. Donna’s own words, “I don’t want any of their parents to think anything whatsoever about anything I do or say,” seem to explain why she was so adamant about keeping a boundary line between Donna, the person, and Donna, the coach thus widening the gap between coach and player. Donna’s behaviors clearly had an affect on coach-athlete relations and on player satisfaction with their experiences and with her. Moreover, her behaviors seemed to be critical to the “punctuated equilibrium” of team development documented throughout chapter four.

In 1988, Pharr proposed that we view homophobia as a weapon of sexism. She pointed out that the fear of being labeled a lesbian impacts not only the behaviors of lesbians, but also straight women, especially in nontraditional areas where women may be challenging male power and masculinity. Sport is one of those areas. Donna was a victim of homophobia. As she said, real or not (the assumption that softball coaches are lesbians), in her mind, she had to distance herself from the athletes in order to protect herself from being labeled a lesbian, from possibly losing her job.

In the future, we need to examine what roles sexism and homophobia play in keeping women from coaching, driving them out of coaching, and/or shaping their leadership styles. Donna’s fear of being labeled a lesbian led to her distancing herself from the players and “the team.” When Donna relented and narrowed the gap, the players were more satisfied with their experiences, with Donna and with “the team,” and so was Donna. Prior to that, Kelsy, Candy, Sara, and Cissy had considered quitting. As responsible researchers, we need to begin a line of research that acknowledges the existence and

prevalence of homophobia in sport. More importantly we must attempt to understand how homophobia is used as a weapon to shape the experiences of women. This will help us to understand how sexism and homophobia affect the experiences of all participants in the competitive sport setting, female and male.

Leadership Styles

As I stated earlier, very few systematic lines of research have been conducted in the area of coaching. For that reason, there is not any evidence to support predictable gender differences in preference for leadership styles (Chelladurai, 1984), cohesiveness (Carron, 1982), or socialization (Sage, 1989). However, each of these researchers has proposed that the design of future research in those areas include the assessment of gender differences. In 1989, Eitzen & Pratt designed a study specifically to address gender differences in coaching philosophy. The results of their study provide another possible explanation for Donna's controlling authoritarian behavior. In their study, they found that women were more conventional than men in their coaching philosophies. Women coaches placed more importance on players controlling their emotions and giving 100% than did men. Women coaches, as well as any woman who attempts to contest the male power structure, are placed in a position where they have to "be one of the guys" just to be considered for the position. Women must continue to "be one of the guys" or be perceived as weak, as female, no longer qualified to coach.

Donna wanted to be more like her female college coach. Yet, she could not bring herself to have one on one conferences with the players or just act as a friend and counselor. She seemed to emulate the authoritative behavior of the male coaches that she described. How much of her behavior was influenced by the pressure to be "one of the guys?" How much of her behavior was influenced by the fear of being labeled a lesbian?" According to Pharr (1988), these issues are related to the institutional sexism that exists in our society, and in sport. Without sexism, Donna would not have to worry about being labeled a lesbian. If we judged people's abilities to perform a task on their qualifications,

not gender, Donna would not have to worry about being viewed as a weak women if she reached out to her players. She would be viewed as a caring coach. In the future, we need to focus more attention on the experiences of women in sport. We need to understand the role gender plays in shaping the behaviors and choices of women within the sport setting. More importantly, what is the relationship between gender and socialization into, through, and out of sport?

In Conclusion

This study was an investigation into the role of communication, more specifically the coach's communication behaviors, in the development of a team. The findings suggest that Donna's communication behaviors provided sites (rituals, meeting, huddles, tournaments) for the successful transmission of a strong team culture (Harrison & Carroll, 1991); nevertheless, "the team" at the banquet was a result of the interactions between the individual and the reference group meanings and perceptions of the players, Donna's vision for team, and the experiences they shared, not Donna's actual communication behaviors. With these results, we have a better understanding of the role of communication in the development of team and in the art of coaching. The findings of this study suggest that, at some level, "communication," "team," "culture," and "coaching" are synonymous. More importantly, communication is a process that involves the creation of meaning through social interactions; interpreting objects, events, and behaviors based on those meanings; and then acting toward the meanings one attaches to the behaviors of the other. Communication is not solely a matter of observed behaviors or the existence of patterned behaviors. Communication is synonymous with coaching and team development. For these reasons, we must continue using methodologies that allow us to bridge the gap between our traditional theoretical "truths" about communication and the "reality" of communication within the competitive sport setting as presented in this thesis.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

COACH'S INFORMED CONSENT

1. I have been informed of the reasons behind the study. I understand that the focus of the study is the role of communication in the development of the team.
2. I understand that Linda Lyman will observe most of my practices and games.
3. I understand that Linda Lyman will observe various formal and informal team events that may help in understanding the role of communication within the team.
4. I understand that she and I may have formal discussions before and after some of the practices and games. These discussions will be at my convenience and with my permission.
5. I understand that I will be formally interviewed three times during the season. I also understand that these interviews could last up to two hours and they will be at my convenience.
6. I understand that if I agree, the interviews may be tape recorded and that the tapes will be destroyed after the final transcriptions have been made.
7. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate at any time during the course of the project.
8. I understand that a fictitious name will be used in the recording of the interview and observational data.
9. I understand that the final reporting of the data will be done in a manner that will make it impossible for anyone to ascertain my identity through links with the league, the school, or personal attributes and actions.
10. I understand that I have the right at any time during the study to clarify issues concerning the project and my participation.
11. I understand that Linda Lyman will be collecting written materials such as rules, game plans, and memos.
12. I understand that due to the nature of the research there may be times when Linda Lyman may ask for different types of access and I have the right to refuse such access.
13. I also understand that I have the right to maintain control over the amount of access that Linda has within the setting and with the athletes.
14. I understand that at the end of the project I have the right to any information gained from this project that will help my future in coaching.

I have read and understand the above statements. I have decided to participate in the project with the understanding that I am free to withdraw my consent without prejudice at any time. Coach's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent:

My name is Linda Lyman. I am conducting a study about the role communication plays in bringing your daughter's softball team together. Your daughter's softball coach, Dawn Arnett, has given me permission to observe her coaching during practices and games. I will be conducting the study in partial fulfillment for my doctoral degree at Michigan State University. I am interested in understanding the role the coach's communication plays in bringing the team together.

The coach and the athletes are not the focus of the study. However, in order to understand the role of communication, I must observe interactions between the coach and the athletes. The observations will include games, practices, and other team gatherings that may help in understanding the role of communication in bringing the team together. Additionally, I believe that it is necessary to interview your daughter and her teammates. The focus of these interviews will be to understand the athletes' perceptions about their team. Consequently, I need your permission to observe interactions that may involve your daughter and to interview her.

I would like to interview your daughter early in the season to get a sense of who she is and what she expects from the upcoming softball season. This interview will last approximately one hour. Furthermore, I would like to interview your daughter after the season to debrief her and ask her views about some of the tentative findings of the project. I assure you that your daughter's identity will be kept confidential. Each athlete will be given a fictitious name. The athlete's fictitious name will be used on all of the collected data. Additionally, all reporting of the data will be done in such a manner that the identity of your daughter cannot be linked to the school, the team, or any personal characteristics. No one, besides me, will see the observational fieldnotes or the interview transcriptions. The coach will not have any access to my data, nor will I discuss with the coach anything that your daughter discusses with me. You or your child are free to decline participation in this project at any time without penalty.

I hope that you will allow our daughter to participate in this project. I am conducting this study in the hopes of learning more about the role of the coach's communication behaviors in bringing together a team. This type of information may be very useful in developing more effective coaching education programs. If you do not give your consent, I will not use your daughter or her behaviors in the reporting of my research.

The possibility may exist that I may need to talk to you to get a better understanding of the experiences that may influence team events. If this becomes the case, I will contact you personally for permission to discuss the possibility of your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, feel free to contact me at 339-2736 in the evenings.

Please sign the attached consent form and send it with your daughter to the next practice.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

ATHLETE/PARENT INFORMED CONSENT

1. I have been informed of the purpose of the project. I understand that the focus of the study is the role of communication in the development of the team.
2. I understand that Linda Lyman will observe most of the practices and games in which my daughter will be a participant.
3. I understand that these observations may involve actions by my daughter.
4. I understand that Linda Lyman may have informal discussions with my daughter. These discussions will be at my daughter's convenience.
5. I understand that my daughter may be formally interviewed two times during the season. I also understand that these interviews could last up to ninety minutes and will be at my daughter's convenience.
6. I understand that I have the right to require the interviews be conducted under my supervision.
7. I understand that if I give my consent, the interviews may be tape recorded and that the tapes will be destroyed after the final transcriptions have been made.
8. I understand that my daughter or I have the right to refuse to participate at any time during the course of the project.
9. I understand that a fictitious name will be used in the recording of the data collected in observations and interviews with my daughter.
10. I understand that the information gained from this project will be reported in a manner that will make it impossible for anyone to ascertain the identity of my daughter through links with the league, the school, or personal characteristics.
11. I understand that at any time during the study my daughter and I have the right to clarify issues concerning the project and our participation at any time.
12. I understand that the coach will not have access to any of the data collected during this project. I also understand that Linda Lyman will not discuss my daughter's responses with the coach or other athletes.
13. I understand that in the future I may be asked to give my permission for a formal interview.

I have read and understand the above statements. I have decided to grant permission for my daughter to participate in the project with the understanding that my daughter and I are free to withdraw our consent without prejudice at any time.

Athlete's Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

TEAM PURITAN CREDO

I care about and respect each of you as individual persons with needs, wants, capabilities, and limits.

Care about and respect yourself, your teammates, your sport, and others at all times.

Winning is great, but even if we lose there will be valuable things to gain:

Self-respect - for participating, for effort readily given.

Friendships - maybe lifelong.

Teamwork - for never letting teammates feel alone in our endeavor.

Physical improvements.

Knowledge of the sport and of yourself.

Memories.

FUN!!!

Since we work together in practice as a team, we win and/or lose as a team. No one person is ever the sole victor or the only cause for a loss.

I believe that we all will get back only what we are willing to give. I'm willing to give 100%, are you???

As a team we all rely on each other for many things, and as a team we all respectfully and willingly give those things:

Reliability - be prepared, be on time.

Sensitivity - remember that we all have feelings.

Encouragement - remember that we all need help sometimes (physically, academically, personally, socially).

Effort - Not trying to cheat everyone on the team, not just yourself.

We're involved in an athletic activity, but academics come first.

Our team goal is: Showing a temper is disrespectful to me and to your teammates. Don't do it!! Be patient with yourself and others.

Breaking rules in the conduct code is also disrespectful. Skipping, drinking, smoking, using drugs, etc. will result in removal from the team. Remember, your teammates rely on you all the time. We're playing softball to have fun. Respect your sport and you will enjoy it!

APPENDIX E

TEAM PURITAN CREDO WITH MY NOTES

I care about and respect each of you as individual persons with needs, wants, capabilities, and limits.

*most important, I do not do job for money
I'm coach but a person too
know enough about you ????? care*

Care about and respect yourself, your teammates, your sport, and others at all times.

rely on you both on and off field - if messing around in class, I'll find out about it.

Winning is great, but even if we lose there will be valuable things to gain:

Self-respect - for participating, for effort readily given. *satisfied with effort*

Friendships - maybe lifelong. *"I hope to become friends with you."*

Teamwork - for never letting teammates feel alone in our endeavor.

Physical improvements. *Six minute wall sit / Heather*

Knowledge of the sport and of yourself. *What challenges reach*

Memories. *Whether win/lose*

FUN!!!

Since we work together in practice as a team, we win and/or lose as a team. No one person is ever the sole victor or the only cause for a loss.

*I hope after loss no one will if I had just or so and so had
If we lose - takes all, everyone*

I believe that we all will get back only what we are willing to give. I'm willing to give 100%, are you???

*Idea of reciprocity - get what you give
If I see you at 70% only give you back 70%.*

As a team we all rely on each other for many things, and as a team we all respectfully and willingly give those things:

I want you to really mesh here.

Reliability - be prepared, be on time.

Sensitivity - remember that we all have feelings. *including me and Pam*

Encouragement - remember that we all need help sometimes (physically, academically, personally, socially). *Be willing to give - be willing to ask. Come to me.*

Effort - Not trying cheats everyone on the team, not just yourself. *Everyone relying on 100%.*

We're involved in an athletic activity, but academics come first.

Our team academic goal is: *C or better. Last year was 2.5 or above. Reminds them of all academic.*

Showing a temper is disrespectful to me and to your teammates. Don't do it!! Be patient with yourself and others.

We're gonna get some crappy umpiresI'll talk to umpires

Breaking rules in the conduct code is also disrespectful. Skipping, drinking, smoking, using drugs, etc. will result in removal from the team. Remember, your teammates rely on you all the time.

You can go to a party if I find out you drink you will be off my team - quiet. Make the right choices.

We're playing softball to have fun. Respect your sport and you will enjoy it!

Kind of our constitution.

Take home and sign it and tape on inside of locker.

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

TEAM CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Being team leader is an honor and a privilege. As such, you are charged with the following responsibilities:

Act as liaisons with open and honest communication between players and coaches.

Leadership role - to keep morale high by setting a good example for your teammates. It can and will become “catchy” and therefore make your job easier.

A POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE is essential at all times.

Conduct team meetings when appropriate.

Be willing to accept responsibility, as more pressure will be put on your behavior on and off the field. (Ex: being on time for practice, games; staying “up” even if you are having a bad game or you feel a negative attitude coming on, etc.)

Help to make sure that all rules set forth are understood and followed at all times.

Keep an eye on team equipment. Stay in charge of it. (Check dugouts, assign job of carrying equipment so all players help, proper care of pitching machine, cords, etc.)

Help pack and store uniforms and equipment.

BUY COACH LOTS AND LOTS OF PRESENTS...

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

THE PARTICIPANTS: NAMES, POSITION, AND SUBGROUP AFFILIATION

Coach

Donna
Pam - Assistant coach

Them

Cathy - Shortstop (**starter**), *captain*
Polly - Firstbase (**starter**)
Tanya - Centerfield (**starter**)

US

Candy - Pitcher (**Starter**)
Babs - Catcher (**starter**), *captain*
Cassie - Second base (**backup**), rightfield (occasional)
Kelsy - Rightfield (**starter**), catcher (3rd in rotation, eventual starter)
Marlene - Pitcher (**2nd rotation**), shortstop, third base (backup),
Molly - Thirdbase (**backup**)-senior
Nan - Secondbase (**starter**), utility fielder
Popeye - Leftfield (**starter**)-senior
Sara - Catcher (**2nd in rotation**), right field (occasional)
Tami - Third base (**starter**), pitcher (occasional)

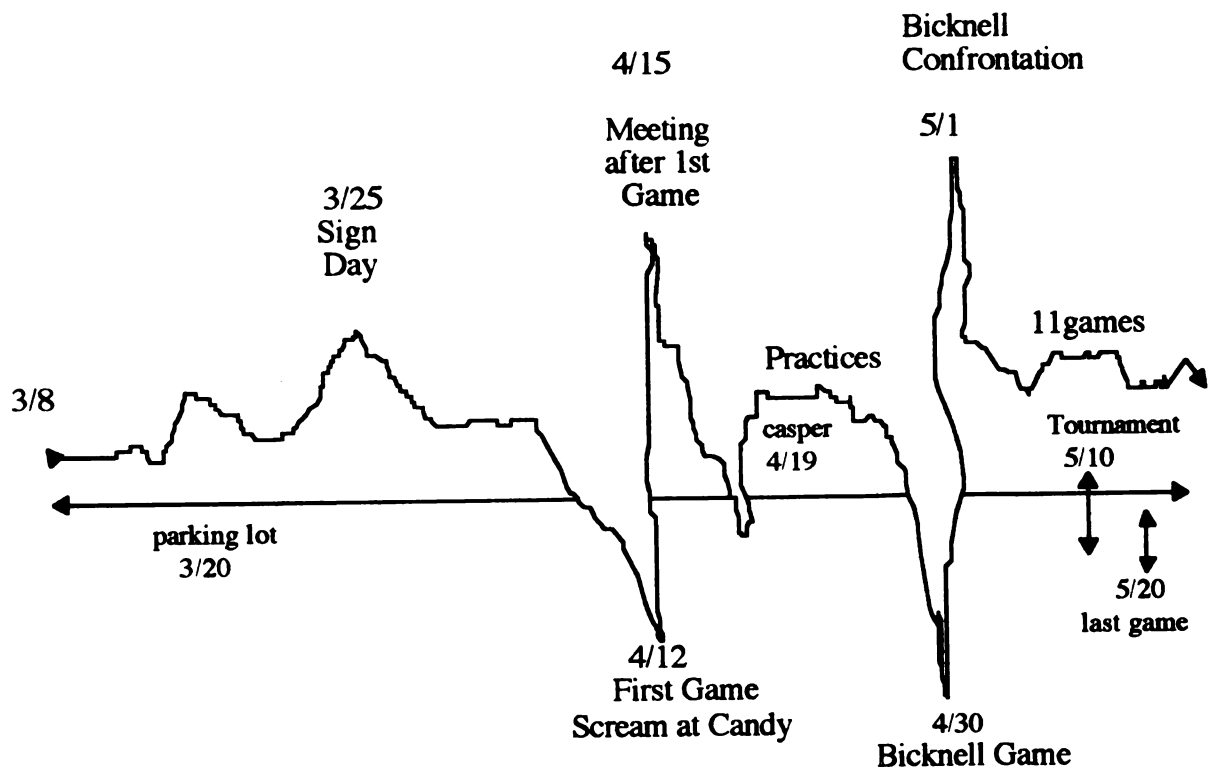
Other people affiliated with the program

Milly - Junior varsity coach
Martha - Freshman coach

APPENDIX H

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TIMELINE



LIST OF REFERENCES

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