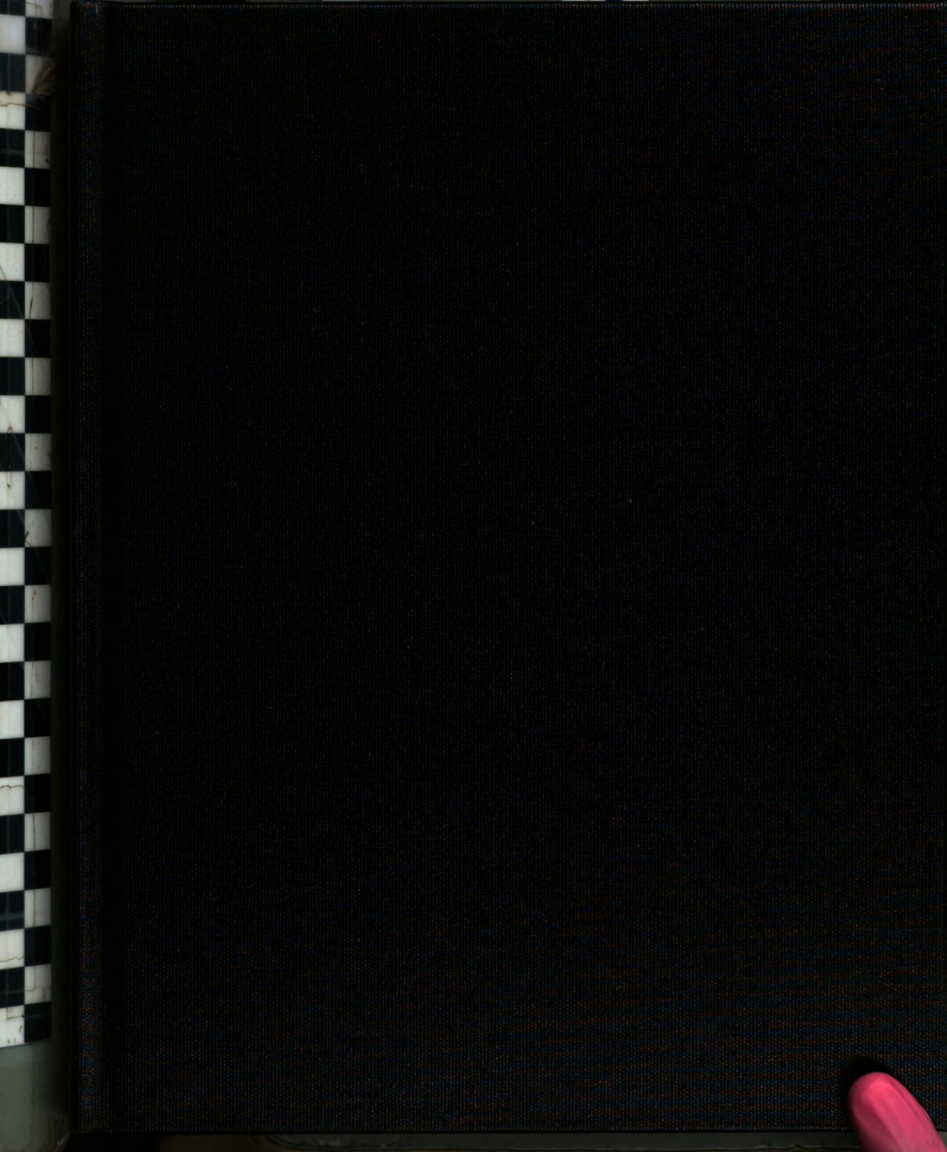




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Ph.D. degree in Kinesiology

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THE EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING THE NEW HEAD COACH
OF A COLLEGIATE PROGRAM:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Volume I

By

Tracy Ilene Carrington

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Kinesiology

2010

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific information required.

ABSTRACT

THE EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING THE NEW HEAD COACH OF A COLLEGIATE PROGRAM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

By

Tracy Ilene Carrington

The purpose of the present research investigation was to examine the experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program from an existential-phenomenological perspective in order to generate a fund of possible elements and relationships that could be used to determine the essential structure of this experience. Twelve NCAA Division I collegiate head coaches were chosen, because they represented a population that had achieved expert status in their field, and were most likely to have had experiences at all levels of participation, thus providing a richer and clearer depiction of coaches' involvement during this process of job transition. The analysis of the interview data identified five major themes. The first, Taking Over Someone Else's Program, was directly related to the experiences of participants becoming new head coaches and taking control of their new programs. The second theme, The Role of Being the Head Coach (Leader), revealed the significance of the leadership position throughout the transition process. The third theme, Implementing the Structure – "Functioning like a Business," focused on the methods coaches utilized to build their new programs. The fourth theme, Understanding the Dynamics of a New Coaching Staff, focused on coaches hiring, managing, and developing new coaching staffs in order to assist them in building their programs. The fifth theme, The Role of Family, revealed the significant role that family played in participants' experiences of becoming new head coaches.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the people who have had the greatest influence on my life. To my mother, who has challenged me to be my best, given me the strength to overcome challenges, and has always believed in me. To my father, whose love and dedication to our family made me believe that as a woman I was capable of anything. Their continuous love and support has given me the opportunity to live all of my dreams. To my sweet sisters, Lisa and Cheri, whose determination, positive attitudes, and creativity continue to inspire me throughout my life. To Dr. Marty Ewing, whose continuous support, guidance, and high expectations have challenged me to achieve more than I would have ever imagined. To Dr. Debi Rhea, whose humor, generosity, moral integrity, and expertise in this field have served as not only an exemplary role model, but even more importantly, as a friend. To Dr. Joe Whitney, my greatest mentor, who knew all of my fears and weaknesses, and never gave up on me.

To my son Cal, whose positive spirit and love for life continues to remind me of the things that are truly important in this life. I am so thankful he has been a part of this journey. And to my best friend and soul mate Chris, who was willing to move all over this country to support my dreams, and made me believe they were his dreams as well. His constant love and support in this process, gave me the strength and courage to make all of my dreams come true. I could not have done this without him.

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I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of my research analysis team members, Dr. Debi Rhea, Dr. Matt Johnson, and Dr. Marty Ewing. Their expertise and tireless efforts in the analysis of the data presented in this dissertation added greatly to the quality of this study.

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I especially want to express my appreciation for the many coaches who have made a difference in my life. Every athlete dreams of playing for a great coach and I have had the opportunity to work with some of the best. I want to thank Butch Traeder, for his passion and dedication to coaching. As my first coach, he introduced me to mental training and developed my love for sports that has continued throughout my career. I would also like to thank Scott Bennett, for taking a chance on the “distance running pole-vaulter.” He made me believe I could fly, and allowed me to achieve more than I could have ever imagined.

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Furthermore, I want to express my gratitude to the coaches who participated in this study. Their honesty and willingness to discuss their experiences are the real strength of this study.

Finally, I want to thank my sweet husband Chris for all the sacrifices he has made so that I could complete this dissertation. Since the day we met, he has continued to believe in me, stand beside me, and support me in achieving my dreams. He is a wonderful husband and loving father, and I am so fortunate to be sharing my life with him.

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INTRODUCTION

The coaching profession has always been a topic of great interest for sport psychology researchers (e.g., Coté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995a, 1995b; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989) as the coach is considered to play a vital role in determining and maximizing the positive effects of sport participation. The way coaches structure the athletic situation, the priorities they establish, the attitudes and values they convey, the leadership provided, and the behaviors in which they engage clearly influence the effects of sport participation on athletes. The job is complex and dynamic and the influence of this profession on the world of sports is enormous and can be measured and felt at all levels of sport involvement.

Researchers have examined the coaching process from numerous perspectives including comparisons between novice and expert coaches (Jones, Housner, & Kornspan, 1995), knowledge of elite coaches (Coté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995a, 1995b; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989; Saury & Durand, 1995), leadership styles (Chelladurai, 1990, 1993; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978, 1980), various types and dimensions of coaching behaviors (Coté & Sedgwick, 2003; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll & Smith, 1989), case studies of expert coaches (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004; Kimiecik & Gould, 1987; Wernther & Trudel, 2006), mentoring and mental preparation (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007; Gould Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987; Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2002), motivational climates created by coaches (Conroy, Kaye, & Coatsworth, 2006; Pensgaard & Roberts, 1996; Reinboth & Duda, 2004), as well as coaching development (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). Other elements inherent to the profession have been widely examined

as well, specifically organizational support (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Doherty, 1998; Kim & Cunningham, 2005; Kim, Cunningham, & Sagas, 2005; Pastore, Goldfine, & Reimer, 1996), work-family conflict (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Sagas, 2007), job satisfaction (Davies, Bloom, & Salmela, 2005; Dixon & Sagas, 2007), and stress and burnout (Capel, Sisley, Desertrain, 1987; Cassesse & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, Eklund, Ritter-Taylor, 1999).

Most relevant to the current investigation, Vallée and Bloom (2005), examined how expert university coaches of team sports built successful programs, with coaches being interviewed at the height of their programs' success. These coaches had been with their teams for many years and had achieved a recognized level of success, and while they touched on different aspects faced during their initial appointment, the investigation was more focused on how they built their programs versus what they experienced while they were trying to accomplish this task.

During the first few transitional years, it is believed that new head coaches will bring vastly different experiences to the coaching profession. Their job requirements remain consistent with those of veteran coaches, who are also required to manage, organize, lead, and provide far more than just the technical instruction of athletes. However, the job requirements of new head coaches also include coaching athletes they did not recruit, recruiting new athletes to a program that has yet to be established, and developing relationships with not only a new team of young athletes, but doctors, athletic trainers, administrators, alumni, donors and most likely a new staff of assistant coaches. Their new job also requires them to manage funds, organize practices, make travel and competition schedules, learn and implement new school policies and regulations, as well

[illegible]

as personal coaching policies in a way so that the two do not collide. Job turnover among coaches is quite common within the profession as administrations are constantly fighting donors and alumni to create the top athletic program, and coaches are often trying to make the best move to enhance their careers (Coy & Masterson, 2007). Accordingly, among university athletic programs, it is almost guaranteed that at least one coach will either be terminated, replaced, or choose to leave a program within a given year. The result of these changes can be felt at many levels throughout the organization, and often the incoming head coach is under intense pressure to perform and produce success within a certain time frame (Croft, 2007).

In a job that already demands long hours and constant travel, it is believed that during this transitional phase, new head coaches are required to take-on even more than the average coach (Croft, 2007). And yet, every season the sports world watches as many new head coaches are able to manage and balance this challenging process effectively, while others struggle through the process. While many of Valle and Bloom's (2005) findings are expected to be supported by the present investigation, this study seeks to uncover the significant aspects of coaches' experiences during this challenging phase of transition in their careers. Literature on this topic comes mainly from personal accounts recorded in coaching and athletic director journals. Thus, the problem addressed in this study concerns the relative absence of coaches' voices from a research perspective during this transitional phase of their careers. Gaining insight into this phase of the coaching process would benefit countless individuals, including both current and incoming athletes, athletic administrators, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic training staff

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and medical support teams, sport psychology practitioners, as well as the actual coaches themselves.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present research investigation was to examine the experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program from an existential-phenomenological perspective in order to generate a fund of possible elements and relationships that could be used to determine the essential structure of this experience. NCAA Division I collegiate head coaches were chosen, because they represented a population that had achieved expert status in their field, and were most likely to have had experiences at all levels of participation, thus providing a more rich and clear depiction of coaches' involvement during this process of job transition. The primary guide consisted of the following question: Describe your experience of being the new head coach of a collegiate program. This question set the direction of the interview and provided the ground from which the phenomenon could emerge (Dale, 1994). Although never needed, a general topical guide was created to be used in situations where sufficient meaning and depth had not been reached. The guide consisted of broad questions that could "facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, and substantive descriptions of the participant's experience of the phenomenon" (p. 116, Moustakas, 1994). The following questions were available to the researcher, but because they were all discussed by participants within their interviews, they were never needed to facilitate full disclosure of the experience: 1. What incidents and people connected with the experience stand out for you? 2. How has this experience affected you? 3. What changes do you associate with the experience? 4. How did the experience affect significant others in your life? 5. What feelings were generated by this

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experience? 6. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to this experience?

(Adapted from Moustakas, 1994).

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was that it provided an exploratory examination of the experience of coaches' establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs. As head coaches of NCAA Division I collegiate sports teams, the participants had reached expert level status as coaches in their chosen sport, comprising a sample that had the opportunity to traverse the various stages of coaching development. Thus, their participation increased the likelihood that significant elements pertinent to this phase of the coaching profession would be uncovered while investigating this phenomenon. The use of a phenomenological interview also added to the significance of this investigation. This methodology allowed an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and provided insights into the experiences of participants that would otherwise be unattainable. Given that the participants themselves were the ones who had the privileged perspective of their experiences, they were able to correct the interviewer's leading questions that did not follow the dialogue (Dale, 1994). This freedom allowed for the discovery of previously undetected factors that were vital to understanding the common structure of coaches' experiences during this transitional phase of their careers.

Finally, the present study offered for the first time an examination of the essential structure of the experience of being the head coach during this common, yet unexplored transitional stage of coaching development. This is a phenomenon that continues to impact everyone involved in the collegiate world of sports, but has received virtually no scholarly attention. Thus, gaining a greater understanding of this phenomenon provided

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insight for coaches, athletes, administrators, medical support staff members, sport psychology consultants, and others directly linked with collegiate athletic programs. Based on the results of this investigation, individuals functioning within the athletic realm may be able to better understand the way in which their relationships with these coaches influence the coaching process and, in turn, entire athletic programs. Insights also offered coaches a better understanding of the intricacies of their profession. Finally, this investigation provided sport psychology consultants with a better understanding of ways to assist both athletes and coaches during this process so as to facilitate an easier transition.

Delimitations

There were three delimitations of the present investigation. The first, using all male participants, was decided upon in an attempt to create as homogeneous a sample as possible. Due to significant reported gender differences in coaching (Everhart & Chelladurai, 1998; Ingles, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000), it was important to select either male or female subjects for participation in this investigation. Because the majority (66%) of Division I head coaches are males, it seemed only natural to investigate this group first (NCAA, 2008). However, future investigations with all female participants will be an extremely important part of fully understanding the structure of this phenomenon. The second delimitation, using NCAA Division I head coaches as participants, was decided upon so as to help maintain as much similarity among the sample in terms of job policies and requirements. The final delimitation, interviewing head coaches during the first three years of their job transition, was decided upon so as to capture coaches' experiences while still involved in the transition process.

Limitations of the Study

The following were potential limitations applicable to this study:

1. Participants may have chosen to discuss experiences they believed would benefit the study, rather than elaborating on the important aspects of their own experiences.
2. All of the participants in the study were still actively involved in coaching at the time of their interview, and their responses may have been biased by their need to maintain certain professionalism about their jobs.
3. Results may not be generalizable to populations outside the sample of participants interviewed.

Assumptions of the Study

This study relied on the following assumptions:

1. Coaches' personal experiences were important in understanding the meaningfulness of this transitional process.
2. The participants in this study were able to articulate effectively their experiences as new head coaches, as well as communicate their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions as openly as possible.
3. Participants in the study provided honest accounts of their experiences of coaching.

Definition of Terms:

Existential Phenomenology: A philosophical discipline that seeks to understand and describe human life as “it is lived and reflected upon in all its first-person concreteness, urgency, and ambiguity” (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, p.5). Further, it seeks a rigorous description of human existence in a way that is free of the presuppositions of our

cultural heritage, especially philosophical dualism, as much as possible (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to investigate the experience of becoming a new head coach, it is first important to understand different factors and variables which may influence new head coaches' effectiveness as well as other significant aspects relevant to the coaching profession. This chapter will examine the coaching process in terms of the role of the coach, which includes understanding coaching knowledge, organization and preparation for training and competition, mental preparation, mentoring, leadership, enhancing group dynamics, and dimensions of coaching behaviors, as well as factors influencing the coaching profession, which include, organizational support, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and stress and burnout.

The Role of the Coach

Coaches are often viewed as “experts” by their athletes, and thus the role of the coach can carry an inherent power, authority, and influence over the lives and development of the athletes with whom they are working. The most obvious task of the coach is to help athletes develop and perform sport skills to their fullest potential. However, the role of the coach is often believed by most to transcend the boundaries of performance development and outcomes to include responsibilities similar to those of a teacher, mentor, counselor, and parent. Most coaches in their careers are typically one out of a few influential adults with whom athletes will share meaningful relationships in their lives (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988). Although existing in a highly competitive society, it is argued that the world's greatest coaches are those individuals who are not only committed to teaching their athletes how to excel in athletics, but more importantly,

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how to excel in life as well (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). Horn (1987) and Martens (1988) argued that a coach's greatest challenge is to teach not only physical skills, but build character, instill integrity, and model the way for athletes to become more confident, self-reliant individuals. Therefore, recognizing the complex nature of coaches' roles, which includes understanding coaching knowledge, organization and preparation for training and competition, mental preparation, mentoring, leadership, and the dimensions of coaching behaviors are important aspects relevant to the current investigation of coaches' establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs.

Understanding Coaching Knowledge

To assist athletes in achieving their performance potential, coaches must be able to implement a wide range of knowledge, including the instruction of skills in training as well as technical and strategic feedback during competitions (Woodman, 1993).

However, unlike professionals in most fields, coaches often do not have extensive formal training. Their backgrounds in coaching can vary from inexperienced volunteers to highly skilled, paid coaches of elite level programs. Gould, Giannini, Krane, and Hodge (1990) sought to identify the educational needs of 130 elite American coaches who were involved in the 1987 Pan American Games. With an average of 15 years of experience, and 76% of the coaches earning a collegiate degree, Gould and colleagues discovered that the two most important sources of knowledge that aided the development of the coaches and their coaching style were their own experiences and other successful coaches.

Despite the number of available formal youth coach training programs and curricula, including American Coach/Sport Education Program (ACEP/ASEP; Martens

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1997), Coach Effectiveness Training (CET; Smith & Smoll, 2002), Program for Athletic Coaches Education (PACE; Seefeldt & Brown, 1993), and numerous individualized state-regulated coaching education programs, the majority of youth coaches have received minimal formal training in coaching (Ewing, Seefeldt, & Brown, 1996). Although some of these programs were designed for coaching certification, very few states, school districts, or sport leagues required coaches to attain any form of coaching credential or certification (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2006). Due to this lack of required training, many youth coaches were forced to rely on personal experience, mentoring from other coaches, and common-sense to develop a framework for their coaching, rather than learning and enhancing their coaching skills through research-driven coaching education programs.

Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1979) revealed that youth coaches, who underwent formal coach training, such as the Coach Effectiveness Training (CET), were perceived by their athletes in a different way than those coaches who did not receive the training. The trained coaches were better liked and were rated as better teachers by their players than untrained coaches. Athletes of these coaches also reported having more fun playing their sports as well as greater cohesion with teammates. Furthermore, those athletes who began the season with lower self-esteem and participated for a CET trained coach demonstrated an increase in self-esteem over the course of the season compared to those individuals with lower self-esteem playing for non-trained coaches (Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). Further investigations also revealed that athletes playing for the CET coaches experienced lower levels of performance anxiety and decreased rates of attrition than did the control athletes (Barnett, Smoll, & Smith, 1992; Smith, Smoll, & Barnett, 1995). Overall, regardless of the win-loss records, coaches trained in “positive

coaching” techniques were better liked by their athletes and these athletes had more satisfaction with their teammates and season. In summary, results from these research investigations clearly substantiated the powerful influence and extensive benefits that positive coaching behaviors can have on participants. Benefits included active involvement, enhanced skill instruction, and positive psychological outcomes such as increased self-esteem, better social interactions with teammates, and lower levels of anxiety. Yet, despite these apparent gains the literature revealed that coaching education for youth and interscholastic coaches has not been widely accepted due to a perceived lack of effectiveness and inability to prepare coaches for the countless roles and situations they will encounter in their coaching careers (Houseworth, Davis, & Dobbs, 1990; Silvestri, 1991; Stewart & Sweet, 1992). The existence of coaches’ education programs at the intercollegiate level is virtually non-existent. This raises questions as to the preparation head coaches’ in the present investigation will have received prior to accepting their new positions.

Abraham and Collins (1998) explained that expertise in coaching is very “domain specific” (p. 68). The expert coach should have acquired expert knowledge and understanding in at least two domains, knowledge specific to coaching and knowledge specific to a particular sport. They argued that coaching knowledge is necessary to establish an optimal learning environment for athletes, while sport knowledge is needed to demonstrate and teach the techniques and tactics of the game, implement mental skills training, and ascertain physical attributes needed for the sport (Abraham & Collins, 1998). Relevant to the idea of coaching knowledge, Jones and colleagues (1995) examined the planning knowledge of novice and expert basketball coaches, and found

that expert coaches tended to establish objectives for each session, which included an understanding of how to meet these objectives and evaluated their success in attaining the desired objectives in a much more organized and focused way than the novices.

In a case study of an elite Canadian Olympic coach, Wernther and Trudel (2006) found that coaching knowledge and sport specific knowledge was gained through a number of different ways. In support of previous research in this area (Gould et al., 1990), Wernther and Trudel (2006) also discovered that previous experiences as well as interactions with other coaches were significant to the elite coach's acquisition of knowledge in coaching. The idea of previous experiences included everything up to the present day. The coach used the past season as a way to learn and grow as a coach, making changes he deemed necessary. Feedback was taken not only from other coaching staff members, but his athletes as well. Further knowledge gains were also reported through the use of materials found on the internet (i.e., medical journals). These findings were limited in that they only examined the knowledge base of one coach. However, due to the success of this coach as well as findings from other research investigations on coaching knowledge, it was reasonable to assume that some of these findings would be replicated in future investigations regarding coaching and sport specific knowledge, particularly at the intercollegiate level.

Reviewing the literature on the knowledge of coaching has revealed specific events such as participant experience, mentoring, coaching courses, interactions with other coaches, and the internet as some of the significant sources that coaches utilize to develop their coaching and sport specific knowledge (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Gould, et al., 1990; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Due to the limited nature of the literature in this

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area, it was difficult to assess whether other factors were significant to this process as well. There was or has been a lack of formal structure regarding the education and knowledge formation of more elite coaches in general. Thus, the present investigation should reveal additional sources of knowledge that participants deem significant to their current situation of establishing themselves as new collegiate head coaches.

Organization and Preparation for Training and Competition

Coaches' ability to organize and prepare for training and competition has been of significant interest to sport psychology researchers examining the coaching process. Coté and colleagues (Coté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995a; Coté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995b) investigated expert gymnastic coaches in order to understand their knowledge of coaching. This investigation provided a framework from which to conceptualize how coaches function and progress in their professions. The Coaching Model (CM) assessed specific coaching behaviors regarding training, competition, and organization utilized by the coach to pursue team and individual athlete's goals of success. The CM contends that elite coaches create "mental models" that help them organize their knowledge that results in directing their behaviors in competition, organization, and training. Significant to this section, Coté and colleagues (1995) explained that organization involves coaches creating optimal training and competitive conditions by structuring and planning tasks geared towards achieving success (see *Coaching Behaviors* for more information).

Vallée and Bloom (2005), in their examination of how expert university coaches built their successful programs, found that coaches valued specific organizational skills that allowed them to reach their goals, which included planning and management/administration. They suggested that regardless of the sport, coaches' ability

to organize before, during, or post-season establishes the foundation for the entire season. They further argued that coaches' organizational skills revealed a lot about their actual coaching style and proficiency in managing an athletic team. Coaches' planning was found to include establishing a plan for the season, organizing practices, making certain athletes were ready for competition, and giving enough time for rest and recovery. Erickson and colleagues (Erickson, Krampe, Tesch-Romer, 1993) suggested that in order to reach an international-level of performance in many different domains, it takes at least 10 years of effortful practice within an optimal training environment, which included coaches' defining appropriately difficult tasks for athletes, providing meaningful information feedback, and allowing enough time for athletes to get in needed repetitions as well as correcting performance mistakes. The quality of practice sessions has been argued to play a significant role in performance excellence, with coaches playing the fundamental role of organizing and structuring this learning environment effectively (Schmidt & Wrisberg, 2004). However, Vallée and Bloom (2005) explained that one of the challenges reported by coaches involved them being able to create a good learning environment that was fun, but also effective.

Other organizational skills significant to the coaching process reported by Vallée and Bloom (2005) were management/administrative tasks which involved working within the community, fund-raising, and recruiting. Coaches reported the importance of recruiting athletes that would match their philosophy and fit into their program. They further explained that recruiting the best athlete was not their top priority; they were more interested in finding players who were first "coachable" and reliable, looking second at their potential talent. These findings supported Giacobbi, Roper, Whitney, and Butryn's

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(2002) conclusions regarding coaches' views about the development of successful athletes. Giacobbi and colleagues also found the idea of an athletes' "coachability" as significant to coaches. Although not discussed in this study in terms of recruiting, coaches reported that the successful athletes in their programs were "coachable" defining this characteristic as "'receptive to instruction,' 'willing to make changes,' 'more educable,' and 'open'" (Giacobbi et al., 2002, p. 170). Therefore, it could be argued that because coaches viewed "coachability" as important to the overall success of an athlete, that similar to coaches in Vallée and Bloom's (2005) investigation, they would also see this as an important quality for their recruited athletes to have. The issue of "coachability" and other organizational skills associated with inheriting a team has not been addressed from a new head coaches' perspectives.

The organizational skills of coaches have been found to be of particular significance within the coaching literature (Coté, Salmela, Trudel, et al., 1995; Schmidt & Wrisberg, 2004; Vallée & Bloom, 2005). Understandably this skill has been found to have multiple influences on the coaching process. Thus, the present investigation hopes to further the knowledge in this area as it is believed that coaches while talking about their experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches would discuss different aspects of this section pertinent to their experience.

Mental Preparation

The psychology of coaching is a growing topic of interest within the literature, as researchers have begun to uncover the significant influence that coaches' have on athletes' mental preparation. In Kimiecik and Gould's (1987) case study of renowned swimming coach James "Doc" Counsilman's use of mental skills in his coaching,

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Counselman explained that “coaches do prepare their athletes mentally. Some of the best psychologists are coaches. Most coaches are so good at motivating, it’s almost frightening what they get their kids to do” (Kimiecik & Gould, 1987). To better comprehend the coaches’ role of mentally preparing their athletes, it was first important to understand the significance of the use of mental skills in achieving performance excellence. A great deal of the literature concerning mental preparation in sports draws from studies involving the experiences of elite athletes. Numerous researchers through qualitative investigation have examined the factors contributing to the development and maintenance of expert athletic performance (Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002; Gould Eklund, & Jackson, 1992a, 1992b). In a study involving the 1988 U.S. Olympic wrestling team, Gould, Eklund, and Jackson (1992a, 1992b) assessed the mental preparation strategies, precompetitive cognitions, and emotions experienced during their performances, by having the wrestlers respond to a series of questions concerning their all-time best, worst, and most crucial Olympic match. Consistent responses were found regarding wrestlers’ descriptions of all-time best and worst matches. Prior to their best matches, wrestlers adhered to their mental preparation plans, felt extremely confident, focused on clear tactical strategies, and were optimally aroused. Before their worst matches, wrestlers were not confident and reported being distracted by negative thoughts and unable to follow their precompetitive routine.

Gould, Dieffenbach, and Moffett (2002), in an evaluation of psychological characteristics of Olympic champions, found athletes were characterized by their coping strategies, confidence, mental toughness, goal setting, ability to focus, work ethic, optimism, sport intelligence, and adaptive perfectionism. Relevant to this review of

literature, coaches were found to have a significant influence on the psychological development of their athletes. This was accomplished when coaches emphasized certain philosophies such as hard work, discipline, and having fun, established trusting relationships with athletes, provided encouragement and support, taught and developed mental skills, and individualized strategies for athletes throughout their careers. These findings stressed the importance of coaches being perceptive to athletes' psychological needs and remaining flexible to use different strategies necessary during the duration of athletes' careers. Unfortunately, some findings reported by Hanson and Gould (1988) indicated that many collegiate cross country coaches were not effective in assessing their athletes' psychological needs.

Other studies have also found the influence of coaches on athletes' mental preparation to be significant, specifically the verbal persuasion techniques used by coaches (Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989; Weinberg, Grove, & Jackson, 1992). In these studies, verbal persuasion referred to the persuasive techniques often used by one's coach or self in order to manipulate confidence levels. Furthermore, elite coaches reported their own modeling of confidence as being a vital source of confidence for their athletes (Gould et al., 1989; Weinberg et al., 1992). However, the research also suggested that elite athletes were more dependent on their own self-talk, citing that this strategy provided them with a greater sense of control. Finally, based on the survey responses of U.S. Olympic coaches, Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, and Chung (2002) were able to reinforce the important role that confidence plays in the performance of elite athletes.

Other researchers have examined the coaches' role of implementing effective strategies to help athletes develop psychological skills. Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Petlichkoff (1987) surveyed 101 intercollegiate wrestling coaches regarding their thoughts on 21 different psychological skills. Findings revealed that mental toughness, positive attitude, individual motivation, and attention-concentration were valued as the most important skills for success in wrestling. Areas giving athletes the most problems were anxiety-stress control, attention-concentration, lack of confidence, and mental toughness. Coaches further reported that the easiest strategies developed were goal setting, team cohesion, and mental-practice imagery. Finally, coaches felt most successful in enhancing team cohesion, communication, sportsmanship, and goal setting. The same assessment was used in New Zealand with 46 national coaches regarding their perceptions of sport psychology and similar findings were reported (Sullivan & Hodge, 1991). These studies provided valuable information for coaching knowledge. However, the psychological strategies mentioned in the survey were pulled from the existing literature and thus, may not completely capture the most significant strategies or actual psychological strategies coaches' utilize on a daily basis within their practice and competitive environments.

Through an exploratory examination of strategies elite coaches use to enhance self-efficacy in athletes, Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Giannini, (1989) conducted two studies specifically to look at the level to which coaches utilized 13 strategies to influence self-efficacy and their perceptions regarding the usefulness of those strategies. The strategies coaches' reported most often using were instruction-drilling, modeling confidence, encourage positive self-talk, and stressing technique improvements while

downplaying outcomes. The techniques considered most effective were instructional-drilling, encouraging positive talk, modeling confidence, and liberal use of reward statements for athletes. These findings further explained why the success of verbal persuasion depends on the credibility, trustworthiness, prestige, and expertise of the coach.

In a survey of the mental skill training, knowledge, opinions, and practices of 153 elite level junior tennis coaches, Gould, Medbery, Damarjian, and Lauer (1999) examined coaches' opinions regarding the importance of mental skills training, the actual mental skills taught by these coaches, strategies utilized to teach mental skills, and suggestions for making mental skills training more effective. The coaches reported some mental skills as challenging to teach, these included dealing with pressure situations, managing crisis situations, self-confidence, and controlling one's emotions. Challenges given regarding mental skill training were time, player interest, measuring mental skills training success, and examples of coaches actually using this as a part of the coaching process.

The research was somewhat inconsistent and limited regarding the specifics of the coach's role of mentally preparing athletes for competition. Furthermore, these strategies utilized by coaches during different times in their careers have yet to be examined. However, despite the inconsistencies and limitations, the majority contends that coaches' play a significant role in athletes' mental preparation. Therefore, in light of the significant role coaches play in their athletes' mental preparation, the present investigation will uncover the relevance of this process for individuals becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. Giving elite level coaches the opportunity to

elaborate on their experiences during their career transitions may provide valuable contributions to the coaching literature, in terms of athletes' mental preparation.

However, because the investigation did not focus on this topic, but rather coaches' experiences of becoming new head coaches, it is uncertain as to the level of information that will be gained regarding coaches' involvement in their athletes' mental preparation.

Mentoring

The way in which a coach's interactions, feedback, and communication impacts an athlete's psychological, emotional, and social development has been under considerable investigation in sport psychology for some time. For example, sport has been established as an environment that promotes moral development in youth (Solomon, 2004), higher levels of concentration and enjoyment than do other common daily activities such as school, watching television, or social interactions with peers (Cziksentmihalyi & Larson, 1984), better educational success in the forms of higher grade point averages, reduced dropout, increased college attendance, greater enjoyment of school (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Eccles & Barber, 1999), and enhanced future occupation and social interaction (Barber et al., 2001). Therefore, based on the obvious benefits of sport participation as well as the significant influences of the coach-athlete relationship on athletes' professional and personal development, it seemed a logical progression to consider the extent to which a mentoring relationship exists between athletes and coaches.

The majority of coaches would agree that participation in sports builds valuable personal qualities and life skills in their athletes (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). However, often these coaches struggle to identify specific methods utilized to facilitate

this process. McCallister, Blinde, and Weiss (2000), in an examination of untrained youth softball and baseball coaches, found that the coaches were aware of the value of teaching essential life skills, but had difficulty identifying how they accomplished this important task. Furthermore, the teaching of these skills by novice coaches was seen as unintentional and that many of them believed that these values and life skills were inherent to sport involvement. Thus, researchers argued that untrained coaches appear to struggle with the mentoring process, specifically teaching these important life skills to their athletes.

Significant to this review of literature, researchers have examined the way in which coaches develop expertise and a better understanding of important skills relevant to the coaching process. Coté, Salmela, and Russell through an investigation of 17 high-performance gymnastic coaches in training and competition found that coaches utilized four interaction styles: supportive behaviors; giving responsibility to the athletes; providing instruction; and providing feedback (Coté et al., 1995a, 1995b; Coté & Salmela, 1996). Similar findings were revealed in Gould, Collins, Lauer, and Chung's (2007) investigation of 10 highly experienced football coaches. Coté and Salmela (1996) further addressed these coaches' behaviors, stressing the significance of them working with gymnasts' parents, as well as assisting athletes' with personal problems such as relationships with family and friends, and educational concerns. These finding suggested that the coaches were not only concerned with athletic development and performance excellence, but with their athletes' personal growth and welfare. As revealed through research investigations involving highly experienced, award-winning coaches (Coté et al., 1995a, 1995b; Gould, et al., 2007), their strategies and framework for working with

athletes was better conceptualized, presented, and recognizable in their coaching behaviors. Gould and colleagues (2007) specifically addressed the impressiveness with which these coaches consistently implemented these strategies into their coaching. These coaches were found to emphasize critical life-skill development not only at the start of the season, but constantly reinforcing important components of their message throughout the entire season (Gould et al., 2007).

Miller, Salmela, and Kerr (2002) suggested that mentoring relationships are likely to be relevant within the educational setting, such as colleges and universities, where there exists a strong commitment by the organization to the professional and personal development of students. Research has suggested that intercollegiate athletes may struggle with many of the challenges involved in trying to balance course work and student responsibilities with their busy practice and competitive schedule (Parham, 1993). Thus, it was understandable that athletes may seek out guidance and support from people within their surrounding environment, which often included university athletic coaches. Miller, Salmela, and Kerr (2002) conducted interviews with eight Canadian university coaches to examine whether or not mentoring athletes was perceived as one of their responsibilities as university athletic coaches. The investigation revealed that coaches believed mentoring was an important part of their professional responsibilities, and felt they had a positive impact on the growth and development of their athletes. Examination of the mentoring process revealed a commitment of coaches to the intellectual and personal competence of student-athletes. These coaches were found to be involved in the academic lives of their athletes on several levels. They stressed the importance of athletes receiving an education and earning their degrees, often stressing academic

objectives over athletic goals. Coaches also arranged tutors to provide additional support for athletes, as well as monitored academic performance to ensure athletes were meeting eligibility requirements, completing degree requirements, and making progress toward completing their degrees. The mentoring relationships between coaches and athletes, however, were not found to be free from conflict. Miller and colleagues (2002) explained that some tensions existed surrounding primarily academic and eligibility issues.

All of the coaches in this investigation also expressed an active involvement in the personal development of their student/athletes, often forming mentoring relationships that extended into the personal context. They reported being committed to teaching transferable life skills and preparing their athletes for life after graduation (Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2002). Given that research findings demonstrated that the mentoring relationship between athletes and coaches were of particular significance within the educational settings like universities and colleges (Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2002), it was reasonable to believe that coaches in the present investigation would perceive mentoring as one of their responsibilities as new head coaches. However, the level of significance of mentoring to their entire experience as new head coaches could vary depending on other factors relevant to their individual coaching experiences, as well as the challenges associated with establishing mentoring relationships with athletes they did not recruit.

Leadership

As leaders of teams, coaches provide teams and individuals with goals, daily structure, motivation, and support that in connection seek to insure that athletes have the greatest opportunities to achieve success. Researchers have tried to determine the specific qualities, characteristics, and personality traits common among great leaders in a

number of different areas, such as business, industry, and sport (Hendry, 1969; Lenk, 1977; Pratt & Eutzen, 1989). These researchers have argued that successful leaders have certain personality characteristics that make it likely they will be leaders no matter the situation. The central problems associated with this approach are that although certain traits may be useful qualities for a leader, empirical research has not found them to be essential, and thus cannot guarantee successful leadership (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Although there are no particular sets of traits that seem to characterize effective sport leadership, successful leaders have been found to have many common qualities including, integrity, flexibility, loyalty, confidence, accountability, candor, preparedness, resourcefulness, self-discipline, and patience (Parcels & Coplon, 1995).

Significant to this review, researchers have also examined the decision-making styles of coaches as a way to better understand their leadership role. The literature suggested that the decision-making styles of coaches, plays a central role in shaping potential psychological, emotional, and physical effects, both positive and negative, of an athlete's sport participation (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001). All aspects of coaching relied on a continuous decision-making process, which involved making constant choices and decisions in order to achieve a specific outcome. The coach had to create a balance between strategic applied coaching concerns, which included tactical skill development, strategic competition plans, organization and planning for the season, practice schedules, as well as other necessary coaching job requirements such as making decisions regarding other coaching staff members, competition schedules, travel arrangements, uniform selection, and other administrative duties. Every decision the coach made in one way or another had an impact on the team

and its performance. Therefore, because the coach was the authority over the team's decisions-making process, it was important to understand the advantages and disadvantages involved in different decision styles of the leader.

Chelladurai and colleagues (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001) developed a model of decision-making in sports. This model has been used to examine the decisions coaches make in a variety of conditions within the sports context. The five primary styles of decision-making they proposed being used in sports were an autocratic style, an autocratic/consultative style, a consultative/individual style, a consultative/group style, and a group style. They further proposed that the effectiveness of any decision-making style relied on specific situational variables which included the importance of the decision, the amount of information relevant to the situation, the complexity of the problem, the cohesiveness of group members, the presence or absence of time restrictions, the degree to which the groups' acceptance of the decision was necessary, and the status or power position held by the coach. Chelladurai and colleagues (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001) explained that the key aspect of this approach to decision-making effectiveness was that coaches did not limit themselves to one particular decision-making style; but instead varied styles taking into consideration situational factors, as well as the characteristics of the group.

Chelladurai (1978, 1990, 1993) also proposed that an athlete's satisfaction and performance depended on three types of leader behavior: required, preferred, and actual behaviors. Each construct was thought to be driven by corresponding antecedent factors or conditions. The type of leader behavior that athletes preferred their coaches' exhibited was determined primarily by specific characteristics of the athletes themselves and by

factors within the situation. Likewise, the actual behavior that a coach exhibited would be a direct function of personal characteristics, situational requirements, and individual athletes' preferences. Finally, the model suggested that the behaviors required by the presenting situation would be the result of certain characteristics or qualities of the actual sport situation and by the characteristics of team members.

Chelladurai (1990, 1993) contended that the optimal outcomes of group performance were achieved when there was congruence between the three aspects of leader behavior. Therefore, when a coach displayed leadership behaviors deemed necessary for the specific situation and those behaviors were consistent with ones desired by athletes, then positive outcomes and group satisfaction would be achieved. In addition, Chelladurai (1993) included a feedback loop, which proposed that a coach's actions may be influenced by the level of his or her athletes' satisfaction and overall performance. Therefore, it was argued that a reciprocal relationship exists between the consequences of coaches' actions and the types of behaviors they actually demonstrate in practice and competitive situations.

Addressing the topic from a somewhat different perspective, Smoll and Smith (1989) suggested a conceptual model of leadership behavior that stresses relationships among situational, cognitive, behavioral, and individual difference variables. Like Chelladurai (1990, 1993), Smoll and Smith (1989) proposed a situational approach to leadership behavior, claiming that the most effective coaching behaviors will vary as a result of situational factors within the sports setting. However, Smoll and Smith (1989) argued that in order to develop a truly comprehensive model of leadership, it was necessary to take into consideration not only the situational factors and obvious actions of

the coach, but also include the cognitive processes and individual differences which directly influence relationships between antecedents, leader behaviors, and outcomes. Thus, Smoll and Smith's cognitive-mediational model suggested that the effects of coaches' actions on their athletes were influenced not only by the context of the situation, but also by the meaning that the group members attributed to those coaching behaviors. That is, how athletes' interpreted and evaluated the actions of their coaches' was greatly influenced by their personal characteristics as well as situational factors of the sports scenario.

Although there seem to be a number of different perspectives and approaches to examining different factors of coaching leadership, the literature demonstrated the commonality that effective coaching was largely influenced and dependent upon different factors or elements present within the leadership role of the coach. Given that the coach was often viewed as the most important person in determining the quality and success of an athlete's sport experience, it was believed that within the present investigation coaching leadership would emerge to some degree when coaches' describe their experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs.

Enhancing Group Dynamics

The literature on team dynamics and group cohesion is extensive, focused on different factors relating to team building and group cohesion (Carron, & Sphink, 1995; Carron, Sphink, & Prapavessis, 1997; Widmeyer & Durcharme, 1997; Widmeyer & Williams, 1991; Yukelson 1997). This review will focus on the role of the coach in this process. Carron and Dennis (2001) argued that the most important factor significant for the development of both task and social cohesion on sports teams is individual

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satisfaction. However, as leaders, coaches have been found to have a powerful influence on the satisfaction of athletes on their teams (Anshel, 1994; Côté & Sedgewick, 2003; Yukelson, 1997). Research on social support contends that a positive relationship exists between social support individuals receive and their evaluations of group cohesion (Rees & Hardy, 2000). In an investigation of collegiate football teams, social support provided by coaches was positively related to increased performance outcomes (Garland & Barry, 1990). Within the literature researchers have also stressed the importance of coaches clarifying athletes' roles and expectations (Weinberg & Gould, 2003), creating environments where open communication is considered appropriate and encouraged (Carron, 1982; Carron & Sphink, 1993; Yukelson, 1997), and promoting fairness in the policies they establish (Anshel, 1994). Findings indicate that athletes' who perceive their coach's behaviors as fair, regardless of their status on the team, are more likely to buy-into the philosophies of the new program. The stability of a team, referring to the turnover rate for group members and the length of time group members have been together (Weinberg & Gould, 2003), and cohesion have been related in a circular fashion (Carron & Sphink, 1993). Researchers contend that teams that remain relatively constant over a period of time are more inclined to be stable, cohesive, and in the end successful (Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

These research findings suggest that as new head coaches, participants in the present investigation will face obstacles during the process of trying to enhance group dynamics. While it is likely that this topic will be described by participants in the present investigation, this study will be more focused on what they experienced as new head coaches versus how they enhanced the dynamics of their new teams.

Coaching Behaviors

Because the majority of this review focused on specific aspects of the coaching process that influenced the psychological and physical development of athletes, the term “coaching behaviors” could include a multitude of information already covered in this chapter, taking into account such topics as leadership, mentoring, and enhancing group dynamics, as well as mental preparation, and organization and preparation for training and competition. Therefore, the majority of this section will focus on the research that has primarily centered on coaching behaviors so as to limit the redundancy of this review. In this section it will be important to identify and examine optimal coaching behaviors and factors that influence the effectiveness of those particular behaviors, which have yet to be discussed in this review.

Coté and colleagues proposed the Coaching Model (CM) as a more comprehensive means of describing the coaching process (Coté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995). Through the qualitative investigation, the CM contends that elite coaches create “mental models” that help them organize their knowledge that results in directing their behaviors in competition, organization, and training. Furthermore, the CM is based on an assessment of a coach’s characteristics, athletes’ characteristics, and the context of the situation involving coaching. Several qualitative studies have utilized the CM for their framework (Bloom, Durand-Bush, & Salmela, 1997; d’ Arripe-Longueville, Fournier, & Dubios, 1998; Gilbert & Trudel, 2000).

Gaining insight from these in-depth qualitative investigations and other research on coaching behavior, Coté and colleagues created the Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S; Coté, Yardley, Hay, Sedgewick, Baker, 1999). One key component of the

CBS-S lies in its effort to develop a comprehensive assessment of high-performance coaches' behaviors that are demonstrated in training, competition, and organizational settings. The CBS-S provided the following seven dimensions of coaching behaviors, identified by both athletes and coaches, as significant components of high-performance coaching: 1. Physical Training and Planning, 2. Goal Setting, 3. Mental Preparation, 4. Technical Skills, 5. Personal Rapport, 6. Negative Personal Rapport, and 7. Competition Strategies. Investigations of athletes and coaches from different ages, levels, and settings have linked the constructs of the CBS-S as relevant to their athletic experiences (Coté & Sedgwick, 2003; Gilbert & Trudel, 2000), as well as supported the factor structure, constructs, and predictive validity of the CBS-s (Baker, Coté, & Hawes, 2000; Baker, Yardley, & Coté, 2003; Coté et al., 1999). The CBS-S has been widely used by various high-performance sport programs as an instrument that provides comprehensive and valuable feedback to coaches (Mallett & Coté, 2006).

Coté and Sedgwick (2003), in an examination of the effective behaviors of expert rowing coaches, interviewed ten Canadian expert rowing coaches and ten Canadian elite rowers regarding their perceptions of effective coaching behaviors. The inquiry was centered on the use of Coté and colleagues' (1995) Coaching Model (CM) as coaches' behaviors within training, competition, and organization environments were examined. Qualitative analysis discovered the following seven CBS-S coaching behaviors as significant for both athletes and coaches: 1. plan proactively, 2. create a positive training environment, 3. facilitate goal setting, 4. build athletes' confidence, 5. teach skills effectively, 6. recognize individual differences, and 7. establish a positive rapport with each athlete (Coté & Sedgwick, 2003). These findings have special implications for

appropriate and effective coaching behaviors; specifically, in that they stress the importance of other significant factors which may influence the impact (both positive and negative) of a coach's actions on athletes' development and success.

In congruence with identifying effective coaching behaviors, Saury and Durand (1995), in an examination of coach-athlete relationships among members of the French Olympic sailing team identified the following four coaching behaviors: empathetic attitude towards athletes, diplomatic decision-making during training, allowing a margin of autonomy for athletes, and utilizing a common point of reference in terms of knowledge and experience, as necessary for team cohesion and success. Likewise, other researchers (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986) found higher satisfaction levels among athletes who perceived that their coaches' behaviors were more rewarding, socially-supportive, and democratic in decision-making style. These findings suggested that coaches' who provided social support, accommodating environments, levels of autonomy for athletes, as well as elements of cooperation were likely to experience greater success and overall athlete satisfaction than those coaches who did not engage in these behaviors (Saury & Durand, 1995; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986). However, results from another study revealed certain elements not consistent with these findings, such as the positive consequences of lacking social support and using negative feedback (d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier, & Dubois, 1998).

In an examination of the perceived effectiveness of interactions between male expert French judo coaches and elite female athletes, an in-depth interview process was conducted with three expert male judo coaches and six elite athletes (d'Arripe-Longueville, Fournier, & Dubois, 1998). Qualitative analysis revealed that the

interaction style of the coaches was authoritative and was facilitated through the use of the following six strategies: stimulating interpersonal rivalry, provoking athletes verbally, displaying indifference, entering into direct conflict, developing specific team cohesion, and showing preferences. The main interaction style of athletes was perceived autonomy and was achieved by the following five strategies: showing diplomacy, achieving exceptional performance, soliciting coaches directly, diversifying information sources, and bypassing conventional rules. These findings demonstrated the compatibility of particular interactions between coaches' and athletes' strategies.

However, they revealed certain elements not consistently visible in the leadership literature, such as participants' repeated success at the international level despite their coaches' lack of social support and negative feedback. Basically, the methods of mental preparation that the French judo coaches emphasized in this study were not supported by conventional findings existing in the sport psychology literature. Judo coaches encouraged rivalry, which can be largely contributed to the warrior-like mentality and motivational climate representative of combative martial arts (Ames, 1992a).

Finally, most relevant to the current investigation, Vallée and Bloom (2005), examined how expert university coaches of team sports built successful programs. Results from this study complemented earlier research on the different elements of the CM (Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Coté, Salmela, Trudel, et al., 1995; Gilbert & Trudel, 2000). Specifically, the findings suggested that the main goal of an elite Canadian coach was the development of athletes as people both inside and outside of their participation in sport. Furthermore, the results provided a greater understanding of the ways in which

coaches accomplished this goal, which was captured in the four higher order categories that emerged from their analysis.

The first category, coaches' personal attributes, included coaches' traits, personalities, characteristics, and knowledge. This was found to be significant in that it allowed them to utilize appropriate leadership behaviors in different situations. The results provided evidence on the value of coaches' possessing a wide range of attributes, so as to be able to display different behaviors when necessary. Vallée and Bloom (2005) also felt that these results suggested that success was partly attributed to the relationships coaches' formed with their athletes. The second category, individual growth, referred to the coaches' overall philosophy of personal development they promoted as essential for building their successful programs (Vallée & Bloom, 2005). These expert coaches wanted to develop their athletes' athletic abilities, as well as their individual attributes. Vallée and Bloom (2005) reported that these coaches spent a significant amount of time building confidence, enhancing maturity, and creating a sense of ownership in their athletes. Likewise, coaches developed mutually respectful relationships with their support staff and recognized them as valuable sources of help, encouragement, and insight, both on and off the court. The third category, organizational skills of coaches, described the process coaches underwent to structure and facilitate optimal training sessions and competitions throughout the season. These results further suggested that coaches' had responsibilities beyond planning practices and preparing teams for competitions, which included multiple tasks such as recruiting, community involvement, and fundraising. Finally, the coaches' vision emerged as crucial for understanding how coaches built their successful programs. The coaches' vision consisted of their goals and

direction for their programs, as well as introducing and selling their philosophies to their athletes. Vallée and Bloom (2005) explained that these coaches had a long-term vision of what they wanted their programs to achieve, which was created before or shortly after they were appointed as new head coaches. They also recognized the need for changes to improve and attain higher levels of success from either previous programs or season to season. Coaches' attributes were found to be a determining factor in how their visions were created, presented, organized, and sold to the athletes. Through their motivation and passion, coaches were able to convince the players to follow them and buy into their systems. Individual growth was seen as the purpose behind the vision, to develop great athletes as well as great people. The vision was also found to influence which organizational skills were utilized, determining every step of their mission, and giving purpose to their leadership roles. Vallée and Bloom (2005) suggested that athletes bought into their visions because they trusted their coaches and believed the messages they were sending. Thus these four categories, guided by the coaches' vision, provided the foundation on which these coaches were able to build their successful programs.

Vallée and Bloom's (2005) investigation focused on coaches' experiences of how they built their successful programs, with coaches being interviewed at the height of their programs' success. They had been with their teams for many years and had achieved a recognized level of success, and while they touched on different aspects faced during their initial appointment, the investigation was more focused on how they built their programs versus what they experienced while they were trying to accomplish this task. While many of Valle and Bloom's (2005) findings are expected to be supported by the

present investigation, this study seeks to uncover the significant aspects of coaches' experiences during this challenging phase of transition in their careers.

Factors Influencing the Coaching Profession

The coaching profession is complex and dynamic and involves far more than the daily interactions, practices, and competition sessions with athletes. Many of the other duties, responsibilities, and roles of the coach greatly impact the overall success, satisfaction, and performance of the coach in his/her career. Therefore, examining the elements believed to influence the complex coaching process such as perceived organizational support, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and stress and burnout are of significant relevance to the current investigation.

Organizational Support

Understanding the influence of organizational support in the coaching profession is an important topic pertinent to this review of literature. Although able to establish complete control of their own teams, coaches' overall success in a program could depend on the level of support provided within the organization (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Kim, Cunningham, & Sagas, 2005; Pastore, Goldfine, & Reimer, 1996; Preist, 1990; Steir, 1985). The impact of a coach's successes and failures extends well beyond the lives of the athletes and coaches involved in that particular sport, but rather are believed to reflect on an entire athletic organization as a whole. In their professional opinions, Coy and Masterson (2007) explained that unfortunately for the coaches, Athletic Directors are likely to make a habit of monitoring coaches from the instant they are hired and thus making certain they are representing the organization well. Likewise, Croft (2007) claimed that regardless of the previous successes and experiences that have resulted in

the coach being hired by the institution, the moment the incoming head coach steps on campus, he or she is unfortunately placed under an intense microscope and is forced to prove him/herself all over again. It is reasonable to believe that this intense pressure could influence the performance outcomes and overall job satisfaction of coaches.

Organizational support theory posits that in order to meet the socioemotional needs and to determine the organization's willingness to recognize and reward increased work effort, employees developed global beliefs regarding the level to which the organization values their involvement and cared about them as individuals rather than just employees (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch, 1997; Eisenberger, Hutchinson, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Findings from Eisenberger and colleagues' (1986) research regarding perceived organizational support in business are relevant to the world of sports. Much like the supervisors of major corporations, athletic directors are also acting as agents of the organization, in this case the University. Thus, they too are responsible for directing and evaluating employees'/coaches' performance outcomes. Therefore, it was reasonable to believe that no different from the experiences of employees in this study, coaches would also be more inclined to view their supervisors' / athletic directors' favorable or unfavorable orientation toward them as indicative of the organization / university's support for them.

In line with the previously discussed research findings regarding organizational support in business, research within the sports domain maintains similar findings relevant to the sports culture (Kim, Cunningham, & Sagas, 2005). Kim, Cunningham, and Sagas (2005), for example, in an examination of 83 NCAA Division I head coaches discovered the importance of perceived organizational support in contributing to the overall job

satisfaction of the head coaches. They further argued that athletic directors should make a greater effort to give feedback to their coaches as a means of demonstrating that the administration cares for the coach's overall well-being, and further values his/her contributions to the University. These findings demonstrated that both work experience and organizational support were important elements that contributed to coaches' overall job satisfaction. However, researchers discovered that there were a number of different types of organizational support within this profession that were significant to coaches.

Pastore, Goldfine, and Reimers' (1996) study of 173 NCAA collegiate coaches examined coaches' perceptions of important areas where athletic administrators could provide support. Analysis of the importance data revealed the following six categories as significant to coaches' perceptions of administrative support: game management, decision making, nondiscriminatory work environment, job benefits / salary, program support, and evaluation. Athletic administrators held a significant leadership position which greatly influenced whether coaches stayed or left their positions. They argued that by creating a supportive environment, athletic administrators could enhance the likelihood of a coach remaining in a particular program. Kim and colleagues (2005) reported that both affective organizational support and financial organizational support were positively related to overall job satisfaction. Thus, the significance of the level of support was not limited to the emotional side of the dimension of organizational support but rather included and stressed the relevance of financial support to this process.

Dixon and Sagas (2007), for example, in an examination of 253 collegiate head coaches with families found that organizational support in general affected both work-family conflict and satisfaction among university coaches. Furthermore, they found that

the perceptions of the overall work environment clearly played a significant role in influencing coaches' performance outcomes. They further contended that athletic departments would greatly benefit from examining the coaches' perceptions of their supportiveness and make necessary adjustments to enhance supportiveness throughout the organization. Preist (1990) argued that it was the responsibility of athletic administrators to create a positive working environment within the department. Supporting this idea, Steir (1985) claimed that successful athletic programs were those that established and nurtured functional relationships between coaching staff members and athletic administrators. The research findings regarding the importance of organizational support for coaches provided evidence that the level of support coaches received could have significant effects on later job-related outcomes. Therefore, it was reasonable to believe that coaches' in the present study would report similar findings and possibly provide greater detail and further insight regarding their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs and the level of organizational support they received during this process.

Work-Family Conflict

Coaching is not the only job in the world that demands long hours and extensive travel. Many other professions have employees that put in just as much time if not more than the average coach. However in any field, the cost of the hours spent away from home can have a dramatic impact on the family system as well as an individual's overall job satisfaction. The ability to handle conflict between work and family role demands is a serious challenge for individuals and organizations, and is a growing topic of interest within the literature. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) examined the causes and

consequences of conflict between work and family, specifically the conflicting role pressures between job and family that are incompatible, and found that active participation in one role was made more challenging by mere participation in the other. Renshaw (1975) argued that such stress in one domain was not necessarily caused by events in the other; rather, it was a function of the interaction of these work and family roles.

Within sports, Dixon and Bruening (2005) contended that there were multiple influences impacting the boundary between work and family roles that included individual, organization, social, and cultural variables. For example, traditional male and female “roles” could impact work-family conflict. Knoppers (1992) and Ingles, Danylchuck, and Pastore (1996) argued that the male-dominated nature of the profession of coaching strongly impacted the boundary between work and family roles by creating an environment that required successful employees to devote all their time, energy, and resources to their profession as well as those of a full-time backup person in charge of handling all the responsibilities at home. Dixon and Bruening (2005) provided further evidence, suggesting that an individual’s characteristics such as personality, values, family structure, coping strategies, and gender could also significantly impact work-family conflict.

Dixon, Bruening, Mazerolle, Davis, and Crowder’s (2006) examination of semiprofessional baseball players revealed that due to the competitive, funneling nature of professional baseball, linked with a culture promoting athletes to sacrifice family in the pursuit of the major leagues, also created this extreme pressure on athletes to choose between their careers in baseball or their family. Dixon and colleagues (2006) found that

giving family members the opportunity to travel on some trips helped young baseball players find a better balance between family and career.

It was understandable that such long extended hours and intense demands of any profession were likely to result in greater tensions between employees' work and nonwork lives (Foley & McGillivray, 2000). Thus, the more time coaches spend preparing practice schedules, training their athletes, meeting with staff members, managing their administrative duties, recruiting new athletes, traveling to competitions, taking interviews with local media, and supervising the entire athletic program, the more time these men and women would spend away from their homes and families, and the more likely conflict would arise.

Burgess and Masterson (2006) explained that coaches spend an excessive amount of time away from home and were often unaware of the impact of this behavior until faced with a traumatic event such as a family member suddenly taken ill. It was only then that they began to realize the cost of all the lost time spent away from home and the ones that they love. The literature on coaching suggested that as a result of the inherent characteristics of the profession, coaches might be more inclined to leave the profession early in hopes of spending more time with family and/or friends (Hart, Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986; Ingles et al., 1996, 2000; Knoppers, 1987; Theberge, 1992). Therefore, it is believed that helping coaches achieve a better work-family balance is important. Researchers in business have found that employees who have been able to achieve this balance have experienced greater job, family, and life satisfaction (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000), as well as increased employee involvement, decreased absenteeism, decreased turnover, and increased employee performance (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eby, Casper,

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Lockwood, Bordeaux, Brinley, 2005; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003). This necessary balance, however, was often difficult to achieve, especially when considering the complex, dynamic, fast-paced, competitive world of sport. Based on the findings from current research on this topic, the relevance of work-family conflict for coaches' in the present study will largely depend on gender, family dynamics, specific sport training and travel requirements, personality characteristics, and the other organizational, social, cultural, and individual characteristics discussed previously. It is reasonable to believe that work-family conflict may not play a significant role in the experiences of all coaches. However, given the stress associated with changing careers, the relevance of this topic for each individual will provide greater insight regarding this topic for future coaching research.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was of particular significance for this review of literature as it has been found to positively influence job performance within a variety of work environments, including sports (Katzell, Thompson, & Guzzo, 1992; Pastore, Goldfine, & Reimer, 1996; Stevens & Weiss, 1991). Ostroff (1992) explained that those organizations that have more satisfied employees are likely to be more productive and profitable. Job satisfaction, combined with positive job characteristics and environment, was likely to result in other organizationally-valued outcomes such as low turnover (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Sagas & Batista, 2001), less absenteeism (Pastore, Goldfine, & Riemer, 1996), and customer satisfaction (DeCarlo & Agarwal, 1999).

Within the business sector researchers examining job satisfaction have found that employees who were satisfied with their jobs were more inclined to pursue challenging

performance goals, perform at a higher level, demonstrate greater commitment to the organization, accept more responsibilities, and obtain significant leadership roles (Ansari, Baumgartel, & Sullivan, 1982; Joyce & Slocum, 1982; Katzell, Thompson, & Guzzo, 1992).

Within the sports domain, Stevens and Weiss (1991) found that high school and university level coaches reported high job satisfaction when they established positive relationships with their athletes, and worked in an environment that was fun, challenging, and collegial. They further contended that high job satisfaction among coaches was linked to personal goal attainment in sport by both coaches and athletes. Similarly, Kelly and Gill (1993) found that job satisfaction and social support greatly reduced the rate of burnout among coaches.

Davies, Bloom, and Samela's (2005) examination of job satisfaction of successful male university basketball coaches found coaches' personal histories, coaching intentions, and job satisfaction categories as significant to coaches' overall satisfaction within their profession. All the coaches in this study had a deep passion and love for coaching and set outcome goals. However, they were not merely concerned with win/loss records, but remained greatly concerned with the development of their athletes. Factors creating job dissatisfaction for these coaches included limited financial resources and administrative responsibilities (Davies, Bloom, & Samela, 2005). The research within the sports setting was limited regarding job satisfaction among elite level coaches. Thus, the current investigation could provide a better understanding of the significance of this topic for coaches undertaking a new head coaching position.

Stress and Burnout

Examining all the complexities involved in this helping profession, researchers have found coaching to be a not only rewarding but also a very challenging, demanding, frustrating, and stressful occupation comprised of numerous identified stressors such as the pressure to win, long-extended hours, role conflicts, inequalities between men's and women's programs, and lack of administrative support (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Cassess & Mayerberg, 1984; Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004; Kelly and Gill 1993; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday 1992; Vernacchia 1995; Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991) Giges, Petitpas, and Vernacchia (2004) explained that "coaches are performers, educators, administrators, leaders, planners, negotiators, managers, and listeners, but they are also people" (p. 431). As a group, collegiate and elite level coaches are considerably more visible to the general public than high school, club, or volunteer coaches. Due to extensive media coverage, massive funds delegated for sport programs, and organizations' over-involvement, it has been argued that these coaches would be more likely to experience greater job-related stress than others working in this field (Burgess & Masterson, 2006). Steve Sidwell, the former defensive coordinator for the Seattle Seahawks, described the impact that these stressors of the profession had on his physical and mental health.

If you said you are going to have a job where you go to work on July 10 and work 90 hours a week without a day off until the middle of January, and then you get maybe 10 days off and we're going to work most of the off season, and every Sunday, you are going to go out and millions of people are going to be able to watch how well you coach your team, is that going to affect your health? Of course it is. You don't have to be a genius to know if you work that way for 25 years, it is going to affect your health (as cited in Burgess & Masterson, 2006, p. 62).

Burgess and Masterson (2006) explained that for Sidwell, after coaching in the league for more than two decades, the cost of his stressful profession was a stroke.

One concern addressed in the literature, common to other helping professions, was the tendency of coaches to place others' needs above their own, often ignoring their personal needs (Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004). Vernacchia (1995) explained that coaches were apt to spend the majority of their work day telling others what to do, and thus had little interest in taking time from their busy schedules to focus on dealing with their own psychological needs. As a consequence, due to the immense pressures of coaching combined with a wide array of perceived responsibilities of the profession, coaches tended to neglect their personal needs as well as those of their family.

Vernacchia (1992) explained that coaches were always thinking about the job and everything that was involved in that position, and thus tended to experience the stress of their leadership position feeling the strain of being "all things to all people" (As cited in Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004, p. 434). Giges, Petitpas, and Vernacchia (2004) described some of the other stressful characteristics of the coaching profession, specifically, the idea that for the majority of individuals in this profession, their job security and future advancement greatly depends on the performances of young inexperienced athletes, over whom these coaches have little control once a competition begins. Furthermore, management of funding for recruiting, travel arrangements, and equipment was often limited as well. Finally, Giges and colleagues (2004) pointed out the cost inefficiency of the entire profession in that the majority of coaches work long-extended stressful hours with little compensation from salaries and benefits.

Giges, Petitpas, and Vernacchia (2004) explained that “Coaches of elite and world-class teams and athletes appear to live in a ‘fishbowl’ world of absolutes: winning and losing” (p.434). Within the literature, coaches have identified the pressure to win and create a successful program as their single greatest source of stress in athletics, as well as one of the more negative aspects of the coaching profession (Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). People’s responses to life’s stressors are influenced by the way in which they judge both the events and their ability to manage these events effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith, 1986). The ongoing belief that there is an imbalance existing between the coaching situation and the resources available to manage the situation could result in the development of coaching burnout.

Burnout is a multidimensional syndrome that impacts those involved in helping professions, such as coaching, where the daily interpersonal interactions are an important aspect of their work (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Burnout is a result of continuous and prolonged stress. Maslach and Jackson (1986) explained that due to the immense stress of the coaching profession, coaches are likely to experience physical and emotional exhaustion, disengage themselves from their athletes, and lose site of personal accomplishments, and thus, experience decreased job satisfaction. Maslach and Leiter (1997) identified six types of person-job mismatches as possible causes of burnout, including work overload, lack of control, lack of fairness, lack of reward, lack of social support and community, and value conflict. Although only two of these, work overload and lack of reward, have been linked with coaching burnout (Capel, 1986; Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992), this may be largely due to the limited nature of the research that has been conducted on this topic.

Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, and Soliday (1992) examined interpersonal and situational factors relating to burnout proposed in Smith's (1986) stress-mediated burnout model among an extensive sample of high school and college coaches (N=847). Findings supported the idea that thoughts rather than behaviors mediate coaching burnout. Specifically, results revealed that the extensive amount of time spent coaching and engaged in extracurricular activities were not linked to burnout. However, trait anxiety, perceptions of accolades and values of their position, meaningful goal achievement, control/autonomy, feelings of overload, and the level of support within the coaching situation were associated with burnout.

Kelly and Gill (1993) in a study of collegiate head basketball coaches also used Smith's (1986) model to look at the relationship between personal/situational variables, stress appraisal, and coaches' burnout. The result supported the overall components of the model, specifically the mediating role of cognitive appraisal in affecting coaches' development of burnout. Kelly and Gill (1993) found that greater job satisfaction with social support, less experience, and gender (females higher than males), were associated with coaches' evaluating their stress levels. Thus, coaches' who felt more stress, problems with coaching, and role conflict were more likely to experience higher levels of burnout.

Based on the findings from current research on stress and burnout in coaching, it is likely that the majority of the participants in the current study will have experienced stress within their profession. However, due to their recent change in position, it will be interesting to discover the extent to which they will report experiences of stress and burnout in this investigation.

Conclusion

Coaches' methods for structuring athletic situations, the priorities they establish, the attitudes and values they convey, and the behaviors exhibited have been found to clearly influence the effects of sport participation on athletes. Lyle (2002) explained that coaching is an extremely complex, dynamic, and context-dependent career that demands a multidimensional focus to truly capture its essence and thus contribute useful knowledge for coaching research, education, and practice. Despite the multiple coaching models that have been documented and examined within this review of literature, Lyle argued that "there is not as of yet a consensual conceptual framework which recognizes and embraces the scale, scope, and complexity of this practice, nor is there a consensual body of knowledge that has informed policy and practice" (Lyle, 2002, p. 292). In summary, qualitative interview studies utilizing coaches as participants are limited in the sport psychology research, and yet this type of inquiry would be extremely useful to further expand our knowledge and understanding of this multifaceted profession. While this research investigation does not attempt to answer all of the questions surrounding this complex profession, it does strive to address an aspect of research in this area that has received virtually no scholarly attention; specifically, coaches' experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs. The relevance of their experiences associated with this extreme change in their lives would provide great insight for coaches, athletes, and practitioners in this field. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine coaches' experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs in hopes of expanding the literature in this area.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In this chapter, the phenomenological methodology used in this study to explore the experience of being the new head coach of a collegiate program is described. More specifically, research from a phenomenological perspective, the researcher as an instrument, descriptions of the participants, data collection procedures, and the method of data analysis are presented.

Research from a Phenomenological Perspective

The phenomenological approach to research investigation involves a return to experience, specifically the subjective nature of the experience. The phenomenological researcher's aim is to investigate how people understand their experiences and gather meaning from them. Through the analysis of comprehensive descriptions provided by individuals who have had the experience, general or universal meanings are derived (Moustakas, 1994). Valle and Halling (1989) explained that the aim of phenomenological inquiry is to "reveal and unravel the structures, logic, and interrelationships that exist within the phenomenon under inspection" (p. 50). Further, the purpose of this method of research was to describe the structure of an experience, not to describe certain characteristics of a group who have had the experience. The result of phenomenological research is a description of the essential structure of the experience being investigated, referred to as the general structural description (Valle & Halling, 1989). Valle and Halling (1989) contend that experience is not indistinct and unstructured chaos. Rather, it emerges as differentiated and structured. That essential structure is made up of those elements or "constituents that are necessary for an

experience to present itself as what it is” (Valle & Halling, 1989, p. 51). The phenomenological researcher seeks to unveil those “processes of consciousness that give the objects that appear in awareness meaning, clarity, and discrimination” (Valle & Halling, p.51). The term thematization, borrowed from qualitative research, has also been used to describe this process. In phenomenological research, it is understood that the search for the essential structure requires the identification of the constituents or themes that emerge in the description of the experience. This process of phenomenological data analysis was discussed in greater detail in later portions of this chapter.

The Researcher as an Instrument

In phenomenological research, the researcher is the major instrument in the study. Thus, it is important to gain an understanding of the primary investigators personal history which has led her to being interested in researching the phenomenon of coaches establishing themselves in their roles as new head coaches of collegiate programs. A description of the primary investigators’ past experiences and her growing interest in this topic was detailed in the following section.

At the time of the study, she was a fifth year doctoral student in kinesiology with a sport psychology emphasis at Michigan State University (MSU). She provided consultation for both men and women athletes and coaches at MSU on an individual and team basis to help them develop their mental skills and overall mental approach for training and competition. She began playing sports at a very early age, and has experienced various levels of success throughout her sports career. She has competed at both a USA national and NCAA Division I collegiate level of athletics, transferred from

one NCAA Division I program to another, and experienced the rewards and stresses of being both a recruited walk-on and a scholarship athlete. Reflecting on her experience as a competitive athlete, the significance of her coaches' roles in this process became more apparent. After retiring from competitive sports, she went on to serve as a volunteer coach at the collegiate level, as well as a paid coach at the high school level for three years. It was at this time that her interest in understanding the different facets of coaching evolved. However, it was not until she began consulting at MSU that her passion for this topic was truly revealed. As a consultant of collegiate teams (that experienced a high turn-over rate of collegiate coaches), she was able to see on a much larger scale the intricacies involved in coaches' establishing a collegiate program. It amazed her how much was involved in this process, and furthermore the impact that it created on everyone involved in that program, including the coaches. While talking and consulting with athletes and coaches, she began to hear similar patterns of experience regarding this phenomenon, and thus became driven to investigate this topic in a more systematic manner.

The primary investigator has been trained in existential phenomenology for two semesters under Howard Pollio, a highly recognized researcher, author, and professor of phenomenology at the University of Tennessee (Pollio, 1990; Pollio, 1984; Pollio, 1982; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Pollio & Swanson, 1995). Training involved learning the significance and relevance of the lived human experience, as well as developing an understanding of the phenomenological research process, specifically how to conduct and analyze a phenomenological interview. The primary investigator has also conducted a phenomenological research study which was being revised for publication at

the time of this study, and had received training in other methods of qualitative research. This training involved the exploration and analysis of philosophical bases, theoretical implications, methods, and data analysis of qualitative research.

Bias Exploration and Bracketing Interview

In view of the fact that qualitative research relies heavily on subjective analysis, it was important for the researcher to discover and reflect upon any personal bias that might affect her actions during each phase of the investigation. Within this research investigation the term bias referred to the researcher's ability to have an effect or impact upon participants' responses, as well as the facility to direct the interests of a particular group due to any biases that were not recognized (Soukhanov, Vianna, Steinhardt, & Metz, 1988). The bracketing interview was considered an important first step in identifying potential biases of the researcher. Bracketing did not remove the researcher's individual presuppositions, as it was impossible to achieve total reduction of pre-conceived knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). However, it did allow the primary researcher to become aware of her assumptions. In this study, the primary investigator was interviewed by two individuals (Angie Fifer, Ph.D.; and Joe Whitney, Ph.D.), experienced in qualitative research, in order to explore her views on the experience of coaches establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs. The bracketing interview revealed three biases.

The first bias was that the primary investigator found that her previous experiences as a former collegiate athlete, coach, and current sport psychology consultant led her to make assumptions regarding the sample that were based on her experiences in these positions, rather than being open to the exploration of each participant's true "lived

experience.” For example, she expressed her belief that how coaches’ organized and structured their programs would be significant to their experiences, as well as how others related to them during this time frame. This bias was generated from not only her research of this topic, but more so from her own sports experience where she had to manage two new incoming head coaches at both universities where she competed. The second bias was that besides their athletes, there would be other individuals who would play significant roles in how these coaches experienced this transitional process. These individuals included members of their coaching staff and support staff, administration, boosters, and media to name a few. While the research may support these views, her initial reaction was not grounded in scientific investigation, but rather from specific examples she could remember from her own time as a coach and consultant to other coaches. The third bias was that each coach’s philosophy would play a fundamental role in his experience of this phenomenon. Establishing a personal and professional philosophy was a central component and theme in the primary investigator’s life. It was described as her “guiding tool” and something to which she “looked to help ground her in her life and career.” Thus, because it was such a fundamental aspect of her professional development, it was understandable that this would present itself as a bias. Therefore, it will be important for her to give the participants the opportunity to express themselves in their own language, rather than limit them to key concepts that are being driven by the researcher.

Participants

In an attempt to create as homogeneous a sample as possible, 12 male NCAA Division I collegiate head coaches were selected for participation in this study. Due to

significant reported gender differences in coaching (Everhart & Chelladurai, 1998; Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000), it was important to select either male or female subjects for participation in this investigation. Because the majority (66%) of Division I head coaches are males, it seemed only natural to investigate this group first (NCAA, 2008). However, future investigations with all female participants will be an extremely important part of fully understanding this phenomenon. Criteria for selection also included head coaches who had been in their current positions for at least one season and no more than three seasons. The current investigation sought to capture coaches' experiences during this transitional process, thus the coaches needed to have at least experienced a season with their current teams. Further, in an effort to stay within the realm of the transitional phase, a limit of three seasons was chosen as the longest any participant was employed by his given institution. While three of the head coaches had been with their institutions for more than three years, they had not begun their fourth season with their teams at the time of the first interview. Previous head coaching experience, specific sports coached, revenue producing versus non-revenue producing sports, education of coaches, and age were not delimiting factors in this investigation.

The participants represented nine different NCAA Division I sports, including baseball (1), basketball (1), equestrian (1), golf (1), football (1), soccer (2), softball (1), swimming (1), and tennis (3). The number of women and men's athletic programs coached by participants at the time of the study was represented equally. The participants' ages ranged between 30 and 58. Their coaching experience ranged from 3 to 24 years, with three first time head coaches. Ten of the coaches had competed in their sports at the collegiate level, four of which continued at the professional level, and one

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1	44	M
2	33	B
3	58	F
4	30	B
5	33	M
6	55	F
7	46	
8	36	
9	52	
10	36	
11	44	
12	40	

Table 1
 Demographic

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participant had only competed at the professional level. At the time of the investigation, ten of the participants were married with children, one was divorced, and one was single. All of the participants had attained higher levels of education at the Bachelor level; with three participants earning Masters Degrees, and one participant earning a Law Degree (see Table 1 for a complete description of each participant).

COACH	AGE	EDU.	SPORT	YRS	TIME	RELATION. STATUS	KIDS	Context
1	44	MS	(M) Soccer	16	3 yrs. 1 mo.	Married	2	Head -> Assist. -> Head
2	33	BS	(W) Soccer	16	2 yrs. 7 mo.	Married	2	(M) Head -> (W) Head
3	58	Law	(M) Tennis	21	3 yrs.	Divorced	None	(W) Head -> (M) Head
4	30	BS	Softball	7	2 yrs.	Married	2	Assist.-> 1st Head
5	33	MS	Swimming	11	3 yrs. 3 mo.	Single	None	Assist. -> 1st Head
6	55	BS	(W) Golf	15	1 yr.	Married	2	Head -> Burnout -> Head
7	46	BS	Football	24	2 yrs. 6 mo.	Married	2	High school -> 1st Head
8	36	BS	(M) Tennis	10	2 yrs.10mo.	Married	4	Head -> Head
9	52	BS	Equestrian	3	3 yrs.	Married	1	Private -> 1st Head
10	38	BS	(W) Tennis	9	3yrs. 1 mo.	Married	2	Assist.-> 1st Head
11	44	BS	Basketball	19	1 yr. 6 mo.	Married	3	Head -> Head
12	40	MS	Baseball	16	2 yrs. 4 mo.	Married	3	Head -> Head

Table 1
Demographic Information of Coaches

Instruments

Instruments for this study included the demographic questionnaire and interview guide. Each of these instruments was discussed in the following section.

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire (*Appendix A*) was administered to assess coaches' ages, educational backgrounds, ethnicity, relationship status, children, college and

professional sport

experience.

Interview Guide

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professional sports they played, as well as their collegiate and professional coaching experience.

Interview Guide

The interview guide (*see Appendix B*) involved one primary open-ended question, developed in an attempt to investigate the widest range of each participant's experience of being the new head coach of a collegiate program. A general topical guide was created to be used when the participant's story had not tapped into the experience qualitatively, and with sufficient meaning and depth (Moustakas, 1994). The primary guide consisted of the following question: Describe your experience of being the new head coach of a collegiate program. This question set the direction of the interview and provided the ground from which the phenomenon could emerge (Dale, 1994). From here, the coaches were allowed to dictate the direction of their interviews, while the researcher followed their dialogue asking questions primarily to clarify the meaning of what they had said. The following are examples of the open-ended probe questions used by the researcher: "Tell me more about some specific instances that stand out in your experience," "What was that like for you," "Can you think of a specific example where that was true," and "Tell me more about how that was...(topic mentioned by participant) for you." These follow-up questions were used in an attempt to "stay with" coaches and the specific aspects of their experiences they discussed, which enabled them to expand on their "lived experience" without the researcher making judgment about their experiences. Probes were used only as a means of gaining more details and a deeper description of specific instances discussed by the participants. For example, one coach made the statement that his experience was "frustrating." The follow-up probe was "can you give

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me a specific example of what things were frustrating for you.” Further, in these situations the researcher avoided asking "why" questions, because they could have promoted rationalizations by the coaches and created a feeling of being judged and having to provide defensive responses (Argyris, 1982).

Although never needed in this investigation, the general topical guide (to be used only in cases where sufficient meaning and depth had not been reached), consisted of broad questions that could have further “(*facilitated*) the obtaining of rich, vital, and substantive descriptions of the participant’s experience of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116). The following questions were listed for the researcher to pose if necessary, to facilitate full disclosure of the experience: 1. What incidents and people intimately connected with the experience stand out for you? 2. How has this experience affected you? 3. What changes do you associate with the experience? 4. How did the experience affect significant others in your life? 5. What feelings were generated by this experience? 6. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to this experience? (*Appendix B*) (Adapted from Moustakas, 1994). As previously mentioned, this general guide was never needed, because coaches were able to clearly communicate the depth and significance in each of these areas during the interviews. This could be explained by the nature of their profession which requires open communication. At the end of the interview the coaches were told that they would be contacted in a few weeks to schedule a short follow-up phone interview to discuss the results.

Finally, after writing up a summary of each coach’s experience, the primary investigator emailed a copy of the summaries and individual transcripts to the coaches, and then contacted each participant to discuss the results. In order to obtain validation

from the participants, their feedback was recorded, transcribed, and utilized as a critical piece of this research investigation. Finally, due to the recognized elite status and revered knowledge of this group, the coaches were asked a final question for this research investigation: After reflecting on your experience as a new head coach, what advice do you have for other coaches going through this transitional process? This question was analyzed separately from the phenomenological inquiry, but was still valued as a significant piece of this research investigation.

Procedure

The procedure for this research investigation included obtaining IRB approval from the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, as well as following the interview protocol that was discussed further within this section. The researcher initially submitted a thorough explanation of the research investigation to the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects. Once approval had been granted she began the research investigation which was discussed in further detail in the following section.

Interview Protocol

As a means of identifying the sample for this research investigation, the primary investigator used a number of methods to find qualified participants. For the first method, the researcher used former contacts she had acquired while competing, coaching, and pursuing her doctorate degree in kinesiology to identify possible participants. These contacts included former coaches, athletic trainers, sport psychology consultants, athletic administrators, strength and conditioning coaches, and support staff still actively involved in collegiate athletics across the United States. The researcher found six of her

participants using this method. The researcher then used her knowledge of recent hires as well as websites from collegiate athletic programs to identify the other six participants for the study. The participants were then contacted by phone and read a recruitment script (*Appendix C*) to describe the study and ask them to participate. Every coach who was contacted agreed to participate in this investigation. Interviews were then scheduled with the primary investigator. At the time of the interview participants were required to sign an informed consent form (*Appendix D*). During this time, the researcher asked the coaches for permission to audio tape the interview session (which was explained in the consent form) so that later transcription would be possible. Once the coaches' consent was obtained and any questions about the procedures answered, the interview began. The primary investigator then proceeded to interview the participants based on information already discussed in the interview guide. Interviews were audio taped in quiet rooms free from distractions that had been agreed upon by each participant and the primary investigator. The length of the interviews ranged from 56-103 minutes. The coaches were also asked to complete the demographic questionnaire (*Appendix A*) at the time of the interview. At the conclusion of their first interviews, coaches were told that they would be contacted to schedule a short follow-up phone interview a few weeks following the initial interview to discuss the results. The length of the second interviews ranged from 12-47 minutes. All of the primary interviews were conducted face to face, while the follow up interviews were conducted by telephone, and audio taped.

An in-depth phenomenological interview methodology was utilized for this study. The interviews were structured according to the research questions covered in the interview guide. The researcher was careful to allow each participant the opportunity to

express his experience with as little interference as possible. Therefore, the potential to introduce material that might have biased the participant's responses was minimized. Unstructured probes were used only to obtain further specific descriptions of phenomena that the participants discussed during the interview process.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was utilized to create a thematic description that described the essential structure of the phenomenon being investigated (i.e., the experience of being a new head coach of a collegiate program). The analysis was conducted by the primary investigator and a research team consisting of members who have been trained in qualitative research. The following steps were followed during the data analysis process.

1. Each of the 12 recorded interviews was transcribed verbatim by a medical transcriptionist, and then checked for accuracy by the primary investigator.
2. The first transcript was read and reread by the primary investigator using the process of idiographic interpretation, where each individual transcript served as the text for that interview (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). This process allowed the researcher to get a sense of the whole experience being described on the individual level (Valle & Halling, 1989).
3. The primary investigator then read through the individual transcript again, dividing the protocol into units (blocks) that seemed to express self-contained meaning from a psychological perspective (Valle & Halling, 1989). This was accomplished by recording each time a transition in meaning was observed, for instance, changes in subject matter or in activities being described. There were instances where the

participant's dialogue was recorded as having one meaning, and then after examining it further, it was found to have multiple meanings relevant to the participant's experience. For example, one coach talked about his wife noticing he did not sing in the shower for a year because of the stress he was under. The first meaning unit recorded dealt with the stress he experienced. However, after a second examination, the relationship of his wife's role in his experience was uncovered. Valle and Halling (1989) explained that although this process requires the researcher's judgment, who will be reading from the perspective of her discipline (i.e., sport psychology), special consideration must be taken to treat the text as a naïve and nontheoretical representation of the participant's experience. Thus, the perceived blocks or divisions were viewed as part of that participant's experience, and ones that naturally fit within the context of the text, rather than one's imposed by the expectations of the researcher's theoretical position (Valle & Halling, 1989). Each block was referred to as a "meaning unit." The meaning units were constituents of the experience, not elements, in that they preserved their identity as a piece of the subject's specific experience. For example, the meaning unit referred to a contextual part of being a new head coach by this person at this time, not about being a head coach in general.

4. After having outlined the natural meaning units, the primary investigator stated, as simply as possible in her own language, the meaning that dominated the participant's natural meaning unit. This was a concise description of the meaning unit and was the first transformation of the data from the participant's words to the researcher's words (Valle & Halling, 1989). These transformations, stated in third person, retained the qualities of the participant's first description while also transforming into the

psychological equivalents of the meaning units originally discussed during the interview (Valle & Halling, 1989). The transformations were necessary, because the original descriptions given by participants were often naïve with respects to psychological structures, and often included multiple and blended references. This transformation progressed through their “everyday linguistic expressions” to the reality they really described, and then further described their “reflective reality” in terms deemed more appropriate to a phenomenologically based psychology” (Valle & Halling, p. 55).

5. The next step was to question each meaning unit in terms of the specific topic of the study. The initial research question was then put into each unit and its accompanying transformation. This was the second transformation, where the researcher pulled out from each unit of the transcript the aspects that were related to the topic being investigated and then described them in the language from the perspective of psychological science (in this case, psychological terms relating to sport psychology). Even though the participant’s descriptions during the interview were given in response to the research question, all of the transcripts contained sections that were unrelated to the question. In these situations where meaning units were found to contain nothing explicit to the topic, the researcher set them aside (Valle & Halling, 1989). However, they were revisited multiple times throughout the analysis process to ensure that they were not relevant to the topic.
6. Once the meaning units had been transformed into psychological language, the researcher worked to synthesize and tie them together into descriptive statements of essential, nonredundant psychological meaning (Valle & Halling, 1989). The

structural descriptions continued to include the specifics of the situation relating to each participant's experience.

7. After completing the situated descriptions, the researcher then developed a description at the general level. Excluding the particulars of the specific situation reported in the interview, the general description focused on those aspects of the experience that were descriptive of being a new head coach of a collegiate program in general. Valle and Halling (1989) explained that although this description cannot claim to be of a universal structure of consciousness, it does claim a general validity beyond the specific situation of the participant.
8. After developing a general description of the subject's situated experience, the primary researcher wrote up a summary of each participant's experience, in order to obtain validation from the participants. Copies of all of the summaries and individual transcripts were sent to the primary investigator's advisor to discuss. Summaries of three participants were discussed over the phone, while the remainders were validated as reflecting the significant aspects of participants' experiences of this phenomenon by the primary investigator's advisor.
9. In order to ensure the validity of the individual analysis, the participants were emailed a copy of their summaries and transcripts to read. Each participant was then contacted by telephone to schedule a time for the second interview to discuss the results. At this time, the primary investigator went through the summaries step-by-step with the coaches, during which time feedback was obtained from the participants (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). These follow-up interviews were also recorded and transcribed to be used as a critical part of this research investigation. At this time, the

coaches were asked the final question: After reflecting on your experience as a new head coach, what advice do you have for other coaches going through this transitional process? Inductive content analysis was to be conducted separately by three researchers to analyze this final question. During this process, the results were going to be compared and discussed among three researchers until agreement was reached. However, no new information was gathered from this inquiry, so analysis was not required. The primary investigator repeated the process with the remaining transcripts, developing individual general descriptions of their situated structures for everyone, contacting them each separately (Valle & Halling, 1989).

10. During this process of analyzing individual transcripts, one transcript was taken before a research analysis team to utilize group interpretation. The transcript was read aloud with frequent pauses to discuss the potential meaning units and possible interrelationships among meanings (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). At this time, the researcher took special care to address different perspectives among the research team regarding possible meaning units. Specifically, when a disagreement arose, she would take the group back to the text and further discuss the meaning unit until consensus was reached. The results of this individual transcript were discussed in comparison to other transcripts already analyzed.
11. The primary researcher then began the process of interpreting each interview in the context of all other interviews. By looking across interviews, the researcher was able to consider a more diverse set of experiences and, therefore, recognized ways in which one participant's experience bore an experiential similarity to another's (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997).

12. Through this process the interpreter began to develop descriptive patterns and relationships characterizing the various interviews, allowing for themes to emerge. In achieving a thematic description, the researcher attempted to capture the experience of the participants by consistently following the data analysis protocol. This thematic interpretation was a continuous process of going back and forth among different parts of the text and continuously rethematising the data as new relationships emerged (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997).
13. After a thematic structure had been developed the results were then discussed with members of the research analysis team separately, the research investigator's advisor, and other experts in the field to insure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A phenomenological approach as outlined by Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997), and Valle and Halling (1989), was utilized to analyze the data. The analysis revealed five major themes. The first, Taking over Someone else's Program, was directly related to the experiences of participants' becoming new head coaches and taking control of their new programs. Subthemes included: (1) *There's a Reason Why the Job is Open*, (2) *It takes Time*, (3) *Inheriting a Team*, (4) *Getting Athletes to Buy-in*, and (5) *Psychological Impact of the Process*. The second theme, The Role of Being the Head Coach (Leader), revealed the significance of the leadership position throughout the transition process. From the analysis, these subthemes were identified: (1) *Transitioning from Assistant Coach to Head Coach*, (2) *Making Unpopular Decisions*, (3) *Developing Athletes*, (4) *Adjusting Coaching Style for Athletes' Differences*, (5) *Handling the Pressures of Coaching*, (6) *Leading Others*, and (7) *Requirements of the Job – "It's Not Just Coaching."* The third theme, Implementing the Structure – "Functioning like a Business," focused on the methods coaches utilized to build their new programs. This theme was comprised of the following subthemes: (1) *Laying the Foundation*, (2) *Defining Roles*, (3) *Changing the Culture of a Team*, and (4) *Building an Army to Support Your Program*. The fourth theme, Understanding the Dynamics of a New Coaching Staff, focused on coaches hiring, managing, and developing new coaching staffs in order to assist them in building their programs. This theme contained the following subthemes: (1) *Hiring a New Coaching Staff*, (2) *Managing and Developing a New Coaching Staff*, and (3) *Building a Program with a New Coaching Staff*. The fifth

theme, The Role of Family, revealed the significant role that family played in participants' experiences of becoming new head coaches. The following subthemes emerged from the analysis of the data: (1) *Recruiting the Family*, (2) *Support from Wife*, and (3) *Family Involvement*. Each subtheme was discussed separately in the following sections. Figure 1 represents the thematic breakdown of coaches' experiences of becoming new head coaches. Figure 2 depicts the hierarchical thematic structure of the five themes, subthemes, and components. Each of these themes is discussed in greater detail in the following sections. In each case, supporting quotes were offered to illustrate specific aspects of the theme, subtheme, or component described. A final section was included and analyzed separately regarding the advice coaches' provided at the end of their second follow-up interviews.

Theme1: Taking Over Someone Else's Program

The first theme, taking over someone else's program, was significant for all participants in their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. As previously discussed, this theme was comprised of five subthemes: (1) *There's a Reason Why the Job is Open*, (2) *It takes Time*, (3) *Inheriting a Team*, (4) *Getting Athletes to Buy-in*, and (5) *Psychological Impact of the Process*. Each subtheme is discussed separately in the following sections.

Subtheme 1: There's a Reason Why the Job is Open

This subtheme examined coaches' early experiences with their new programs, and the reasons they discovered as to why these positions were available. Participant 2 illustrated this concept in the following passage:

But if somebody leaves the program, there's a reason why they left it. You're going to inherit something that's imperfect, you know, but you

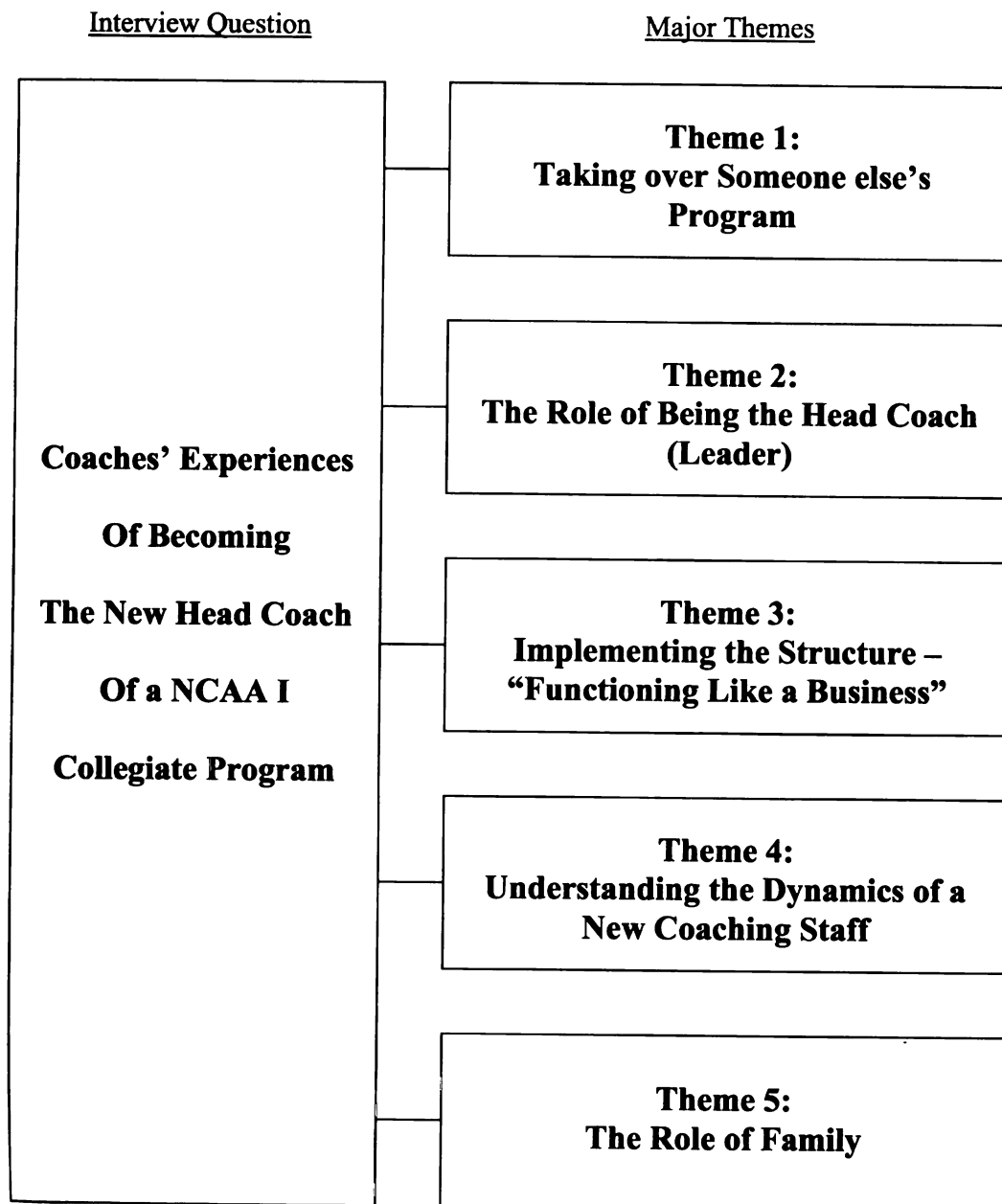


Figure 1
Global Themes from Participants' Interviews

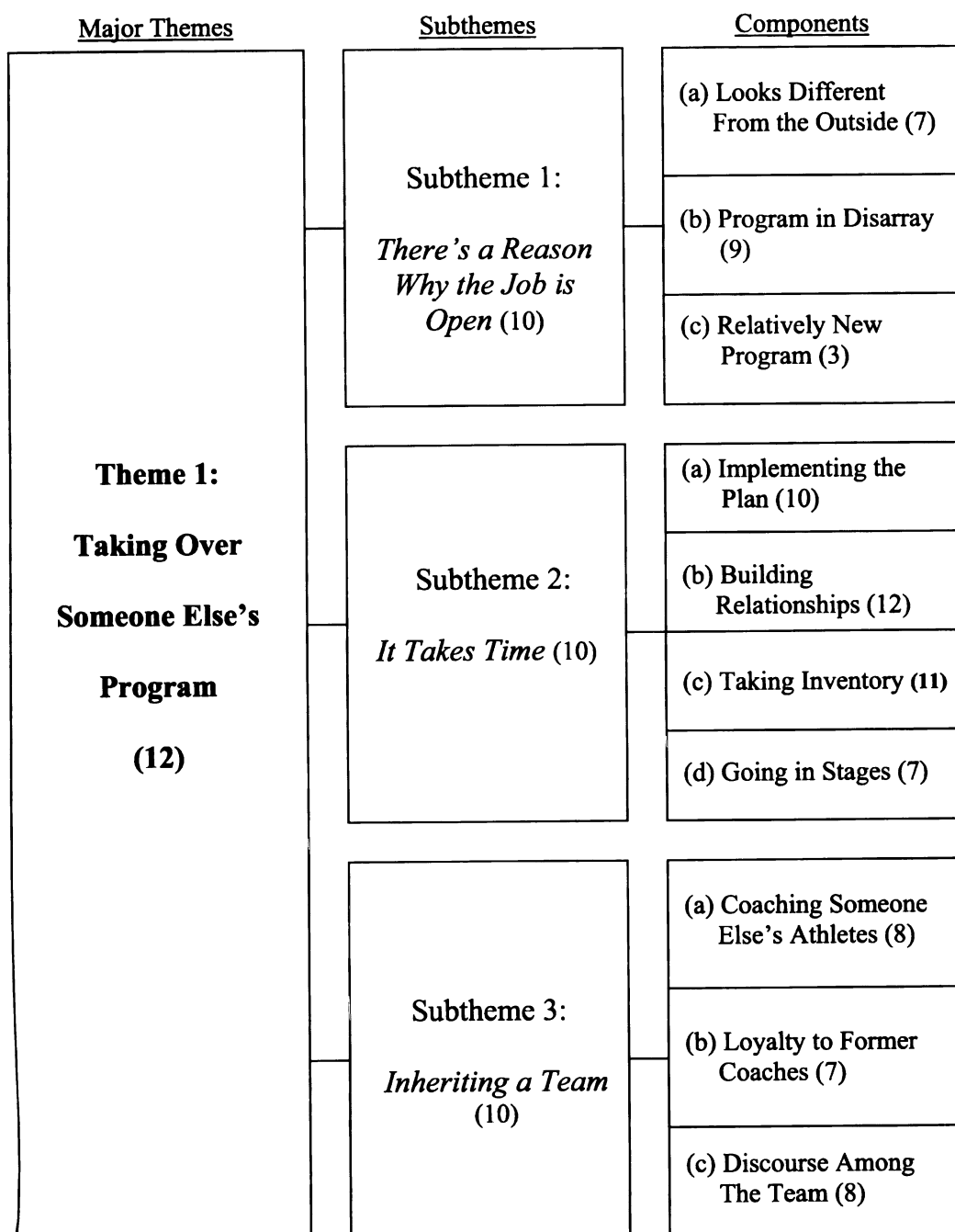


Figure 2
Themes, Subthemes and Components from Participants' Interviews

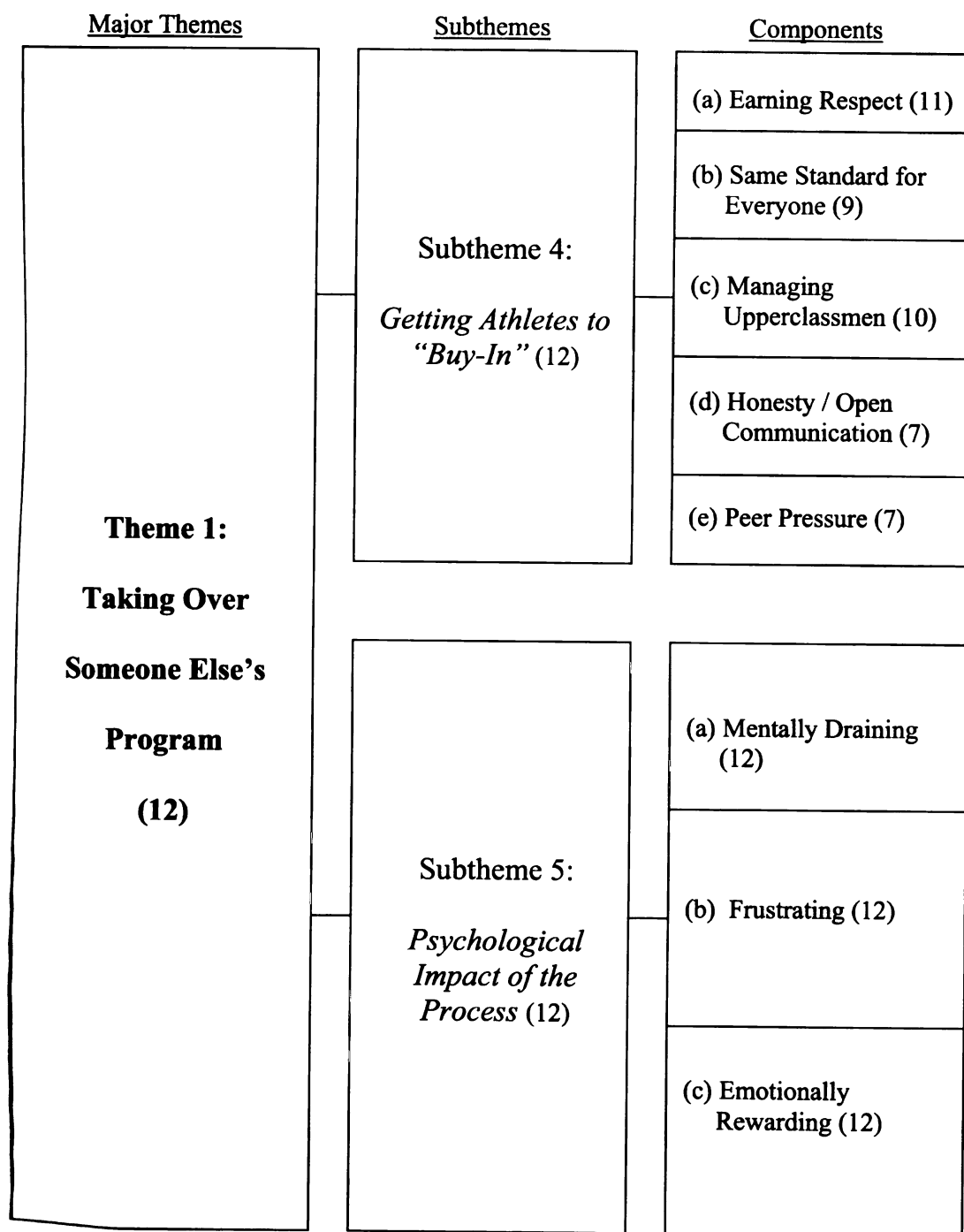


Figure 2 – (continued)

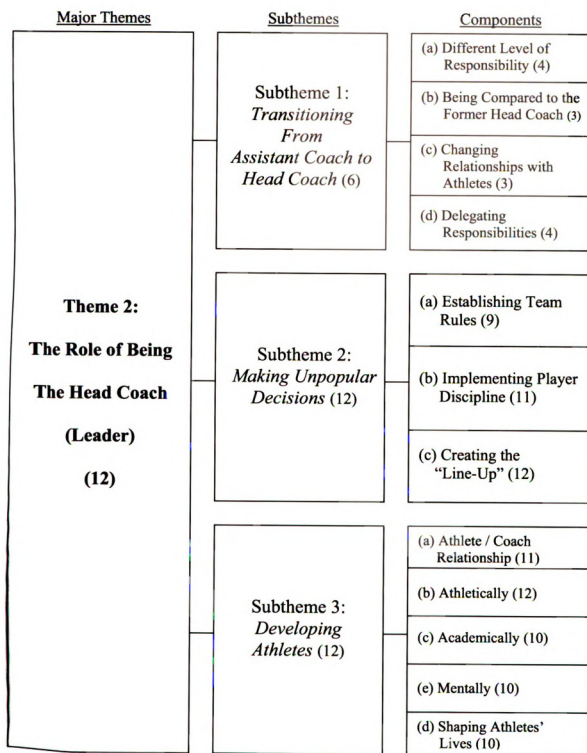


Figure 2 – (continued)

<u>Major Themes</u>	<u>Subthemes</u>	<u>Components</u>
Theme 2: The Role of Being The Head Coach (Leader) (12)	Subtheme 4: <i>Adjusting Coaching Style for Athletes' Differences</i> (10)	(a) Adapting to Gender Differences in Coaching (7)
		(c) Adapting to a Different Generation of Athletes (9)
	Subtheme 5: <i>Handling the Pressures of Coaching</i> (12)	(a) Dealing with External Pressure (11)
		(b) Creating Internal Pressure (12)
		(c) Dealing With Criticism (11)

Figure 2 – (continued)

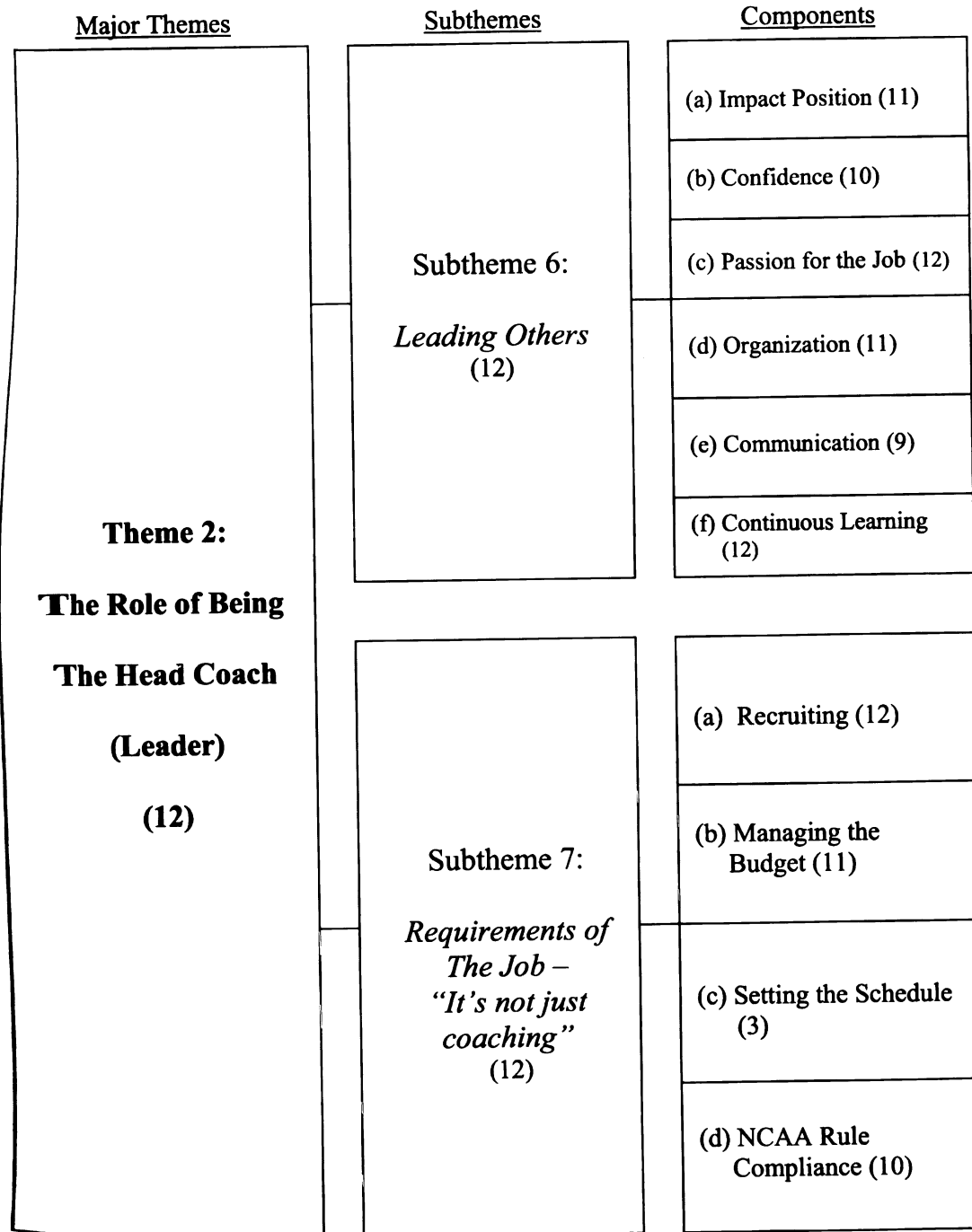


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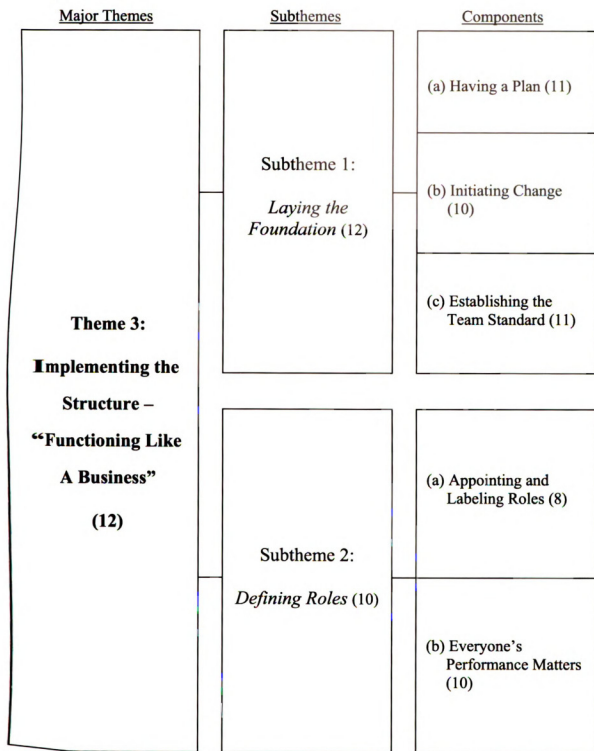


Figure 2 – (continued)

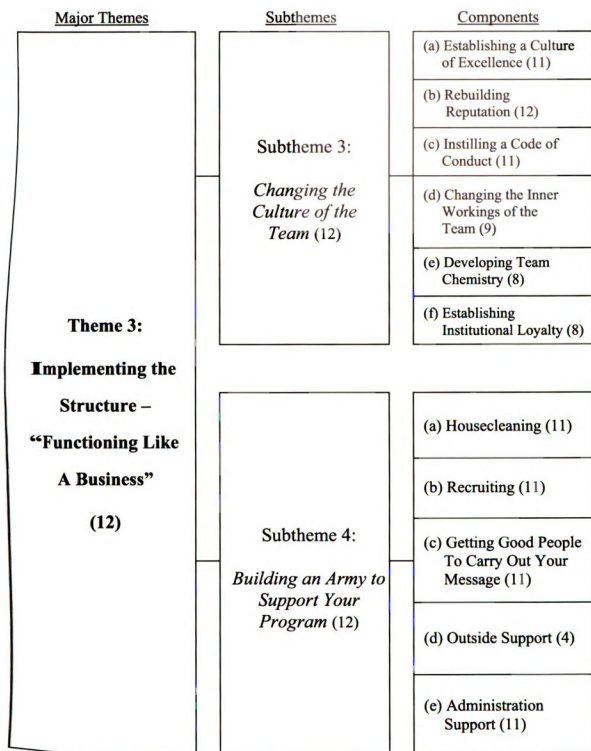


Figure 2 – (continued)

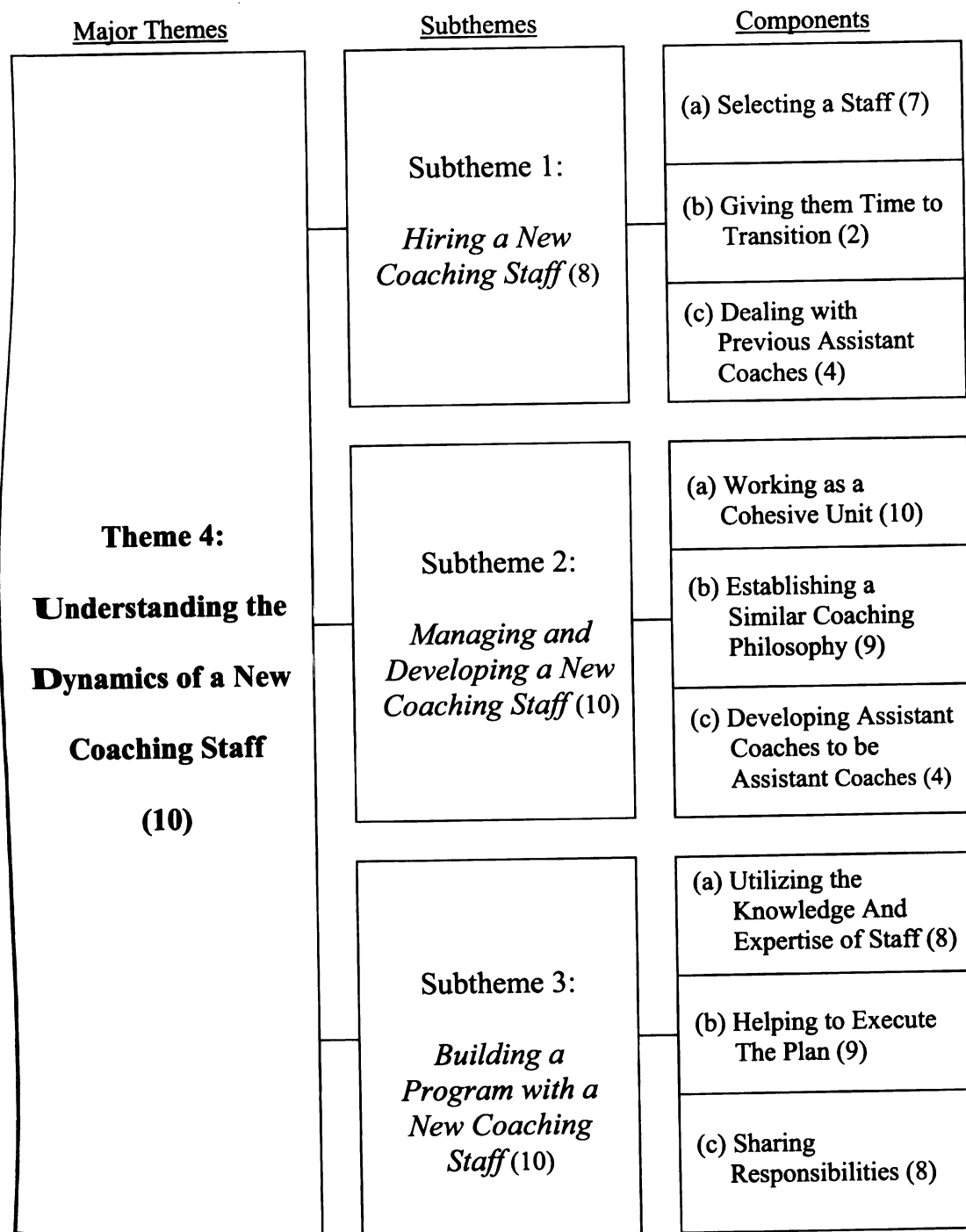


Figure 2 – (continued)

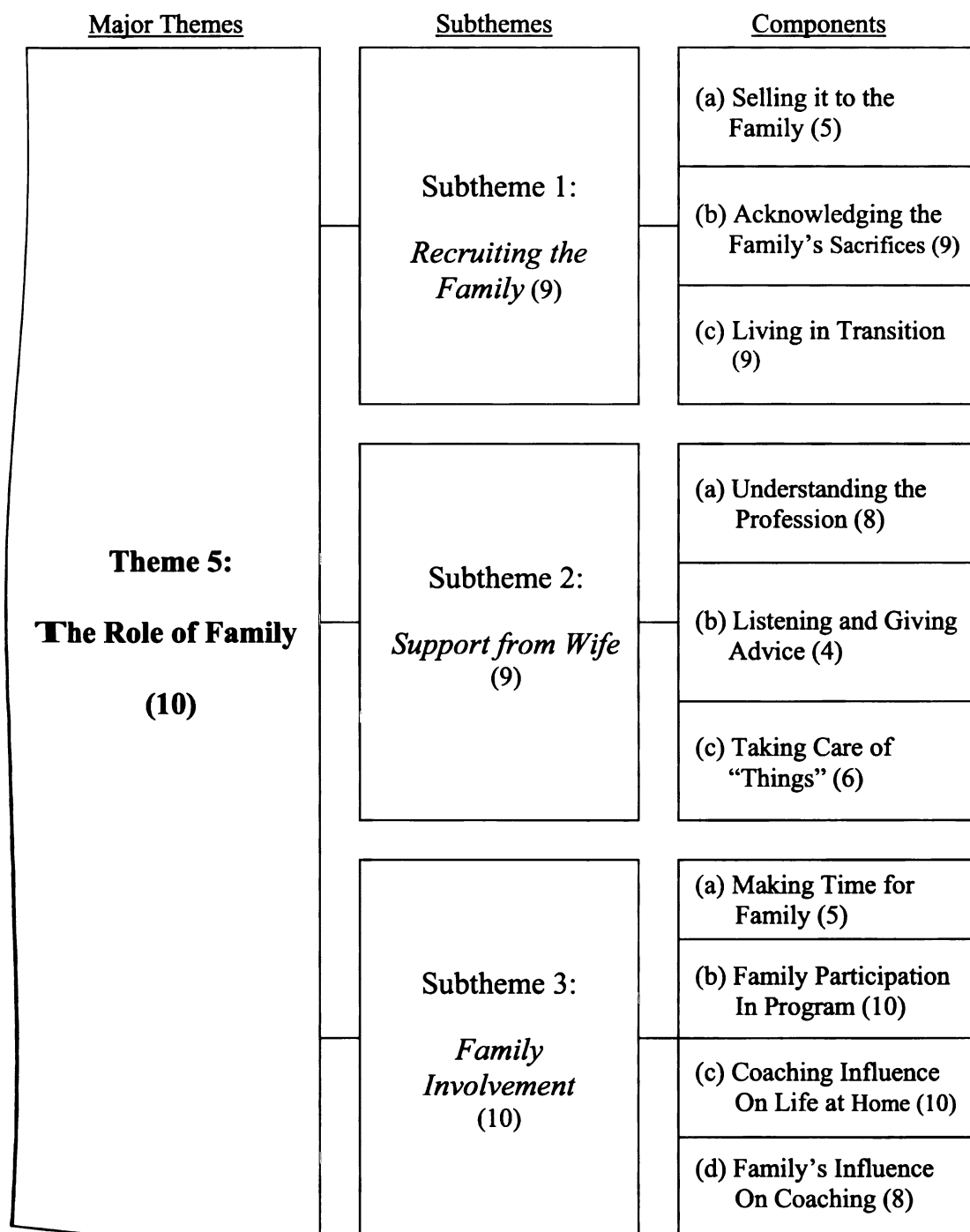


Figure 2 – (continued)

have to make it a great situation. I think Lou Holtz said it, that ‘there are no good jobs available. All the good jobs are taken. You have to take a bad job and make it a good job.’ I thought this was a good job because this is the place I dreamed to be. It was a terrible job in terms of how the players were treated, what things were going on here, and what (*I* was) left with (Participant 2).

Ten of the coaches similarly described the imperfections and problems associated initially with their current positions. From this analysis the following components emerged: (a) looks different from the outside, (b) program in disarray, and (c) relatively new program.

Component A: Looks Different from the Outside. The first component, dealt with coaches’ descriptions of their programs prior to their arrival as having “looked different from the outside.” Seven coaches (Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, & 12) explained that they were unaware of the problems associated with their programs until their arrival on campus, and even then “new ones kept popping up.” They never knew where the next problem would originate. Three of the coaches in this study inherited teams on NCAA academic probation, and suffered scholarship losses ranging from 6-10% (Participant 3, 7, & 12). Most of these coaches’ were aware of their programs’ reputations, but had not been given the opportunity to “research” their programs in detail prior to their arrival.

Participant 11 explained this point clearly:

...sometimes during the process especially in college jobs you really do not get the opportunity to find out any information ahead of time so it is really once you take over the program, okay now you have to go and do all your research the best you can.

Another coach described his experience of entering the program as being “different” than what he expected.

It always looks different from the outside...and so you always look inside and you think you know what something is from the outside; until you get

on the inside, you have no idea. It does not take very long for the inmates to take over the asylum, run it...run it into the ground, and then they look around at everybody else and say, 'well what just happened,' you know. And then once somebody has come in to clean it up, they realize that maybe that is not what they wanted all along, and so it is just different than what you think it is going to be (Participant 2).

Having been the head coach prior to accepting his current position, Participant 8 recalled his entry into his previous job as being different than what he expected. He also felt the experience was helpful in teaching him "a lot about the politics of coaching," which better prepared him for his current position.

I was being offered a job in a *Competitive Conference*, at a high profile school, and I was offered that job. At the same time the person that offered me the job said to me 'you do not want this job.' I liked him. He liked me, and he knew what was coming. It is sort of unprofessional of him, but I appreciated it. I said, 'you are crazy, of course I want this job. I absolutely want this job. Give me the job. I am there tomorrow,' kind of thing. It went through, but within a month he left. So the person that hired me left, and then the athletic department was in a.....it had some things going on...Now the administration starts to change around me, and I can understand why he said, 'you do not want this job,' but of course I still believed that I was the luckiest guy in the world to get this job. Give me that job every time, because I believed in what I was going to do, and you can over come all kinds of stuff. That kind of mentality, but it really helped me; I learned a lot. Comparing it to this position coming here I learned a lot about the politics of coaching (Participant 8).

Other coaches recalled incidents where they were "shocked" by the overall "lack" of structure and status of their teams. Their examples included teams that were "underachieving" athletically and academically, programs that had "overgrown their budgets," negative "reputations of their teams" on campus and within community, "bad reputation" of former head coaches within the community, and even the minor and major problems associated with the "inner-workings" of their teams.

Component B: Program in Disarray. The second component, program in *disarray*, examined the severity of the problems and challenges nine coaches' faced

taking over their new teams. Participant 8 explained that for new head coaches “there (are) mine (*fields*) there” and “they have to work with (*them*).” Another coach describing his experience explained that his “program was obviously in disarray, so it was a whirlwind” (Participant 12). Having been through the process of becoming a new head coach four times, Participant 1 offered his insight on the topic:

I have been through it a few times, so the thing that stands out every time that I have been a head coach for the first time at a place, or taken over a program, is that the first year is difficult - no matter what. You know that there are going to be things that are just inherent with taking over a program.

Similarly, another coach explained that “usually when you get a job, there’s a reason why the job was open (Participant 7). He claimed that he “understood” that problems would be inherent to the process of taking over, but was unaware as to the specifics of those problems.

There were some problems. So you understand that going in, and there are some things you’re going to have to undo, there are some attitudes you’re going to have to change. It didn’t surprise me necessarily that we would struggle a little bit. You just don’t know where the problems are going to come from. Even though you know there are problems, you don’t know what they are yet. And sometimes you go through the first year, and a new one’s popping up about every two weeks, you know.

In connection with the other coaches, Participant 8 explained that from his experience, usually when a job became available, it was not because it was successful and the previous head coach was just “moving on,” it was more likely that it was filled with challenges, and “situations (*that were*) very difficult in their own right.” Participant 2 also recalling the problems he faced described his program as “a stinking mess when (*he*) got in there.”

We are allowed to give 14 scholarships total. That is our scholarship limit. We have given 10. That’s it. We have four scholarships just sitting

out there. The old coaches did not recruit. They didn't recruit much of *the city*. The players they brought in weren't near the level of ability to be able to come here. So we had a talent deficiency. Their top three goal scorers the year before I came all graduated. The fourth leading goal scorer was injured, and they tried to kick her off the team the year before, because she was a problem. The team said that the process wasn't done correctly. They went to the athletic director. The athletic director said, 'well, as much as it kills me, the process wasn't done correctly,' so the girl gets to be back on the team. So that now empowers them, and so, you know it was just a mess. You know, it was a mess. For me, it was a combination of I was coming from coaching men to coaching women, and so everything just kind of came in, and it was just, it needed a lot of work. The house needed to be rebuilt, and so I knew that there would probably be some rebuilding here; I just didn't know the depth of it (Participant 2).

Inheriting a team on probation, Participant 12 elaborated on his experience of taking over a program that was in "disarray." After going through an interview process that lasted less than four days, he described the "whirlwind" experience he had his first day on campus.

Then that afternoon, they come in and take like three sheets like this, and they say, 'by the way, we're one of the first schools ever to get hit with the maximum APR penalty,' and I'm like 'you could have told me that yesterday on the interview.' We lost 10% of our scholarships. It's the maximum penalty. It's only been given out twice in NCAA history in baseball. So they are like, 'you've got to do this, this, and this,' and I am like 'ok, so you want me, my first day on the job, I've got to call somebody and tell them they can't have their scholarship? That's probably not really good for me to do...Especially when I don't know any of the players.' And then I am looking at the three high school kids that were drafted, and I've got kids in summer school. We had like 16 guys in summer school...that was 16 kids in trouble academically, that's way too many. We should only have one or two, and I have drug tests being failed my first week, so I'm just like...that was how I sifted through it. We figured things out, but it was tough.

Despite the magnitude of these problems, he did not feel that these examples were even *the* most "shocking" challenges he faced while taking over the program. Instead, he cited *his* **P**layers' lack of "work ethic," inability to "practice" effectively, and their "sense of *entitlement*" as being the biggest obstacles he had to overcome while working with this

team. These topics were discussed in later sections. Participant 3 also inheriting a team on academic probation described his experience:

...it's been a little bit more difficult because the reason I got the job is the previous coach had to resign for NCAA major violations, so we were put on probation through November. Our probation goes all the way through November; we're almost finished with it, but we lost a scholarship, and we've kind of had to be under the eye of compliance, and we've kind of been really monitored.

Having not committed the violations, Participant 3 expressed concern with the way he had been treated by the administration during this process. He felt that he was not responsible for causing the team's probation, and therefore should not be treated like a "two year rookie coach" constantly being micromanaged.

It's an issue with me, because my compliance, rather than say we've got a great guy here...it's like I'm the guy who broke the rules. It's really a poor way of dealing with people in this situation and it really bothers me. I understand she has a job to do, and has concerns for violations, but you treat people, particularly people who have had a lot of success at a different standards, and I don't like to feel like I am being treated like a two year rookie coach when I have more experience than anybody else and more success than anybody here...Every where I have been I have been a winner and I have done so without breaking any rules and that's the thing that really bothers me a great deal and it's a concern for me and it eats at me...it really does.

Finally, while nine of the coaches' experienced initial problems within the structure and status of their programs, all of the coaches' reported that in their profession challenges are expected. They explained that the situations that occurred within their program, although "trying," "stressful," "difficult," and "challenging," were still manageable over time.

Component C: Relatively New Programs. The third component emerged from *three* participants' experiences of becoming new head coaches of relatively new *programs* (Participants 4, 5, & 9). In general, these coaches reported positive experiences

of taking over the new programs. They expressed satisfaction with the idea that they were building a program from the “foundation up.” The three coaches described an emotional connection with their programs. Participant 4 illustrated this concept in the following passage:

The very first day they had a team here, I’ve been here, so I’ve seen where it came from and how it started, you know. We didn’t have a field, we didn’t have uniforms, we didn’t have anything. So I’ve been here from the start, so there’s definitely a sense of emotional connection to the team, you know, it’s, I don’t want to say it’s, you know, my personal connection, but I just have a, I don’t know what the word is. There’s just a, I’m tied to it right now, and I don’t want to leave it until I know that it’s in the best state it can be in before I go somewhere else.

Participant 5 explained that it is “really fun to have that chance to build something up almost from the foundation.” He described the support he was given to accomplish this task in the excerpt below:

This will be our 12th season of competition ever at this University. So, in reality, this is our infancy as a program, and the predecessors before me did not have the facility, budgetary, or other resources, you know, that were set up. They built a new facility, they added money to the budget, you know, things really got put in place for this program to be successful shortly before my arrival, and they were just looking for a person with the right kind of enthusiasm and framework and structure to build this.

Participant 9 on the other hand had, expressed difficulties in acquiring the equipment and facilities he needed for his team initially. He explained that the greatest problem the program faced was that they “had grown so rapidly,” and in doing so had “overgrown their budget.” He described his early experience of working with his team under these conditions.

...when I started here the program three years ago, we had the day we started, we had almost no equipment. When I was hired we had enough money in the budget to buy a small amount of equipment, and then we were borrowing the rest of it. We were borrowing horses, renting horses,

doing whatever we could do at the time and it was very difficult to try and train a team when we didn't have proper equipment (Participant 9).

In summary, this subtheme examined coaches' early experiences of understanding "the reasons why" their jobs were available. Through the analysis of ten coaches' experiences of initially facing the imperfections and problems associated with their current positions, the following components were found to be significant: (a) looks different from the outside, (b) program in disarray, and (c) relatively new program.

Subtheme 2: It Takes Time

This subtheme focused on coaches' experiences of the "time" involved in the process of taking over someone else's program. Participant 1 explained that for new head coaches "the hardest and most important thing" they need "is time," and ironically "it is the one thing (*they*) don't have." The following components were discovered from the analysis of ten coaches' descriptions of their experiences as taking time: (a) implementing the plan, (b) building relationships, (c) taking inventory, and (d) going in stages.

Component A: Implementing the Plan. The first component dealt with participants' experiences of taking over their programs, and needing time to implement their plans. Ten coaches' explained that "it just takes time to build a program," and "get things done the way (*they*) want" them to be done. And that although it "never happens as quickly as (*they*) wanted," when they took over as head coaches of their new programs, they were not trying "to just fix (*their programs*) in one year." Participant 1 *illustrated* this concept clearly in the following statement:

...there are going to be things that are just inherent with taking over a program. So that is the thing that stands out to me is that it takes time for you to implement the things that you want to do, the way you want to do

it, and no matter how good or bad the person was before you, they are different than you, so that adjustment is something that you have to account for.

Similarly, another coach explained that he was aware of the problems facing his new program, and that the process involved in making the necessary changes would take time.

I knew when I got the job that it was going to take some time to get things going the way I wanted to. I felt like coaching at the high school level, and the success that we had, I wasn't naïve enough to know that I wouldn't have to tweak things at the college level, but I felt like I've got a plan. I feel like I've got a plan of leading men. I feel like I know how to treat young men. I know how to surround people with good people. I feel like I've got an ability to motivate and to build a team. It has not come near as quickly as (*I*) would have always hoped it to, but it's kind of one of those things in life, you just stay consistent. You know, the one thing that I believe that I've done since I've been here, is that the message I brought in, is the message that I'm still talking (Participant 7).

The majority of coaches described the process as a cycle that takes "a few years." There was not a clear consensus among coaches as to the length of time needed to implement their plans. Participant 5 explained this in his comments below:

I think when anybody takes over a new team and you want to do things your way, that's going to take a couple of years to get accomplished, and I've been really fortunate that we've been able to do it relatively quickly and relatively painlessly.

However, in spite of Participant 2's explanation of the process only taking "a couple of years," three to four year cycles were the time spans most commonly allotted by coaches for this process.

Everything seems to come around in cycles. I think that it takes probably four years to establish your program. We are in the third year of the program right now just starting the fourth season (Participant 8).

One coach in the first interview cited his "third year," the upcoming season, as being the "*marquee year*" where "things should come together" for his team. However, during the

second interview, which occurred after a “disappointing” post season, he expressed “frustration” in the process “taking longer” than he would have thought (Participant 7). Finally, despite the fact that coaches did not reach a consensus on the length of time needed for this process, participants agreed that “it takes time” to build a program, and the process was always “slower” than what they had hoped.

Component B: Building Relationships. The second component examined coaches’ descriptions of the time involved in building relationships. All of the coaches in the current investigation stressed the importance of building relationships with individuals directly involved in their programs. They explained that in order to build their programs, they needed to surround themselves with “good people,” who could “carry their messages for them.” They also, needed their athletes “to buy-into” their programs. Coaches explained that the only way to accomplish the task of building solid relationships with those involved in their programs, would be to establish trust and that “takes time” (These topics are discussed in following sections). Participant 1 stated that as the head coach “you’ve got to get to know the guys,” and more importantly “they have to believe in you, and you have to believe in them, and it takes time.” Participant 10 depicted the time involved in the process of rebuilding relationships as having to “(start) from scratch.” Finally, another coach recalled his experience of having to rebuild relationships in the community. He explained that his predecessor’s reputation was not positive among club and high school coaches. This coach’s experience uncovered another aspect relevant to the component of time being involved in coaches’ experiences of building relationships.

Every success that my team had when we were demonstrating progress, we were doing mass mailers out to club coaches, high school coaches, just

trying to get the word out there that this was a viable option, full well knowing that I wasn't going to get the recruits that year. It was going to be a multi-year process because we had to rebuild reputation, do education with people, and get that going. So that was a real challenge that first year (Participant 5).

Component C: Taking Inventory. The third component that arose from the analysis involved participants' experiences of the time involved in taking inventory of their teams' needs, and then prioritizing those needs. Eleven coaches reported that taking inventory of their programs was significant in their experiences of taking over someone else's program. The following quote supports this idea:

Coming from another head coaching position I think that the natural thing is to compare and contrast. Where is this program at in comparison to where my program was before? I spent the first month just evaluating, turning over every single rock that I could find. Everything that I wanted to know...Really it was just taking an inventory of who we had in the program, what are the major needs, what type of resources we had, what type of resources do we need, where are we at, and where do we want to be? You always have to prioritize things that you do, but you quickly have to scheme through it... hopefully, you're always going to make mistakes, but hopefully you got through it the best that you could with as much success (Participant 1).

Many of the coaches commented on similar experiences of entering their programs and "assessing" the needs, and "pin-pointing the problems." Their experiences throughout this process also involved "making decisions" based on their assessments that were in-line with the "long term growth" and "development of their programs." They stressed that certain things in their programs "had to change," often resulting in negative performance outcomes." Coaches explained that when they accepted the positions they were not looking for a "quick fix." In fact, many reported "taking a hit" their first seasons, because they understood that it would benefit the long-term development of their programs. Participant 5 described his experience of taking inventory, which resulted in

his choosing to level the distribution of scholarships on his team by “sitting on scholarships.”

When I got here, the distribution of scholarships per class was completely out of whack. It’s still out of whack a little bit, but, you know, I came into my second year with a ton of money to spend in terms of scholarships, and I could have gone out and got a couple of studs from overseas, and just loaded up, and been really good right away, but then we would have had a crash at the other end of that, and I chose to, then I talked with my boss about this, and he was supportive of it; I said, ‘I don’t want to just be successful once or twice; I want to build this program so it can have long term success (Participant 5).

Finally, coaches agreed that one of the most important roles as new head coaches was to take the time to assess the needs of their teams and then develop long term plans geared to address those needs effectively.

Component D: Going in Stages. The final component focused on coaches’ experiences of taking the time to prioritize the goals and needs of their teams, and then going in stages to implement those changes. Seven coaches described this process as significant to their experiences. Despite the countless problems that spanned all levels of their programs, these participants stressed that as new head coaches taking over someone else’s program it was important for them to “prioritize” the necessary changes, and furthermore implement those changes in stages. One coach clearly illustrated this concept in his statement below:

Coming out of all of that there is obviously major weaknesses all across the board. So now, it becomes a matter of where do you want to concentrate your efforts. What is the thing that is going to help us in the long run the most, and I can put my hands on first (Participant 11).

He elaborated on this point further, explaining that as the head coach he cannot “come in and cure all the problems at once”:

...there is no human being on the planet that can come in and cure all the problems all at once. There is no coach who is going to come in and he is going to recreate this program in two months. You can only be in certain places one place at a time so there are some things that have to be put on the back burner. That is the hardest part. You have to go in stages. You have to make conscious decisions on what am I trying to change which you may have to let something go that you totally disagree with, but it is not going to be as important right now as this. That was hard sometimes because I thought that was a real tough issue (Participant 11).

Six coaches commented that when they were hired, it was with the understanding that they were “trying to build a program,” and that the process would take time (Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, & 12). Three coaches described their “contracts” and the time allotted for that process. However, they all expressed their desires to achieve success as quickly as possible, but not at the expense of their teams’ long-term development (Participants 3, 11, & 12). Participant 5 described his experience of going in stages as having “progressively increased the level of structure and expectations” for his program over the course of three years.

Over the year since I have been here, I have progressively increased the level of structure and expectations. If I were to come in and put the program in place that we are running now my first year, instead of kicking a couple people off the team, I would have had to get rid of half the team, and had a lot of them quit and things like that...they just weren’t ready for that...so I’ve increased the amount of expectations, and the level of structure over the years, over the last three years to the point we’re at now, which is where I want it to be.

In summary, this subtheme focused on coaches’ experiences of the “time” involved in the process of taking over someone else’s program. Finally, participants agreed that although they were not given “forever” to accomplish their tasks of taking over and building successful programs, the process does “take time.” Participant 1 explained:

You're in a society and also just in athletics, it's what you do now that matters to most people, but success isn't built in one day. So it's one of those things, you do need time, but obviously you don't have forever...but it does take a little bit of time.

In connection with this subtheme, the following components were found as significant for coaches' in their experiences of this process as taking time (a) implementing the plan, (b) building relationships, (c) taking inventory, and (d) going in stages.

Subtheme 3: Inheriting a Team

This subtheme dealt with coaches' experiences of inheriting a team. Ten coaches reported different aspects of this process as significant to their experiences. The following components were associated with participants' descriptions of inheriting a team (a) coaching someone else's athletes, (b) loyalty to former coaches, and (c) discourse among the team.

Component A: Coaching someone else's Athletes. The first component emerged from eight participants' experiences of inheriting teams and having to coach someone else's athletes. Participant 1 explained that when coaches' inherit someone else's team, they "inherit someone else's stamp on that team," and then they have to find a way "to change that." Coaches described "the bond" they established with athletes they had recruited, explaining that it was challenging to inherit a squad, because there were no guarantees those bonds would exist with players they had not brought into their organization. Furthermore, coaches' described the "challenges," "frustrations," and "disappointments" involved in inheriting a team and trying to get those athletes to "buy-in" to the program they were establishing. Participant 2 elaborated on this concept in the following section.

And I found as a coach, when you inherit a squad, versus when you develop a squad, you attract a certain type of player that responds better to you, and there's a bond there, and when you come in as a new coach, sometimes there is and sometimes there isn't, you know. That's not what they kind of contracted for.

He explained that when he recruits athletes into his program, he searched for specific personality traits and characteristics that would be compatible with his program.

I want a certain thing. I want a certain work ethic. I need a certain passion for the game. For you and I to get along, you have to have a certain passion for the game. You have to have a certain passion for *University A*. This has to be important to you, alright. You have to have a certain level of accountability. You have to hold each other accountable. None of that was there. None of that was there, and so, you know, to be honest with you, in the middle of last year, it came to a head to where there was a move by the players to try to get me out, you know what I'm saying? There was a move by the players, and I found out on that occasion, I actually exposed myself to where I had to actually explain my actions because I wasn't organized and everything else (Participant 2).

Six of the coaches recognized that the athletes "did not sign up" for this transition. Thus, coaches believed that they needed to be somewhat flexible in "meshing people and personalities." Participant 7 explained that when he accepted the new head coaching position he had "to put (*himself*) in their shoes."

One thing I think at any level, as a head coach, that I think is very important to get across to student-athletes, I don't care whether it's at the professional level, at the college level, or at the high school level, is you really need to go the extra mile to explain to your players that, 'yes, there is a certain percentage of you that were either brought in here by someone else,' whether it was a general manager at the professional level, whether it was a head coach in a recruiting situation at the college level, or even, obviously, just at the high school level, that a group of kids had been playing under a different coach in different systems. So, I've always wanted to make sure that they all understood that I did not carry the philosophy of, 'by gosh, when I get my guys in here, we're going to be alright.' And I really, sincerely meant that and have tried to get that across. Whether or not sometimes my players always bought into that has been a little disheartening to me because, I look at it as, when I hired a contract here at the *University of A*, I became theirs, and they became mine. So I think that's important for a player, because I have to put

myself in their shoes. What would I feel like, I'm a junior in college, if the coaching staff that recruited me left and a new staff comes in (Participant 7).

Another coach expressed a concern of inheriting a team of less talented athletes. As a former athlete and current coach, he had always performed at a high level of competition, and was "worried" that working with athletes who were not at that level, might affect his "motivation." He described this experience in the following excerpt:

One of the things I was really concerned about, coming from coaching a Top 25 team to coaching a team that was nowhere near there, was that, my biggest concern was that I was not going to be motivated coaching athletes that were at a much lower level. That was a real concern of mine in making this transition, but it never materialized (Participant 5).

Finally, coaches agreed that when they inherited their teams, they could not just "clean house" and bring in all the new athletes that they wanted. Despite their "frustration" and "the challenges" involved in the process of getting their new athletes to "buy-in" to their programs and philosophies, they all explained that as new head coaches they had to find ways "to deal with it," and "assimilate them into the process."

Component B: Loyalty to Former Coaches. The second component focused on coaches' descriptions of "the loyalty" their inherited teams sustained for their former coaches. Seven coaches described their athletes in this way (Participants 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, & 12). Coaches explained that regardless of how good or bad these individuals were prior to their arrival, "(they were) different." Therefore, as new head coaches these were "adjustments" that had to be taken into consideration. One coach explained that as the new head coach, "he was always being compared" to the former head coach. He reported that "he had a talented team that was bought into the ideals of the old coach (Participant 1)." Another coach was chosen as the head coach over the existing assistant coach.

Participant 8 described this assistant as “excellent” and “an expert in the field.” He understood and respected the players’ “loyalty” to their former coach. Participant 8 was also the only coach who took on an assistant from the former head coach’s program, and reported the experience as successful. He described this in greater detail in the passage below:

The players were comfortable with the assistant coach, he is excellent. They naturally wanted, they built a relationship and some guys had known him for two or three years, other guys had built that relationship. Everybody had built a relationship with him and was comfortable with him. With me they did not know me from Adam. I think that I was very comfortable with them. It was also very interesting because you could find out very quickly the personalities that you need to be really concerned about because you have some guys who are immediately ready to jump on board and say I am so glad. My process was coming in with the team, setting up, getting myself situated, I am here. I am in a hotel room the family is still relocating two months later, but for the first month and a half I am here. Within the first few days I am setting up individual meetings with all the players. It was extremely interesting to me. I have no problem with the guys that had a problem. I completely understood it and I appreciate that loyalty (Participant 8).

Other situations mentioned by some of the coaches in this study included coaches’ descriptions of how their teams “loyalty” made it difficult to change from “one style to their style.” Participant 12 clearly illustrated this point:

...what I was trying to do in the program, my biggest thing in becoming a new coach was changing the culture. That was by far the hardest thing I’ve had to do here, even in the last couple of years, obviously from one style, you know, to my style. That was like pounding (*my*) head against a wall for 23 hours a day nonstop, and not ever feel like (*I’m*) getting anywhere, you know what I mean. But then obviously over time we have. So it’s a lot.

Similarly Participant 4 explained that he had a “different style” of coaching, and that he was very adamant about making sure that people could “see the difference in the two head coaches.” The majority of the coaches stated that they “understood” and respected

their athletes' "loyalty" to their old coaches. However, they felt that their "loyalty" sometimes caused them to "miss opportunities for growth," and slowed the "building process."

Component C: Discourse among the Team. The final component involved coaches inheriting their teams, and having to manage the discourse among the team. Eight coaches' explained that when new head coaches enter their programs they "shake things up" (1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, & 12). Players had established themselves in relationship to their teammates and coaches, and when those structures were eliminated it caused athletes to feel a range of emotions from "fear" to "relief." Participant 1 illustrated this concept through the description of his experience:

Some people that were comfortable where they were are now uncomfortable, and they didn't handle that well, and some people that were uncomfortable became comfortable, and some people handled it well, and some people didn't. Some people handle things well for a short period of time and then over the long haul, didn't, and some people stepped up at the end. It was just really everybody - that's why the first year is hard, because there are all those things.

Many of the coaches found that the discourse among their teams often prevented athletes **from** "getting on board" and "buying into" the programs they were trying to create.

Participant 7 described his teams' reaction to this process:

Well, human nature and everything floating around, the talk is, well, you know, 'you're not one of his, so you won't be,' and sometimes that has been one of the things that has kept us from growing as quickly as I would have liked us to as a football team, is that I think a lot of my players just assumed that they were going to be treated badly, and that's unfortunate, and I guess from a standpoint, you just have to go through adversity sometimes together to gain trust (Participant 7).

During the follow-up interview he elaborated on this aspect of his experience, describing his players' maladaptive reactions to being inherited by another coach as "a crutch" and "an excuse."

But the players were a lot slower to buy-into that, sometimes there is that feeling that 'I'm screwed because they didn't recruit me' and it's a crutch and an excuse, they don't get as much playing time so it's just as well, it's very hard to get them to let go of that.

Many of the coaches described the discourse among their teams that escalated during the second year in their positions. Having a handful of athletes they recruited who were on "the same page," and the remainder of the team being comprised of athletes from those inherited squads, caused an even greater level of distrust and insecurity among team members. Participant 3 recalled his experience of dealing with the discourse among the team as "being the worst year of (*his*) life."

...and then when you're dealing with the old group and you're dealing with the new group, you're like two different people. Instead of trying to stay with one attitude, this is it, okay, and you're trying to cater to everybody, it was the worst year of my life, where I almost wanted to quit. It was awful. The second year is always the hardest. And it was the worst year I ever had, and then finally my third year, I got in a position where I got the kids I wanted, and it was wonderful. It was so much fun (Participant 3).

Finally, many of the coaches recognized that they were not the candidates their teams had hoped the athletic directors would hire. Therefore, as a result of their teams' dissatisfaction with the hiring process, the participants' reported entering programs where there "was some discourse within (*their teams*)," because they wanted other individuals for their head coaches. Participant 8 described the way he approached his team, in terms of their reactions towards his appointment as the new head coach.

...because of the situation, the reason for the hiring, there was some discourse within the team, because they wanted the other guy. It was a

very really interesting coming in. Perfectly happy, not a problem for me, but I knew the start was going to be really important. I remember walking into a room being introduced and you had some solemn faces in the room that were, had sort of been forced to be there, and just basically taking over and that is what I did. I just walked in the room and said...I introduced myself, 'I am here, and this is what we are going to do.' It was an interesting start (Participant 8).

In summary, the subtheme inheriting a team, focused on the different aspects significant for participants in their experiences of taking over as head coaches of teams they did not create. The analysis of ten coaches' descriptions of inheriting their teams lead to the development of the following components (a) coaching someone else's athletes, (b) loyalty to former coaches, and (c) discourse among the team.

Subtheme 4: Getting Athletes to Buy-In

This subtheme captured participants' experiences of getting athletes to "buy-in" to **their** coaching philosophies and the programs they wanted to build. All of the coaches in **the** present investigation mentioned different aspects involved in this process of athletes' "buying into" the messages they were conveying, the standards establishing, and the long-term growth and development of their programs. From their descriptions of this process, the following components emerged: (a) earning respect, (b) same standard for **every**one, (c) managing upperclassmen, (d) honesty and open communication, and (e) **peer** pressure.

Component A: Earning Respect. The first component centered on coaches' descriptions of earning respect as critical in their experiences of getting athletes to "buy-in" to the programs they were trying to establish. For the eleven coaches who reported earning respect as significant, the process involved "developing a mutual respect" for one **another**, as necessary for moving forward in the development of their relationships with

their athletes. While reflecting on their experiences of earning respect, coaches explained that “it was a task to get (*their athletes*) thinking a different way” (Participant 4), “(*they could not*) change everybody all at once” (Participant 11), and “just like anything else, (*they had*) to spend time in (*these*) relationships to make them work” and develop that important “level of trust” (Participant 1). All of the coaches working with female programs stressed the importance of earning respect while working with women. Coaches’ comments included that their female athletes needed “to know they cared about **their** well-being,” that they were concerned with their “growth and development as **individuals**” versus only athletically, and that they provided “support” on all levels for **these** young women. These experiences were not limited to the six male coaches’ of **female** teams, but rather were stressed to a greater extent by these participants.

Participant 4 reported:

I think girls, and I’m completely convinced, girls could care less about how much you know. They could care less about how much you know. They want to know how much you care. They want to know that you’re going to be there for them.

Coaches of male programs were more inclined to describe the process of earning respect as “**showing** athletes where they (*were*),” and “where they need to be” to achieve success, **getting** them to “believe in the message” they were sending, and “going through adversity **together**.” Participant 11 explained that he “just tried to convert them one by one” by **making** his basketball players understand the “importance” of the process.

That has kind of been our saying is trust the system. You have to get them to buy into whatever it is that you are doing, if they execute the things they are supposed to do, they are going to have an opportunity to win.

As a football coach, Participant 7 described his experience of “going through adversity” **with his** team to earn respect.

I think a lot of my players just assumed that they were going to be treated badly, you know, and that's unfortunate, and I guess from a standpoint, you just have to go through adversity sometimes together to gain trust. And we've definitely been through our share of adversity over the first two years.

Another coach of a men's athletic program discussed his experience of telling his baseball players, after being reluctant to "buy-into" what he was trying to accomplish, **that** the reason he was hired was because "they sucked" and "were a doormat of the conference." He did this as a means of helping his athletes understand that he was "brought in for a specific reason," and they needed to "respect" that he was trying to help **them** accomplish "something they had never done before."

The freshmen never knew any different, didn't have any problems...study hall, no problem. I did class checks with the older guys; I couldn't get them to really buy-in. Some of them did. Some are really good kids, and they would do whatever (*I*) wanted them to do. But most of them, if it wasn't in their favor, they weren't going to do it. They said, 'well I don't understand. We're not used to it.' I said, well 'the reason why I'm here is because you suck. There wouldn't have been a change if you were good. The way you used to do it, it isn't right.' I said, 'we need to look at that,' in a nice way, I tried to say, 'if you want something you never had, you've got to do something you've never done,' you know what I mean? So along those lines, I said look, 'it's not working for you. You're the doormat, the doormat of the *Conference* every single year. You're not very good' (Participant 12).

Finally, the majority of coaches in this investigation expressed similarities in their **experiences** of earning respect. Some coaches explained that as first-time head coaches **they** viewed the process as more of a "one-way street," trying to get their new athletes to **respect** them as coaches (Participant 2, 3, & 8). However, after going through the process **multiple** times, they gained a better understanding of the mutual respect essential for **building** a successful program. Participant 8 elaborated on this topic during the second

interview, clearly illustrating the relevance of this concept for coaches in their experiences of getting athletes to “buy-in” to their programs.

It’s a challenge for those players. I think it’s important to stress that although every coach wants to bring in his own players, it’s a bad decision to just come in and sort of clean house...you’ve got to work with those players, but also those players have to respect what you’re implementing, and the way that you want the team to handle themselves...they have to respect you, because someone has hired you to make the leaps that you were the right person to take that team to where the goals of the athletic department are...to have them achieve what the university wants them to achieve...and they have that decision, they don’t know you, they may feel some resentment, but good people have to handle change, and it sort of reveals their character, and you sort of find out who can work within your system and who is going to pretty much fight you the whole way. So ultimately those who choose to fight, and not buy-in to what you’re trying to do, and what you believe in, they are the one’s that end up leaving, transferring, or if they are completely disrespectful are removed from the team. So that is where the respect is, they have to respect that you have been brought in to do a job. And you have to respect that this is not what they signed up for, but you both have to move forward toward the ultimate goal of having the program succeed (Participant 8).

Component B: Same Standard for Everyone. The second component was **connected** with coaches’ experiences of getting athletes to “buy-in” by setting the same **standard** for everyone. In this section, this topic was discussed in terms of utilizing this **process** to get athletes to “buy-in” versus detailing the process involved in establishing **those** consistent guidelines for their teams (for “establishing the team standard see Theme 3, subtheme 1). Nine coaches described setting the same standard for everyone as **fundamental** to the process of getting their athletes to “buy-in.” Participant 11 reported:

Now I think it is more of a family type atmosphere... if we are going to have success over the long haul everybody on the team needs to feel that they are going to be disciplined the same, treated the same regardless of how productive they are. That has held true with me the whole way through.

Coaches described situations where they had to “level the playing field,” because their “star” athletes were receiving preferential treatment. They explained that they were not concerned with where players stood in the line-up, they “held everybody accountable” to the same standards. Many of the coaches explained that coaches who do not utilize this strategy can “lose a team,” “destroy a team,” and essentially will be “unable to regain control.” Participant 10’s description of his experience with his team provided a clear example.

My big thing was in this individual sport it was just try and make more of a team concept, and have equitability and feel like there is more fairness, where the stars were not being treated differently than the rest of the team. You stay consistent...if you stay consistent with your approach, eventually everybody buys into it regardless of what the approach is. That is how I take it; because it is what it is, and you are not going up and down like a yo-yo or roller coaster on how you approach things. Eventually they are like ‘okay, well I guess this is how it is going to be and we better just get used to it.’ As long as you are consistent, I feel like that you can make a team into whatever you want. You cannot say one thing one day, and do something different the next day.

Component C: Managing Upperclassmen. The third component developed from ten of the coaches’ descriptions of the ways they managed their upperclassmen to facilitate the process involving their athletes’ “buying-into” their programs. Many of the other coaches described situations where they actually had to eliminate some of their teams’ leadership, because these individuals refused to “adapt” to their programs’ “changes.” They reported that these individuals refused to “get on board,” and their continued associations with their programs were detrimental to their teams’ overall growth, development, and success. Currently in his 4th head coaching position, Participant 1 described his tactic with his upperclassmen as “working with them,” to get them through the process. He explained that he tries not to get too “attached” one way or

the other, because “in three months, or a year,” they will be gone, and will not play a role in building his program. Finally, three coaches reported experiences of “getting their leaders on board,” as significant for getting athletes to “buy-in” (Participant 5, 7, & 11). However, for these three coaches in the study, developing relationships with their upperclassmen was beneficial for what they were trying to accomplish with their teams.

Participant 11 explained his philosophy on the topic in the passage below.

I really thought it was important to spend a lot of time with the seniors on our team. Find out what they were trying to accomplish long term, find out what they really thought about this team, their experiences here, and have them be the guys that help get the other guys to buy in, because really that is what it comes down to.

Participant 7 expressed pride in the fact that entering his third season, many of the leaders on his team were members of the group he initially inherited. He explained that through his “consistent message,” and “honest communication” with these men, he was able to get them “to buy-in” to the program he was trying to build.

but I feel really good about where we are right now and, you know, again, call it what, I’ve got 105 players going through fall camp, there’s probably 85 of them who have joined the team since I’ve been here and about 20 that are, you know, that were here when I got here, and many of those, probably one of the proudest things I have in my program, is that several of those that are still with me that were here before, now are some of my best leaders, and they bought into what we’re trying to do (Participant 7).

Similarly, Participant 5 explained that his leaders “bought in so well” that it made the transition easier than he had anticipated. Finally, as was found with the other coaches in the investigation, these three coaches also had to eliminate a few of the upperclassmen in their programs, who refused to implement the necessary changes in their attitudes and behaviors.

Component D: Honesty and Open Communication. The fourth component, focused on coaches' descriptions of the "honest" and "open communication" they utilized in order to get their athletes to "buy-in." Seven coaches stressed the importance of their being "upfront" and "honest" with their athletes (Participant 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11). They explained that the process of getting athletes to "buy-in" required the development of solid coach-athlete relationships (for coach-athlete relationship" see Theme 2, subtheme 3), and the only way to accomplish that was through "trust." Furthermore, they suggested that "trust" was only established by consistently using "honesty" and "open communication" in all aspects of their relationships. Participant 7 explained this point in the following statement:

I think it's important that you, as a head coach, you let players know who you are, how you are, what your pet peeves are. Some things are more important to, you know, to some coaches than others, you know. What you expect of them, try to communicate, and it's starting to pay off now.

Participant 11 believed that there was nothing more important as a head coach than the process of establishing "trust."

I do not think there is a more important word in athletics than trust. You have to trust the guys with you, you have to trust the coaching staff, and you have to trust that they are always going to have your interest at heart and not their own selfish interest. It is a constant thing, and you do it by communicating, and by being available to them, by being around them when other things go on that they know, that they are more than just athletes in your program.

Similarly, Participant 1 cited "honesty" as the most important quality needed within a transitioning athletic program.

I think the most important thing as you go through, is being honest with your players and the people around you. If you make something out to be something it's not and all of a sudden it starts falling apart, it's tough to reel it in and justify it. Kids aren't stupid. 'You might not like what you get,' and that's what I say to my players - I say, 'you might not like what I

have to say, but at least I'm going to shoot straight to you, and if I don't know, I'll say I don't know.' Because really, if you deal with people very straightforward and in the right way, it's easier. And I think as a coach, it's a learning process to do that. I think that I'm very up front with our players here (Participant 1).

Another coach suggested that "there are no secrets" among teams, and therefore "open communication" should be used at all times. He discussed his thoughts on this topic in the following passage:

There are no secrets with players. What you tell a guy in a room privately, to him, is going to be told to somebody else. It may not come out at first, but sometime it will come out, because eventually there are no secrets. So do not be saying something in a room, that you should not be saying, that might affect somebody else (Participant 8).

He also elaborated on the idea of maintaining an "honest" approach in the way he handled his athletes and staff.

If you believe that your stuff.....that you are honest at least, that there is a fair reason for doing something, then you can follow through with it, but if you are unsure of yourself, whether something is the right thing or not, the players will rip you apart. These guys are too good, and those are the people that you want, you want people that want to challenge and improve and....you have to earn their respect, it should not just be given to you (Participant 8).

Another coach described his approach as "honest" and "direct." He felt that it was extremely important as a new head coach to "address problems" as they arose, and "never sweep things under the rug."

The approach that I would typically use would be calm, but it would be one that would be very direct... I would just say this is not how we are going to do things. If you want to do things the right way you are going to need to improve a little bit and you are going to do them our way otherwise we are going to have some problems. I tried to nip it in the bud soon. Never sweep anything under the rug, I never hope things get better; you just address it head on, and I think that things can change more rapidly in terms of making the program more...at least for me I did (Participant 10).

Furthermore, Participant 10 felt that using this approach was the only way to get athletes to “buy-in” to the program he was working to establish.

If you are really going to get down in the trenches and make players better, and coach them, you have got to get them to buy-in. The only way to get kids to buy in is to say ‘here is the product, here is what I am offering, here is how I am running the show...and you can buy in and we will get better. You are going to enjoy it, because you are going to be treated well, you are going to be treated fair. We are going to work hard and have a lot of fun, but if you do not buy-in, we are not going to have as good of a season. I am not going to get in the gutter with you.

Finally, the majority of the coaches in this investigation cited honest and open communication as fundamental in to their leadership (for “leading others” see Theme 2, subtheme 6), but did not directly link the approach as essential to getting athletes to “buy-in.”

Component E: Peer Pressure. The final component, dealt with coaches experiences of using “peer pressure” as a tool to persuade athletes to “buy-in.” Seven coaches recalled situations where this method was involved (Participants 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12). In these instances coaches described times when their players enforced the “new team culture” through “peer pressure.” Certain athletes, who had already bought-into the philosophy of their new teams, were found to have pressured athletes to engage in appropriate behaviors, through their direct and indirect actions and words. Participant 10 described the influence his recruits had on the “work-ethic” of this team:

The expectation that I set out when I recruit players is met. I think that the general feeling, the ones that stick out because of their work ethic. Once the numbers got high enough to where the majority were working hard, it was pretty obvious the one player, two players, who really were not going after it. So all of a sudden, they felt like outsiders. In a sense they were pressured into working hard even though mentally they were not as into it.

Participant 5 explained that as the head coach, his role only extended to a certain level, and that it was the responsibility of members on the team to “educate” and “assimilate” new recruits into the process.

It’s hard for a coach to really project goals and expectations onto a team. That has to come from within. You know, the coaches can lead, but you cannot, no matter how much you want to, project that kind of commitment level. It’s got to come from the kids on the team, and getting the right people in place, and getting to the point where, when we bring new people in, the people that are already in the program are educating them on what it’s like right away and assimilating them into the process that we’ve started.

Similarly, Participant 1 contended that by surrounding his athletes with “good people,” who were “doing it the right way,” his younger players did not know anything different, because the team had already bought-into the program.

...if the guys around them are good people, you know, and doing the right things and are in the system doing it the right way, sometimes the younger players don’t need to know why because it’s like they’re just doing it because everybody else is. At the beginning it’s harder because when you’re trying to change this culture, it’s harder because you don’t have players to follow.

Other coaches agreed that initially they could not utilize “peer pressure” as a tool to get athletes to “buy-in,” because they did not have any players to follow.

In summary, this subtheme captured participants’ experiences of getting athletes to “buy-in” to their coaching philosophies and the programs they were trying to build. All of the coaches recalled different aspects involved in this process of athletes’ “buying into” the messages they were conveying, the standards establishing, and the long-term growth and development of their programs. From their descriptions, the following components emerged: (a) earning respect, (b) same standard for everyone, (c) managing upperclassman, (d) honesty and open communication, and (e) peer pressure.

Subtheme 5: Psychological Impact of the Process

This subtheme revealed the psychological impact of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program. All of the coaches described both the negative and **positive** aspects of the psychological impact they experienced during this transitional **process**. From the analysis the following components were created: (a) **mentally draining**, (b) **frustrating**, and (c) **emotionally rewarding**.

Component A: Mentally Draining. In the first component all of the coaches **recalled** situations in their careers as new head coaches that where “mentally draining” **for them**. Participant 10 discussed his experience as an interim as “nerve racking,” **Participant 9** described situations working with his athletes that “kept him up at night,” **while Participant 12** recalled his experience of taking over a team on NCAA probation, **filled** with countless organizational and structural problems on all levels, as an “absolute **nightmare**.” Participant 3 facing a similar situation, reported that he was not sure whether **he would** have “taken the job,” and “gone through all of that,” if he had known what that **job entailed**. Participant 6 experienced “burn-out” at one point, and actually left the **coaching** profession all together. The mental suffering described in this investigation, **common** among participants, was “intense,” “draining,” “mentally exhausting,” and “**personally taxing**.” Participant 4 explained that he “suffered mentally” during his first **year** as a head coach, and believed he “wouldn’t be married” if he had not made changes **in his** coaching style. The following passage further illustrated the psychological impact **of this** process on Participant 4:

I probably slept, I averaged maybe three hours a night, and every night before a game, I would just wear myself out going through everything. Making sure that we were ready, I was going to make sure we were not unprepared, and we knew every in and out of every team that we were

playing; I would analyze every kid's swing on our team; I would look at every single kid. I would stay up watching video every night, and it was, oh, I remember those nights because I would stay up until 4 o'clock in the morning just watching videos, doing swings, and the next day we would come in at 8 o'clock and start practice, and we would analyze and watch, and it was just, I beat myself up over it, and maybe it was for a good cause. It was probably one reason why we did so well, but it was definitely not good for my home life, for sure. It, I kind of let, softball definitely took over at my house as well. There wasn't a clear separation between the two, but it wore me out mentally too. I was just exhausted by trying to do all that stuff (Participant 4).

He further explained that although his efforts resulted in his team's improved performance that year, it did so at a cost. He stated "we beat a lot better opponents, so it was definitely different. There was a visible difference, so I got my way, but I really suffered through that, I suffered mentally." One participant really illustrated the mental suffering he endured through his coaching experience. He explained that as a result of the stresses he faced initially at his current coaching position, it was the "first time" in his life that he "did not want to go to practice or a game."

It was the first time ever in my life that I did not want to go to practice or a game. I've never been like that, and I had to, I remember just literally being in the locker room and just, you know, putting (*my*) hands like this and saying, 'you've got to do it, and you've got to try to be positive, and you've got to try to do these things,' and it was, I just felt like, I've never been a prisoner before, but I felt like I was a prisoner, because of the fact that, because of our APR penalty (Participant 12).

He continued to describe the experience as "pounding (*his*) head against the wall for 23 hours a day." This coach explained that because his athletes were aware that his "hands were tied," he was limited in his ability to run the program.

This was something I didn't touch on a lot. Well, the kids knew it, so there was nothing I could do. I couldn't kick kids off, because every kid I kicked off, we lost that much more scholarship because of retention. So everybody knew it, so it was a joke on the team. Well, 'I can do whatever I want; Coach can't take my scholarship away or anything.' So I had five kids on campus that didn't play, didn't practice, on scholarship, and I'm

playing with walk-ons. Walk ons, walk ons, walk-ons. And I couldn't take their scholarship away, because we would sink further into the penalty, and so that was very frustrating, kind of being a, just being a prisoner, you know. There's nothing I could do. Even though I knew what I wanted to do, I couldn't do it, you know what I mean? I couldn't set a precedent with them (Participant 12).

Finally, one coach recalled his experience of his wife bringing to his attention that he did not "sing in the shower" for an entire year as a result of the stress he experienced.

My wife laughed at me or she jokes with me she said for a year...this is funny to put this on here, but one of my habits is to sing in the shower and she said that she did not hear me sing in the shower until the season was over and then she remembers me finally singing again, if that tells you what that first season was really like (Participant 8).

Component B: Frustrating. The second component focused on the frustrations coaches experienced from becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. Every coach described different aspects of the process that caused them "frustration." For some it was "hiring new coaching staffs" (see Theme 4, subtheme 1), others "managing the NCAA rules and regulations" (see Theme 2, subtheme 7), and the most commonly mentioned "frustrating" situations involved coaches' players and administrations (for "administration support" see Theme 3, subtheme 5). One coach explained that becoming a new head coach "comes with it's own set of challenges."

...the thing that stands out every time that I have been a head coach for the first time at a place, or taken over a program, is that the first year is difficult - no matter what (Participant 1).

Another coach compared his experience to "running on a treadmill," "working" hard, but "not getting anywhere" (Participant 11). Coaches also described their experiences of trying to help their athletes as sometimes "frustrating," because their athletes would not "buy-in" to the changes they were trying to implement for the greater good of the program. Participant 10 stated that "as a coach it is very frustrating, because (he was)

trying to find the buttons to push for each individual player.” Other coaches explained that these are merely examples of “the stressors” that coaches’ have to face. Finally, the majority of the coaches in this study cited “their passion for the job” as instrumental in the leadership position (for “passion of the job” see Theme 2, subtheme 6). Thus, they expressed their greatest levels of “frustration” with some of their athletes failing to demonstrate that level of “passion” for their sport. The following passage provided an excellent example of this experience.

You really want to be surrounded by a bunch of players that you really feel like they care. I mean that they really have a genuine care for what’s going on. To be honest, I have, up until this point, I really haven’t had that feeling in this program, and that’s been very frustrating, but I knew if we just kept grinding, staying with our play, kept modeling the way that we’re going to treat each other, disciplining them, don’t let things get by, you know (Participant 7).

Component C: Emotionally Rewarding. The third component focused on the **experiences** of participants becoming new head coaches as an emotionally “rewarding” **process**. In spite of coaches’ descriptions of their experiences as “mentally draining” and “**frustrating**,” all of the participants also reported that there were emotional benefits of the **profession** that made the entire process worthwhile. Coaches explained that although the **process** had been “very taxing” at times, it had also been “a richly rewarding experience.” **Coaches** explained that they were willing to tolerate the negative characteristics of their **profession**, because they “enjoyed coaching so much.” Participant 6 stated that there was **no reason** to engage in the activity if “fun” was not present in the process.

If you can’t have fun with what you’re doing, then there really isn’t any point. And so I think that fun factor has been a really important part of what I’ve been trying to incorporate into my coaching since I came back.

Participant 5 clearly illustrated the emotional rewards he received from coaching in his description of his experience.

It's been really fun to have that chance to build something up almost from the foundation. That being said, a lot of coaches are trying to build something from a foundation, but I don't know how many of them are doing that with a new facility, a good budget, a supportive administration, and in one of the most talent rich states, probably the second most talent rich state in our sport to recruit from. So it's been really fun, I would say.

Originally not on track to become a coach, Participant 5 discovered his passion for the profession, because nothing else had ever given him "that kind of reward."

One thing I've realized, is why I enjoy coaching so much, and I think if I ever got out of coaching, why I probably need to stay in education in some way, because I've never done or experienced anything else that I get that kind of reward from it. And it's not a real ego driven, you have to be egotistical to coach at a highly competitive level; to some extent, you have to be. But at the end of the day, that's not what does it for me. It's the moments when an athlete has a breakthrough performance and almost shocks themselves, and you know, just gets emotional. It's those moments that are...you can't put a dollar value on that.

Although his current position was his first coaching position, Participant 9 also described his experience as having been "richly rewarding," specifically mentioning his interactions with his athletes as resulting in this process.

Well, you are going to laugh, but just being called coach was probably one of the biggest...It has been a richly, rewarding experience, just to be involved in their lives on a day-to-day basis and to see their human side. So many times we see athletes and all we see is their sport side or their athletic side and we don't see the feelings and the emotions that go on behind that. We do not see what makes them that hard driving person or what makes them strive for more in the darkness or in the hours when nobody is watching what makes them prepare themselves mentally.

Participant 6 explained that he "looks forward to getting up in the morning," because he cannot wait to work with his team.

I have no problems getting up in the morning, because I just can't wait to learn something new. And I don't think that had really changed in my

experience, I just think my expectations have changed. I don't try to hold everyone that I coach against my ideals, you know. I really did take a look at myself and I think that has really helped me a lot (Participant 6).

Finally, coaches described watching athletes “achieve goals,” and develop on all levels as “fun,” “rewarding,” and “the reason *(they)* began coaching” in the first place. Many of these coaches claimed they were “better people” because of how their players affected them. They expressed the desire to incorporate this “fun factor” in their programs.

Participant 7 illustrated this concept clearly in the following passage:

We have fun, you know. And I have to preface that with, having fun is not going out and playing who goosed the moose during practice, and just goofing off at practice. It's being good. It's being efficient during practice. It's having a crisp practice that just flows with a lot of excitement, but to me, that's fun, and that's getting ready to win. Winning is fun, but we have to keep in perspective the big picture.

This subtheme examined the psychological impact of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program. All of the coaches described both negative and positive aspects of the psychological impact they experienced during this transition process. From the analysis the following components emerged: (a) mentally draining, (b) frustrating, and (c) emotionally rewarding.

Theme 2: The Role of Being the Head Coach (Leader)

The second theme, The Role of Being the Head Coach (Leader), captured the significance of the leadership position throughout coaches' experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. All of the coaches in the study discussed this theme as significant in their experiences. As mentioned previously, the following subthemes were developed (1) *Transitioning from Assistant Coach to Head Coach*, (2) *Making Unpopular Decisions*, (3) *Developing Athletes*, (4) *Adjusting Coaching Style for Athletes'*

Differences, (5) Handling the Pressures of Coaching, (6) Leading Others, and (7) Requirements of the Job – “It’s Not Just Coaching.”

Subtheme 1: Transitioning From Assistant to Head Coach

In this investigation, only three of the coaches had transitioned from the assistant to head coach position on their teams (Participants 1, 4, & 10). One participant made the transition from assistant coach at his previous school, to head coach at his current institution (Participant 5). Although only four of the participants at the time of the study were involved in this transition process from assistant to head coach, other coaches recalled their experiences as assistants, and the changes they faced during their transitions. Therefore the majority of the support provided for this subtheme came directly from the four coaches involved in making this change. However, other coaches offered support for many of these concepts discussed in this section. From the analysis of six of their experiences, the following components emerged: (a) different level of responsibility, (b) being compared to the former head coach, (c) changing relationships with athletes, and (d) delegating responsibilities.

Component A: Different Level of Responsibility. The first component, dealt with coaches’ experiences of having a different level of responsibility in their new head coaching jobs. The majority of coaches in this study described the level of responsibility placed on them as head coaches (for “responsibilities of the job,” see Theme 2, subtheme 7). However, only a few coaches really delved into what this process was like as first time head coaches (Participant 2, 4, 9, & 10). Participants 4, 9, and 10 were first time head coaches, whereas Participant 2 recalled his experience as a first time head coach. Many participants also reported that as head coaches they were constantly required to

make important “decisions” regarding their programs’ structures and the ways their teams’ were functioning on a daily basis (for “making unpopular decisions,” see Theme 2, subtheme 2). However, these three coaches clearly described the new “pressures,” “responsibilities,” and “stress” they experienced in their positions as first time head coaches (Participants 2, 4, 9, & 10). Participant 9, coming directly from private industry, discussed his experience of becoming a “first time coach” of a team that did not have the proper equipment or structure set in place. He explained:

I remember the first day of practice three years ago our very first day of practice, standing there, we were on a bunch of borrowed horses with a bunch of girls that I did not even know and they were getting bucked off and everything was going on. I am kind of like, ‘what have I gotten myself into?’

Another coach described his experience as a first time head coach and the “stress” he experienced from trying to manage all of his new responsibilities.

So whenever I became a head coach, it just, it seemed easier for me just to keep doing all that stuff instead of trying to teach someone else how to do it, so I kept all of the same duties that I was doing as assistant coach, as a head coach, on top of all the responsibility, all the other administrative meetings that you have to go to and attend. So I did everything. So I would literally come in at 8 in the morning, and I would leave here at 2 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the morning, and I would do everything from the budget, to the travel, to the scheduling - all of that. I was about ready to pull all my hair out (Participant 4).

Struggling through the learning process and becoming “frustrated” was a common experience for these participants. In many situations coaches recalled feeling anxiety over their decisions, in terms of whether or not these choices might affect their job status.

Participant 10’s reflection on his experience captured this concept:

The things that I think personally that I get nervous about are things that I have never done before. So when you are trying something new, anything that is new can be nerve racking. I think that part of it was that I was an

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Similarly, Participant 4 described his experience as a first time head coach and the changes he faced throughout the process:

The schedule that I set, before, again, I had no authority in the matter, I just did what the head coach told me to do. Now, I have to set the schedule. Now I have to think, is this going to get us better? Is this going to allow me to keep my job, you know? Is this going to improve us? Even down to the budgets and the money issues, travel, you know, staying within the budgets.

For many of these coaches, the experience was a process of “trial and error,” continuously searching to find the most effective ways to execute their jobs. Often they sought alternate strategies, and thoroughly “analyzed” their decision-making process. Participant 4 elaborated on his experience and the “weight (*he*) felt on his shoulders” from this different level of responsibility.

The most significant difference from going from assistant coach to head coach was just the level of responsibility that was there...there is kind of weight on my shoulders now. The actual skill itself, the coaching part, wasn't any different. It was a lot more decision making, a lot more responsibility. Not necessarily a burden, but just a lot more weight to carry, which made me have to really think through all my decisions. Before, it was just, yeah whatever, you know, as an assistant coach, but now as a head coach, (*I*) have to look at every angle just to make sure (*I'm*) making the best decision because (*my job is*) not necessarily based on every decision, but maybe the course of several decisions, it is. So I try to really analyze the decision-making process a lot more now, and that's probably the biggest, that was more stressful for me than anything else (Participant 4).

Finally, in line with comments from the other coaches, Participant 4 explained that coaching itself “isn't that stressful,” rather it is the decision making involved in the head coaching position that is “nerve racking,” “personally taxing,” “exhausting,” and “mentally draining” (for “psychological impact” see Theme 1, subtheme 5).

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The skill of coaching itself isn't that stressful. It's all, especially if you're an athlete, it's all natural stuff, and you don't really question what you're doing, but when it comes to, and as an assistant, when it comes to other things, you know, business stuff, travel, punishment for the athletes, you do at the direction of your head coach, so there's no involvement from you. You're just doing, you're following orders. You're just listening to the superior, but when it comes to being the head coach, and you go to that authoritative position, if you have to cut a kid, if you have to remove a kid from a situation, or if a kid gets in trouble...how are you going to handle it, did I reprimand that kid the right way? Should I have given him another chance? You always think about the legal issues, and in today's society someone will come back and try to file a lawsuit against me or something like that. So all those decisions that before I was just doing at the direction of my head coach, now I'm the one having to decide (Participant 4).

Component B: Being Compared to the Former Head Coach. The second component, focused on participants' experiences of being compared to their former head coaches. Comparisons to former coaches were already discussed in terms of coaches' inheriting their teams and their athletes' loyalty to old coaches (see Theme 1, subtheme 3). In this component, the experiences of the three coaches that moved from assistant to head coaching positions within their own programs were discussed in terms of being compared to their former "bosses" (Participant 1, 4, & 10). The common element among these three participants was their desire to demonstrate that they were "different" than their former head coaches. They explained that the most difficult task was making people "realize" that they were "different" and had a "different style of coaching." Participant 10 conveyed this in the following passage:

...The head coach prior had a different style than I have... I would think that the toughest part was probably getting the kids to realize that I am not somebody that makes them play out of fear or you have to realize that kids put enough pressure on themselves and my style would be just to try and take some of that pressure off that they have already put on themselves. I would try to have more of an intellectual style and less of an emotional style I think than the prior coach.

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In his fourth time as a head coach, Participant 1 explained that in taking on this role “you are always compared” to the former head coach. He also described the “differences” between coaching styles, and the need for head coaches to make adjustments to account for those differences.

No matter how good or bad the person was before you, they are different than you, so that adjustment is something that you have to account for. I think it has been easier for me this time because I knew the guys that I was coaching, I knew the school because I was the assistant here, so it was a little bit different in that respect, but also taking over from someone that was very successful, who was a mentor of mine, and basically a legend in the sport, that comes with its own set of challenges.

Coaches also described the “expectations” and both internal and external “pressures” they had to “exceed” the performance levels of their former “bosses” (for “handling pressure,” see Theme 2, subtheme 5).

...when you take over from someone who has success, a great deal of success, then the expectation of success is built in, which we all want, but there are also pressures with that, in maintaining that level, and the goal here is to exceed that level - to win a National Championship, to do the things that haven't been done here (Participant 1).

Finally, two of the coaches expressed “respect” for their former “bosses,” but struggled with making changes in their programs in ways that did not offend their predecessors (Participants 1 & 10). Furthermore, they wanted to demonstrate “respect” while also clearly defining their teams as their own.

The difficult thing about it is that I have the utmost respect for *Coach M* and his family, and what they have done for me, and no matter how I handled myself, I have always tried to, number one, make sure that I was very conscientious of his contribution to my career and what have you, but every time you opened your mouth, you had to be very careful because you're in a very public position, and if you say things the wrong way, it's construed - well, *Coach W* said this about *Coach M*, you know, and really I'm doing things different, you know, it's my team (Participant 1).

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Component C: Changing Relationships with Athletes. The third component centered on the changing relationships three coaches experienced with athletes as a result of participants transitioning in their roles from assistants to head coaches (Participants 1, 4, & 10). Unique to this experience, these three coaches had already worked and developed relationships with their team members as assistant coaches. Therefore, their experiences differed, because they did not enter their positions as truly “new” head coaches. They explained that “perceptions” had already been established and “roles” had been defined. Therefore, making changes in the “structure of the program,” and the ways their “teams functioned” without having that “clean slate” was challenging. Participant 10 discussed the transition as “tough,” because player issues were inherent to the process regardless of his perceptions.

There is no question the transition is tough, and more so because you come in and you are just kind of nervous, you know that you have to be strong and you are going to butt heads with somebody no matter what the issues are and how you view them.

Similar to the majority of the coaches in this study, these coaches also described having to “tighten the reigns,” and clearly “establish guidelines” for what would and would not be tolerated in their programs (for “establishing the team standard,” see Theme 3, subtheme 1). Given that “team norms” had already been established by their predecessors and upheld by them as assistant coaches; it was “challenging” to change their teams’ culture (for “changing the culture of the team,” see Theme 4, subtheme 4).

The following quote addressed this point:

It was tough the very first year, only because the kids that I had that were returning had seen me as an assistant coach, and I think this works in kind of any dynamic of a coaching staff; the assistant coaches tend to be more lenient, the kids tend to talk to them or maybe offer more information to them, because I found out really quickly as a head coach, they don’t

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necessarily come in and say, they don't just kind of open everything up to you as they did when I was the assistant coach (Participant 4).

Another coach described himself as "rocking the boat," because he had made changes in the team's "norm."

So what had gone on in the past had been the norm, and it was something (*they*) could count on, and then all of a sudden this new guy comes around who had been here as an assistant and a lot of people knew, but he is doing things a little bit different, and it's rocking the boat. But it's just part of it. (*I*) just learn to do it, and I don't like to be disrespectful to the people that have helped me out, and I never wanted to - I would be more comfortable just going and doing my job and not worrying about speaking or doing this or that, or the other thing, but every time I did, the anxiety was that (*I had*) to make sure that (*I was*) appreciative of Coach M, which I always tried to do. But if (*I said*) something the wrong way, and didn't mean it that way, it's just - I didn't like that part of it (Participant 1).

Finally, the last aspect coaches' recalled in the changing relationships with their athletes was the "communication" between them and their players. Participant 4 explained that once he became head coach his athletes continued to go to him for "support" and "guidance," and were not "utilizing the assistant coaching staff." Therefore, he had to "makes changes" in the way the team communicated by having them take their "daily problems" to the assistant, and come to him "for the really big issues." He explained that he always wanted his team to feel like "his door was open," but that he was spending so much time dealing with "boyfriend issues," "family problems," and "grades," that he was unable to manage his other responsibilities as head coach. Participant 10 on the other hand described the communication with his players as having been "cut off" once he became the new head coach. He explained this point clearly:

I was transitioning from assistant coach to head coach. In that process as assistant coach you get all the stuff from the players that the head coach does not get to hear. So you are the filter between the coach and the players both ways. In that scenario, once I became head coach a lot of those lines of communication were cut off, because now a lot of the

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players realized that I was making the calls on a lot of things regarding line up and so forth and they did not want to show any weakness. So, they would not really come in and make themselves vulnerable anymore like they would when I was the assistant (Participant 10).

Component D: Delegating Responsibilities. The final component examined four coaches' experiences of learning the importance of delegating responsibilities as new head coaches (for "managing assistant coaches" see Theme 4, subtheme 2). This section was discussed in terms of coaches letting go of their roles as assistants, and teaching others how to do their assistant coaching responsibilities effectively. Participant 2 illustrated this idea clearly in the following passage:

I think in this country we are developing a bunch of assistant coaches who are becoming head coaches, okay, and they are still doing their assistant coach role and their head coaching role. It's not the same - it's different, and so you need to understand that you can't wear all the hats, and you need to have specialists who can help you along the way.

He further explained that during his first time as a head coach, he was unaware that he was still trying to do "the jobs" of both the assistant and head coach. Through his mentor's guidance, he realized that he needed to "observe" and "manage" as much as he needed to coach. Based on his experience he provided the following advice for future head coaches:

I can tell you that there's no good planning for this, but the number one thing to being a head coach is to stop being an assistant coach in any way, shape, or form. You have to stop because you can't do both jobs (Participant 2).

One coach reported that initially he believed it would be easier if he handled all the responsibilities rather than "trying to teach someone else how to do it." He described this experience in the following section:

So whenever I became a head coach, it just, it seemed easier for me just to keep doing all that stuff instead of trying to teach someone else how to do it. So, I kept all of the same duties that I was doing as assistant coach, as a

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Common among these coaches, was their initial belief that “it would be easier if they just did it,” “no one could do it the way they wanted,” and “teaching would take too long.”

Participant 4 reported:

it just seemed a lot easier if I just went ahead and did it than taking four hours out of my day to sit down and show someone else, and then ask me, six weeks after that, how to do this, this, and this, you know. It's not that they're going to learn it, boom, in that four hour session, so it just seemed to me, at first glance, to be a lot easier if I just did it. I didn't look at the bigger picture, you know.

During the follow-up interview, Participant 4 also expressed his gratitude for being involved in the research investigation, as it gave him the opportunity to reflect on his coaching process, and implement the necessary changes. He explained his experience in the passage below:

So, the second year, I delegated 90% of what I was doing and cleaned up the whole process . . . it was a lot better for me. I got to spend a lot more time at home. I was a lot more relaxed, I guess. I wasn't so, 'I have to do everything to be successful.' It was a lot. It's a big burden to have to carry it all, to do everything. And that is exactly what I was trying to do, everything. I wouldn't even let people help, I thought it would just be better, easier if I did it, you know, and so... Yes, yes... It was tough the first year; mentally, physically, I was worn out, and then this last year, I felt like I enjoyed the season a lot more.

In conclusion, this subtheme focused on coaches' experiences of transitioning from assistant coaches to head coaches. Although only four of the participants at the time of the study, were involved in this transitional process from assistant to head coaches. Other coaches recalled their experiences as assistants, and the changes they made during their transitions. Therefore, the majority of the support provided for this subtheme came

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Subtheme 2: Making Unpopular Decisions

This subtheme emerged through the analysis of coaches' descriptions of making unpopular decisions as head coaches. All of the coaches' discussed aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences. From the data, the following components developed: (a) establishing team rules, (b) implementing player discipline, and (c) creating the "line-up."

Component A: Establishing Team Rules. The first component revealed coaches' experiences of making unpopular decisions regarding the establishment of team rules. Nine coaches described situations where they made unpopular choices concerning their teams' guidelines. They all agreed that their rules were "fair" and had "specific purposes" geared towards the overall growth and development of their teams, and yet were still sometimes seen as "unpopular," because they challenged athletes' behaviors and attitudes. Participant 12 explained:

So I made some unpopular decisions early from their perspective, but I had to set the guidelines for what was going to be tolerated and what wasn't going to be tolerated in this program. I mean we changed, like the weights was the first thing, we had optional weight lifting here before. You know, we changed that to mandatory. We changed the study, obviously we're in the APR penalty, which is academic progress report, and we had to meet with the NCAA, and we had to even do guidelines because we already hit the penalty on what we're going to do, so we had to increase study hall time. We had to increase more services for our kids, such as tutors and whatnot, which the center is unbelievable, so we had the

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resources, we just weren't utilizing them. So we got a new academic counselor too. That was part of the, so we hired somebody there, we put in a more strict environment, or a program I should say, study hall, you know, mandatory eight hours a week, you know. Just a lot more checks on it. So that was a tremendous change for the kids, tremendous (Participant 12).

Many coaches reported "setting clear guidelines" as "unpopular" in their experiences, and described their teams as having one of two reactions: (1) accepting and moving forward with their programs, or (2) resisting and refusing to accept and implement new policies.

Participant 11 described his experience of "(*setting*) the bar" for his team:

We set the bar. We did not allow them to set it so that when they came in they knew it was all business. Whatever it had to take, if I was not happy I would bring them back at midnight, if I was not happy with that I would bring them back at 2, until they figured it out that what had been the norm was no longer going to be the norm because we wanted better results.

He explained that new head coaches have to be the one's "to instigate the change" within an organization, and sometimes the idea of "change" is not popular among teams.

They knew coming in the door that I am not playing around with anything that is going to be a distraction or negative to how we are viewed, how you are individually viewed, how this basketball program is viewed. So they knew that the penalties were severe, the penalties were harsh. The penalties were across the board there were no excuses, there were no stories. I tell them there are no lawyers here, there is only a judge. You have no option here. You do it or I sentence you. That is it. That is kind of the way it is.

The majority of coaches cited specific examples of the "unpopular" policies they implemented. Participant 2 implemented "unpopular" changes with his team's preparation and basic eating habits. He explained that his athletes were "eating hot dogs and drinking cokes" prior to their games, as well as "showing up for games and practices" dressed in shorts when it was below freezing or raining. He discussed that his athletes' were "unhappy" with the changes he made, but that it was in their best interest.

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One coach, challenged with overcoming his team's NCAA academic probation, enforced the rule that players, who were ineligible at the end of the semester, would not finish the season, which extended a month after spring semester ended. Participant 12 described the negative responses he received after making and then enforcing this unpopular decision:

I made a rule earlier, I said 'look if you don't get,' see we play a month after school is over. I said 'if I get your grades at the end of the year, and you're not eligible to come back next year, whether you're a senior or a junior, you're done on the spot.' Lo and behold, two kids, one was a junior, one was a senior. Kicked them off. And I mean you would have thought that I had committed murder. I mean it hit every f---ing paper, it hit everywhere, and they got a lawyer and said 'you can't kick' . . . *John's* like, 'yeah, he can.' 'Because why?' 'Because he's the coach.' He said, 'and it was the rule,' and I said 'look if you're not eligible, you get all F's, four F's, and drop the class.' And he said, 'well I'm a senior. I'm going to . . .' I said, 'no you're not going anywhere. I said, you're done,' and I did it to two kids at the same time. Well, last year I had a first rounder that got 1.5 million dollars, who wasn't a very good student to begin with, that got like a 3.0 last spring, and he did that knowing he's getting 1.5 million.

Another coach recalled multiple "unpopular" decisions he had to make initially, from drug testing the entire football team to requiring his players to live on campus their first two years. He described his experience in the following passage:

When I got here, I grew up in the age that you lived in the dorm. I mean, you know, there were true athletic dorms, and so everybody lived in the dorm. You didn't live in apartments, stuff like that. So I got here, I asked, 'okay tell me about which ones of our players live in the dorm?' 'There's no one living in the dorm.' I mean, we've got this great facility, I've got this beautiful dorm here. No one was living in the dorm. I said, 'you've got to be kidding.' So my policy was going to be that all freshmen and sophomores, your first two years live in the dorm. After that, you can move off campus. And I was told, by everybody from people in administration, people here, from people on campus, 'you can't do that coach. You can't do that.' I said, 'what do you mean I can't do that?' 'They just won't act right in the dorm. They'll tear things up, and they'll be this and that.' I said, 'is that what happened? Is that why they're not living in the dorm?' 'Yeah, that's why they're not living in the dorm

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because the coach just got fed up with,' and so I said 'well, I'll tell you what, if I can't have an expectation for them to act right in the dorm, we might as well tear that contract up right now because ya'll got the wrong guy.' And obviously it wasn't a real popular move amongst some of the players that had been able to move off, and now they had to move back on, but that's the way, it's culture now for us...If I tell a parent that my number one goal is to be an encourager/motivator for them to do the very best in the classroom, that us sending them into a situation in apartment America where they've got, that they get a scholarship check and now they've got to pay rent, they've got to pay electricity, they've got to pay cable and all that, they've got to worry about all that. No, I can take that all away from them, and so that's the way we do it, and I think if you researched the 119 Division 1 programs, probably half of them do it the way I do it, and some of them let them live off campus, but that's the way we're going to do it here (Participant 7).

Finally, coaches in this study explained that the “unpopular” decisions they made were done so in the best interest of their teams. Furthermore, they reported that as the “leader” sometimes they “have to be the bad guy,” because they understand that in the long-run it was what was necessary to achieve success. During the second interview Participant 7 elaborated on this concept:

The one thing (*I have*) got to look at when (*I*) make policies or rules, if there is something that is important to me and important to my coaching staff to make sure that our players do, that after we evaluate it, it's going to be a policy or a rule that it's good for the players, it's in their best interest. I always want to make sure that when it's rules or policies, it's not a bunch of 'I gotcha stuff.' It's stuff that really is important to us and is going to help them, like going to class.

Component B: Implementing Player Discipline. The second component illustrated participants' experiences of implementing player discipline as “unpopular.” Eleven coaches described situations where they had to implement “unpopular” acts of discipline with their teams. One coach used “peer pressure” as a tool to implement discipline among his players. He explained that when one member of his team breaks a

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rule, the entire team and everyone working with that team, endures the punishment together.

I had to almost discipline them individually. Once we started getting enough guys then we disciplined them all. If player A missed class, we are all up at five thirty, and I mean everybody, players, coaches, managers. Anybody who touches this program is up, and that is how they started doing the right things and beginning to understand. Peer pressure sometimes is a good thing (Participant 11).

Another coach described his experience of “drug testing” his entire football team, and the criticism he received in response to his “unpopular” methods of handling the players who tested positive, as well as testing the team altogether.

I’ve been around athletics my whole life. I know what an underachieving team looks like. I know what an underachieving athlete looks like, one day he has a great practice, next day he has a bad. Last season, I felt like my football team needed to be drug tested, and the one thing in Division 1 football is every Division 1 head coach has the ability and the right to drug test any of his players any time he wants to. So I didn’t think of it like this at the time. I found out it may be unprecedented. I drug tested my entire football team, which usually you take out about 20 or 25, maybe one you suspect, but I didn’t want there to be that deal of, ‘well he’s just testing the guys that he didn’t recruit,’ so I tested all of them. My son’s on the team. I drug tested him too. So 105 of them were drug tested, and I explained to them that ‘I’m not doing this as a witch hunt. If anyone does test positive, your name will never be released to the press. We’ll go through the process. Bottom line, you get the help you need, you have a chance to continue to be on this football team. I’m not going to suspend anybody right now.’ I explained all that, and we had out of 105 that were on the team, we had 17 test positive for marijuana. Actually, it was not as high as I thought it was going to be, but with that I got criticized in the community. I got criticized by my team. I think they thought that there were some names of some kids that leaked out, and the whole reason was because they told other people. I bring each one of them in, and I said ‘listen, this is confidential. I’m not telling anybody, if you tell somebody, then that’s your right. So that was disheartening (Participant 7).

Coaches also described “kicking (*individual*) kids off the team,” as part of their experiences of making unpopular decisions. Participant 4 explained that as the head coach he had to make “tough” decisions like “having to cut a kid,” or “remove a kid from

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a situation” if the athlete caused trouble. In line with this coach’s experience, Participant 5 recalled a situation where he had to remove an athlete from the team for committing “academic fraud,” and explained that being the head coach is not “all sunshine and rainbows.”

She was actually a freshman that year that committed academic fraud and had to go through that whole process, and removing her from the squad, you know. It’s not all sunshine and rainbows, you know. So there’s been some issues like that, and you know, that’s a real bummer as a coach. You see somebody that’s got some talent that’s just blowing it, and you know, you just have to get rid of those people and move on, and that’s, you know, so there’s some bad stuff too. But for the most part, everything we’ve done has just been fun and exciting, and you know, like I said, it’s been challenging, but it’s been so rewarding that the challenges are all, that’s what makes it so rewarding (Participant 5).

Finally, for this coach and so many others, implementing this type of discipline was something they did not enjoy, and they referenced it in the category as having to make “unpopular decisions.” Participant 9 provided another example of the “difficulties” involved in implementing this type of discipline:

Some of the difficulties have been that there have been some girls on the team that have had to be punished and had to cut and had to do some things to that affected them and I knew it would have affected them. I don’t do things like that personally but (I) do in hopes that, at some point down the road, they will see the value in that or it will help them some point down the road.

Component C: Creating the “Line-up.” The final component dealt with coaches’ having to make the “unpopular” decisions of creating their teams’ “line-up.” Whether it was “replacing athletes they believed would choke” (Participant 9) “eliminating the pecking order to create a competitive environment”(Participants 3, 8, & 12) “forcing athletes to compete” in situations outside their comfort zones (Participants 1, 2, 6, 7, & 11), “cutting star players from the team” who did not follow teams guidelines (All

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participants), or just “creating the line-up” they believed would provide their teams with the greatest opportunities for success (Participants 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 12), all the participants’ recalled someone on their teams as having been “unhappy” with the decisions they made in creating the “line-up.” Participant 9 provided an excellent example of this experience, describing a situation where he had to pull an athlete who had a bad performance, because he did not “trust” that she would compete successfully.

The second year at Nationals I let a girl go first round, *Athlete C* who was a sophomore then, one of my good horsemanship riders, she had a real problem with the horse, just a major blow up. I knew that she wouldn’t be able to just come back in the next round, and that the judge wouldn’t just completely wipe that out of his mind, and that she would be affected by that. So, I took her out of the line-up for the next round, and put somebody else in. And I knew it would crush her, but I also knew that her confidence was pretty shattered. It was an interesting dynamic in dealing with how is it going to affect this person if she goes or doesn’t go. Those are the hardest things; those are the things that keep me up at night. That is the thing that is hardest I still have to do my job no matter what (*Athletes*’) feelings or emotions are, I still have to put somebody out there that I think can win. She had all the time to consider that, and even though we talked about it, and I thought we had it worked out, she just never got over it.

In conclusion, this subtheme revealed coaches’ experiences of making unpopular decisions as significant in their leadership roles as head coaches. All of the coaches’ discussed aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences. The following components emerged from the analysis: (a) establishing team rules, (b) implementing player discipline, and (c) creating the line-up.

Subtheme 3: Developing Athletes

The subtheme, developing athletes, revolved around coaches’ experiences of developing their athletes in all areas in order to help them reach their potential. This development was not limited to athletics alone, but included the growth of athletes in

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every facet of their lives. Participant 9 stated that “the best thing for *(him)* is that when they leave this university, *(he)* will have given them all that *(he could)* to make them successful.” Likewise, all of the participants in this study stressed the importance of their athletes’ development as significant to their experiences. From their descriptions the following components were uncovered: (a) athlete – coach relationship, (b) athletically, (c) academically, (d) mentally, and (e) shaping athletes’ lives.

Component A: Athlete-Coach Relationship. The first component captured participants’ experiences of developing the athlete – coach relationship as part of the process involved in their athletes’ overall development. Eleven coaches described situations where this was true for them. Participant 11 provided his thoughts on the topic:

The player-coach relationship especially in basketball... I think it is the way you handle it, the way you coach them. They just need to know that you are trying to do everything you can to make them better, which means you have to be as demanding as you can, but you have to be as human as you can. They have to know that it is never personal and that once a practice is over, it is over. I do not have a very long memory, but I want the guys around here in our office interacting with our staff as much as they can. They have to feel comfortable in here.

In reference to the development of the athlete – coach relationship, Participant 8 felt that in order to execute this job successfully he had to be “completely committed to it” as well as being completely “committed to *(his)* players.” Participant 5 described how as a head coach he had “to keep a box of Kleenex by his desk,” because he “gets a lot of crying in *(there)*.” One coach characterized the development of the athlete – coach relationship as the most important aspect of any program.

...the most important thing in the program is the players - and meshing people and personalities. Well, when you inherit someone else’s team, you inherit someone else’s stamp on that team, and then you’re trying to change that. How to get the players, how to get the most out of people, is very important in the coaching world, and that is something that you don’t

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walk in and say, there is no magic formula to say ‘I’m going to get the most out of this kid.’ You’ve got to get to know the kid, you’ve got to get to know the person... You’ve got to get to know the guys, and I think that the biggest thing is that they have to believe in you, and you have to believe in them, and it takes time. There are players that earlier in your career you’re about ready to kill, and then at the end of your career you have a lifelong friend and person that you have spent a lot of time with (Participant 1).

Another coach specified that although the athlete – coach relationship plays such an integral role in the development of athletes, it was important that these relationships were adaptive and functional. He illustrated this concept in the description of his experience in this area:

I just told myself one thing, because I think when I was younger, I was very codependent in my relationship with my players. If they were in a bad mood, it’s my fault. Well, it isn’t my fault, and as I’ve gotten older and gotten more secure, and I said ‘I’m not going to deal with that crap,’ and I told myself, I got to a point in my life where, you know what? As a coach, ‘I do the best I can, it’s not about me, and if you don’t like it, I have too good a track record with so many athletes that are very happy... So you just move on,’ and so I try to be as tactful as (*I*) can and just move on and take the high road.’ And so, one thing I heard... a great line, there was a guy who used to be the NM coach, he’s an athletic director now in New Mexico, Tim Cast, he used to say, ‘when you have one player drawing more energy than all the others, there’s an imbalance, it’s wrong. The really great teams are the ones that have an even balance. All the energy isn’t being drawn by one guy all the time, and the involvement and the concern. If everything’s pretty equal, you’ve got a great team.’ It’s really a lot of truth, you know. When you’ve got one guy pulling all that out of you, it is just so draining (Participant 3).

Finally, many of the coaches discussed the importance of building relationships with their athletes that extended beyond their sports. They stressed the significance of their athletes’ feeling they “cared” about them as people, versus just athletes. They made references to creating a “family atmosphere,” being “surrogate fathers,” and being involved in all aspects of their athletes’ lives. One coach explained that he had “43

grandbabies” in reference to his athletes’ children. Participant 11 illustrated this concept clearly through the discussion of his feelings on the topic:

The other part of it is that something that was very important to me was, that if they played for me, and they were going to pay this price, and if I was going to be this demanding, they better know that they got me for the rest of their life. I think that the relationship beyond basketball.... it is all part of building a successful program.

He continued to explain that it was important to him that his players understood that he genuinely cared for them as “more than basketball players.”

They have to understand that you care about them. I probably keep going back to this....more than basketball players. There is nothing more important to me than them understanding that. If they leave here and they do not feel that, then it has really been a bad experience for them (Participant 11).

Component B: Athletically. The second component centered on coaches’ descriptions of developing their players athletically. Every coach touched on this concept throughout the interview process. Coaches described their experiences of establishing “training programs,” soliciting “technical feedback” from athletes to develop their awareness, organizing “practice schedules,” “setting competitive schedules” to play better teams, creating “conditioning programs,” implementing “drills” to address team and individual weaknesses, and “changing” the way athletes trained, prepared, and competed. Their examples were precise and geared towards the overall advancement of their players athletically. During our follow-up interview, Participant 8 readdressed the importance of player development in the overall structure of an athletic program.

It is important to recognize that part of your program and plan is that you’re developing them. And you really do have a big emphasis on developing them. When we have the guys compete, we are trying to develop their ability to compete. We are not trying to prioritize back and realize for everyone that in order to be successful they’re going to have to compete, and they’re going to have to be okay with that, and you know,

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what I walked into was that they weren't. Nobody wanted to upset the balance, they all took it personal...there in training it was only a few strong personalities that really set the tone, and it was only a couple of personalities that happened to be in the wrong spot in the line-up and it just really filtered down to everybody else that, 'we're not going to compete, because I'm going to get upset, I am just going to play this position and you're just going to have to play that one,' and I think what had happened is that the coaches prior maybe had...their relationship with that player allowed him to do that (Participant 8).

One coach expressed his initial shock concerning his "teams' conditioning," "work-ethic," and "inability to practice" effectively. He further characterized the program as having had a reputation of being "white collar and he had "to change it to blue collar."

...the perception of this program was white collar, and we were trying to change it to blue collar. And you could, any time, any other coach in the country could tell you the same, so we knew, I knew what the perception was, so that had to be changed too (Participant 12).

Participant 7 outlined a clear plan for the overall development of his players, which included a "training component." He described this part of his "message" in the statement below:

The second thing is, kind of changing gears, is that we train, that we work the off season, we work spring football practice, we work the summer conditioning program, to put ourselves in a position to, you know, to be at a level of intensity on game day that our opponents can't handle.

Another coach described his experience of developing his swimmers athleticism by "coaching to his best athletes." He explained:

There was such a gap, when I started here, there was such a huge gap between the top and bottom end of talent, that it was, you know, to have team camaraderie, you've got to keep the bottom end people happy and bring them along, so the top end people suffer a lot...but you always end up coaching to your best athletes. You have to. They're the ones you're relying on the most. You coach to your best athletes and try to bring everybody else along with them. The more that that talent gap narrows, the better you can become. At football, if your third and fourth string are terrible, and your first string is good, you're not going to have good practices, whereas if the fourth string is really talented, they're just

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younger, but the gap is narrow between first and fourth string, your workouts are going to be a lot better, and it's going to make your team a lot better, and that's where we've gotten to now (Participant 5).

Finally, every coach described different situations where they worked to develop their players athletically, from limiting “the clubs they were allowed to use” on the golf course, to the endless repetition of basketball drills, coaches’ found tactics geared to help athletes “meet their potential,” or as one coach said, “blow the top off of potential” (Participant 7).

Component C: Academically. The third component, dealt with coaches’ experiences of ensuring that their athletes were developing academically. Ten coaches described this process as playing a significant role in their coaching experiences. Among these coaches they reported a range in the academic status of their teams upon their arrivals. Some coaches’ inherited teams in excellent academic standing. These coaches connected this academic success with the type of athletes their sports attracted (Participants 5 & 9). One coach felt that academic success was “innate” to his sport, and explained that because of the “structure” it provided, his athletes actually performed worse during the off season.

Swimmers crave structure and time management. I think, to be honest, that's innate in the sport of swimming, and swimmers tend to do very well academically, and I tell you, when I was, it's evidence here, when we are in off-season periods, we do worse in school (Participant 5).

Similarly, another coach recalled the benefit of accepting his head coaching position, as having the opportunity to work with such intelligent athletes.

The upside has been that I have the opportunity to work with some of the brightest athletes from across the nation that we have been able in a short time put together as a team. I feel that we could almost take this group of people right out in the business world and run a successful business with

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it, because they are such talented, dedicated, hardworking young women (Participant 9).

He further described his teams' academic accomplishments to better illustrate the type of athletes that had participated as members of his team.

...this team has raised the GPA of the athletics department as a whole, about two tenths of a point. There has never been a Chancellor Scholarship winner in athletics history here, and I have two of them on my team. I think that the figures are like 60% of my team members are on some sort of academic scholarship.

In the following passage he characterized the women on his team, suggesting that their backgrounds had influenced their athletic experiences, and the ways in which they approached achievement arenas.

That is the type of athlete that we attract in our sport. They are pretty much an upper scale income family. They have traveled a lot. They are very focused on what they want to do, as far as grades and as far as what they want to accomplish in life, and also the competitions. They really bring a maturity to them to college that we don't see in a lot of college students at this point because they have had such a varying life and background (Participant 9).

Other coaches inherited teams with normal academic standings (Participants 1, 6, 8, & 10). These coaches expressed a desire for the athletes to perform well academically, but their focus was not as strongly centered on academics in comparison to the other coaches in this investigation. Coaches reported that they "wanted (*their athletes*) to be successful in the classroom and go on and get their degrees" (Participant 1), and that they "(*were*) very proud of the fact that (*their athletes*) do very well in school." The following passage further illustrated the concept:

...being a college coach is not about the sport. It's about the person. I want everybody on my team to be professional players if that's what they want. If they don't, then that's okay. Of course, I'm not going to recruit them unless that's what they really want, but I want them to be the best

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players they can be, but I also want them to be very successful academically (Participant 6).

Four coaches in this study inherited teams in poor academic standing (Participants 3, 7, 11, & 12). In fact, three of the teams had acquired APR penalties, and were on NCAA academic probation, with losses of 6-10% in scholarships (Participants 3, 7, & 12). For these coaches, athletes' academic development was an essential component of their experiences. However, for many of these coaches their motives were not necessarily centered on ending their probation, but rather on the growth and development of their athletes. Similar to the other coaches in this study, these coaches expressed the desires for their "kids to do well academically" (Participant 3). One coach explained that his players are "student athletes" first and foremost. In the "plan" he created for his team, academic development was the first requirement he listed for his athletes.

The first one is for our players to understand that everyone associated with our team, all of our coaches, the head coach, everything, is going to be an encourager and a motivator for them to do the very best in the classroom that they can do, and let's make sure we state it right up front that you are a student athlete (Participant 7).

He explained that one day these "guys" would no longer be playing football, and "for some it (*would*) end sooner than later." "That being the case," he argued that if he cannot "prepare his athletes," and "provide them with the greatest opportunities for success in life," then he should not be coaching at all. Participant 12, whose team suffered the greatest APR penalty, described the changes he made to initiate his athletes' academic development.

We changed the study, obviously we're in the APR penalty, which is academic progress report, and we had to meet with the NCAA, and we had to even do guidelines, because we already hit the penalty on what we're going to do, so we had to increase study hall time. We had to increase more services for our kids, such as tutors and whatnot, which the center is

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unbelievable, so we had the resources, we just weren't utilizing them. So we got a new academic counselor too. That was part of the, so we hired somebody there. We put in a more strict environment, or a program I should say, study hall, mandatory eight hours a week, you know. Just a lot more checks on it. So that was a tremendous change for the kids, tremendous (Participant 12).

He further described the result of the dramatic academic changes he initiated within the structure of his program.

I'm not going to tell you we're perfect academically, but we're going to class. We're going to class, and we have nobody ineligible. I won't have anybody ineligible this semester, so we've got it going in the right direction. So that was really tough, you know, but it's a cancer to your team when you don't do that stuff...It really is. It bites you in the long run, and the players know it (Participant 12).

At the time of the follow-up interview, his team was still on probation due to the fact that NCAA APR reassessments occur in three year cycles. He was optimistic that their penalty would be removed, because of the changes he had implemented with his team. Another coach, whose team was not on probation, described making similar changes in the structure of his program, and the way in which the academic development of his athletes was handled. He also reported success from the process:

It was across the board. It was academics, it was athletics, and it was everything. The amount of calls that I get now for missed classes, or missed tutors are limited. At this time last year I was getting four or five calls a day, and now it is maybe one a month, or one every two weeks (Participant 11).

With his team on probation, Participant 3 described his athletes' academic success as a result of the changes he had implemented in his program.

We're the only men's team in our conference that made the ITA all-academic team. You have to have over a 3.2 accumulative for the year, and then we're one of only six teams in the top 40 that made it. So we've done some good things.

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Finally, for the majority of coaches in this study, the development of athletes academically was significant regardless of the academic status of their inherited teams. However, circumstances surrounding their experiences seemed to have shifted their focus. For some, academic excellence was representative of their sports and the types of athletes their sports attracted. For others, academic success was merely one piece of the puzzle in an important picture. Some found academic improvement as essential for player eligibility and ending their probations, and for the majority, academic development was crucial to help athletes achieve success in their lives.

Component D: Mentally. The fourth component examined coaches' experiences of developing their athletes mentally. Ten coaches reported the mental development of their athletes as significant in their experiences. One coach argued that mental training was "where sport is made these days."

The reason why we hired a psychologist or a mental conditioning coach to work with our team full time is because that's where sport is made these days. That's where sport is made, and really if I could tell, and you should put this in your report, any young coach that is coming up, I would tell them this. You need to be very solid on your methodology. You need to know what you are doing, but you are crazy if you think that that's what is going to do it. You need to be solid on your methodology. You need to get somebody who is sharp on the physical end of things, and you need to get somebody who is sharp on the mental conditioning edge of things because you can't do everything (Participant 2).

Another coach explained that as a head coach it is just as important to develop athletes mentally as it is to develop them athletically.

Just as important as what they are actually doing to help their bodies is to train their mind to work efficiently and to do the right things. When you have an athlete that is tired and is going from one thing to the next, if you can allow him to cut a corner, chances are he is going to try to cut the corner until he understands why it is good not to, and even then he is going to have days when....he needs help. They need somebody to motivate them and push them to do the right things (Participant 8).

Many of the coaches described their experiences of working with their athletes to develop a “culture of excellence” (for “developing a culture of excellence,” see Theme 3, subtheme 1). From a mental training perspective, this meant that coaches were instilling a philosophy of what it meant to “compete,” and even more important what it meant “to prepare to compete.” Coaches’ descriptions on this topic included, developing “championship attitudes,” “persistence to overcome challenges so as to continue when things aren’t going their way,” “a culture of excellence,” “a culture of success,” “personality changes to become intense and hard-nosed competitors,” “the ability to work outside their comfort zone,” and “the fire to never give up and always find a solution.” One coach’s description of this athletes’ mental development on and off the field involved their learning the “schizophrenic nature of football.”

It’s important that our players learn the schizophrenic nature of football. I learned this a long time ago as a young coach, and obviously I have to explain, you know, schizophrenia means a split personality. So I talk to them about, off the field, when (*they’re*) dealing with the ladies in the dining hall, when (*they’re*) dealing with the RA’s, when (*they’re*) dealing with young ladies on campus, when (*they’re*) dealing with professors, out in the community, it’s ‘yes ma’am, no ma’am, yes sir, no sir,’ being the ultimate gentleman. And I do explain to them, ‘you are special. You’re special, God gave you a gift. You’re not any better than anybody else. Treat people with courtesy. Treat people the right way. Be a gentleman. Be a good person. Now, when you step through the iron gate of our practice field on any given afternoon, or come down the tunnel at our stadium, you snap.’ You know, that personality needs to change to be a very intense, hard nosed competitor (Participant 7).

The idea of learning when and where to “compete,” and the intensity and focus involved in that process, was common among participants’ experiences of their athletes’ mental development. Participant 8 illustrated the relevance of this concept for his team.

It was just interesting because we want our teams to go out there and compete, and have that competitive edge, and that fire to never give up,

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and to always try and find a solution. You have to practice that; you cannot just do it for a week, and then go out there on the weekend and do it. On a daily basis we put them in situations where we competed.

In the following passage he described his experience of discussing this philosophy with his athletes to help them understand the changes he made to develop them mentally.

‘We are not going to take short cuts, but we have to compete.’ In a competitive environment if you are prepared to do that a little bit more than the other guy that gives you an advantage. All practices we compete. I basically say to them ‘look, *the conference* we are in is the most competitive conference out there. They all hate you equally. I was in a major conference prior to coming here, but you had maybe one or two rivals. Here they hate each other equally. When *University A* comes to town they are just fighting tooth and nail to beat you. They can be 50 spots behind you in the rankings, and it is going to be a battle, especially at their place. You cannot shy away from that and you cannot whine and moan if things are not going your way. You just have to make them go your way.’ In practice that is the mentality that we have and we try to structure our practices that way (Participant 8).

Participant 8 also provided an excellent example of teaching his athletes to “be competitive,” through a situation that happened in practice between a freshman and senior on the team. He recalled that the freshman perceived the upperclassman’s call to have been incorrect, and turned to his coaches for validation. Participant 8 described his response in the following quote:

The freshman gets a tight call from the senior and the freshman is all like looking around looking at us to over rule the call. The first thing is that no one is going to be around the call anyway. ‘The likelihood if you are on the road, it is going to be even less likely that the call is going to be overturned, so just get used to it. It is a competitive environment.’ I am not saying...we are not advocating the guy hooking him, but it is his call. ‘You get to make your calls, he gets to make his calls,’ but it is more of the example. ‘Even if you think that you are being Do not let it affect your next point, the point after, and the point after. Just deal with it there, and now by all means say something, but get on with it.’ Again that is what I mean by being competitive.

Some coaches described experiences of getting their athletes “outside of their comfort zones” to help them reach their potential. One coach described his strategy of forcing his athletes to “acknowledge” and furthermore “work-on” overcoming their weaknesses as athletes. He described this process as “pushing them out of their comfort zone.” During our follow-up interview, he elaborated on the topic:

People really don’t know what they are capable of until they get outside of their comfort zone...and if I were going to add something to that it would be that by forcing them to think about these things, you are forcing them out of their comfort zone and they realize what they are capable of more when they do that. And, I think that is kind of what my goals are along those lines (Participant 6).

Many of the coaches referred to the emotions involved in the athletic process. One coach found great enjoyment from seeing the “human side” of his athletes through the “feelings and emotions” that they revealed behind their performances.

Just to be involved in their lives on a day to day basis and to see their human side. So many times we see athletes and all we see is their sport side or their athletic side and we don’t see the feelings and the emotions that go on behind that. We do not see what makes them that hard driving person or what makes them strive for more in the darkness or in the hours when nobody is watching what makes them prepare themselves mentally (Participant 9).

Finally, developing athletes mentally was significant for ten coaches in their experiences as new head coaches of collegiate programs. For many of them, this involved helping their athletes find the “joy” that comes from pursuing their goals. Participant 7 illustrated this concept in the passage below:

We have fun, you know. And I have to preface that with, having fun is not going out and practicing goofing off... you don’t play who goosed the moose during practice. It’s being good. It’s being efficient during practice. It’s having a crisp practice that just flows with a lot of excitement. But to me, that’s fun, and that’s getting ready to win. Winning is fun, but we have to keep in perspective the big picture.

Component E: Shaping Athletes' Lives. The final component uncovered coaches' experiences of shaping athletes' lives. Ten coaches referenced this aspect of athletes' development as significant to their experiences. Coaches discussed their desires of producing "good human beings" and "people productive in society," and essentially "shaping their lives" by teaching them through their participation in sports "things" that would benefit them later in their lives. Participant 9 claimed that as a coach his "biggest goal" was "to make this an experience that (*his athletes could*) leave, and go into the world and be successful." The following quote captured this concept:

Being in the program I expect, and they should expect, to become better people in the four to five year window that they're here. The only thing that I promise to parents and to a player in the recruiting process is that 'I will surround you with good men, and I'll surround you with good teammates. I'm not going to run a team that's going to have a bunch of coaches that don't care about their players. I'm not going to run a program that has a bunch of thugs,' you know. 'When they're 22 and they're done from here, that being associated with our program will help them become a better father, a better husband, and a better worker, and if it doesn't, then I haven't done my job' (Participant 7).

One coach referred to his experiences of "shaping athletes' lives" as "the entire growth experience."

I think it's about the entire growth experience. I'm not trying to belittle how important the sport is, but I don't think you're ever going to be successful at something unless you have other things in your life that are important also, and it gives you perspective. So that's what I'm hoping to create with all the kids that I coach. Yeah, I mean, well that's my goal at least (Participant 6).

Finally, the majority of coaches in the study discussed wanting their athletes to feel like they had an "open door policy." In order to "shape their lives," their athletes had to feel comfortable enough to discuss the problems they were facing in their lives with their

coaches. Participant 11 explained that without this solid relationship, he would be unable to develop his athletes in this area.

If they do not feel comfortable coming through my door telling me anything that goes on in their life, then I am failing them. Then I am just a basketball coach, and I am not somebody that is going to help shape their lives and really that is what it is all about. I am trying to teach them things through basketball that are going to help them.

In summary, this subtheme revolved around coaches' experiences of developing their athletes in all areas of their lives to help them reach their potential. All of the participants in this study stressed the importance of their athletes' development as significant to their experiences. From their descriptions of this development, the following components were uncovered: (a) athlete – coach relationship, (b) athletically, (c) academically, (d) mentally, and (e) shaping athletes' lives.

Subtheme 4: Adjusting Coaching Styles for Athletes' Differences

In this subtheme, coaches' described their experiences of adjusting their coaching styles for athletes' differences. In the following passage, Participant 1 discussed his experience of making adjustments to his coaching style and “working outside his comfort zone.”

I think that when I came in here, our roster, for me personally, the number of student athletes that we had, was larger than what I would have liked. I think every coach has his comfort zone; some people might want 26, 18, whatever, and we had more - it was out of my comfort zone as a coach. Now, if the old coach was here and I was still here, then it wouldn't be out of our comfort zone, because number one, that's what he wanted as head coach, and then I was here, as well as the other assistant. So how do you handle that? You've got a couple of choices. You come in and cut a bunch of people, right? I felt that that's totally inappropriate because I don't think that - you know, the kids coming in were brought in because they were promised an opportunity, and what I had to do was just work out of my comfort zone, and you just do the best that (*I could*) and try to make it work the best that (*I could*), and we did.

Likewise, ten coaches reported making adjustments in their styles of coaching for their athletes and coaching careers. From the analysis of their descriptions, the following components were uncovered: (a) adapting to gender differences in coaching, and (b) adapting to a different generation of athletes.

Component A: Adapting to Gender Differences in Coaching. The first component focused on seven coaches' experiences of making changes in their coaching styles to adapt to gender differences (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, & 10). All of the male participants that were working with female athletic programs at the time of the study, or had previously worked with female athletes, discussed this process as significant in their experiences. Having coached both male and female athletes, one coach provided his insight regarding gender differences in coaching.

I think it's almost a little easier to coach when you only deal with one gender. I don't really prefer one over the other; they're just, men and women are different physiologically; you can train them a little bit differently; how you deal with them psychologically is different. Somebody told me a long time ago, and I love the line, you know, with coaching men, you tear them down, tear them down, tear them down. With women, you have to build them up, build them up, build them up, build them up, build them up. You know, and when you're trying to deal with both at the same time, there's always going to be some people that don't get what they need. So it's a little easier when you're just dealing with a single gender, but if you've got the right staff and the right structure, you can do a co-ed team just as well (Participant 5).

Many of the male coaches described having to change their coaching style once they began working with women. Participant 6 explained that his female athletes "forced (*him*) to look at things differently."

I am going into my 12th year coaching females and I think coaching females has done more for me than coaching males ever did. In the regard that I think my relationship with my wife is much stronger, and I think my ability to be a dad is a lot better because of it... I don't know if that is the right way to say it, but I was forced to look at things in a different light

coaching women, because women do not think the same way as men...I have found out two things, one I know a lot about women, that's one, second, I know nothing about women (Participant 6).

All of the participants who worked with women described the “communication,” and “compassion” that was needed in their coaching relationships with women. Participant 4 reported:

So I think through learning that females don't learn the same way, I think, as guys do, in terms of they want to feel compassion sometimes from their coaches, I've learned that I can't be that way all the time, and I adjust to them more than (*they've*) got to adjust to me. That's how, I guess that's probably the bigger picture, is I used to make them have to get used to me versus me getting used to them, and I'm the one that has to adapt, because the kids are going to be different every year, so I need to adjust to them versus them trying to adjust to me.

Participant 9 also discussed having to learn to “communicate more” after he began working as the head coach of a women's athletic program. In the following excerpt he described a conversation he had with his wife on the topic:

...*Athlete A* just called me and told me what she made on her test, and my wife said 'yes that is communication that is what people do.' Obviously I am not very good at it, so for me to be coaching a women's team it was a unique thing, because I had to learn how to communicate much more.

Coaches also explained that their female athletes “did not do well” when they were asked to compete against each other in practice. None of the participants coaching women, described situations during practices where they tried to create competitiveness among their athletes, rather they worked individually or as a group to enhance the competitiveness of the team. Whereas those who coached men's programs, specifically described experiences where they instigated inner-squad competitions. They explained that their male athletes' actually “thrived in these conditions.” Participant 3 expressed his thoughts on the matter in the caption below:

Guys, you know they can yell and scream at each other, and the next day they're fine, whereas the girls, sometimes they're more sensitive. You play challenge matches between guys in our sport, it's no big deal, but I rarely ever did that with the girls. I didn't want to create competitiveness among the women, where the guys thrive a little.

This coach, however, expressed regret for leaving his women's program to take over as head coach of the men's program. He described his experience in the following passage:

My style is not to yell or scream at people, and with the women, I think one of the reasons I had a lot of success was because I think I was able to talk with them, because they're on a little more mature level. There are other concerns in different aspects, coaching guys and girls, but from a perspective with the boys' team, I've had to be kind of a tougher guy, which is not in my makeup, I don't like, and I'm a little more upset about things, because it doesn't seem that unless you do that, *(I)* have to be more that way with them, whereas with the women, I think it would be a disaster to treat them that way, and I think with the guys, *(I have)* to be. So my coaching style, in terms of my interaction with the guys, is a lot different than it was with the women. It's like night and day, two different people (Participant 3).

Participant 2 described making similar changes in his coaching style once he began working with a women's program. However, contrary to the opinions of the other coaches, he felt that the differences were not as drastic between men and women, but rather apparent among the different generation of athletes he had coached. This concept is addressed in the next component.

Component B: Adapting to a Different Generation of Athletes. The second component examined the adaptations participants made in their coaching styles as a result of this different generation of athletes they were coaching. Nine coaches described their athletes as coming from a "different" generation, in comparison to "when they played," or even just different in the last five to ten years in terms of "the athletes they use to coach." One coach explained:

People are different now. Kids need more attention now, more instant gratification now than when I played. It was more disciplining and this is how we did it no questions asked. Kids want to know now, which I think is a good thing. To me it comes down to treat people how you want to be treated (Participant 11).

Having coached both male and female programs, Participant 2 offered his perspective on the differences he observed among his athletes and the adaptations he made as a result of these differences.

It's not like we're raising Rambo these days, you know. We are not, none of the kids are as tough. *Coach C* always references this study that he saw in the Harvard Review, and it was termed "A nation of wimps," alright? We are, in some ways, raising a nation of wimps. Well, I grew up with very hard men as coaches. I mean the guy from The Miracle looked like a teddy bear, compared to him, but I love the guy. The guy is the godfather to my children, and so I think I come from that background. You know, even a Bobby Knight background, like hey, there is a proper and an improper way. That is, you cannot do that these days; you just cannot because everybody's feelings will get hurt. Their egos can't take it, and there is somebody to pick up the pieces for them. So, in general, it wasn't just the moving from men to women. It was almost me, even though I am a young guy, coming in and realizing, hey, the way I have to deal with kids today is totally different than the way that I was dealt with five years ago, and the way that I am dealing with them now is different than the way I had to deal with them three years ago, you know. They are not tough. They don't have thick skin; they take everything very personally, so (*my*) communication style (*had*) to change. And, so it is a challenge figuring out how to get my environment to change when accountability is very difficult to establish within any group. And so that has been the adjustment (Participant 2).

During the second interview he added that "in general, it's a new generation of athletes and (*he*) just (*has*) to talk to them differently." Participant 4 explained that his philosophy had changed in response to the differences he had seen among his players. He too was coached by someone who "yelled and screamed" all the time and initially began coaching in a similar fashion. However, he soon discovered this method was

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ineffective with his athletes and began making the necessary adaptations. He described the changes he made in the statement below:

Now I adjust to them more than (*they've*) got to adjust to me. That's how, I guess that's probably the bigger picture, is I used to make them have to get used to me versus me getting used to them, and I'm the one that has to adapt, because the kids are going to be different every year. So, I need to adjust to them versus them trying to adjust to me (Participant 4).

In line with this coach's experience, Participant 6 described how his coaching perspective had changed after realizing his high expectations and demanding coaching style were not beneficial to his athletes.

But even being that competitive, I think my perspective has still changed a lot. If I had coached you my very first year, you probably wouldn't have enjoyed me very much because I demand and expect a lot out of kids, and I figure if I recruit them to this place, then I must think that they have the ability. And that hasn't really been the case, so I think my viewpoint has had to change a little bit over a period of time, and I think that I have realized that people perform better. Certainly when they're being competitive and when they're placed in competitive situations, but if you can't have fun with what you're doing, then there really isn't any point. And that fun factor has been a really important part of what I've been trying to incorporate into my coaching since I came back (Participant 6).

Participant 6 also realized that his demanding coaching style had been ineffective, explaining that he "lost many athletes that way." He found that as a coach he had to account for the different personalities on his team, and adjust his coaching style accordingly. He described a situation where he pushed "kids" past their limit and "lost them forever."

Some kids handle it real well, some kids don't handle it real well, and I coached at *University C*, and I did that with a whole group, and a couple of the kids, I lost them forever because of that, literally lost them forever. They got so mad, they got totally and completely were defeated by that, and I think I learned a lot from that. Unfortunately, they didn't, but I learned a lot from that, and it's, you know, people are different, and you have to treat them different, and the goal was the same, but the

methodology has to be different based on personality, more so than anything else (Participant 6).

Finally, coaches did express some frustration with the sense of entitlement, and lack of accountability sometimes “characteristic of this generation” Participant 3 explained that “it’s just unbelievable the perspectives of some of these kids. It’s like everybody thinks they deserve a trophy just for showing up.”

In summary, this subtheme captured the experiences of coaches adjusting their coaching styles for athletes’ differences. Ten coaches discussed making adjustments in their styles of coaching for their athletes. From the analysis of their descriptions, the following components were developed: (a) adapting to gender differences in coaching, and (b) adapting to a different generation of athletes.

Subtheme 5: Handling the Pressures of Coaching

This subtheme centered on coaches’ descriptions of having to handle the pressures of coaching as relevant in their experiences of becoming new head coaches. All of the coaches in this investigation recalled experiences when they had to “deal with the pressures” of their jobs. Through the analysis of their experiences the following components emerged: (a) dealing with external pressure, (b) creating internal pressure, and (c) dealing with criticism.

Component A: Dealing with External Pressure. The first component captured coaches’ experiences of dealing with external pressure as new head coaches of collegiate programs. Eleven coaches made references to external pressure which included the “media,” “administration,” “parents,” “community,” past program performance accomplishments, “family,” and even “within the program itself.” Many coaches described their experiences of the media as “just part of the job” and something they had

to “deal with.” They characterized the process as a “roller coaster” in that sometimes they were in good standings with the media, and other times not as much. However, they all stressed that it “doesn’t just go away” so it is easier to handle the media’s questions as they arise. Participant 12 explained:

It’s hard to face the media, but you have to do it because if you don’t do it and you win, that’s not, you can’t do that, you know what I mean? You have to do it in wins and losses, and you’ve got to answer the questions that, you just want to strangle them, you know. Why are you asking me that question? You’ve already asked me that a hundred times.

Many of the coaches in this study described their experiences of handling their administrations and the “pressures” they created. Participant 10 described that as an interim, he felt like he was “under the microscope of the administration.” He expressed his feelings on this topic:

The things that I think personally that I get nervous about are things that I have never done before so when you are trying something new. Anything that is new can be nerve racking. I think that part of it was that I was an interim which made me nervous. That is probably a big part of this as far as I am under the microscope.

Other coaches’ reported “frustration” in their past and current positions where their administrations “pressured them,” but were “unsupportive” of their coaching process (Participants 1, 2, 3, & 8). Similarly, the other coaches felt that because the “pressure to perform” and “expectations of success” were built into their programs, “administrative support” should be as well. Only a handful of coaches mentioned the involvement of parents in this process. However, those who articulated this aspect of their experiences addressed their methods of handling parents within their programs. Participant 8 described his experience of parents sending defamatory emails about him prior to meeting him:

Parents were overly involved in the program's decisions and that was a shock. Oh yeah, parents were writing. We had a parent that did not know me at all from Adam, but one of the other guys basically had a couple of e-mails sent saying, long short of it, 'he is the devil.' They do not know me, they have no idea. Basically, there were just irrational comments. I was fortunate I was given that information prior so at least I was prepared to know what I was coming into (Participant 8).

Many coaches described the "community involvement" in their programs, and the external pressures it caused. A few coaches inherited teams who had achieved a certain level of success. Participant 9's team won a National Championship his first year coaching. He described the external pressure he felt "to have to do it again." Participant 1 also inherited a successful program, and described his experience with this type of external pressure:

I think that when you take over from someone who has success, a great deal of success, then the expectation of success is built in, which we all want, but there are also pressures with that, in maintaining that level, and the goal here is to exceed that level - to win a National Championship, to do the things that haven't been done here.

Many of the coaches described the pressures they felt concerning their families (For "the role of family," see Theme 5). They recognized that their families made many sacrifices in support of their coaching careers, and wanted their families "to live in (*cities*) they liked," have opportunities to get "good educations," and "establish themselves in a community." Participant 1 described an experience where his athletic program was dropped entirely from the athletic department and the difficult conversation he had to have with players and his family.

Like when we were at *University D*, everything, we were doing, everything that we were supposed to and then one day, you walk into a room, and they dropped the program, and you know, that's a tough conversation with your players and your family, you know. So I mean, coaching is goofy because, you know, those issues come up from time to time, and you know, you don't like to deal with them, but if you coach

long enough, you will deal with them, and you have to accept that as part of the job (Participant 1).

Finally, coaches described their experiences of having to handle the external pressures within their programs. The majority of coaches explained that there were “high expectations in their programs to succeed.” Participant 1 explained:

It’s great that you’re here, but you also have to accept the responsibility of it. And I’ve never ever, one day I’ve been here, never ever thought it was going to be any different than it was. You know what I mean? I knew it was going to be, and I’m glad. I wouldn’t want it any other way because if there wasn’t that pressure here to win, you’d be somewhere else, and you wouldn’t be in a Top 25 program. So, you know, I mean that’s just the way it is, you know.

Component B: Creating Internal Pressure. The second component captured coaches experiences of the internal pressure they created within themselves to be successful. Every coach in the current investigation discussed the internal pressures they experienced throughout their coaching careers. Furthermore, they explained that the greatest pressures they “felt” were the one’s they “placed on themselves.” The following quote illustrated this concept:

The internal pressure we put on ourselves, as coaches you know, every coach does this, that internal pressure is just so great, and so much more than all the other. It’s like if you have a really bad tooth ache and you cut your hand, well you don’t notice your hand at all because your tooth hurts so damn much. Well it’s like that with this internal pressure, it just burns inside you and I think it does that with all coaches (Participant 12).

Another coach discussed his “tremendous desire” to achieve success. He further explained his reasons for the internal pressure he placed on himself to achieve those high expectations, specifically at a program in his hometown.

It is, in some ways, fulfilling my destiny; in some ways fulfilling my birthright; in some ways, you know, building something special and giving back to the town that I love more than anything else. So it’s big. Now, there are a lot of people who would say, ‘well that’s the worst situation to

ever coach in, in your life.' I don't see it that way. I see it as the best. I see it that, as much external pressure as there is, I put internal pressure as well, but that's what drives (*me*), you know. That's what drives (*me*) forward and all that stuff, and so it's definitely big. They're here a lot, you know (Participant 2).

During the second interview Participant 2 elaborated on this topic with the following statement:

I bet of the people you talked to they all have a burning crazy desire to be the absolute best and for me, I have a burning crazy desire to be the absolute best, the very, very, best.

The majority of the coaches in this study similarly reported having a "crazy desire" to be the best, "to win National Championships," to "knock the top off of potential." One coach referred to internal pressure as what was needed to be successful.

In my mind, if we don't get good, I can't handle it because I'm not used to that, and I don't like that. I like to win. I want to win. I want to win. I want to be good. I don't like to be a second tier team, a mid major team, and you know everybody else, because I think I'm better than a lot of the coaches that are in better programs... you should be able to make it work. And the thing is there's no reason not to. So, I mean, it's the pressure you create on yourself if you want to be good...maybe it's pressure I put on myself, but that's how I feel. That's the way I think. I don't think we've gotten where I want to be yet (Participant 3).

Another coach described the internal pressure he created for himself to exceed his predecessor's performance level.

The expectations that I tried to place on myself, to beat the, you know, kind of the standard that was set before me; the pressure that I put on myself to do it better than the person that was here before me. And that, coupled with all the new responsibilities on top, were very, I don't think I was the best, that very first year, I don't think I was the best instructor for the kids in terms of, on a day to day basis. I was so consumed with, we've got to get better, we've got to get better, instead of how are we going to get better (Participant 4).

Finally the majority of the coaches recognized this internal pressure as “part of the process.” They believed that it motivated them to “push through challenges,” “overcome adversity,” and “compete” at the highest level. Participant 1 explained:

I think every coach goes into their season wanting to win a national championship, wanting to be the best in the country, but here...in this program, it's a reality. And making sure you're maintaining that reality and that you have the opportunity, not everyone is going to win a National Championship every year, but that you put yourself in a position to do that is important.

Component C: Dealing with Criticism. This final component examined coaches' descriptions of dealing with criticism as relevant to their experiences of handling the pressures involved in the profession of coaching. Eleven of the participants recalled specific examples of the criticism they faced as coaches. Coaches explained that “criticism was part of the job,” and as head coaches it was their responsibility to handle the criticism they receive. Participant 7 described his experience as an athlete as having “prepared (*him*) to be a coach” and deal with the criticism:

I was put in a position as a young athlete to prepare me to be a coach. Having the opportunity to play at the *University of C*, I learned what it felt like to have a standing ovation by 80,000 and be booed by the same 80,000 in the same day. That's just kind of the life of a Division 1 quarterback. So that's kind of the life of a coach. You're hanging out there, the one thing about a coach is that, you know, a guy, all due respect, a guy that works at the bank or a guy that sells insurance, 25,000, 30,000, 80,000 people don't show up 12 times a season to watch (*him*) work, you know. And every decision that he makes is not talked about in the newspaper, you know, so that's just the profession that we chose. So from a criticism standpoint, I can handle criticism, but sometimes, my whole goal is to affect this football team, to build a team, and sometimes that criticism, because now my team doesn't know whether or not they should listen to this, listen to that, you know, it gets in the way of building it as quickly as you possibly can (Participant 7).

Another coach reflected on his aspirations of becoming a coach, and getting “flack” for the way he “implemented” his program's plan.

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When you become a head coach, you have wanted to become a head coach for a number of years. It has been a goal for X amount of years so when you are finally there all of those things that you thought you wanted to do now, you have to reevaluate those and then implement the majority of them because you feel strongly about them. Once you do that, or at least once I did that, I knew that there was going to be a little bit of flack, I just didn't know how much (Participant 10).

Many of the coaches described the criticism they received as coming from a number of different areas including players, other coaches, parents, administrators, media, and in general, people "outside" of their sports and organizations. Participant 2 clearly illustrated this experience in his description below:

Now we're judging football coaches on their first hundred days of practice; presidents on what do they do their first hundred days, you know. That's a new phenomenon. You're going to be judged about what you're doing right now. You're going to be judged on a very local level. You're going to be judged on a very personal level, and you're just going to have to get used to that being the way it is...and this is for any coach - you're going to be judged by people who know nothing about what you do and so you'd better have an organization to make sure that you don't leave yourself open to things like that. Every coach is going to go through that now.

This coach also provided advice for ways future practitioners should handle the criticism they are given, by stating that they should "have a philosophy," develop a "long term plan for what (*they're*) looking to do," and "stick to the plan."

You'd better hold your nerve, because you're going to get criticized, you know, you're going to have to fight through certain things, but that's where you have to have a philosophy, and a way that you're going to stick to it. You better stick to it, especially if you're going to be a college coach. Your season is short, and if it starts going bad, it's very difficult to turn it around, because you don't have a whole lot of time. So you need to be able to stick to your guns. You better have a long term plan for what you're looking to do. Stick to your plan. Stick to what you want to do, you know (Participant 2).

One common philosophy among coaches was the importance of deflecting criticism away from their athletes. They explained that as head coaches it was their responsibility to

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“take it,” and they should not “make excuses” to divert attention away from themselves.

Participant 1 described the way he handled the criticism he was given as a coach:

...but it's asked, through other people, 'what's the reason for,' or the media, just coming up and asking you, 'hey you're ranked number 2 in the country' and then, 'this week you dropped two games in a row. What's the reason?' Anything that you say, it's going to sound like an excuse. So sometimes you've just go to sit and take it. Those are the things that you just have to be very careful of how you answer them, because if it comes out.....every time you opened your mouth, you had to be very careful because you're in a very public position, and if you say things the wrong way, it's construed, it's public. All that's public, and it's one thing when, a lot of things are public, but people care about it, so there's a lot of questions. I think that what you want to do, is you want to deflect as much of that tension as you can away from your players, and just let them enjoy the experience and perform, because I think our guys last year were, did a great job, but they were also very aware of when they didn't perform to the level, how it affected me.

Participant 10 also stressed the importance of not “making excuses,” but rather focusing on the program and the “long term” plan intended to enhance the development of the team.

...you do not make excuses, you continue to work on the program and get the program better and think long term not just one match and one season. What do you plan on doing over all and as long as they are on board with that philosophy, then it is not a problem.

Another coach agreed that being criticized was a characteristic of his job, and it was essential that he was able to “deal with the criticism” as it was made, and not allow his athletes to be criticized.

You don't let the kids be criticized. So people are going to criticize you, and they're going to come after you, and all that. You have to be able to deal with that. You have to be able to deal with the fact that part of your job is that you're going to be judged by people who know nothing about what you do or the sport you play, alright. And that's if you're a football coach or not. I want to be judged by people who know our sport, you know, and so, you just have to handle it. You just have to deal with it, you know (Participant 2).

Finally, one coach explained his rationale for not making excuses was that he did not want the team to hear his comments and think that this type of behavior, excuse making, was acceptable in their program.

I've always been a guy that, you know, I don't ever want to see my team, because I know that they read the newspapers and they read everything, and they see my radio shows and all that; even when we're going through all that stuff, I don't want to come off as an excuse maker, because as we build this program, that's one of the problems that usually a losing program has, that everybody has got an excuse. Everybody's got an excuse. 'It's somebody else's fault.' You know what? Maybe it is. We identify what the problems are, whether it's injuries, whether it's defections, whether it's youth on the team, whatever. Everybody's got their problems. I don't want to be a coach, because I think it's true that your players will reflect, and so as we've gone through it, we just grind. We try the best, and we get evaluated exactly where we are. Constantly talking about players and how we can make them better. And now we've gotten to a point that I feel like we've got a collection (*of athletes*) that is ready to be a team (Participant 7).

In summary, this subtheme examined coaches' descriptions of handling the pressures involved in coaching as significant in their roles as head coaches. All of the coaches in this investigation recalled experiences where they had to "deal with the pressures" of their jobs. Through the analysis of their experiences the following components emerged: (a) dealing with external pressure, (b) creating internal pressure, and (c) dealing with criticism.

Subtheme 6: Leading Others

This subtheme dealt with coaches' descriptions of leading others as significant in their roles as new head coaches of collegiate programs. All of the participants referenced different qualities of this subtheme. Participant 8 recalled the advice he was given by his mentor on the topic:

A much smarter coach than myself has said to me on many occasions that 'regardless the guy, the personality you have, they all want to be led. They

all want somebody to help them. You may not think it sometimes, but even the guys that you think want to control everything they need it as badly as anyone.' At times when I maybe (*questioned*) do I back off or do this? Those are the times advice like that has helped me. 'Know that you have to stick to what you are doing. It is the right thing. Do the right thing, lead, help them' (Participant 8).

From the analysis of their experiences, the following components developed: (a) impact position, (b) confidence, (c) passion for the job, (d) organization, (e) communication, and (f) continuous learning.

Component A: Impact Position. The first component focused on the leadership role of head coaches as an impact position. Eleven coaches characterized their roles as head coaches as "impact positions." They further discussed the "impact" they have had on the lives of their athletes. Coaches recalled countless examples of their influences over their teams, both positive and negative. Working as a male coach of a women's soccer program, Participant 2 provided his thoughts on the subject:

When I say something, I think I can have an impact, okay, and I think just by the position of being a head coach and being a man coaching women, I think it's an impact position. When I say something, it impacts them.

Coaches also described this process as knowing how "to lead others," "to change lives," "to motivate," "to build a team," as well as knowing how "to put people in particular slots where they can be successful." Participants also elaborated on the pleasure they found in discovering the impact their coaching had on athletes' lives.

You know, there's all those things that you have to do to be successful, but, those moments when (*your athletes are*) having great competitive breakthroughs are what makes it all worthwhile, you know. It usually takes a few years, and then you start to get these E-mails about what kind of impact you had on somebody's life, and then, like I said, it's priceless. Just absolutely priceless (Participant 5).

Finally, coaches suggested the importance of “making an impact,” specifically as new head coaches. Participant 3 stressed the need for head coaches to “make an impact” so as to demonstrate to their new teams the reasons they were hired for these positions. He described the process of becoming the new head coach as having a “window of opportunity,” in which a coach needed to make an impact.

I think when you’re a new coach coming in, I call it a window of opportunity, what you get when you’re new and coming in, expectations of what, well, everybody’s going to give you a lot of time, which they did... This year and four more years after this year, so I’ve got until 2014 to get it done, but that’s nice, but I have an attitude that when you come in as a new coach, there’s always that excitement, and somebody can turn around or whatever, so it’s really important to get on board and get going, you know. I don’t agree necessarily with the process, like, okay, you’re going to be mediocre for so long, and eventually you’ve got to make some jumps and leaps over time because that’s what... you kind of get molded in to that.

Component B: Confidence. The second component captured coaches’ experiences of confidence in their new leadership roles. Ten of the coaches in this study reported “having confidence,” as a critical component in their roles as new head coaches. They explained that they could not please everyone with the decisions they made as head coaches. Therefore, they argued that it was better for them to “believe in their systems,” “trust their plans,” and make decisions based on what they thought was “right for their teams.” One coach explained that there are many different styles of coaching, and every coach has a “way that they do it.” With this in mind, he felt it was essential that coaches “pick what (*they’re*) going to do” and then have the “confidence” in themselves “to stay true to it” (Participant 7). Another coach expressed a similar philosophy on the subject.

If you are not comfortable about who you are, and what you are about, then it is going to be a nightmare for you, because you are going to end up trying to please everybody, and you will end up pissing off everybody else. You want to do a good job. I think if you believe in what you are

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doing, then just go ahead and do it, and deal with the challenges. Deal with it, nothing new (Participant 8).

Having already been a head coach, Participant 8 expressed “confidence” in the “system (*he*) had in place,” as well as in himself as a head coach.

I felt very confident that okay we are coming in, and I have a set system in place. It is not like I was just coming in for the first time trying to find my way. I felt very comfortable with the system that I had in place. You have to be comfortable with who you are. I am a competitive SOB. I absolutely love to compete. I am not going to pretend that I am Mr. nice guy, and then be an asshole. I am just going to be me. I am honest.

Many coaches explained that it was not always “easy” to be confident and “stay true” to their philosophies, but in the long run it was essential to achieve the outcomes they wanted. The following quote illustrated this concept:

I think you have to be patient and you have to stay true to the course that you have set, because there are going to be people, there are going to be times when you think that, ‘we have to redirect this course,’ ‘this is not going the way that we want it to be,’ and you just cannot be worried about winning the next game. You have to take the long haul view of ‘I am trying to change this program’ (Participant 11).

One coach recalled his experience of taking over as head coach for his former boss, who was highly respected in the field. He explained that in situations like that where comparisons were being made between coaches, it would have been easy for him as the head coach to lose confidence, but this was when it was critical that he remained “confident” and “stayed the course.”

What you have to do is be very confident in yourself, and know that there are going to be some things that you do that are the same, and there are going to be some things that you do that are different, and you need to have confidence that the things that you do that are different are going to work, and know that if you stay the course that things are going to work out, and you are going to find that success that you want (Participant 1).

Coaches also described the significance of confidence as new head coaches, because of the “influence” it had on their players. Coaches explained that their new athletes “looked to them” for confidence during this unstable phase of transition, and therefore they had to be “consistent” and “keep the same mentality.” Participant 11 reported:

...but they cannot ever see me down, or unenthusiastic, or without trying to get better, or not prepared because that is what they are watching. They are watching to see what happens when they start feeling down how you react. I had to be the lightning rod and that is hard, and hopefully that will spread to some other people.

Another coach explained that by “keeping the same mentality,” athletes “(*knew*) what to expect” within the new program.

I think what you do is you keep the same mentality, here is how we run the program, and you have to fit into it, because we believe in this program. If you believe in it, and you are not wishy washy, and you do not waffle on certain things. This is just how it is. You think of Pat Summit at Tennessee, you always think about how she does things in a particular way, and has been doing them that way for a long time. Kids come in and they know what to expect, and know what they are getting into. There are not any surprises. So, you have to be consistent like that you know (Participant 10).

One coach described his experience of having to change the reputation of his program.

He explained that he had to have enough confidence as the “unknown coach” to “beat the pavement” and “sell his philosophy.”

So I had traveled to *this State* numerous times and visited with kids and coaches. I knew a handful of people, and had a good reputation with them, but basically, I was an unknown. I was an unknown coach, I was young, and there was not a lot known about *University A* as a program. It was sort of the great unknown. So I went out and had to just beat the pavement trying to sell myself. I couldn’t sell the success of the team, because we were on ground zero at that point. I just had to beat the pavement, you know, selling my own philosophy, my own style, and the university, which people didn’t know about (Participant 5).

Finally, the majority of coaches made references to experiences where their confidence was “shaken,” because of their new teams’ performance outcomes. However, they all agreed that it was imperative at these times to remain confident, “think long-term,” and “trust their plans.” Participant 7 provided the following advice on this subject:

I really do believe that in coaching you just, you better not get too high with your highs or too low with your lows. If you just keep grinding, believing in what you do, that it’ll come back around, you know (Participant 7).

Component C: Passion for the Job. The third component focused on coaches’ descriptions of the passion they had for their jobs as head coaches. All of the coaches described “the passion” they had to work in this field. Furthermore, because of the “long hours,” “travel involved,” “pressures to perform,” and so many other obligations of the job, they agreed that their “love for coaching” was what kept them in the profession. Similarly, Participant 6 reported that “(he) just can’t wait to get up in the morning,” because he looks forward to working with his team. Another coach described his “burning, crazy desire to succeed” and “to be a part of something special” (Participant 2). Participant 5 explained “that if it wasn’t fun, (he) wouldn’t be doing it. (He) would do something where he could make a lot more money and work less hours.” Having “changed career paths” multiple times, he further illustrated his “passion” for coaching:

You know, I changed career paths so many times while I was in college, and could never figure out what it was that I was really passionate about. There were so many things I was good at and enjoyed, but didn’t really, wasn’t really passionate about. So to just sort of fall into this, I feel like it’s, you know, it’s worked out right. It’s just worked out the way it was supposed to for me, and I know how fortunate I am. One, that I have a job, and two, that I have a job that I really love coming to every day. How many people can say that in this day and age (Participant 5)?

Many of the coaches mentioned “passion” in terms of them “believing in what (*they were*) selling.” They explained that as new head coaches they were trying to “lead” a

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new group of athletes and if they were not “passionate,” and “did not believe” the message they were sending, no one would have followed them. Participant 7 discussed this concept in the passage below:

Believe in what you are selling - One thing about a football coach, or I guess at any position in leadership, but really in my profession, is that, you know, this is our passion, Myself and my ten assistant coaches, we have a tremendous passion for this game. It is our livelihood. We get hired or fired, call it what it is, on what happens on Saturday afternoon. That's, fair or not, that's the way it is.

Two of the coaches in this study described moments in their coaching careers where they experienced “burn-out.” Participant 6 actually left, and then returned years later after a “near death” experience. He explained that “(he) loved coaching so much that he was willing to put up with the other stuff.” Participant 4 was in the process of working through his “burn-out” at the time of the first interview. As a first time head coach, “not delegating responsibilities” to his coaching staff, he had become overwhelmed by the experience, and reported feeling “exhausted” and “mentally drained” his first year. After reflecting on the interview, he made the following assessment during the second interview:

That meeting with you made me think about several things on a daily basis for a few weeks, and continue to make those adjustments, and continue to feel like that first year I beat myself up, didn't really enjoy the job itself...not that you're suppose to have fun all the time, but I hardly ever took the chance to sit back and say, wow this is really a lot of fun. It was more like, 'we gotta do this, this, this, and this and, if we don't get it done, then we're not going to win,' you know...I never took the time to actually live in the moment you know...it was more about what do we have to do to get better.

Finally, coaches reported that their “passion” was a critical component involved in their experiences of becoming new head coaches, and furthermore when that “passion” did not exist, it was impossible to execute their jobs effectively, if at all.

Component D: Organization. The fourth component involved in participants' leadership roles as new head coaches was their "organization." Eleven coaches mentioned "organization" as fundamental to the process of becoming a new head coach. They believed that "organization" impacted the way their programs were formed, their plans were executed, and their structures were protected. One coach described the organizational process involved in coaching, and the role administrators' played assisting coaches with this process:

There is an administrative side to coaching, and you need to be organized you need to, there needs to be a structure that you follow within your program. Everybody's got a different way of doing that, but it seems to me looking at different successful coaches they have a structure. There is an organized way that they go about doing things, and it is clear to those people that are in it. I think a school like *University A* has the resources, and the people in place to say, 'coach what is it that you want to put in place,' 'how do you want to put your structure in place.' Each guy is different, each coach has emphasis on different areas, and that is where they spend their money and their time, 'how can we help you there' (Participant 8).

Many coaches reported their strengths in being able to "organize" plans to assist athletes in their achievements of goals. They explained that they executed their "plans" with a specific "purpose" or "goal in mind." Participant 6 stated:

...so I'm real good on making plans out, you know, and figuring out what we're going to do from day to day. But all the tournament golf, all the qualifying that we do, each practice that we do has a specific goal in mind.

He further elaborated on the role his "organization" played in getting his "program on track":

I think we have an opportunity to get this program on track in a pretty short period of time. So, and I feel like I'm very organized as far as practice is concerned and the things that we're doing, the reasons why we do them, and the potential benefits from the way we practice and the way we prepare (Participant 6).

Coaches stressed the importance of “organization” as new head coaches of collegiate programs. Participant 5 cited “preparation” and “management” as key during this transitional period, so as to be able to “put out the fires as they (*came*).” Moving from a men’s to a women’s athletic program, Participant 3 claimed that this change required him “to be more organized and structured with the guys.” Coaches also described their need for “organization” in order to protect themselves while under scrutiny.

If you are going to be successful, if you are going to be successful for a long time, you have to be almost maniacal about it, and if you’re maniacal about it, then if a kid pisses you off, evidently it happened to Leech, or somebody like that, you’re going to react to it because you are already at that line, you can’t go any further...and so you react, so the only way to protect yourself is by having your stuff together. I am a guy that lives on the edge. I like to go as far as I can possibly go, but when you do that you expose yourself to different risks. So you know that is why you have got to have all these checks and balances in place to make sure that you are giving yourself the best chance. But to win, you must expose yourself to that level (Participant 2).

Finally, coaches described “organization” as playing a significant role in helping them get through the process as new head coaches. Participant 9 explained that he was “not that organized.” However, he utilized his own strengths and found someone to handle that aspect of the program, because he recognized the importance of organization in the coaching process. Participant 2 described coaches’ “organization” as essential for “(*making*) it through that (*transitional*) process.”

So until you have your own players in your organization, okay, the one thing I took from it is, your organization had better be really tightly run. You better have your I’s dotted and your T’s crossed, because the only thing you’re going to have to fall back on is your process and your organization, because the players don’t know you. They may connect to you; they may not. So you better have your organization done right, because that’s the only way you’re going to make it through that process until you can get your own players in there (Participant 2).

Component E: Communication. The fifth component, dealt with the role coaches' "communication" played in their experiences of leading new groups of athletes. Nine coaches described their "communication" as significant to their experiences as new head coaches. Participant 7 explained that as a new head coach "you've got to stay right up front with what you're trying to get done, and it is completely outside of blocking, tackling, throwing, and catching." This concept of "communication" for these coaches involved their being "upfront" and "honest" with their athletes, so as to "develop trust," and "build relationships" with their players. Participant 7 provided his philosophy on the subject:

I think it's important that you, as a head coach, you let players know who you are, how you are, what your pet peeves are. Some things are more important to, you know, to some coaches than others, you know. What you expect of them, try to communicate, and it's starting to pay off now.

Similarly another coach presented his thoughts on the relevance of "communication" as a new head coach. He stressed the importance of "trust" in athletics, and explained that it is impossible to develop "trust" without communication.

I do not think there is a more important word in athletics than trust. You have to trust the guys with you, you have to trust the coaching staff, and you have to trust that they are always going to have your interest at heart and not their own selfish interest. It is a constant thing, and you do it by communicating, and by being available to them, by being around them when other things go on that they know that they are more than just athletes in your program (Participant 11).

Finally, coaches also described their new programs as having "open door policies," where their athletes were expected to talk with coaches about their concerns or problems they were having within their teams. Participant 8 for example, explained that one of the first things he did as a new head coach was to tell his new players to "come talk to (*him*)

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about things, so (*he*) could explain it.” Furthermore he described his program as “having a very open door policy” where his guys could talk with him whenever they wanted.

Component F: Continuous Learning. The final component found coaches’ experiences of leading others as involving a “continuous learning” process. All of the coaches discussed learning from “coaching experiences,” “other experts in the field” and “research” relating to the profession. Participants’ descriptions of learning from coaching experiences included both past and present situations. One participant described the personal growth he had experienced as a first time coach:

...it has caused so much personal growth for me just as a person, and in doing a lot of things that I have never been challenged to do before that has been an awesome experience to be able to do that (Participant 9).

Many coaches described their experiences of continuous learning as “evolving” their coaching process and their overall philosophies. Participant 2 illustrated this concept in his description of working with his team and “evolving (*his*) process of how (*he*) does things.”

And so it just goes to knowing what you need in your group, and getting it, and so it goes, and I’ll continue to evolve. I’ll continue to evolve, and there may be something that I see the next time around that, I need this in this role. So I think you always have to reflect on yourself, and what you’re doing, and how you’re going about it, because in the end you’re only going to be successful if you have your philosophy on how you want to do things. You’re going to implement that philosophy, but you have to be willing and flexible enough to come away from that philosophy when you need to, or to amend your philosophy when you need to. And so I think it’s an ever-going process, so I hope that I am able to grow and continue to evolve the process of how we do things as time goes on.

Similarly, another coach discussed his coaching philosophy as having “changed completely,” because of “the experiences that (*he has had*) along the way.”

I think a coach’s philosophy is based on their experiences more than it is their beliefs. I’m living proof of that, I had one philosophy when I started,

and it's changed completely to another one, based on the experiences that I've had along the way (Participant 4).

Many coaches described learning from past experiences in their careers. Participant 8 reported having "learned a lot about the politics of coaching," from his last head coaching position. Another coach recalled the learning he acquired through his experiences as an athlete and high school football coach as having prepared him for his current position.

I've been through adversity before, you know. I have, my life, my college career, my coaching career, I've been the starting quarterback at *University C* that everybody in town loved me. I've been that one that, when we got beat, I was the bum. I started out my high school career, the first job I had, we went to the state championship game the first year. I thought, 'man, this stuff's easy,' and then probably about a three to four year window before we ever made it back to the playoffs. It's just, so you learn from all of those experiences and I think all of those experiences helped me handle this (Participant 7).

After his "near death" experience, Participant 6 reflected on the "changes" he made in his overall approach to life.

Spent seven days in the hospital and for three of those days they weren't really sure if I was going to make it or not...I just had a really bad infection, and it almost killed me. And I really think that kind of changed the way I do things a lot. I don't take things for granted nearly like I use to. I don't take, like I use to, things near as serious as I did before. You know it's serious and I want a lot, I expect a lot...but I am also a lot more realistic about the process and all I ask is that someone gives me what they got.

He also described the impact of this experience on his coaching:

And coming back into coaching, I think my attitude toward what I'm trying to accomplish and how I'm trying to accomplish it has changed a lot. I don't know whether that's a subject of maturity or just a kind of a change in perspective, but I think that I'm changing a lot of the ways that I try to motivate people. Kind of the process we go through to work on the different aspects of the game, those kinds of things (Participant 6).

Many of the coaches described learning from other experts in the field, specifically other coaches as well as their mentors. Coaches recalled their experiences as athletes, where

they had learned from their former coaches. Participant 7 described the influence his former coaches have had on his coaching philosophy:

I knew when I was 17 years old that I wanted to coach, because of the way I was treated, the experience that I had, you know, and the philosophies... I've been very fortunate, very blessed, to be around some really good men in my career, and there's just a certain way that we do things and I'm going to do things.

Other coaches addressed the need for coaches to have a "support staff" comprised of people in the field, outside of their organization, who are able to support them throughout the coaching process. Participant 8 actually advised future practitioners to compile a group of individuals to support them, prior to entering their new position, so that support would already be set in place. Participant 2 described his experience of learning from an expert in the field. He explained that his mentor, "*(kept him)* learning," "*(kept him)* on *(his)* toes," and was an "outlet." In the following quote he illustrated his thoughts on the topic:

You need to learn from people who are better than you. People who have done it at a higher level than you have. And *Ben* has done it at a high level, and so when you have somebody who has done it at a high level, at a world cup level, been successful and failed, and failed . . . You need to talk to people who have failed.

Participant 2 also directed attention to the fact, that his mentor had provided insight that completely changed the way he managed his program. In the passage below he described his experience:

And so he *(gave me)* a view from the top, you know. And he was the first one to recognize *(I was)* coaching instead of managing. He came in and drew a diagram for me. It's like, he's like 'that's a number one.' He's like, 'your country is short on number ones,' you know. 'You're actually a number one, alright. You can manage an organization,' you know. Now, he didn't tell me, but, 'Dope, you're coaching here, so you're not able to do that.' He just said hey, 'you can do this. You need to surround

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yourself with people who protect you and let you do what you do’
(Participant 2).

Finally, many coaches referenced having a “thirst for knowledge,” and described “looking for answers” in sport-related books and research. In fact, Participant 5 commented that “there are a lot of answers out there if you go seek them out.”

This subtheme dealt with coaches’ descriptions of leading others as significant in their roles as head coaches of collegiate programs. All of the participants referenced different qualities of this subtheme. From the analysis of their experiences, the following components developed: (a) impact position, (b) confidence, (c) passion for the job, (d) organization, (e) communication, and (f) continuous learning.

Subtheme 7: Requirements of the Job – “It’s not just coaching”

This subtheme uncovered participants’ experiences of handling the “other” requirements of their jobs as new head coaches. All of the coaches referenced the idea that their jobs “were not just coaching.” Participant 5 explained:

Like my job is probably 35 to 40% coaching, and the rest of it is recruiting and administrative and fundraising. There’re so many different things you’ve got to do. The coaching is what makes it all worthwhile.

Through the analysis of coaches’ descriptions the following components were uncovered: (a) recruiting, (b) managing the budget, (c) setting the schedule, and (d) NCAA rule compliance.

Component A: Recruiting. The first component focused on coaches’ descriptions of recruiting as one of the requirements of their jobs. Nine coaches discussed recruiting as relevant to their experiences of becoming new head coaches. Participant 10 described recruiting as “the most important aspect” of the job, because he was “totally in charge of who (*he brings*) into (*his*) program.” Like wise, Participant 6 commented that “the key

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for almost any college program is in recruiting.” Another coach described the significant influence recruiting has on an athletic program.

I think that is as important as anything else is recruiting. You have to recruit guys that can win at the level that you are trying to win at. Taking on guys, because you are panicking, which a lot of coaches do in our sport, ‘it is late. It is not early, it is late.’ We are trying to convince guys to come to the school, and they are holding out for as long as they can. Whereas, in other sports they are committing when they are juniors and sophomores. It is getting crazy in some sports. We are obviously on those from freshman up, but we are trying to convince that senior to come to school at the level that *University A* is trying to compete at. Our best recruit this year, well there are two of them, but neither guy was really convinced that college was right for them. College was right for them; in our mind it was clear – ‘are you crazy, you have to come to college. Do you see these guys, they are pretty good.’ It is a different kind of recruiting, it is a lot later, and I see a lot of coaches either get tired of that process or believe that they can turn a guy into something. I just think that you have to look around, that is the advice that I gave my friend. If you do not have the talent regardless of how good a coach you are, you are not going to be as successful as you want to be. You cannot take that third or fourth tier talent level if you know that you need the first or second, and too many coaches do for some reason (Participant 8).

Coaches also reported the challenges involved in the recruiting process, specifically recalling situations where they had made mistakes in the athletes they had recruited. The following passage illustrated this concept:

Sometimes you make mistakes in the kind of kids you bring in because the problem is, when you’re not a very good program, you can’t go out and get the best of the best of the best. You have to get to that point. It doesn’t happen, okay, you’re lousy and then you get great - it doesn’t work that way (Participant 3).

Other challenges mentioned by coaches, included the “time commitment” involved in the recruiting process. Participant 5 described the hours he had spent recruiting as “unfathomable.”

The time commitment that you put into recruiting is almost unfathomable to people outside of the coaching world. It’s the hours on the phone. It’s the hours studying for, I spend hours and hours pouring through meet

results, you know, and looking at just numbers on a page to track improvements, and look at how people are doing, and figure out who's going to do what, and it's a huge time commitment. You have to spend a lot of time on the road, you've got to spend tons of time on the phone, on the computer, huge time commitment. That's not always that fun (Participant 5).

Finally, Participant 5 described the experience of "meeting with recruits in person (*as*) fun." However, he further elaborated on the aspects of recruiting that he did not enjoy. Specifically he mentioned that "nobody likes making phone calls," and that he "was on the phone for two and a half, three hours last night with recruits, (*and*) that's not fun for anybody." In the passage below he also discussed the "cut throat" nature of recruiting:

...recruiting is a challenge at any level, all the time. It's just, it's such a cut-throat endeavor, which I don't like. I'm very competitive, but I don't have that killer, cut-throat instinct when I'm dealing with people's lives (Participant 5).

Component B: Managing the Budget. The second component examined eleven coaches' experiences of managing their athletic programs' budgets as a responsibility of their jobs. The majority of coaches in this investigation mentioned their budget in reference to their experiences as new head coaches. However, many of the coaches commented on the excellent resources provided by their organization, and failed to detail their responsibilities of handling their budgets. Only four coaches described "managing their budgets" as relevant to their experiences (Participants 1, 4, 5, & 9). Participant 5 clearly listed "managing the budget," along with "equipment inventory," as requirements of his job as a head coach. As a first time head coach, Participant 4 described the stress involved in the process of having to "manage the budget." Another coach reported his experience of taking over for a relatively new program, which had "outgrown the budget." He described his experience in the passage below:

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When I started here, the program three years ago we had the day we started. We had almost no equipment. When I was hired we had enough money in the budget to buy a small amount of equipment, and then we were borrowing the rest of it. We were borrowing horses, renting horses, doing whatever we could do at the time and it was very difficult to try and train a team when we didn't have proper equipment (Participant 9).

One coach elaborated on the concept of "budget constraints," and the impact that it has on the coaching process. He recalled an experience at a previous university, where the budget's constraints forced him to make difficult decisions:

...there're also budget constraints you're working with... I mean we're very fortunate here that we've got a very good budget, but you know, I remember when I was at *University C* as the head coach, we had no money. I mean our budget was just terrible... So anything that I did was cause and effect, you know... If I do this, I can't do that, and I remember we were at the conference tournament, and we were in vans, and we lost. You know, we lost the game, so we were going back to the hotel, and I mean, it was a late game, got done at 10, and we had a late checkout. We were out of the hotel, and because it was a conference, they were going to let us go back and shower. Then it starts snowing, and I'm sitting there, you know, we probably would have gotten back at 3 in the morning. But I was like man, we get back at 3 in the morning, we turn the vans in, that's one less day of the vans, a whole night less of hotels, I don't have to feed the guys, I save money . . . So all those things come in and, those are the difficulties. What do you do? You make a choice. Do you go or do you not go? And I stayed overnight (Participant 1).

In line with other coaches descriptions of the excellent support their programs received, Participant 1 described "having a good budget" as "(*adding*) to the (*coaching*) experience."

I think that having a good budget adds to the experience because you don't have to worry about... we can't be extravagant, but you know, we're going to have enough to feed our players in preseason... We're going to have enough to buy our players shoes, you know. We're going to have enough to do the things that you should do, whereas some places don't have that, you know. When we were at *University D*, we had to make choices. Whether we flew here or we drove here or, you know, we couldn't fly three times in a year or whatever, team wise, you know.

These coaches also reported fundraising as relevant to their experiences of managing their budgets. Participant 9 explained that his program “didn’t have any money in the budget,” so they “went to some private sources” and received donations that enabled them to bridge the gap “from the second year to the third year.” Participant 5 also described fundraising as allowing him the opportunity to increase his budget:

Fundraising is another part of it, which the coaches here were not asked to do much of ever before, but I was accustomed to it from my previous job. We were required to raise a certain percentage of our budget, and I got here, and I said ‘okay, this is a budget, but I want to spend more than that, and I’m willing to go out and privately raise the money to make up the difference,’ and the athletic director’s sort of, ‘okay,’ you know. So I’ve been working hard on that, going out and soliciting donations and things like that, and every year, we’ve been able to increase the amount of money we’re raising, which increases what we can do. We’ve been increasing the size of the roster by fundraising, we can have more people on the team, we can afford to outfit everyone, we can travel to more places, we can do some more things.

Component C: Setting the Schedule. The third component centered on coaches experiences of setting their competition schedules as a requirement of their jobs. Only three coaches described this process as significant to their experiences (Participants 4, 5, & 12). The coaches reported different reasons for why “setting the schedule” was an important aspect of their experiences of becoming new head coaches. As a first time head coach, Participant 4 described the stress involved in setting the schedule:

The schedule that I set before, again I had no authority in the matter; I just did what the head coach told me to do. Now, I have to set the schedule. Now I have to think, is this going to get us better? Is this going to allow me to keep my job, you know? Is this going to improve us? Even down to the budgets and the money issues, travel, you know, staying within the budgets (Participant 4).

Similarly, Participant 5 commented on the responsibility of not only having to decide where his team competed, but their travel schedules, accommodations, and logistics.

...where we go on the road, with 40 people for a week, housing, transporting, and feeding those people is a big part of the job. When you don't coach football or basketball and have administrative staff to handle all those things, you know, the coaches are in charge of all that stuff. So you've got to do a great job with that (Participant 5).

Participant 12 on the other hand, discussed the significance of playing a better schedule. He explained that his team had been playing a "bad schedule," and that it had negative effects on their performance outcomes. He believed his team had to "play the best" in order to "become the best."

You don't understand we were notorious for playing a bad schedule. I'm not going to play a bad schedule. We played a lot better schedule, and we improved. I think we improved 60 spots in the ratings, so I think that's pretty good. I'm not playing them any more. I'm only playing the best teams. We went from the year before, having a terrible record in the state. Last year we had the best record against in-state opponents.

Component D: NCAA Rule Compliance. The final component examined NCAA rule compliance as significant in their responsibilities as coaches. Ten of the coaches referenced the "rules" they had to follow in order for their teams "to be eligible." Two coaches gave clear descriptions of what their "rule compliance involved." Participant 6 actually declared the NCAA rule compliance as one of the reasons he left coaching.

I actually didn't have any intentions of coming back into coaching when I left five years ago, when I left coaching. I was kind of tired of all the NCAA rules and, you know, you'd have school rules, you'd have conference rules, you have NCAA rules, and I really didn't feel like I was getting to spend very much time with the student athletes. And so I was kind of, I don't know if I'd call it burned out, because I still had a lot of the same goals.

He explained that "he enjoys coaching so much, that he is willing to put up with the rest of it." In the following passage he elaborated on this concept:

I just realized that it's just a necessary part of the job, and I just have to deal with it... You know, the NCAA manual now is, I just received a brand new manual, so I have no excuses for missing any rules in here now,

but it's, I've got it upside down now. I can't believe they printed it that way. It's only got 420 pages now, so that's actually pretty good, but you know we're required to basically know everything in here. But in the NCAA, you have to know them, yeah. And I don't know all the rules. I'm pretty good at them, but I don't know all the rules, but I know where to find them. So if I have a question, I can find it in an expeditious manner. This thing right here is just, it's written in hieroglyphics, too. I mean, it's just, it's crazy. I mean some of the way it's worded, there's just, it's just crazy. So I figured out, okay, what do I need to make sure that I can do, and not break any rules, and then figure out a way to get everything done within kind of that context, and then just go to other people to take care of the rest of it (Participant 6).

Finally, other coaches who mentioned "rule compliance," referred to the time commitment involved in the process. Participant 5 provided his insight on this topic in the following section:

Under the time commitment I would add something about the NCAA rule compliance, that people don't realize, they just think 'oh you follow the rules.' Well, following the rules is a major time commitment...in terms of logging all of your activities from phone calls, to travel, to day to day contacts. How many hours you had the athletes in training every single week, all year long...There's a lot of things to do to ensure you're compliant with the NCAA rules that takes a lot of time...and every coach has to do that. We have monthly meetings, then three once a year meetings, and then monthly coaches' compliance meetings and it's just a lot of time. It's because the rules are complicated, and they're not always logical. It takes a lot of time to make sure you're okay.

In conclusion, this subtheme uncovered coaches' experiences of dealing with the other requirements of their jobs. All of the coaches described aspects of this subtheme as significant in their experiences. From the analysis of coaches' descriptions the following components were uncovered: (a) recruiting, (b) managing the budget, (c) setting the schedule, and (d) NCAA rule compliance.

Theme 3: Implementing the Structure – "Functioning Like a Business"

The Theme Implementing the Structure was significant for all participants' in their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. As previously

discussed, this theme was comprised of four subthemes: (1) *Laying the Foundation*, (2) *Defining Roles*, (3) *Changing the Culture of a Team*, and (4) *Building an Army to Support Your Program*. Each subtheme is discussed separately in the following section.

Subtheme 1: Laying the Foundation

This subtheme dealt with the coaches' experiences of laying the groundwork for the structure they intended to implement in their new program. All of the coaches expressed the importance of this process in their experience. Components of this subtheme include: (a) having a plan, (b) initiating change, and (c) establishing the team standard.

Component A: Having a Plan. The first component, coaches' experience of "having a plan," dealt with participants' experiences of having the knowledge in their field and the ability to utilize that expertise, to formulate an approach for taking over a new program. Specifically, they stressed the importance of knowledge, organization, and a well-matriculated means of implementing their plans. Eleven of the twelve coaches reported having some plan of how they intended to implement structure into their program, by establishing this foundation. Participant 7 for example, elaborated on this concept in the following passage:

I knew when I got the job that it was going to take some time to get things going the way I wanted to. I felt like coaching at the high school level and the success that we had, I wasn't naïve enough to know that I wouldn't have to tweak things at the college level, but I felt like I've got a plan, I feel like I've got a plan of leading men. I feel like I know I've got the ability to motivate and build a team.

Only six of the coaches discussed the concept of being "knowledgeable" in the sport and "knowing your stuff." These coaches stressed the relevance of their expertise in creating and implementing the program.

You have to have a plan, you know, and it has to be implemented. And so, some people think, well I'm going to go in, I'm going to do this and this; it's not that way, you know. If you're a fraud, if you haven't done your sport work, you know, if you're not an expert in your sport, they will find you out. They will find you out...so you have to know your stuff. You have to be organized, and you have to be smart with how you implement things. Those three things are important. (Participant 2)

Ten of the coaches compared their experiences as head coaches to running a business. In their descriptions of their fluidly operating companies, organization was stressed as a significant factor relevant to the process and their overall "plan." Participant 1 in the following excerpt explained that it was his desire to have his organization set in place to reduce any problems:

I think everybody wants to come in and have all your gear set up and people know to go here and when, and be organized so there are no glitches. It's just like running a big company (Participant 1).

An important aspect of coaches "having a plan," was their ability to "stick to the plan." The participants explained that as coaches they could not allow the stress of upcoming competitions alter their strategies intended for their programs just to win a few games or matches.

I think you have to be patient and you have to stay true to the course that you have set, because there are going to be people, there are going to be times when you think that we have to redirect this course. This is not going the way that we want it to be, and you just cannot be worried about winning the next game. You have to take the long haul view of I am trying to change this program (Participant 11).

As new head coaches, many of the participants also described experiences of having to "handle criticism" of their coaching on many different levels (for "dealing with criticism," see Theme 2, subtheme 5). During these times, coaches agreed that it was imperative to "hold (*their*) nerve," "think long terms," and "stick to (*their plans*)."

You'd better hold your nerve because you're going to get criticized. You're going to have to fight through certain things, but that's where you have to have a philosophy and a way that you're going to stick to it. You better stick to it, especially if you're going to be a college coach. Your season is short, and if it starts going bad, it's very difficult to turn it around because you don't have a whole lot of time. So you need to be able to stick to your guns. You better have a long-term plan for what you're looking to do. Stick to your plan. Stick to what you want to do, you know (Participant 2).

One coach explained that in the field there are many ways to approach the profession.

However, he felt that it was important for coaches to choose how they are going to coach and then adhere to that plan.

You know, well you see all kinds of ways to do it, and everybody's got the way that they do it. But I think it's important to pick what you're going to do and then stay true to it (Participant 7).

Component B: Initiating Change. The second component, initiating change, focused on the process coaches' went through in order to lay the foundation for the structure of their programs. In these situations, participants described their experiences during their initial phases of transition, and the impact needed during those periods of change. Specifically, ten of the twelve coaches discussed that as new head coaches, "the start is important" (Participant 8), that change should be initiated "as soon as you get there" (Participant 11), and that they have only a "window of opportunity" (Participant 3) to initiate that change.

I think when you are a new coach coming in...it is important to understand what I call the window of opportunity. Get going, get started, you know...I have this attitude that when you come in as a new coach, there's always that excitement, that somebody can turn it around or whatever...so it's really important to get on board and get going...Don't sit there and build a program for eight years. You've got to move up into the hunt (Participant 3).

Participant 11 explained that it is the sole responsibility of the new head coach to initiate the necessary change, and that has to be accomplished from the beginning.

...you are the one to instigate the change; I think that is what has to happen if you want a really disciplined organization as soon as you get there.

In addition to these experiences, eight of the coaches, in the descriptions of their first few days on campus, reported similar experiences of “making an impact” from the start, as significant to initiating change within their programs. Participant 8’s description of his first team meeting clearly illustrated this process:

I remember walking into a room, being introduced, and you had some solemn faces in the room that were, had sort of been forced to be there and just basically taking over, and that is what I did. I just walked in the room and said...I introduced myself, I am here, and this is what we are going to do. It was an interesting start (Participant 8).

Another aspect of the component, initiating change, reported by participants was the idea that as a new head coach it was important to think long term throughout the process.

Coaches explained that it took time to implement their program. Participant 11 stressed that he “(couldn’t) change everything at once,” that he had to go in stages to initiate change.

...there is no human being on the planet that can come in and cure all the problems at once. There is no coach who is going to come in and recreate this program in two months. You have to go in stages. You have to make conscious decisions on what I am trying to change. You may have to let something go that you totally disagree with, but it is not going to be as important right now as this is (Participant 11).

Furthermore, many of the changes coaches initiated had some negative effects on their athletes and the program itself. For example, coach required drug testing resulted in athletes’ dismissal (Participant 7 & 11), academic ineligibility for prospective professional athletes resulted in zero playing time during the post season (Participant 12),

while maintaining equal standards for all athletes, resulted in star athletes quitting or transferring (Participant 10). All of these reported situations initially hindered the success of these perspective teams. However, the coaches explained that initiating these changes were necessary to move their programs in the “right direction,” and that their actions were in the best interest of building their program and its long term success.

Participant 12 illustrated this concept in the following passage.

...my philosophy was I was trying to build something here, and you know, I've tried to share my vision with people here, and I have, and everybody understands, you know. Being on the other side, they want more wins, and they don't care, but I can't coach like that. I knew I got a five year deal. I knew what it was going to take. Nothing that happened so far has really surprised me as far as what it takes to get good players on the field, so I wasn't trying to just fix it in one year.

Finally, many coaches suggested that in order to initiate the changes needed to move their programs in the “right direction,” they had to be willing to take a “hit that first season.”

I was trying to be a little more uniform, more consolidated in the team concept, have a consistent approach with the kids and not get down in the gutter with them to get them to play better for just one season. I wanted to lay the groundwork to really set up a system and thought process that was going to have long-term results. I was willing to take a hit that season (Participant 10).

Component C: Establishing the Team Standard. The final component focused on eleven of the coaches' experiences of establishing the team standard as an important aspect of laying their foundations. This experience was first characterized by coaches' “spelling out” specific guidelines, rules, and responsibilities for their athletes.

I think that anytime you're on a team, you're in a business. You've got to state right up front what you're trying to get done, and it is completely outside of blocking, tackling, throwing, and catching (Participant 7).

Participant 5 described his experience of establishing the team standard, in terms of facilitating the proper behaviors, work ethic, and motivation of his athletes.

I went out and just wanted to get those kids there established into a pattern of the proper kinds of behavior, the proper kinds of work ethic, enthusiasm, fun, and success. And they all experienced success that year like they had not had before, and I think that really set the stage.

Some coaches stressed the importance of discipline in this process and reported experiences of having to “tighten the reigns quickly,” “put (*their*) foot down,” and “put in a (*stricter*) environment.” While transitioning from the assistant coach to head coaching position on his team, Participant 10 described his experience of establishing the team standard which clearly illustrated this process.

I had to tighten the reigns quickly, and put my foot down. Not so much draw a line in the sand, but just say look, here is what flies with me and here is what does not fly. If you have any problems with this, then you need to come and talk with me.

Three of the coaches inherited teams currently on NCAA probation (Participants 3, 7, & 12). All of the coaches described significant changes made, strict disciplinary actions taken, and standards implemented to regain control of their teams.

I mean we changed, like the weights was the first thing, we had optional weight lifting here before. You know, we changed that to mandatory. We changed the study, obviously we're in the APR penalty, which is academic progress report, and we had to meet with the NCAA, and we had to even do guidelines because we already hit the penalty on what we're going to do, so we had to increase study hall time. We had to increase more services for our kids, such as tutors and what not, which the center is unbelievable, so we had the resources, we just weren't utilizing them. So we got a new academic counselor too. That was part of the, so we hired somebody there, we put in a more strict environment, or a program I should say, study hall, you know, mandatory eight hours a week, you know. Just a lot more checks on it. So that was a tremendous change for the kids, tremendous (Participant 12).

Ten of the twelve coaches stressed the importance of setting these standards for their athletes. Participants explained that their athletes were not aware of “where they (*needed*) to be,” so as coaches it was their responsibility to “set the bar,” and clearly

establish the standard for how their teams would function on all levels, and in all situations.

We set the bar; we did not allow them to set it. So when they came in they knew it was all business, whatever it had to take. If I was not happy, I would bring them back at midnight. If I was not happy with that, I would bring them back at 2:00; until they figured it out...what had been the norm was no longer going to be the norm, because we wanted better results (Participant 11).

Another important aspect of coaches establishing their teams' standard was that the new policies maintained "the same standard for everyone," regardless of the athlete's status on the team or performance outcome, so as to create a sense of fairness among all team members. Participant 11 explained:

If we are going to have success over the long haul everybody on the team needs to feel that they are going to be disciplined the same, treated the same regardless of how productive they are. That has held true with me the whole way through.

Eight of the coaches described situations during their take-over where athletes' felt that two sets of rules existed for players, one set for "the stars" or "starters," and another set for everyone else.

Coaches think players are stupid, but they know exactly what's going on all the time. They know they've got a best player, and one of the things that I've heard from a lot of the players that are here now, they're saying that that's one of the things, that we don't have two sets of rules any more (Participant 12).

Coaches also expressed concern for the "pecking order" that existed among team members as a result of the imbalanced standards set by former coaches. Coaches' reported athletes' as being afraid to upset the order of things, and therefore refusing to challenge other players in competition. Therefore, setting the same standard for all

players seemed to be one way these coaches found to level the playing field for all team members, thus allowing them to implement their structure more effectively.

One of the concepts that we were bringing in is that it did not care if you were a 1 or a 10 in the line up. Everybody is held accountable and everybody is held to the same standards (Participant 8).

Finally, Participant 7 was the only coach that stressed the importance of setting the same standard with regards to his reactions of team and individual performances. He explained that some coaches alter their behaviors towards their athletes' depending on their level of performance on any given day or competition. He described this process as having a "knee jerk" kind of reaction to performance.

I knew when I was 17 years old that I wanted to coach because of the way I was treated, the experience that I have had, you know, and the philosophies of these coaches...I've been very fortunate, very blessed, to be around some really good men in my career, and there's just a certain way that we do things, and I'm going to do things. I try really hard to really stay true to that philosophy, and not be some guy that's a knee jerk guy, you know. I'm going to treat them pretty much the same way whether we've lost four in a row or whether we've won four in a row (Participant 7).

In summary, laying the foundation played a significant role for all of the participants in their experiences of implementing their structures. Formulating a plan to implement the necessary changes, as well as establishing a standard intended to assist in the long-term growth of their programs seemed to be significant for the majority of the coaches. These concepts were described in the following components of this subtheme: (a) having a plan, (b) initiating change, and (c) establishing the team standard.

Subtheme 2: Defining Roles

This subtheme dealt with coaches' experiences of clearly defining the roles for everyone involved in their programs. While they did not all implement this effectively

their first seasons with their teams, ten of the participants expressed that it was necessary for their teams to function smoothly and effectively. In fact, two participants reported having learned from mistakes they made by not defining roles their first seasons in their current positions, while four other participants discussed learning from these same mistakes while in their previous coaching positions. The following components developed from the analysis: (a) appointing and labeling roles, and (b) everyone's performance matters.

Component A: Appointing and Labeling Roles. The first component, appointing and labeling roles, captured eight coaches' experiences of "getting everyone on the same page," so that there would be a clear understanding of who "*(made)* the decisions," and what those "responsibilities" were for team members, coaching staff, support staffs, and anyone else associated with the program. This component was generated from coaches' descriptions of appointing roles for their athletes and coaching staffs as a means of "functioning like a business," "creating structure," instilling "accountability," and making their program more "professional."

To make it more professional, to treat it like an organization. If it was a business, there would be the CEO; the CEO answers to the board of directors. I answer to the athletic director, okay, you know, and then everybody else comes up and works through there, and so I think that the CEO can't also be the chief financial officer, they can't do everything. They have to differentiate the different roles that they do and all that stuff, and so we've tried to make that organization here. Let players be players, let coaches be coaches, let everybody know what everybody's doing, and then get good people to build the staff (Participant 2).

In line with the idea of appointing roles, Participant 9 explained that when he recruits athletes he is "hiring them for a job," and with that job comes certain expectations and requirements. Thus, when his athletes were not meeting the expectations and

requirements of their jobs they had been hired to do, he believed that it had to be addressed.

So I try as much as possible to deal with it from that stand point that... when I sign an athlete I am hiring you to do a job here, and you need to do your job. If you are not doing your job, I am going to come tell you and we will talk about that...my team captains are not elected by the team members they are appointed. One of the reasons that they are appointed by me is that they have jobs to do and if they are not doing their job, then somebody else needs to do it...in a few years these ladies will be out in business, and you can't always vote for who you want to work for.

Furthermore, Participant 9 contended that appointing roles and clearly defining the expectations and responsibilities of those roles, enabled his team to come together, in spite of existing personality clashes.

...when you bring 40 strong, confident, independent, young women from across the nation together and put them into sometimes a pressure situation. Personalities begin to clash, and it's great that we have been able to work through them and established a real ...basically a flow chart where we have two team captains... one is under the other and they divide, they have different responsibilities. We have committees. We have a marketing committee, a public relations committee, and a judicial committee, who determines a lot of the punishment, and everybody gets kind of put on those. We also do volunteer work as a team at one of the therapeutic riding centers that is south of town. All the girls on the team, I want them to become a part and feel a sense of that the team is important in how we function and I have tried to do it more from a business-like stand point as opposed to a team.

Seven of the coaches made reference to similar situations where the implementation of roles helped reduce discourse among teammates. The idea that to run a fluid organization clearly defined roles were needed resonated with the majority of coaches who participated in this study. Most of the coaches stressed the importance of defining these roles for others. However, in reference to mistakes made in their first year as head coaches, a few described their experiences of learning these responsibilities during their first seasons of their jobs, and then having to make changes in the organization

accordingly, specifically, redefining the roles of their assistant coaches. Participant 4 explained that when he became the head coach, he thought it would be easier to continue doing his assistant coaching responsibilities rather than having to teach someone else how to accomplish the same tasks.

It just seemed easier if I just went ahead and did it than taking four hours out of my day to sit down and show someone else, and then ask me, six weeks after that, how to do this, this, and this, you know. It's not that they're going to learn it, boom, in that four hour session, so it just seemed to me, at first glance, to be a lot easier if I just did it. I didn't look at the bigger picture. So the second year I delegated 90% of what I was doing and cleaned up the whole process, and it was a lot better for me.

Furthermore, coaches explained that clearly appointing and labeling these roles gave athletes' and coaches' a sense of security, because they understood their jobs and the requirements of those jobs. In these situations, a clear standard was set in place so that everyone involved in the program would be "on the same page," and thus functioned, communicated, and worked together more effectively.

It lets everybody know what their role is. It clearly defines what happens where, and it clearly defines who makes the decision. So now, they don't have to worry about any of that. I think there's security in that in the same way that there's security in knowing in your family, hey, Mom does this, Dad does this, they know this is what it is. It gives the coaches security because now they know, okay, I know my role, you know (Participant 2).

Component B: Everyone's Performance Matters. The second component, everyone's performance matters, focused on the significance ten coaches' placed on their athletes' understanding that they all "(had) a job to do," and that "job (was) important" for the success of their programs. Coaches explained that even athletes' not in the starting line-up, brought value to their teams.

I think that was probably the biggest challenge is getting everyone to understand that you may not be the team captain, but your role is still important. You may not be the one that is getting to be in the starting line

up, but your role is still very important to this team. I think that has been...we have been able to establish that and the fact that our team really gets along very well, as opposed to a lot of teams across the nation (Participant 9).

Participants also described situations where one individual was able to strongly impact the team. Whether in performance or practice, coaches agreed that it was important for athletes to recognize the significance of their role on the team.

The difference between winning and losing is so small that one single player's performance could have an effect on it. I think that is a valuable lesson that they learn is that everybody on our basketball team is going to have to help us win a particular game. I do not know if you have played in the first 10; there are going to be games some where down the line where you are going to have to have an impact. I do not know if they felt that way coming into it, but I think they realize it now (Participant 11).

In summary this subtheme revealed that clearly defining the roles of everyone involved with their teams was a significant aspect of coaches' experiences of implementing their structure. They accomplished this by appointing jobs, labeling specific responsibilities and obligations of those positions, and instilling the philosophy that everyone plays an important part in the growth and success of the program. From the analysis the following components emerged: (a) appointing and labeling roles, and (b) everyone's performance matters.

Subtheme 3: Changing the Culture of the Team

In this subtheme, participants discussed the process involved in changing the culture of their teams. All of the participants reported aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences of implementing their structures as new head coaches. Six of the coaches however, characterized this process as the most significant and most trying aspect of their jobs. Participant 12 gave the following explanation for his experience of changing the culture of his team.

...what I was trying to do in the program, my biggest thing in becoming a new coach, was changing the culture. So, that was by far the hardest thing I've had to do here, even in the last couple of years, obviously from one style, you know, to my style. So that was like pounding your head against a wall for 23 hours a day nonstop, and not ever feel like you're getting anywhere, you know what I mean. But then obviously over time we have. So it's a lot.

This subtheme was comprised of the following five components (a) establishing a culture of excellence, (b) rebuilding reputation, (c) instilling a code of conduct, (d) changing the inner workings of the team, (e) developing team chemistry, and (f) establishing institutional loyalty.

Component A: Establishing a Culture of Excellence. The first component, establishing a culture of excellence, focused on the coaches' experiences of trying to set a standard of excellence for their teams. Participants' experiences differed in this area due to the fact that three coaches inherited teams on NCAA academic probation with scholarship penalties, three coaches were working with relatively new programs, three coaches transitioned from assistant to head coaching positions of the same teams, two coaches inherited teams with good reputations of athletic excellence, and the majority of the coaches reported that their teams were "underachieving." Despite these differences in program longevity, coaching experience, team rankings, program reputation, and NCAA penalties, the majority of coaches reported that establishing a culture of excellence was significant to their experiences. However, the method utilized during this process varied.

Some of the coaches explained that their programs had not experienced success; therefore, the athletes' struggled to believe they were capable of achieving that level of excellence. Participant 4 reported that "it was definitely a task to get them thinking a different way." Other coaches suggested that initially they struggled to "change the

culture,” because “(*they*) didn’t have the players to follow.” Therefore, in these situations, many of the coaches described situations where they had to “create the story,” introduce “the idea of being a champion,” and “instill the attitude” that every member of the team would become a fierce competitor.

The program had not had any success so there was no story to go back to. There was no story here so the story had to be created, and the story had to kind of be run through me... It is the way that we did everything; their approach to everything that we did it was kind of (*me*) against the world to be honest with you, because everything that you teach, everything about the program is absolutely new (Participant 11).

Other coaches, both coming from programs and into programs that had already experienced success, described the pressures faced to not only maintain high levels of performance, but rather to exceed those expectations. One participant explained that he had to “kill something that was good,” in order to establish the program he wanted.

Here, I had to kill something that was good. Made the NCAA tournament, all that stuff. I had to kill something that was good to try to make it great, you know, because I’m a believer, and it’s a fact - if you want to prevent yourself from being great, be good, you know, because you can . . . the arms of good are warm, and you can become very comfortable there, okay, but you can also get fat and, you know, you can lose your way, and so I am a driver by personality. I drive things forward (Participant 2).

Two of the coaches (Participant 5 & 6) inherited teams with little talent, and zero experiences of success. The external pressure to perform was not present within these programs, and thus, coaches reported focusing on “getting (*athletes*) on track” and “establishing the proper mindset.”

I went out and just wanted to get those kids there established into a pattern of the proper kinds of behavior, the proper kinds of work ethic, enthusiasm, fun, and success. And they all experienced success that year like they had not had before, and I think that really set the stage. Even though nobody was going terribly fast that year, nobody was achieving at a really high level, it was greater than they had ever done before (Participant 5).

Most of the coaches reported their teams as “underachieving,” and expressed frustration with their teams’ initial mentality. They stressed the importance of changing that mentality to an “overachieving” mindset as significant in establishing a culture of excellence for their teams.

You really never want to be someone they say had potential. You want to be someone who they said knocked the top off the potential, they overachieved, they really were grinders, you know. It pains me to say it, but right now, I mean, as far as from a production standpoint, we’re underachieving, you know, and that probably bothers me worse than anything. And now, you know, and as a competitor and the leader of a program, you know, the only way to remedy that is get a new season right in front of you and bust your tail in the off-season (Participant 7).

The participants also explained that although it was challenging to establish a culture of excellence for their teams, once the changes were in place, and the “culture” had been accepted, the teams took responsibility and helped maintain the culture.

The most important thing that you want to develop as a coach is a culture of excellence in everything because then once it perpetuates it is easy; it kind of runs itself. You got to kind of get it going in that direction (Participant 1).

Similarly, another coach suggested that once the culture of success had been established for his program, less time and effort were required to maintain those changes, because the foundation was already set.

I feel like we are finally establishing a culture of success. It was in all areas. It was across the board it was academics, it was athletics, and it was everything. The amount of calls that I get now for missed classes, or missed tutors are limited. At this time last year, I was getting four or five a day, and now it is maybe one a month or one every two weeks. To see that....it has not lead to anymore wins right now, but I think over the long haul all the pieces are now starting to be in place. The foundation is now set, so now when the pieces do come, we will have the ability to compete (Participant 11).

Component B: Rebuilding Reputation. The second component, rebuilding reputation, emerged from coaches' experiences of having to alter the reputation of the program in some form or fashion. Whether it was overcoming NCAA violations (Participants 3, 7, & 12), disliked predecessors (Participant 4 & 5), highly revered predecessors (Participant 1,10), assistant coach assumptions (Participants 1, 4, & 10), or program rankings (2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, & 12), coaches' all reported having to "rebuild" the way their programs were viewed as a whole.

I've never had any violations, knock on wood, in my career, but since the program is under scrutiny and has had major violations, I've really had to watch everything and kind of be ultra careful and meticulous about a lot of things. I think the difficulty with our program is that we were always a great program, up until about 2001...they really kind of dropped off the map... in terms of the reputation of the school and the eyes of the young players, they don't remember any more. So it's been hard rebuilding the program, and I think it's been a slower process (Participant 3).

Not only did Participant 12 have to change the reputation of the team academically due to the NCAA penalties incurred in seasons prior to his arrival, but he also described his experience of having to change the perceptions of the teams' work ethic.

...we always knew that *University A* could always be better than what they were. They always kind of underachieved in baseball. Had some great years, had some world series years, but a lot of other years they could never go to the *Conference* tournament. And I knew it was, the perception of this program was white collar, and we were trying to change it to blue collar. And you could, any time, any other coach in the country could tell you the same, so we knew, I knew what the perception was, so that had to be changed too (Participant 12).

One coach discussed his experience of having to rebuild the reputation of his program as challenging, largely because of the poor reputation left by his predecessor, his limited head coaching experience, and his standing as an "unknown coach."

I knew a handful of people and had a good reputation with them, but basically, I was an unknown. I was young, and there was not a lot known

about *University A* as a program. So I went out and had to just beat the pavement, you know, trying to sell myself. I couldn't sell the success of the team because we were on ground zero at that point. I just had to beat the pavement, selling my own philosophy, my own style, and the university, which people didn't know about. Every success that my team had when we were demonstrating progress, we were doing mass mailers out to club coaches, high school coaches, just trying to get the word out there that this was a viable option, full well knowing that I wasn't going to get the recruits that year. It was going to be a multi year process because we had to rebuild reputation, do education with people, and get that going. So that was a real challenge that first year (Participant 5).

Coaches, who inherited teams with reputations of athletic excellence, described the expectations and pressures built into the position of head coach to not only maintain, but exceed the teams' level of performance. While they did not have to rebuild the reputation of success for those teams, they did have to alter the reputation to include them as part of the process significant to their teams' success.

...when you take over from someone who has success, a great deal of success, then the expectation of success is built in, which we all want, but there are also pressures with that, in maintaining that level, and the goal here is to exceed that level - to win a National Championship, to do the things that haven't been done here (Participant 1).

Two of the coaches (Participant 4 & 10), as former assistant coaches of their teams, discussed their experiences of rebuilding the reputation in terms of wanting to differentiate themselves from their predecessors.

I think my biggest thing, I was like, we're going to be better than we were this, I want to see a significant difference in our play, and I want everyone to know that this is a different style; this is a different era. That I am a different coach...So I was very adamant about making sure that people could see the difference in the two head coaches and . . . yeah, so I mean I guess I did that in a way, and you know, it went well (Participant 4).

Finally, many of the coaches discussed building the kind of program in which parents would want their children to participate. Participant 9 stated that he wanted to "create an

atmosphere that people looking in from the outside (*would*) want their daughters to be a part of this.”

Component C: Instilling a Code of Conduct. The third component focused on the role that coaches’ codes of conduct played in changing the culture of their teams. Eleven of the coaches’ described different aspects of instilling codes of conduct, specifically defining the rules and responsibilities of their teams, in terms of acceptable behaviors on the field, in the classroom, and in the community. These guidelines were found to “create structure” for team members, getting everyone on “the same page.”

...so what we do is really put a lot of time or what I have chosen to do here is put a lot of time and effort into our younger players and develop standards for them, standards for them academically, standards for them in their lifestyle and how they conduct themselves in the things that they do on and off the field, standards for them fitness wise, standards for them in their soccer performance, those four areas. A lot of things are not quantifiable but we try to make it as clear as possible to players that this is what we expect out of you (Participant 1).

Some participants (2, 3, & 7) were very specific in the standards established for their programs, having athletes sign contracts and read long documents detailing specific aspects of the teams’ code of conduct.

The players have a 70 page handbook with everything in it. I have last year’s copy, but it’s basically got code of conduct in it, it’s got our philosophy in it, it’s got our system of play in it, it’s got their position expectations, so they know exactly what we want. It’s got set pieces, it’s got their psychology, it’s got the physical demands and methodology - how we’re going to do that, it has schedules, contracts, everything. So I give them one of these, and this year’s actually looks just like this - I give it to them at the beginning of the semester, and they have, playfully or unplayfully, started referring to it as The Bible. But I give it to them, so now there’s no question. This is how we’re going to play. This is what you’re going to do (Participant 2).

Other coaches’, while their codes of conduct were not clearly established in written form, were very clear as to the standards set for their teams.

My rules are be honest, give your best effort, not specific rules, there is a third that is just be respectful. We can deal with pretty much anything else. Guys are going to make mistakes, we make mistakes on a daily basis, but you have to look at the overall...if you look at the big picture, things are going well (Participant 8).

All of the coaches,' who discussed instilling codes of conduct, stressed the importance of their roles in the process. They explained the need to be "upfront and honest" with athletes and staff, as well as reasonable in the rules and expectations set.

Going in and changing that, and shaking up that culture for someone that is not smooth, like myself can be...I think as a new coach coming in, there is a mine field that you have got to work with. I think that sometimes I myself might have got lost in that and rubbed people the wrong way and sometimes you have to rub people the wrong way if that someone is not doing what they are suppose to be doing...again I think it goes back down to truth and honesty (Participant 8).

Participant 10 described his approach as being very direct, and explained that when he is faced with confrontation he addresses "it head on."

The approach that I would typically use would be calm, but it would be one that would be very direct... I would just say this is not how we are going to do things. If you want to do things the right way, you are going to need to improve a little bit and you are going to do them our way, otherwise we are going to have some problems. I tried to nip it in the bud soon. Never sweep anything under the rug. I never hope things get better. You just address it head on, and I think that things can change more rapidly in terms of making the program (Participant 10).

Finally, seven coaches discussed their codes of conduct in terms of implications for their roles as head coaches. They felt that an important part of the process was insuring that they were modeling the desired behaviors for their athletes so as to establish "trust" within their teams. Participant 11 explained that "trust" is the most important word in athletics, and that establishing that "trust" for his team, started with his attitude and behaviors.

I do not think there is a more important word in athletics than trust. You have to trust the guys with you, you have to trust the coaching staff, and you have to trust that they are always going to have your interest at heart and not their own selfish interest. It is a constant thing and you do it by communicating, and by being available to them, by being around them when other things go on that they know that they are more than just athletes in your program.

Component D: Changing the Inner Workings of the Team. The fourth component, changing the inner workings of the team, focused on nine coaches' experiences of establishing the way their teams worked and functioned on a regular basis, as well as coaches' perceptions of why these transformations were significant in changing the culture of their teams. Specifically, this component dealt with the systems coaches implemented during practices and conditioning to prepare their teams for competitions. One coach explained that during his first season, changing the inner workings of the team was his most important focus.

I spent my entire first season changing the culture of our team, more so than the program, I wanted to change the inner workings of how we worked, how we practiced, how we looked at ourselves, the image of our team, what our goals were. All of that in my opinion had to change, so really my whole first year was that. Every single day I was changing the culture of our team with the guys that I would come in contact with every single day because I think that without that nothing else really matters (Participant 11).

Coaches reported having to make significant changes in this area, describing their teams as incapable of getting through practices their first seasons. They stated that athletes were either "unprepared," "unmotivated," or "out of shape." One coach explained that it was a real struggle trying to prepare his team when the athletes "didn't bring their lunch pails everyday" (Participant 10). Another coach described an incident that occurred during his team's first practice, where athletes were unable to complete ten minutes of training due to their poor physical conditioning and work ethic.

We're hitting ground balls to all our infielders, same time. We have four balls going the same time, you know, our pitchers are hitting them at home plate...so we do that about 10 minutes. The second baseman takes off and goes in the dugout. I said, 'what are you doing?' He said, 'I'm thirsty.' I said, 'we just started practicing.' 'I'm thirsty.' I said, 'we're not done.' He said, 'well I'm tired.' I come to find out that they practiced pretty much on their own for just about an hour, hour and a half a day...I couldn't get my guys to go 10 minutes, and they would just start losing concentration and fade. I knew the academics were in disarray, but the practice...I couldn't get the guys to practice for an hour, hour and a half a day, and it was unbelievable (Participant 12).

Participant 10 explained that in his experience it was important that his athletes "were not trying to get out of practice early," "not skipping workouts in the gym," and were "(accountable)" for their actions. He further stressed the need for athletes' to work hard, prepare, and possess not only "the will to win," but more importantly "the will to prepare to win." Preparation, in terms of the work and mental focus exerted during practices and training, was a key element of participants' experiences of changing the inner workings of their teams. Participant 7 explained this concept in the following passage:

We train...we work the off season, we work spring football practice, we work summer conditioning program, to put ourselves in a position to, you know, to be at a level of intensity on game day that our opponents can't handle (Participant 7).

Component E: Developing Team Chemistry. The fifth component centered on eight participants' descriptions of bringing their teams together. Coaches described their experiences of taking a "mish mash of personalities," getting them "all on the same page," developing "trust" and "camaraderie," in order to function as a cohesive unit. Some coaches explained that their athletes were acting like they were participating in individual sports, rather than members of team sports. Participant 8 stated that "there was a simple message (*he*) was sending everybody that (*tennis was*) not an individual sport, it (*was*) a team sport even though (*athletes*) have to go out there and have to play by

(themselves).” Clearly the coach of a team sport, Participant 11 found his basketball team functioning in a similar fashion.

When I first came here it was like I called it 24 hour fitness. We had a bunch of guys working but they were not working together, they were not working towards anything, they were not working with any goals in mind. To get them all of a sudden to understand the importance and the relationship that they have to have with each other and, how without the other guys on the team working towards what they want, they will never reach anything that they want to accomplish (Participant 11).

Participant 9, an equestrian coach, discussed the challenge as a first time coach, of getting a group of women to work together who knew nothing about each other.

It was going to be a new challenge and really understanding that I had to reassess my skill and find out what I could do, and then figure out how to bring a group of people that really didn’t know each other not just people but young women together that didn’t know each other so that they could begin to work together.

Six of the coaches cited “overcoming adversity,” as a key aspect involved in bringing teams together to develop team chemistry. They explained that during this process, athletes are “forced to trust” one another.

It was a bunch of personalities; it is a bunch of different issues. We had to keep the team coming together as much as we can, and just keep moving and growing in the right direction. I think that the one thing that is true in sports and I think what we try to do, the harder you work together the closer you become. That is what we have tried to do. Try to put them in really difficult, competitive environments that they had no choice but to trust each other. That has forced it along if anything else, but that is kind of how you have to do it (Participant 11).

As a football coach, Participant 7 found that because of the adversity his team faced, members of his “inherited” team “bought into” the team concept, and were transformed as leaders of his program.

You just have to go through adversity together sometimes to gain trust. And we’ve definitely been through our share of adversity the first two years, but I feel really good about where we are right now. I have 105

players going through fall camp, there are about 20 of them that were here when I got here...probably one of the proudest things I have in my program, is that several of those, that are still with me, that were here before, now are some of my best leaders, and they bought into what we're trying to do.

Coaches agreed that without team chemistry, teams were limited in the success they could achieve. Participant 10 explained:

If the chemistry is not there you know, you are typically not going to do well unless your talent is that much better; and ours was not that particular year. We really knew that in order to get the most out of ourselves and overachieve we were really going to have to feel it and want it. On a scale from 1-100 we were at about an 80. We needed to be at about 95.

Participant 9 stated that utilizing the strengths of individuals within the collective group, had brought his team a lot of success.

Therefore, if I am the coach and we do everything my way then we can only be as good as me. But if we build a team and if I build this group of professionals successfully, then we can be as good as everyone in the group together, the collective. We identify here are your strengths and when we come into this situation we pull from that, and I think that is what has really brought us a lot of success early is just allowing other people to input in where we need to go and what specifics we need to do (Participant 9).

Finally, coaches explained that while the development of team chemistry was "gradual" and "took time," the process had positive impacts on the way their teams functioned on all levels, including their attitudes during practice, training, and competition, their behaviors on and off the field, their travel experiences, and how they functioned during competitions.

It is a gradual thing where once players leave the program there is a change in the team chemistry each year. So, once the team chemistry changes for the better, the vibe is better, the road trips are better, winning feels better, practices are much better (Participant 10).

Component F: Establishing Institutional Loyalty. The final component emerged from eight coaches' experiences of having to eliminate athletes' sense of entitlement to develop their loyalty to their teammates, their programs, and the institutions supporting the advancement of their sports. Some of the coaches were shocked by athletes' sense of "entitlement" versus gratitude for the resources given to them in their programs (Participants 2, 3, 8, 10, & 12). One participant described that when coaching the generation of "kids today," everyone "expects a trophy" or award of some kind "just for showing up" (Participant 3). One coach, whose team, was currently on NCAA academic probation, struggled with athletes' failing their last semesters prior to going professional. These athletes expressed no concern for the impact their behaviors had on the well-being of the team.

'You see nothing wrong with it?' He said, 'no I see nothing wrong with it.' I said, 'you hurt our APR.' I said, 'for next year, I'm going to be back on scholarship penalty because you didn't go this year.' 'Well, that's next year.' 'Well, but you're part of this program.' That's what I'm talking about, the sense of entitlement (Participant 12).

As new head coaches, they believed it was imperative to eliminate that type of mentality from their teams. Participant 12's description of the following incident clearly illustrated this point.

...the sense of entitlement here just blew me away. Every kid here felt like we owed them, we get more stuff, we get more shoes, more shirts, we get the best of everything you could ever get. It's never enough. This is the greatest story. First year, we played Tuesday night. We had lost that game, we go in and eat, I'm mad, we lost every game. So we go in, and one of our players, one of the better players again, goes to *Walt*, our trainer, and he says, we had steak catered in from the cafeteria, and he says, '*Walt*' he says, 'do you think that I could get a filet because I'm kind of tired of the sirloins all the time.' So our trainer, no way, shape, or form he'd tell me (*that night*) because I would have been in jail. That would have broken my back that night. So he tells me the next day, so I'm just like, I could not believe that. Everywhere else I had ever been, we never

even catered our meals at home games. They're eating steak at night, on a Tuesday night. All you can get. So the next day, we played better on Wednesday, we won. I didn't bring it up before the game, so after the game I said, 'there's a lot of people that go to bed hungry in this country.' I gave them that kind of speech, 'we've got to be thankful for what we have,' so they walk in, and I had four loaves of bread and a jar of peanut butter, and that was it. I didn't hear a word. So, I fixed that, didn't hear another complaint the rest of the year.

Furthermore, coaches also stressed the importance of respecting the "whole process."

Coaches felt that athletes were given an unbelievable staff of people and resources designed to assist them, and that it was critical that their athletes' demonstrated respect in all situations.

We talk about respect, but we spoil our guys, we do. I remember when I was a player, and I would get a match shirt, a pair of shorts, the racket, and then I would get to string my own rackets, but I did not have to buy the string. Here they are getting waited on hand and foot. They are getting everything now, and we say this: 'look we want to spoil you, we want you to feel special, but you have to respect that. It is a privilege.' That is something they need to make sure that they are thanking people, they need to make sure that they are appreciative of the opportunity. I think that in our program from time to time you will have guys that will forget what it is all about, and they think that everybody is just here for them. We make sure that we awaken them from that (Participant 8).

He elaborated further to explain that his athletes are given "unbelievable resources" to achieve success, and they need to be respectful of those involved in the process and the organization giving them this opportunity.

If they look at the big picture here, they have unbelievable resources. We are trying to help them. We have just a massive staff of people who are there to help them, and they just need to be respectful about that whole process and sometimes guys can get caught up in the little things that just eat at them (Participant 8).

Another aspect mentioned by coaches in relationship to establishing institutional loyalty was that their athletes developed "pride" and "ownership" of their teams, facilities, and institutions. Participant 9 explained that he wanted "the ladies on the team to own this

team as much as possible.” Another coach required his team to take ownership, by giving them the responsibility to clean and maintain their own facility. He explained that forcing them to make those changes, and take more pride in the facility, created more pride in the entire program.

...it has changed; I think it’s changed a lot. I mean, I really do think it has changed a lot...we made these kids clean the locker room, and they had never cleaned anything. They never pick up their field, just walk off, leave it, whatever, not clean their shoes, throw their laundry down anywhere...I changed all that. They clean the locker room now. They put their clothes up neat...I think just by making them take a little more pride in the facility and taking pride in that just creates a little bit on its own without even getting into your big speeches and stuff (Participant 12).

Finally, all eight of the coaches felt that it was important for athletes to understand that they were involved in a program that was bigger than any one individual. Furthermore, many of the coaches reported that by creating a “family atmosphere,” where everyone’s role was important, athletes’ were found to be “loyal,” and believed in the idea of “building a legacy.” Participant 10 describing his experience explained that “we have kids that we have stayed loyal to, and they have stayed loyal to us. It is that family atmosphere.” Similarly, as the coach of a National Championship team, Participant 9 stated:

We work very hard for everybody to understand that you are a part of something and you are a part of something that is bigger than you and bigger than just you. You have a chance to build a legacy here and that is really what we are trying to establish here is a legacy at this university.

In summary, changing the culture of the team was significant for all the coaches in their experiences of becoming new head coaches’ of NCAA Division I collegiate programs. For the coaches this involved different aspects of the following components (a) establishing a culture of excellence, (b) rebuilding reputation, (c) instilling a code of

conduct, (d) changing the inner workings of the team, (e) developing team chemistry, and (f) establishing institutional loyalty.

Subtheme 4: Building an Army to Support Your Program

This subtheme focused on participants' experiences of "building an army" to support their programs in terms of assessing which individuals would support and help facilitate necessary changes, and which one's would detract from that process.

Participant 11 explained:

I started building my own little army in terms of okay who are the people that are going to support me, who are the people that I can turn to for advice, who are the people that I can get to help me change some of these things that me and our administration mutually agree on as going to help our basketball program. Who are the people deterring us from that, and how do I get through to those people the importance of what it is I am trying to do. In a lot of cases it might be just letting them know how you feel.

All of the coaches' reported aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences of implementing their programs' structures. This subtheme was comprised of the following components (a) housecleaning, (b) recruiting, (c) getting good people to carry out your message, (d) outside support, and (e) administration support.

Component A: Housecleaning. The first component, focused on eleven of the coaches' experiences of "cleaning up" the attitudes and work-ethics of their teams in order to build the programs they wanted. The coaches agreed that an opportunity should be given for athletes to "comply" and "get on board" with their programs. Many of them expressed an understanding for athletes during this process. Participant 8 explained this in the following passage:

It's a challenge for those players, I think it's important to stress that although every coach wants to bring in his own players, it's a bad decision to just come in and sort of clean house...you've got to work with those

players, but also those players have to respect what you're implementing and the way that you want the team to handle themselves...they have to respect you because someone has hired you to make the leaps that you were the right person to take that team to where the goals of the athletic department are, to have them achieve what the university wants them to achieve, and they have that decision. They don't know you, they may feel some resentment, but good people have to handle change, and it sort of reveals their character, and you sort of find out who can work within your system and who is going to pretty much fight you the whole way. So ultimately, those who choose to fight and not buy-in to what you're trying to do, and what you believe in, they are the one's that end up leaving, transferring, or if they are completely disrespectful, are removed from the team. So that is where the respect is, they have to respect that you have been brought in to do a job. And you have to respect that this is not what they signed up for, but you both have to move forward toward the ultimate goal of having the program succeed.

In line with Participant 8, all the coaches felt that there were certain areas where they were willing to be flexible, but other areas where "lines had to be drawn." One coach recounted his experience with an athlete "losing (*his*) temper" "in the heat of battle," but when confronted by an assistant coach, the athlete then "directed (*his*) foul language toward the coach." Participant 7 brought the athlete into his office and informed him of the consequences he would face for his actions, specifically, that he would be suspended "indefinitely from the football team." In his description of the experience, he explained how the player's response to the punishment and explanation of that punishment forced him to draw that hard line.

I said, 'basically when you start acting the right way, acting in a way that is conducive to winning, then you can come back. Until then, we've got to remove you from the team. I'm not taking your scholarship away from you right now. You're getting time to think about this'...that was conveyed...the kid blew up and again with the foul language and those kind of things here in the office, and he pretty much, in about a three minute window, ruined his opportunity to ever play football here again (Participant 7).

Other coaches cited specific incidents where “lines had to be drawn” in the following areas, “disrupting the team,” “not taking care of business,” “attitude problems,” “dishonesty,” and “being disrespectful.” Participant 5 described his experience of this process in the following excerpt.

I had to do some housecleaning that first year, kicked several people off the team that just didn't want to do the kind of work that was necessary for the program I was running. But most of the athletes that were here craved it. They wanted to be pushed. They wanted the structure. They wanted the excitement. They wanted to see how good. The few that didn't want that change, wanted to continue their old ways. We parted ways, and that was fine, and I think that was good for them, it was good for us (Participant 5).

Many of the coaches reported situations where they disciplined athletes for inappropriate behaviors, and athletes responded with inappropriate reactions. For example, Participant 12 had an athlete show up late for early-morning conditioning. The athlete was confronted, and responded that his behavior was “not that big a deal.” He was told to meet the coach for conditioning later that afternoon, and came “in jeans” unprepared to face the consequences for his actions. Participant 12 described his response to the experience:

He says, ‘I thought about it and I don't think it's that big a deal that I overslept one time.’ He goes, ‘I don't think I want to run.’ So top five blowups I have ever had in my life. It was so bad, I was down at one end of the hallway, all the way down in *Athletic Complex* where the office used to be, his secretary thought there was a fight. Nobody was doing anything because I was yelling. I said, ‘what do you mean?’ He said, ‘I'm not doing it.’ So anyway, needless to say, he did it. Took him over there, and our strength coach ran him. Well, ended up dehydrating him a little bit, had to put an IV in him, but that was nothing to do with what we were trying to do, but I think our players saw the message. That's our best player, and they saw him on a stretcher with an IV (Participant 12).

Many of the coaches recounted similar experiences where athletes' refused to comply with the standards they set for their teams. Participant 1, for example, informed his

athletes that “(*they were*) not going to be here and do those things.” Participant 7, in response to players’ attitudes stated that “miserable people are not going to be allowed to be on this team.” Another coach clearly described the way he handled these types of situations with his athletes.

So the penalties were across the board, there were no excuses, there were no stories. I tell them, ‘there are no lawyers here, there is only a judge. You have no option here. You do it or I sentence you. That is it.’ That is kind of the way it is (Participant 11).

Participant 8 discussed his experience of trying to “clean up” the attitudes and work ethic of athletes he did not recruit. He explained that although he wanted to find a way to work with these individuals, he did not feel the same responsibility for them as he did for athletes he brought into the program.

...when you recruit these kids, you don’t really know these kids that well, and all of the sudden, you start seeing their personalities come out when they get comfortable...and as a coach you are wondering, wow ‘why didn’t I see those warning signs,’ or you may have seen those warning signs but ignored them because he was really good...and I think as a coach that has done that, probably you have to accept ‘that’s okay, that was my mistake, now I will work with him the best I can,’ whereas I didn’t recruit that kid. So when I see that behavior, I don’t feel the responsibility to work, or to be so patient, or to allow that to happen, when it wasn’t my mistake. I think I just have to do what’s right, and if it doesn’t fit with the plan that I have, then something is going to have to change, or they need to leave (Participant 8).

One coach reported that, because his team was on probation, he was unable to do the same “housecleaning” described by other coaches. He explained that the athletes understood his predicament, and took advantage of the situation.

...the kids knew it, so there was nothing I could do. I couldn’t kick kids off, because every kid I kicked off, we lost that much more scholarship, because of retention. So everybody knew it, so it was a joke on the team. Well, ‘I can do whatever I want,’ ‘Coach can’t take my scholarship away or anything.’ So I had five kids on campus that didn’t play, didn’t practice, on scholarship, and I’m playing with walk-ons. And I couldn’t

take their scholarship away, because we would sink further into the penalty, and so that was very frustrating, kind of being, just being a prisoner, you know. There's nothing I could do...Even though I knew what I wanted to do, I couldn't do it...I couldn't set a precedent (Participant 12).

Finally, another coach suggested that there was no need to worry about clearing out difficult athletes, because “in time” those players would be gone. He found more value in focusing his attention and energy on his younger players.

...in a year or three months they will be gone and I don't have to worry about it. I don't have them to help me build what I want. It is good and bad. So if I have a player that is really the kind of guy that is a pain in the neck, he is going to be gone. What I have chosen to do here is put a lot of time and effort into our younger players and develop standards for them (Participant 1).

Component B: Recruiting. The second component speaks to eleven of the participants' experiences of recruiting athletes as a significant means of implementing the structures of their programs. Participant 6 explained that “the key for almost any college program is in recruiting.” Coaches described recruiting athletes who “want to be there,” and who understand the philosophy of the program, as one of the most instrumental components involved in building their programs.

If you could bring your own players with you right away, people who you recruit, people who share your values, you don't have to worry about it as much, because you know that your guys are all going in the same direction (Participant 2).

Furthermore, coaches explained that recruited athletes “know what to expect” and that helped eliminate some of the problems faced early-on during the transitional phase.

Kids come in, they know what to expect and know what they are getting into. There are not any surprises. So if you are consistent like that you know...and as a recruit, or a recruiter, you do not want kids that are not going to fit the program. You do not want a square peg in a round hole and you tell them that up front, here is how it is and we hope you think of things the way that we do (Participant 10).

Participant 9 described the recruiting process as “hiring athletes” for a job. Comparing it to the business world, he explained that his athletes were aware of their roles and responsibilities to the team before arriving on campus.

So I try as much as possible to deal with it from that stand point,...I basically look at it as when I sign an athlete, I am hiring you to do a job here. You need to do your job and if you are not doing your job, I am going to come tell you and we will talk about that.

Another coach, focused on the athletes’ mindset and ability to compete, as significant in the recruiting process, and furthermore in gaining the support necessary to build the program wanted.

You need to get kids in that were going to work hard, but understand what it means to be a part of a team concept. Kids that like to compete, kids that had the right mentality on the court, that could handle pressure, recruit kids that were not looking to give them excuses when they did not win, and kids that would stay with it to the bitter end and basically fight, have a warrior mentality (Participant 10)

Similarly, Participant 8 stressed the importance of recruiting athletes with character versus talent.

We have a group of good guys, and I think partly because we do not let them become A-holes, but we do not recruit A-holes. We try to stay away from those guys...It is tempting to take talent over character, but character kills you. I think what I have learned in my program is that A-holes do not last, because we are asking them to be honest too much (Participant 8).

However, despite coaches clear descriptions of the athletes’ desired on their teams, a few coaches reported challenges faced during the recruiting process. One coach described recruiting as a “cut-throat process,” and that he did not “have that killer cut throat instinct” when dealing with people’s lives (Participant 5). Participant 3 explained that as a coach, although he was aware of the type of athlete he wanted to recruit, those athletes were not always available to him. He reported making a few mistakes in recruiting

initially, because he was limited by the program's reputation and penalties that reduced the number of scholarships.

Sometimes you make mistakes in the kind of kids you bring in because the problem is, when you're not a very good program, you can't go out and get the best of the best of the best. You have to get to that point. It doesn't happen, okay, you're lousy and then you get great - it doesn't work that way (Participant 3).

In addition to these experiences, many of the coaches discussed the idea that players' actions and behaviors on and off the field played a significant role in the recruiting process. Coaches explained that team members were often the one's who attracted better players to their teams. Although teams may not have experienced immediate success, it was important for them to understand it was for the long term growth of the program.

Participant 1 explained:

We want to do this, not for the immediate success of those players, but for the success of the program. So we played a certain way, we did certain things, so we could attract better players on down the line, and it was great (Participant 1).

Finally, Participant 6 contended that in his experience "success breeds success." He explained that as his athletes' started experiencing success; they began "recruiting for (him)." During his second interview, he addressed this topic again and stated the following:

I signed three girls in the fall that are exactly what I was talking about, and we went from being ranked 132nd in the spring to 86th in the fall, and it really lends itself to the things I was talking about with you.

Component C: Getting Good People to Carry Out Your Message. The third component dealt with eleven of the coaches' experiences of getting good people to carry out their messages, viewed as significant for building armies to support their programs. For these coaches, the list of "good people" included players, assistant coaches, support

staff members, and anyone else directly involved in their programs. Participant 7 explained that for building a program “it’s not the X’s and O’s, it’s the Jimmys and Joes, you know. You’ve got to have real good players that are all on the same page.” Similarly, another coach stated that as the head coach “(he) can lead,” but he cannot force his athletes to be committed to the process. He believed that was a quality that must be found within an athlete.

It’s hard for a coach to really project goals and expectations onto a team. That has to come from within. You know, the coaches can lead, but you cannot, no matter how much you want to, project that kind of commitment level. It’s got to come from the kids on the team, and getting the right people in place, and getting to the point where, when we bring new people in, the people that are already in the program are educating them on what it’s like right away and assimilating them into the process that we’ve started (Participant 10).

Coaches explained that by “surrounding” themselves with “good people,” they knew that everyone involved had their programs’ “best interests” at heart. In reference to hiring “good people,” Participant 1 described his feelings towards hiring an assistant coach in the following passage:

...I wanted to have the opportunity to get the best person because if you get, if you surround yourself with good people, then you know, it’s not that you’re not going to have ups and downs, but you know at least that that person has the best interest of yourself and the program at heart, and that’s just the way I like to operate (Participant 1).

In addition, Participant 7 suggested that many individuals involved in collegiate athletics spend far more time with athletes than do head coaches. Therefore, he believed that it was important to insure that those individuals in contact with his athletes needed to be “good people,” who could help spread the message he was sending his athletes.

Hire people like *George* and have him come in and make the effect that he did, you know, on our players, you know, I think the strength and conditioning position is so underrated in college athletics, especially

football, because 365 days a year, you take that calendar and you take how many times that guy spends with my players versus how many times a position coach, and it's not even close. And so it's very important that you hire good people, you know, that are going to carry your message out.

Component D: Outside Support. The fourth component was connected with four coaches' experiences of turning to individuals outside of their program for support (Participant 2, 6, 7, & 8). The coaches characterized their having support outside of their departments as significant aspects of their experiences. They described it as being an "outlet," "someone to go to for tough decisions," and responsible for the formation of their coaching philosophies.

They need a mentor, they absolutely need to have a support system in place and it's a noncompetitive group, you can't have a support group within your conference, or people that you're nationally or directly competing with, because it would be hard for them to...you just have to have that support system and you have to set it up. Normally when you interview for a head coaching position, you already have those people in place because they are the one's who are trying to help you get the job. And in order to get the job you need to rely on them and bounce ideas off them...and have the confidence that you can communicate about your program and it will get, you will find a way to work it out...everybody needs somebody to rely on to support them. So you have to have that in place and you have to use it (Participant 8).

Participant 2 explained that in his experience it has been important that a "hierarchy" existed, and his athletes and coaching staff perceived that "he (*had*) the answers." Therefore, during difficult times, he had turned to someone "outside (*his*) organization" for support and advice.

That hierarchy is good, so you need people outside your organization to go to and be like, man, this is a tough decision. This is a tough one, and I have to get it right. Because when you come here, you'd better be right, you know.

He recounted an incident where this individual was able to reflect on his situation, providing him with insight into some of his coaching behaviors, specifically that he was coaching rather than managing, of which he was unaware.

And so he gives you a view from the top, you know. And he was the first one to recognize (*I was*) coaching instead of managing, you know. He came in and drew a diagram for me. It's like, he's like that's a number one. He's like, your country is short on number ones, you know. You're actually a number one, alright. You can manage an organization, you know. Now, he didn't tell me, but, Dope, you're coaching here, so you're not able to do that. He just said hey, you can do this. You need to surround yourself with people who protect you and let you do what you do (Participant 2).

Participant 6 commented that it was “nice” having other coaches in his department that he **c**ould turn to for support. Their offices were “just across the hall,” so it made it easy for **h**im to access their support, in addition to the fact that they all “got along so well.” **A**nother coach referenced his mentors, during the conversation surrounding the **d**evelopment of his coaching philosophy and passion for the job.

I knew when I was 17 years old that I wanted to coach because of the way I was treated, the experience that I had, and the philosophies...I've been very fortunate, very blessed to be around some really good men in my career. There's just a certain way we do things and I am going to do things (Participant 7).

Component E: Administration Support. This final component emerged from **e**leven of the coaches' descriptions of the support and lack of support they experienced **w**ithin their programs' administrations. Although a few of the coaches discussed **c**hallenging experiences they faced working with their current administrators (**P**articipants 2, 3, & 9), all of them felt that having the support of their administrations **w**as important in building effective programs, and that without that support the process

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would be hindered and slowed drastically. Participant 8 elaborated on this topic in the following section:

...coming into an environment where you are being asked to change the culture...You have got to have the support if they are going to put you in that environment... coming here I learned a lot about the politics of coaching, and it was extremely evident to me here that they supported all their programs. They wanted everybody to be good. There was a very high expectation here to be successful, but boy, they have to support you to be successful...I feel here the support system in place has said look we brought you in here to coach. I think a school like *University A* has the resources and the people in place to say, 'coach what is it that you want, and how do you want to put your structure in place'...Here they are definitely, if they do not have it, they are going to find a way to get it.

Another coach indicated that in order for a program to “change” and become “great,” the **a**dministration had to support those changes. He further, stressed the importance of **d**eveloping a good connection between coaches, players, and administrators as essential to “make a program turn.”

...you take a job based on the people that you meet, and before I took this job I only met the athletic director. At that time I was talking to a couple of different people, but I just felt comfortable with him. I felt like we shared the same vision, because really if programs are going to change, the administration has to be behind the change. They have to be the ones to change it. Coaches sometimes, I think, live in this little world where we over glamorize what it is we are actually doing. I do not think if I took every program that changed and all of a sudden became great, there is an administration behind it that decided they wanted to make that an important program. I think that it is not just coaches, it is not just players, and it has got to be a connection between all three that make a program turn (Participant 11).

Coaches characterized this support in terms of “backing them up” when dealing with **P**layer issues, providing “financial support” through facilities, equipment, travel, and **s**upport staff, accessible when needed, visible during practices and competitions, and “**o**pen to getting the right things in place.” Participant 5 during the first interview **d**escribed the tremendous support given to his program through “increased funding” and

“new facilities,” but even more significant to him, was that the administration was “inclusive of (*his*) staff and (*his*) sport during this process.” He explained:

...you don’t want to have an athletic director that’s involved in your day to day business and be micromanaged; that’s not what you want. You want somebody who is going to show up once in a while and just show their support, you know... The administration is very supportive. They show up at our competitions, they come by practice. If there’s a big donor being toured around by the athletic director, he brings him to my office, gives me five minutes of face time. It’s, I have been, it’s inclusive here, I would say, more than exclusive.

During the follow-up interview to discuss the analysis, Participant 5 explained his **e**xperience in greater detail:

The administration was very supportive and there were certainly a lot of things in place, but not necessarily everything in place right off the bat...but the administration was extremely open to getting the right things in place very quickly when I explained to them why it was important.

Participant 1 also reported that although he may not be given everything asked of his **a**dministration, their relationship was one where the athletic director supported his **p**rogram, and would try to provide those things needed to be successful.

...our AD is very supportive of our program and says hey, what do you need to do to be successful, and then you might not get everything you want, but he’s going to try to.

Some of the coaches in their descriptions of their first years on the job described their **e**xperiences as “challenging,” “frustrating,” and “mentally exhausting.” They also **r**eported that they were aware there would be problems to face in many different areas **t**heir first seasons. These coaches explained that changing the structure of a team was **d**ifficult in and of itself; thus, it was imperative to have that support to back up their **a**ctions. Participant 10 explained that, in general, making the transition of taking over as

head coach of a collegiate program was challenging, but as long as the administration was supportive, there was no need to “worry.”

There is no question the transition is tough, and more so because you come in and you are just kind of nervous, you know that you have to be strong and you are going to butt heads with somebody no matter what the issues are and how you view them. As long as the administration has your back, because you are doing things the proper way, then you do not have to worry about anything. I did not really ever worry so much as *(I)* knew that there were going to be times when *(I was)* going to have to call somebody out and call them out in a big way.

He also suggested that it is not only the responsibility of the administration to support head coaches’ decisions, but also coaches’, particularly those coaching “nonrevenue sports,” not to “cause problems,” and “do the right things.”

My big thing with administration is you just do not cause problems. When you are a non revenue sport, if you are causing problems, you are really not worth it to them. You just make sure that your kids are doing the right things. Our APR has been at a thousand, no one has transferred out, everyone has graduated. That is very important to them. We stayed under budget the last two years, which is very important to them. That might be as important as winning the conference title. If you do all the little things right, you are on time to things they say to be here with your players and you are there with your players, they say to do this and you say how high. Those things mean a lot because there are a lot of those extra curricular things that need to be taken care of, all the charity events, and all the other things. We always dot our “I’s” and cross our “T’s” on those. When you do all of those things, you get all the support that you want and need (Participant 10).

Seven of the coaches recalled either current or previous experiences with unsupportive administrations. Participant 8, in reference to his previous position explained that “real Problems” arise when that support is not in place.

When you’re going into a place and you don’t feel like they are going to support...the support staff is suppose to be there to support your athletes, and if that support is not real and is just supporting itself, and not the athletes, then you’re going to have a real problem (Participant 8).

Participants 1 and 9 described situations faced where budget concerns, and unsupportive administrations, made it difficult to execute their jobs effectively. Participant 1 recalled an experience traveling with a former team, when a “blizzard forced him to change the (*teams*) travel arrangements” and “spend an extra night in a hotel.” Although he made “an executive decision” with the team’s best interest in mind, he was reprimanded by the Athletic Director, because his budget would not support that choice. Participant 9 described his experience of his team “outgrowing” their budget:

That has been the biggest struggle. We have grown so rapidly and our success has come so rapidly that we have overgrown our budget that they have planned for us quite dramatically. When I started here three years ago, we had the day we started almost no equipment. When I was hired we had enough money in the budget to buy a small amount of equipment, and then we were borrowing the rest of it. We were borrowing horses, renting horses, doing whatever we could do at the time. It was very difficult to try and train a team when we didn’t have proper equipment. So, I actually went out and bought some, and kind of without the permission of my administration I went out and bought some and handed them the bill and it was a lot easier to ask for forgiveness later. Administrative budgets are kind of unique sometimes, but we managed to work it out. I am still here, so I guess we did work it out (Participant 9).

One coach after having battles with the administration over “player issues,” described the administration as people “in positions of authority” “who don’t know anything about sports,” and are “surprisingly more concerned with “trivial things” than “winning and losing.” He explained that as a head coach, “you have to deal” with them, and “you’re going to have to find common ground.” During the follow-up interview he described how this process had interfered with his ability to take his team to that next level.

I bet of the people you talked to they all have a burning crazy desire to be the absolute best. For me, I have a burning crazy desire to be the absolute best, the very, very, best...and so if you want to be that good, if you want to go to that level...if you’re an administrator you probably don’t want to go to that level, so they don’t understand why you do the things you do to get to that level. So, they do little things to trip up that...that’s what I

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mean by trivial things, things that are important to them, but in the end, things that have nothing to do with where you are trying to go...they almost slow you down from getting there (Participant 2).

During the first interview, Participant 3 explained that because his team was on NCAA probation, he had been “really monitored” by the administration, despite the fact that he was not the one responsible for the violations. As the previous head coach of the women’s program, he had developed a positive working relationship with individuals in that area. However, after some position changes in administration and his move as head coach for the men’s program, the administration support changed drastically. He explained:

...it’s been a little bit more difficult, because the reason I got the job is the previous coach had to resign for NCAA major violations, so we were put on probation through November...we’re almost finished with it, but we lost a scholarship, and kind of had to be under the eye of compliance, and been really monitored.

When this topic was discussed during the second interview, Participant 3 expressed more frustration and “concern” with the subject, and responded with the following statement.

It’s an issue with me, because my compliance, rather than say we’ve got a great guy here...it’s like I’m the guy who broke the rules. It’s really a poor way of dealing with people in this situation and it really bothers me. I understand she has a job to do, and has concerns for violations, but you treat people, particularly people who have had a lot of success, at a different standards. I don’t like to feel like I am being treated like a two year rookie coach, when I have more experience than anybody else and more success than anybody here...Every where I have been I have been a winner and I have done so without breaking any rules and that’s the thing that really bothers me a great deal. It’s a concern for me and it eats at me...it really does (Participant 3).

Finally, during the second interview Participant 8 stressed the importance of coaches’ understanding the culture of their athletic departments prior to accepting their jobs. He explained that finding programs with similar philosophies that were willing to support

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coaches in building their programs was fundamental in building successful programs.

Finally, Participant 8's description captured the essence of coaches' thoughts regarding their experiences of needing and wanting administrative support.

It's important in looking at jobs that you understand what the administration is, and what that culture within that department is, because it just may not be the right job for you. Even though you think it's a good opportunity in terms of the position itself...maybe it's a highly competitive conference, or the school itself. It's just that is not always the case...you may get to a program where the administration is very supportive of you and are willing to work with you, whereas if you go to another school and you haven't researched that culture...I think it's really important to research that culture and find out, am I going to fit in here? Or are they going to want me to be something different? Because you will be able to work that for a while, but it's not a career job. It will be a job that you either move on through or it will change your passion for what you do. Some administrations, it is night and day...the administration here is trying to help coaches be successful. Whereas the administration at my last job, everyone wanted a piece of power. Nobody felt like they were working with anybody else so they had their roles, and were just so protective of it, so it was just a much more of a "Me" mentality. Here, everybody says, hey coach, how can we help (Participant 8).
In conclusion, this subtheme emerged from coaches' experiences of "building an

army" to support their programs in terms of assessing which individuals would support and help facilitate necessary changes, and which one's would detract from that process.

Participants' experienced different aspects of the following components: (a) housecleaning, (b) recruiting, (c) getting good people to carry out your message, (d) outside support, and (e) administration support.

Theme 4: Understanding the Dynamics of a New Coaching Staff

The fourth theme, understanding the dynamics of a new coaching staff, emerged from ten participants' descriptions of hiring, managing, and developing new coaching staffs in order to assist them in building their programs.

I think a good quote, if you ask any coach who do they spend more time with, do they spend more time with their assistant coaches or with their

family, their assistant coaches will win that argument 99% of the time (Participant 5).

This theme contained the following subthemes: (1) *Hiring a New Coaching Staff*, (2) *Managing and Developing a New Coaching Staff*, and (3) *Building a Program with a New Coaching Staff*. Each subtheme is discussed separately in the following section.

Subtheme 1: Hiring a New Coaching Staff

The first subtheme, hiring a new coaching staff, centered on coaches' experiences of selecting their staff, giving them time to make the transition, and deciding whether to fire or hire the previous assistant coaches as members of their new staffs. The following components emerged as significant for participants: (a) selecting a staff, (b) giving them time to transition, and (c) dealing with previous assistant coaches.

Component A: Selecting a Staff. The first component, selecting a staff, was generated from seven coaches' experiences of picking new members of their staff, and the politics, time commitment, and challenges involved in that process (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, & 12). Participant 12 explained that coming in as a new head coach he was overwhelmed with new responsibilities, and hiring a coaching staff was part of that experience for him. He recalled having to take care of everything "alone," and so it was important for him to get a staff in place as quickly as possible. He explained that "it was a lot to do, obviously, as far as just hiring a staff, trying to recruit, trying to recruit (*his*) current players back on, and so it was a challenge to say the least." Furthermore, Participant 12 also had challenges selecting his staff, because of the politics involved in this process. He discussed the fact, that he received unsolicited advice from numerous people regarding his selection of candidates.

That was tough because they had some coaches here that had been here a long time, you know, but I had some of my guys in mind too, and of course, everybody in the world has an opinion, and everybody wants to tell you who to hire (Participant 12).

Along with Participant 12, four other coaches (Participant 1, 2, 3, & 5) reported making poor decisions in the hiring process based on politics surrounding the situation.

Participant 5, kept an unqualified diving coach, whose lack of knowledge and expertise were detrimental in the growth of the program. Another coach (Participant 2) described his experience of making a mistake initially during the hiring process, in that he hired a “former player,” who despite her athletic talent, did not have the team’s respect, and served to divide rather than build the team.

I’ve always had very good people who have worked for me, alright. I’ve always had very good people who worked for me, but I don’t know if I did a good enough job picking a staff (Participant 2).

Participant 3 on the other hand hired a coach with a very different “mentality” and work ethic than his own. He explained that he did not have the “same level of intensity,” and “did not care” as much as he did about the success of the program. Similarly, Participant 12 claimed that hiring “someone he didn’t know,” was a major mistake he made in his experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program.

Get good people around you...the only mistake I made was in the hiring process. I hired a guy I didn’t know, and I will never do that again. It was just that he was not on the same page. I did it because I was listening to some people...the AD, a big donor and all of them said that this was the guy, that he had *Conference A* experience. No doubt, by far this is the toughest conference, but I think sometimes they put too much weight on that...on that conference experience, and that guy was just in it to get a few wins and move on. We were sending two different messages to the kids, and it just didn’t work, it really didn’t work...really my only regret that year too (Participant 12).

Another coach in response to the hiring mistakes made, expressed the challenge of going through that process multiple times.

It is really tough going through the hiring process twice...and dealing with all that. But we feel like we have someone that's very, very good in place, but you know, it took all the way until now to get it done (Participant 1).

All of the coaches agreed that despite the "politics" involved in the hiring process, it was important to pick a staff that could work effectively as a cohesive unit. The following excerpt illustrates this concept.

I think how incredibly important it is to have a staff of coaches that get along, that can work cohesively, that can generally enjoy being around each other because in coaching you deal with some very stressful high pressure situations and being able to face that as a...if your coaches are a team it enables the team to be a team. I think it's really, really important that you find assistants that not only are good coaches and good people, but people you generally get along with because you are going to spend a lot of hours and a lot of high stress situations with these people (Participant 5).

Component B: Giving Them Time to Transition. The second component, "giving them time" to transition, came from two of the coaches' explanations of this process and the significance of this process (Participant 1 & 12). Participant 1 stressed the importance of giving his assistant coaches time to adjust to the position.

...when you pick somebody, it's different, you know, and that's why I was really concerned about, in the fall, making a hire for an assistant because if I sit down and say this is the guy, then I have to be willing to give that person time to make it work out, you know what I mean (Participant 1).

Furthermore, he argued that assistant coaches also have to move, buy homes, establish roots for their families, and settle into the responsibilities of their new jobs. Therefore, as head coaches, it was important that those coaches were given the same time to make the transition that head coaches were given coming into new programs. He explained this in the following passage:

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It took all the way until now to get it done, you know. So that person just comes in, they move from California, you know, *(they've)* got kids, family, got to buy a house, and they're going through the whole thing you did the year before. So what you want to do is get to a level of continuity, you know, maintain and have for a while. But you always have to be ready for a little instability. I mean as a coach...it's an unstable profession, and you want to have as much stability in it as you can...there shouldn't be any turnover for quite a while, which is great for both us and the guys (Participant 1).

Participant 12 on the other hand arrived to find a program in "complete disarray," and needed his staff established as quickly as possible. In his description of the hiring process, he referred to the "time it takes" to make the transition in terms of getting the new staff set in place. He explained that hiring a new staff, requires coaches to create job postings, gain human resources approval for potential candidates, as well as the "time" it takes coaches to arrive on campus ready to work.

Nobody forced me to do anything, but I did bring one guy with me from *University B* where I was, so I knew that was going to be okay. But it's still a hiring process, so it's not like they're on board that day, you know what I mean? Because you've got to go through the, you've got to post it X amount of days, and it's just a nightmare (Participant 12).

Although only two coaches reported this component as significant to their experiences, the findings are still relevant to coaches' global experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs.

Component C: Dealing with Previous Assistant Coaches. The third component, dealing with previous assistant coaches, was developed from four coaches' descriptions of their experiences of either "hiring," "hiring then firing," or "firing" their former assistant coaches (Participant 3, 5, 8, & 12). One coach reported having had good experiences with the previous assistant coach he had hired for his program. The coach had been a candidate for the head coach position, and despite his disappointment in not

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getting the job, decided to remain and assist Participant 8 in building and implementing his program.

It has been a great experience. He was the guy that wanted to take over; he should have taken over in everybody else's mind. The AD wanted me over him; so am I extremely happy about that of course, I am jumping for joy when that guy made the call and I am like you are kidding me. This guy is excellent. The assistant coach he is fantastic, he is a super star and probably should have been given the job. If I was one of his friends, I would have gotten it for him. We didn't know each other. He did not take it personally. It takes a certain amount of character to be able to handle that, but he loves the school, he loves what he does. I wanted to give it a try, I had that choice. Politically, it was probably the right position to give it a try, so there were two reasons why I did it, but I heard nothing but good things about the guy. It was a real simple conversation and again in all honesty, 'I cannot be upset that I was offered the opportunity, but I think I understand your side of it...I would really like for you to stay on. The players really like you. You have a lot of respect from everybody that I have ever talked to about you. I really would like for you to give it a try,' and he did. It has been almost three years and it has been great. He is fantastic (Participant 8).

He further explained that it was a "unique situation," "but it (*worked*)."

Participant 8 was the only coach who hired an assistant coach from the previous organization, and reported the experience as positive and an overall success. While Participant 8 characterized his assistant as knowledgeable and an expert in the field, Participant 5 described his assistant as someone lacking "technical expertise" that did not have the personality to be a coach.

The diving coach was, I don't like to disparage people, she was an idiot, she was in way over her head. She didn't have the technical expertise to be a Division 1 coach, nor did she have the temperament to be a coach at any level. She was a grad student here, just doing it part time, so there were some challenges that first year (Participant 5).

Participant 3 on the other hand explained that the previous assistant he hired before was "a nice guy," but when it came down to the program and accomplishing those goals, "he didn't care." This coach expressed "frustration" with the fact that as a coaching staff, they were "not on the same page." Eventually, Participant 3 had to replace this assistant

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with a coach who fit more in line with the philosophy of the program. Finally, although the remainder of the coaches did release their previous assistant coaches, Participant 12 was the only one who mentioned the firing process as significant to his experience.

That was a 10 hour a day thing, just trying to field the calls for coaches and everybody, and I had to sit down with the two coaches that were here, three coaches, and you know, tell them I wasn't going to go in that direction. That wasn't easy. And then I just started the process, and I hired one coach right away, the guy that came with me from *University B*. I knew that, and that made it a lot easier.

In summary, hiring a new coaching staff was important for the majority of coaches' in their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. This subtheme dealt with coaches' experiences of selecting candidates, giving them time to transition, and deciding whether to fire or hire the previous assistant coaches as members of their new staff. The following components emerged as significant for participants: (a) selecting a staff, (b) giving them time to transition, and (c) dealing with previous assistant coaches.

Subtheme 2: Managing and Developing a New Coaching Staff

This subtheme emerged from coaches' experiences of managing and developing their new coaching staffs. Ten of the coaches' reported experiences relevant to this subtheme. The following components emerged from the data: (a) working as a cohesive unit, and (b) establishing a similar coaching philosophy, and (c) developing assistant coaches to be assistant coaches.

Component A: Working as a Cohesive Unit. In this first component, coaches' experiences were discussed in terms of working effectively with their new staffs as cohesive units. Ten coaches described the importance of their coaching staffs' ability to work and function effectively as a team. Participants' reported a number of different

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ways in which this process was significant in their experiences. Participant 7 commented on the role this component played in his experience when describing the process that was involved in creating his new coaching staff. He explained that he “got a great blend” of coaches, ranging from differences in personality, age, education, playing experience, and overall coaching experience. Bringing these personalities together enabled them to “execute the plan together.”

...when I took the job, I brought four coaches with me that had been with me at *High School A*. Then I hired four others that were veteran college coaches. You know, there were a lot of people who said, ‘well you shouldn’t hire a bunch of high school coaches’ and all that kind of stuff. The way I looked at it is that I got this opportunity to go coach at the Division 1 level, and all of these men had been with me along that journey, and if I’m going to get this opportunity, then I’m going to give them the opportunity to have this opportunity if they choose, if they want to. So, four of them wanted to come with me, and so we did. Two of them are still with me, two of them are not, you know. But now my coaching staff is one that I’ve got a 40 year veteran on my staff and I’ve got a 28 year old linebacker coach, and from all the way in between, I think it’s a great blend, and my coaching staff has really, I mean, you know, I feel like I’ve got a plan, I feel like I’m a good executor of a plan, but I’m a good listener. I’m not so set in my ways that I don’t take advice from people that I really trust, and I’ve got several veteran coaches on my staff that I really trust, that there are situations that they’ve been in that, you know, I listen to and then we as a staff come up with a plan, and then we all go and kind of execute the plan together (Participant 7).

However, the majority of coaches explained that developing group cohesion among their new staffs was challenging, because they were bringing together “a lot of different personalities,” and trying to get them to work together in an effective way. During the follow-up interview, Participant 7 expanded on this topic, and in the following passage described the process as “one of the most difficult things to do in coaching.”

It is probably one of the most difficult things to do in coaching is to take, because the one thing you want is a bunch of different personalities on your coaching staff, you don’t want a bunch of clones of yourself, you want a bunch of different styles and within the styles each one is the

responsibility of the assistant coach to understand the philosophy of the head coach and how things are going to be run and to figure out how to do it within your own style. Some guys are screamers and some guys are a little more patient, you know, and some guys are high energy guys and some guys are more analytical about things, but it's all about taking that personality and putting it into what we are all trying to get done with our players (Participant 7).

Another coach, describing the difficulties he faced in this area as having to “add two new coaches” to the dynamics of the staff. As a first time head coach, he explained that because all the assistants were new to the program, they were unaware of the way the program functioned prior to their arrival, and were also unaware of the changes that were needed to transform this team.

If it had been maybe another assistant that had stayed here, it might have been a little easier, but still, I think adding two new people to that dynamic of coaches and me trying to do. I had this idea in mind that we were going to change the whole personality of this softball team. We're going to change it. It was difficult, and with two new coaches that had no idea what it looked like before, added more, you know (Participant 4).

Many of the coaches commented on the “instability” of the coaching profession. One coach in particular, suggested that although instability exists, establishing a cohesive new coaching staff can help create “a level of continuity.” He explained that during the transitional phase, new staff members come in and out of programs and initially create more instability within those teams. As a head coach, he felt it was his responsibility to understand the dynamics of the new coaching staff, in terms of their transitions into the field, and support them during that process so as to eliminate possible turnover, thus creating stability in the program.

It took all the way until now to get it done, you know. So that person just comes in, they move from California, you know, (they've) got kids, family, got to buy a house, and they're going through the whole thing you did the year before. So what you want to do is get to a level of continuity, you know, maintain and have for a while. But you always have to be

ready for a little instability. I mean as a coach...it's an unstable profession, and you want to have as much stability in it as you can...there shouldn't be any turnover for quite a while, which is great for both us and the guys (Participant 1).

"Trust" was also reported as critical in this process by seven of the coaches. One coach explained that head coaches, "have to trust the coaching staff," and "trust that they are always going to have (*the head coach's*) interests at heart and not their own selfish interests" (Participant 11).

Some of the coaches stressed the importance of presenting a "united front" for team members. They explained that as coaches it was their responsibility to "model" proper behaviors, and their athletes needed to see the staff "communicating" and "working together" for the benefit of the team (Participant 2, 3, 7, 8, & 11). This concept was clearly illustrated in the following excerpt:

I think that they need support, the players that is, and if they see us being friendly, we eat lunch together everyday. Our families get together a lot. I think they have to see a united front on our side. They have to understand that I value the input of every single guy on my staff, it is not just me. That those guys are valuable to me, they are valuable to them. That I respect their opinions, I respect how hard they work. I think that is the way it is, because in any team situation there is always going to be some guy that has more ability or talent than another, and how does that person respond to the rest of the group. Is he separating himself, does he act above the group...throughout my years of coaching I have done a lot of things with those type of guys to get them to understand the importance of the group. I think they have to see it in me. They have to see how I relate to my coaching staff, how I relate to the worst player on our team, the best player on our team, and how much respect I have for everyone in the program (Participant 11).

Many of the coaches also stressed the importance of staff members being "on the same page," and "having the same mentality," as significant in their being able to work as cohesive units.

...he cares as much as I do about the program getting good, and whereas, you know, the guy's just clocking in and biding his time to move on, but I mean this guy really wants to succeed in anything he does. Everything he does, he wants to do good at, and that's what I wanted. If I could find (*players*) like him, you know, we'd be good (Participant 3)

Finally, coaches explained that their professions required them to handle stress and pressure on many different levels and that having a staff that “(*liked*) each other,” and could function effectively was important in managing those situations effectively.

I think how incredibly important it is to have a staff of coaches that get along, that can work cohesively, that can generally enjoy being around each other because in coaching you deal with some very stressful high pressure situations and being able to face that as a...if your coaches are a team it enables the team to be a team. I think it's really, really important that you find assistants that not only are good coaches and good people, but people you generally get along with because you are going to spend a lot of hours and a lot of high stress situations with these people (Participant 5).

Component B: Establishing a Similar Coaching Philosophy. The second component came from coaches' experience of establishing similar coaching philosophies for their new staffs. Nine coaches discussed this process as significant, so as to ensure that “two different messages” were not being given to their players. As previously mentioned, Participant 12 recalled one of his “biggest mistakes” his first season as hiring someone he did not know. This conclusion was reached because the coach found that he and the assistant coach “were sending two different messages to the kids and it just didn't work.” The assistant was more concerned with “getting a few wins, and moving on,” versus the long-term growth and development of that program. Participant 1 explained that as a head coach “there's a certain standard” he “wants things to be done,” and that “some people aren't willing if left to their own” devices to abide by those standards. Therefore, as the leader of the program, he explained it was his responsibility “to set that

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standard” or coaching philosophy and ensured that his staff members worked accordingly inline with that philosophy. Participant 3’s description of his new assistant coach illustrated the importance of them establishing a similar philosophy.

...he won’t accept mediocrity... I only want guys who want to be the best in the world...that want to become the best in the world. That’s his mentality, you know... I’d rather have a guy like that than a guy who says, hey, I want to, you know, so that’s been a good thing, and I really like him a lot, and I think, hopefully I can keep him for a couple of years because he’s going to be too good a coach to keep. He’ll be on his way someplace big time. But, you know, his mentality is a no nonsense guy, and he’s a good guy; he’s a great guy, but he’s also, hey, he tells it like it is, and sometimes guys don’t like to hear that.

Participant 7 explained that when creating a new staff, he inherited a lot of different personalities. However, despite these differences, he felt it was the “responsibility of the assistant coaches” to make sure that their styles of coaching were in line with the philosophy of the head coach and the goals of that program.

It is probably one of the most difficult things to do in coaching is to take, because the one thing you want is a bunch of different personalities on your coaching staff, you don’t want a bunch of clones of yourself. You want a bunch of different styles and within the styles each one is the responsibility of the assistant coach to understand the philosophy of the head coach and how things are going to be run and to figure out how to do it within your own style. Some guys are screamers and some guys are a little more patient, you know, and some guys are high energy guys and some guys are more analytical about things, but it’s all about taking that personality and putting it into what we are all trying to get done with our players (Participant 7).

Finally, another coach mentioned the assistant coach’s responsibility of adjusting to the style and philosophy of the head coach. He explained:

And your staff will have to change periodically because you’ll change...either who the people are or as people. Because you’ll change, so they’ll have to change as well (Participant 2).

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Component C: Developing Assistant Coaches to be Assistant Coaches. The final component focused on coaches' experiences of managing and developing their assistant coaches to become assistant coaches. Only four of the coaches reported this process as significant to their experiences (Participant 1, 2, 4, & 8). Despite the limited support for this component, the importance these coaches' placed on their experiences of this process warranted them being included as relevant to the global experience of becoming a new head coach. Participant 8 explained that as a head coach developing assistant coaches was just as important as the development of players.

An important role of the head coach is along with the players, is the head coach to develop his assistants. I love having assistant coaches that have ambitions of being head coaches...it's easier to control your player with those coaches, now if your coaches don't have ambitions, you're going to have probably more struggles with motivation (Participant 8).

One coach contended that the most important aspect of being a head coach “(was) to stop being an assistant coach in any way, shape, or form.”

I think in this country we are developing a bunch of assistant coaches who are becoming head coaches, okay, and they are still doing their assistant coach role and their head coaching role. It's not the same - it's different. You need to understand that you can't wear all the hats, and you need to have specialists who can help you along the way (Participant 2).

He explained that it is impossible to execute both jobs effectively. Therefore, he claimed that as a head coach it was imperative that he learned “to manage.”

I feel like I can manage people. I can manage grown people, I can manage kids, I can manage the group. Well, I was losing myself in that ability because I was too busy trying to do the job that other people can and should be doing. There are plenty of people who can train a team, alright, and I was losing myself... the methods with which I train the team are exceptional... well guess what, in the end, nobody cares about that. They care about, in the end, how you manage your team and so I realized I probably wasn't managing my team right (Participant 2).

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He suggested that managing and developing the coaching staff, creates stability for individuals in that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

It lets everybody know what their role is. It clearly defines what happens where, and it clearly defines who makes the decision. So now, they don't have to worry about any of that. It gives the coaches security because now they know, okay, I know my role, you know.

Finally, Participant 4 learned the importance of this concept through his own experience as a first time head coach. He described his experience in the following section.

So whenever I became a head coach, it just, it seemed easier for me just to keep doing all that stuff instead of trying to teach someone else how to do it. So, I kept all of the same duties that I was doing as assistant coach, as a head coach, on top of all the responsibility, all the other administrative meetings that you have to go to and attend. I did everything. I would literally come in at 8 in the morning, and I would leave here at 2 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the morning, and I would do everything from the budget, to the travel, to the scheduling - all of that. I was about ready to pull all my hair out.

Through this process, this coach realized the importance of managing and developing his assistant coaches. He found that his role as head coach required him "to teach" others how to execute the job effectively. He explained:

So, the second year, I delegated 90% of what I was doing, and cleaned up the whole process. It was a lot better for me. I got to spend a lot more time at home. I was a lot more relaxed, I guess. I wasn't so, 'I have to do everything to be successful.' It's a big burden to have to carry it all, to do everything. And that is exactly what I was trying to do, everything. I wouldn't even let people help, I thought it would just be better, easier if I did it, you know, and so it was tough the first year; mentally, physically. I was worn out, and then this last year, I felt like I enjoyed the season a lot more (Participant 4).

In summary, this subtheme captured coaches' experiences of managing and developing their new coaching staffs. The following components were found as important during this process: (a) working as a cohesive unit, and (b) establishing a similar coaching philosophy, and (c) developing assistant coaches to be assistant coaches.

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Subtheme3: Building a Program with a New Coaching Staff

This final subtheme was generated from coaches' experiences of developing their programs with their new coaching staffs. Different aspects of the following components were significant for ten of the coaches: (a) utilizing the knowledge and expertise of the staff, (b) helping to execute the plan, and (c) sharing responsibilities.

Component A: Utilizing the Knowledge and Expertise of the Staff. The first component dealt with coaches' experiences of utilizing the knowledge and expertise of their assistant coaches to build their programs. At the time of their interviews, all of the coaches' who discussed their coaching staffs reported being satisfied with current staff members. Although some had made changes earlier during the course of their transitions as new head coaches of collegiate programs, their descriptions of their staffs at the time of the interviews were positive. Eight of the coaches when discussing their programs, recognized the strengths of their assistant coaches in terms of their expertise and knowledge in the field. Participant 3 described his assistant coach in the following section:

I hired a great assistant coach, who is a great recruiter, and he's kind of an overachiever from college, great in college, great in the pros, but was a so-so player going to college and got really good, and kind of the mentality of what I'm looking for.

He respected his assistant so much that he actually felt that "he was too good of a coach to keep." Meaning that eventually his assistant would move on to better positions in coaching. Similarly, referring to his assistant coach as an "expert," Participant 8 explained that he was fortunate to have an assistant coach, who was not only talented and driven to succeed, but also someone who had developed an excellent working relationship with players on the team.

Assistant Coach A has those qualities, he is unbelievably competitive and he is fantastic. The guy is an expert. For me to be able to work with him is awesome. He is one of the best players in the world at his sport which makes it even more unique. It is not like he cannot do something else, he could, and he has opportunities.

Most of the coaches described their coaching staffs as playing an “integral role” in their teams’ success. Participant 5 illustrated this concept in the description of his assistant coach.

But my other assistant has been phenomenal. It’s hard for me to imagine working without her by my side now. She’s been such an integral part of the success (Participant 5).

Other coaches’ characterized their assistants as “brilliant,” “talented,” “experts in the field,” “competitively driven,” “excellent technicians,” “highly decorated” as players, and “one of the top coaches” in the United States. Coaches further explained that they wanted to “surround themselves with good people,” and that their goals as head coaches were to acquire staffs of coaches with knowledge and expertise in their fields that could take their programs to the next level. Participant 1 illustrated this concept in the passage below.

...I wanted to have the opportunity to get the best person because if you get, if you surround yourself with good people, then you know, it’s not that you’re not going to have ups and downs, but you know at least that that person has the best interest of yourself and the program at heart, and that’s just the way I like to operate (Participant 1).

Component B: Helping to Execute the Plan. The second component developed from participants’ experiences with their new coaching staffs helping them execute their plans to build their programs. Nine of the coaches described incidents where their assistants “helped facilitate” their programs and moved them in “the right direction.” The coaches reported times where as a team the staff “came together” to develop a plan, and

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then “set out to implement that plan.” These head coaches’ recognized that without their assistants they would have been unable to accomplish their goals. They also described situations where assistants were expected to “discipline players when the (*head coach*) was not present,” “make decisions” regarding practices, travel, and competitions, as well as “model appropriate behaviors” to uphold the standards of the program at all times. Participant 10 described his assistant as hard working and explained that “she (*helped*) drive the bus too in terms of trying to get kids to work harder even though the will was really not there for a couple of them.” Participant 2 explained that as a head coach “you can’t wear all the hats, and you need to have specialists who can help you along the way.” Participant 7’s description of his staff illustrated this concept.

I think it’s a great blend, and my coaching staff has really, I mean, you know, I feel like I’ve got a plan, I feel like I’m a good executor of a plan, but I’m a good listener. I’m not so set in my ways that I don’t take advice from people that I really trust, and I’ve got several veteran coaches on my staff that I really trust. There are situations that they’ve been in that, you know, I listen to and then we as a staff come up with a plan, and then we all go and kind of execute the plan together (Participant 7).

Participant 2 stressed the importance of his staff in the development of his program. He explained that their roles were clearly defined, each having specific responsibilities geared towards them helping him execute his plan.

Coach E is very good because she is young. She connects with the girls. She helps me keep a beat on how they are emotionally; who needs a kick in the pants, who needs an arm around their shoulder, whatever, and so she is a good go between. *Coach F* is a good coach, but they like him, so they will listen to him, and I tell them the first day, ‘there’s only one person who decides if you play, and that’s me. So get close to *Coach F* - it doesn’t bother me, okay.’ So now they can get close to *Coach F*, okay, and now, if they feel vulnerable or if they feel like, ‘hey I need to work on something,’ they can go to *Coach F*, and *Coach F* will help them get better at it. They don’t have to worry about, ‘man if I go to Coach, he’s going to know, and is he going to use it against me?’ ‘No, just go to

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Coach F. He's going to help you with it,' and *Coach G* is in that same role (Participant 2).

One coach, having had difficulties with his first assistant diving coach, described his assistant swimming coach as "phenomenal." In addition, he reported that he enjoyed their working relationship and believed that she played an "integral part" in the overall success of the team.

But my other assistant has been phenomenal. It's hard for me to imagine working without her by my side now. She's been such an integral part of the success, and when my predecessor was let go, which happened in February, I didn't come on board until June. She was sort of the interim here, and she was very young; she was only 24 at the time; managed to go out and sign a class of who our current seniors this coming year will be. Probably, at that point, was the best recruiting class this team had ever seen, and she managed to pull them in with no head coach of record, you know, held things together, and she's been awesome (Participant 5).

Finally, many coaches recalled experiences where they took advice from their assistants and made changes in their plans. These coaches explained that they "trusted" their assistants and "valued" the ideas that they had. For these coaches, it was important that they utilized the "strengths of all individuals in their program," especially their assistant coaches, because they helped execute their plans. Participant 7 described an incident that truly illustrated this idea, where he canceled practice in response to his assistant coach's suggestion.

...he sets the plan in place, you know. There are times, you know, I mean there was a time just the other day, we're grinding here during a two-a-day practice during fall camp, and I had plans for us. We'd get our players today, the first day of school, and then we're going to practice tomorrow. We open up on a Thursday this year, so it's kind of a strange schedule, but I planned on bringing the players in on Saturday, and Chuck's a veteran guy. He comes in the other day and said, 'hey coach, I think we'd be better fit if we gave them the day off. I think we'd have a better practice on Sunday, you know, I think they'd be more mentally rested... We've had a hard, good camp, and what do you think about that?' I said, 'do you think it's important to the staff also?' He said, 'yeah I do.' So I made the

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change. And those kind of things happen from time to time, and again, I hope to be a coach that...if I think it's very, very important, you know, then this is the way we're going to do it. But I also, you know, I value the coaching staff that I have and the ideas that they have (Participant 7).

Component C: Sharing Responsibilities. The final component, focused on coaches' experiences of sharing responsibilities with their assistant coaching staffs. For eight of the coaches, sharing these responsibilities included "technical coaching," "decision making" in terms of practices and travel, "administrative paper work," "recruiting," "team policies," "player punishments," and "passion for the job." Participant 2 explained that when he first became a head coach, prior to taking his current position, he made the mistake of continuing to function as if he were still the assistant coach of the team. He believed that in certain areas he was "the best" person for the job, and that it would be easier if he did the job himself, rather than teach his new assistants how to do the tasks "the way he wanted." He explained:

I used to want to do everything, you know. I'm like, 'hey I'm the best at this, so I'll do it.' 'I do that better than anybody else, so I probably need to do that,' when that's not the way. The way you have to do it in this role is, 'I was the best at that. Let me show you how I did it. Let me show you how to teach this, so that now you know how to teach it the way I want,' you know. I think in some ways football coaches are better at that than other coaches, because with football coaches, there is a very defined hierarchy. The head coach dictates down (Participant 2).

Like other coaches in the study, he found that as a head coach it was important that he "taught" others how to do the job effectively. Through his development as a head coach, he learned that a key component in leadership is the ability to "manage others," as well as sharing responsibilities of the job. He stated that as head coach "you can't wear all of the hats." Another coach had a similar experience in his current position as a first-time head coach. Like Participant 2, he thought it would be "easier" if he "did everything himself,"

rather than “teaching others how to do the job.” During his first season he reported feeling “overwhelmed,” “mentally drained,” and “physically exhausted.” At the time of the first interview, he was just beginning his third season with the team. Although the previous year had improved in this aspect, because he had learned to delegate more responsibilities to his coaching staff, he still described his experience as needing to manage his assistants more effectively so as to “share some of the weight.” During our second interview, he explained that the interview process had helped him reevaluate his “management style,” and that his ability to delegate responsibilities had greatly improved during his third season.

That whole role with my staff, I have made sure this year that I am a lot more on top of that. We have had a lot more meetings, a lot more checking up to make sure they are up to date, you know, ‘hey have you got this done?’ ‘Have you accomplished this?’ Giving them a to-do-list, and then probably once every two weeks we go in and kind of do a check up with everyone in the office... ‘have we accomplished this, this, this and this? Do you have any questions on, do I need to show you how to do that,’ I’ve given them a lot more responsibility, I’ve given them a lot more, ‘hey this is your call you make the best decision’... ‘I am entrusting you to make the best decision for us’... I’ve given them a lot more decision making, not just doing the work, but actually deciding where we are going to stay, what we will eat, you know things like that... What I have done is relaxed a little bit and then I check on them every two weeks. But you know they are 25-30 year olds and they can handle it, and I think in the past I dealt with them more like they were players than coaches (Participant 4).

Other coaches in connection with the idea of sharing responsibilities referred to situations where their assistants’ involvement relieved some of the pressures they were feeling.

Whether it was participants’ experiences of being relieved, because an assistant was able to take care of the recruiting side of things (Participant 12) or the “female issues” among players (Participant 2 & 10), coaches reported that their assistant coaches’ involvement in

their programs had “(*taken*) a lot of weight off of (*them*).” Participant 5 described this in his experience of finally finding a qualified diving coach for his team.

My first year, that was such a big struggle; had a terrible diving coach, we had terrible divers; now we have a great diving coach, we have seven divers on the roster this year, I have a couple of more that are interested in trying out. The ball is rolling in that aspect of our program, which makes it so much easier for me, because I can coach the swimmers. The sport is so unique, because they are so different - swimming and diving - yet, you go to a meet, and they are scored together. So to have no concerns about that aspect of our program, and it takes a lot of weight off of me.

Finally, coaches also mentioned their experiences of sharing the responsibility of caring for the teams’ well-being and the emotions involved in that process. They explained that it is “nice” to know they had a staff of coaches, who “(*cared*) as much as (*they did*).”

Like my assistant coach I had before was a great guy, but you know, if we weren’t getting out recruiting who we wanted, it was like, ‘hey, how’s it going, let’s go have a beer,’ you know, he didn’t have a care. But my guy, the guy I have now, really cares. If we’re not winning or the guys are struggling, he worries just as much as I do, and it’s nice to have somebody you can kind of share that with (Participant 3).

In summary, this final subtheme emerged from coaches’ descriptions of building their programs with their new coaching staffs. Different aspects of the following components were significant for ten of the coaches in their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs: (a) utilizing the knowledge and expertise of the staff, (b) helping to execute the plan, and (c) sharing responsibilities.

Theme 5: The Role of Family

This theme developed from the experiences of ten coaches in the current investigation. Ten of the twelve coaches were married, and all of them had children. Therefore, for these individuals family played a significant role in their experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. When they made the decision to

accept their job opportunities, their actions impacted not only their lives, but the lives of their wives and children as well. From their descriptions of their experiences of this process with their families, the following subthemes were created: (1) *Recruiting the Family*, (2) *Support from Wife*, and (3) *Family Involvement*. Each subtheme is discussed separately in the following section.

Subtheme 1: Recruiting the Family

This subtheme was developed from coaches' descriptions of having to recruit their families into supporting their new positions as head coaches of collegiate programs. Nine of the coaches reported this process as significant in their experiences. The following components emerged from their descriptions: (a) selling it to the family, (b) acknowledging the family's sacrifices, and (c) living in transition.

Component A: Selling it to the Family. The first component dealt with participants' experiences of having to "sell" their new positions to their families. Five of the coaches (Participant 1, 2, 7, 8, & 12) felt that it was essential to recognize that when they made the decisions to take their new jobs, their families were greatly impacted by the nature of their careers. Participant 1 explained:

They're along for the ride too, and that's the thing that you've got to be careful about. As you go along, you've got to be more protective. I'm more concerned, I'm happy, I love doing my job, but I have to make sure that my family has, you know, they're in a place where they can enjoy themselves.

Other coaches agreed that it was important to take their families' well-being into consideration when making changes in their careers. They reported the difficulties of having to "live in places" that their families did "not like." They wanted their families to be in places where they could "establish roots," and in "an environment" where their

“children (*were*) going to get a good education.” They also explained that it was a “struggle” moving when their family was happy where they were living. Participant 12 described his experience in the following passage.

...if you uproot your family and move, that’s difficult. That’s asking everybody a lot. My kids were happy where they were, you know, my wife was happy where she was.

He continued to explain that from his perspective the choice was “a no brainer.” He had aspirations of working for a “big time” program and “winning a National Championship,” and felt that this new position would give him the opportunity to accomplish that goal. However, he explained that making that decision was not that simple.

...we can do what we need to do here, and so I thought it was a no brainer. But I kind of had to recruit the rest of the family into that situation. So I had to sell it to them, and it’s hard because like I said, everything happened so fast. So it was like, so it’s been, they love *The City* now. It was tough in the beginning. It was tough when I was gone, but part of it is I’ve been gone a lot anyway my whole life, so I’m fortunate in that way that my wife understands that, and I think that helped (Participant 12).

Participant 7 on the other hand, did not find “the selling” of his new job to be quite as difficult. Similar to the other coaches’ experiences, he did feel it was important to take the family into consideration before accepting the new job. However, in his experience, becoming the new head coach of this collegiate program had many benefits. The position was “25 miles away,” and thus did not require his family to move or force his wife to change jobs. In fact, the new position had “financial benefits” almost tripling his salary, allowing his wife to take a “step back” from her career and enabling her to spend more time at home with their children during their last few years of high school.

It was a situation where it was only 25 miles away from where I lived. I had a son and a daughter still in high school, a wife that taught in *the area*.

Like I said, it's 25 miles away. A great fit for my family. Obviously, a great challenge for me, and I believed in *University A*. I had coached here before, lived in the *surrounding area* my entire professional career, and you know, call it what it is; it was a significant financial raise for my family, allowed my wife, during this window of our marriage, to be able to stay home, be close to her and be able to do some other things with our kids, so it just had a whole lot of up side to it (Participant 7).

The five coaches' who reported this component as significant in their experiences' stressed the fact that their families' happiness impacted their ability to do their jobs effectively. Therefore, when making such drastic transitions, they believed that they should have to take their families into consideration. Although the situations "may not be perfect," they should be able to "sell" the programs on those aspects that were important to their families such as "living somewhere they (*could*) be happy," "good education," and "financial" gains.

Component B: Acknowledging the Family's Sacrifices. The second component focused on participants' acknowledgements of the sacrifices their families made when they accepted their new jobs. Nine coaches' described situations where their families sacrificed as a result of their career choices.

One coach explained that his children have lived in twelve different cities over the course of their lives, never staying longer than four years in any one place.

I think it's crucial that you have people that understand the complexities of it because there's high highs and low lows, and there are times, it's not a 9 to 5 job. It's more a lifestyle. My kids have lived in, I mean they've probably lived in 12 places, you know, and I don't think we've ever been anywhere more than four years, and this is the longest stint that I've ever had...obviously like everything else, you want to buy a house, you want to have a yard, you want to have your kids go to the same school, have their friends, whatever. But you know, and a lot of people are fortunate that that happens, but it doesn't happen to a lot of people, and you know, is that worth the cost of, you know (Participant 1).

The majority of coaches in this study discussed the time commitment of their jobs, and the sacrifices their families made with them “being gone a lot.” Participant 5, who reported having no wife or children, made the comment that head coaches spend “more time with their assistants, than they do with their families.” One coach explained this experience through the description of making the transition from a program that was “established,” to one that was in “complete disarray.”

...it's been a lot of sacrifice for them because you've got to remember, I came from a program that I had running, and it was established. Didn't mean I didn't do anything because I certainly did, but now there's a lot, until we get this thing up and running, there's a lot of commitment. Not just from me, from all my coaches, because this is not going to, it doesn't get better on its own. It's just not going to happen. You know what I mean? So there's been a lot of, it's been a lot of work in two years. A lot of sacrifice and a lot of traveling. A lot of just doing things I've got to do, but I feel like right now we're finally, I feel like we just, I feel like we're kind of even now, you know what I mean (Participant 12).

Other coaches' recalled some of their families' sacrifices as “their wives being single parents,” “not being able to buy a house,” “leaving behind friends,” “living in cities they (*didn't*) like,” and not being “available” for their families. Participant 1 offered similar thoughts on his experience of his family making sacrifices for his career.

...And we're here, so that's great, but you know, there's times that we've lived in places that we didn't want to live... we've had to do things that we didn't want to do living wise... like to buy a house, but you know, where we're at it's so dang expensive you can't buy anything here, but you know, that's our goal to do, is to buy it. So it takes time, and everything has their challenges, but yeah, I think family is huge.

Component C: Living in Transition. The final component developed from nine of the participants' experiences of their families' living situations during this phase of transition. Some of the coaches' (Participant 1, 2, 8, 11, & 12) reported incidents where they had moved to the locations of their new jobs, while their families remained in other

cities. In these situations, coaches were living in hotels, trying to establish their programs while also preparing for the arrival of their families. One coach explained that having been through the situation before, he and his wife felt it was better if she and the children stayed in a place where she had a support system in place, giving him time to adapt to the new position.

I am here. I am in a hotel room, the family is still relocating two months later. That is part of what happens when you are new. It was probably a good thing that when I came to University A that my wife did not come. At least she knows people there, and we can get things set up (Participant 8).

He explained that in his experience, he had been able to “jump into” new careers, and close his mind to only focus on that one thing of becoming the new head coach. He felt that this process was not as simple for his wife. Although she may be better “prepared” the second time going through it, he explained that “she was in no hurry” to move the family to the new city.

If I am never at home, working all hours of the day, I think my mind...I think coaches have that ability to switch everything off and just have that tunnel vision...When you jump into something like that I know my wife, hopefully the second time through it, we’ve done this, so she was way more prepared and was in no hurry to get there (Participant 8).

In reference to his wife being more prepared to make the transition, he described a “wives support group,” comprised of other coaches’ wives who had faced similar situations, who she turned to for guidance and support. Many of these coaches’ explained that like them, it also “(*took their families*) time to figure it out too.” They explained that “it (*was*) not an easy transition for anyone to make,” so they needed to support their families as much as possible during this process. Participant 11 explained that during this transition his

family had to make “adjustments here as well,” and therefore would be getting all of his “free time.”

The other part of it was that I had a family that had to make adjustments here as well. We move from *across the country* so they get all my free time, that is just the way it is, that is just how I choose to spend it. It is not easy, but it is a process. If I was to try and change all of those things at one time, I do not know if we would have gotten better in any area, and I think that is what you do not want.

In summary, the subtheme, *recruiting the family*, focused on participants’ experiences of “selling” the program to their families, acknowledging their sacrifices, and the coaches’ experiences of living in transition with their families. Nine of the coaches reported this process as significant in their experiences. The following components emerged from their descriptions: (a) selling it to the family, (b) acknowledging the family’s sacrifices, and (c) living in transition.

Subtheme 2: Support from Wife

As previously mentioned, ten of the coaches were married at the time of the study. All of these coaches reported that the roles of their families were important in their experiences. Nine of these coaches specifically mentioned “the support of (*their wives*)” as present during their experiences. One coach explained that “it (*was*) just unbelievable important to have a supportive wife” (Participant 8). Participants discussed certain aspects of this “support” that was relevant to their experiences. From their descriptions the following components emerged: (a) understanding of profession, (b) listening and giving advice, and (c) taking care of “things.”

Component A: Understanding the Profession. The first component developed from eight of the coaches’ descriptions of their wives “understanding” the intricacies of their profession. Two coaches explained that as daughters of coaches, their wives had

been around teams and understood the profession. Participant 8 recalled his wife's support while pursuing his goal of becoming a head coach.

Her dad had been an athlete and coached as well, and she grew up playing sports. She had been around teams, and she had been around that environment, so she is into it. She is a massive collegiate sports fan, so being in a collegiate coaching environment is not something that she does not understand. She enjoys it, and she likes it. She knew very early on in our relationship what I wanted to do. The deal that she made to me (was) as soon as I was a head coach, she wanted to start a family. She spent the three years (*while*) I was an assistant; my wife was the bread winner. She was a teacher, and brought home the salary. The salary that I was getting was probably nothing compared to that. So she was supportive of my endeavors so she knew that I was doing something to get somewhere else. So she was from the start, she was part of the process.

Also the daughter of a coach, Participant 7 characterized his wife as “understanding” the profession. He described her support for him throughout his career on many different levels, including postponing her education.

So when we got to *University A* in '92 and I was a position coach here, she was able to go back to school, and in that two year window, she finished school, and she actually got her degree, her secondary education degree, from here at *University A*. Got back into high school coaching, she started teaching, so she's been teaching now from 1994 through 2007. She's now a veteran teacher, but the job that I have now allows her, right now in our lives, to step outside of that and to be able to be home. My daughter is a sophomore in high school, and she's able to be there for her things, and my son, right when I got this job, he still, even though I left, he still had another year at *High School A*, so it allowed her to do that and be around more for his senior year. And my wife has sacrificed a lot in our marriage, you know. She grew up a coach's kid, so she understood, and I was very fortunate that I married a coach's daughter in that way. She understood, but she did, earlier in our marriage, she sacrificed a lot. She sacrifices through the years when, I mean literally, a coach's wife becomes a single parent about four months out of the year, and at the college level, even more than that sometimes. And so it's, if I had the opportunity to more than triple my salary and then that allows her, that's another benefit of it (Participant 7).

Other coaches reported their wives involvement in sports as relevant to their understanding and support of the profession. Married to a former highly competitive collegiate swimmer, Participant 10 explained:

She just understands the intricacies of trying to play at a really high level, and what it takes, and the reverb you get from it as a player, in terms of your own mentality, and just what it means to compete. She always competed really well, and liked to compete. She was always right there in terms of my philosophy, and did not differ one bit.

Participant 10 elaborated further on his experience of his wife's support, describing his wife as "the perfect wife for being a coach."

She can understand the trips and the long nights, and trying to get the right mentality. She grew up in a house that was very positive, and always saying you could do it. She understands that you have to burn the midnight oil sometimes to get things done, and understands that in order to do those things it is going to take a lot of time at the office, and being gone a lot. (*She is*) just a goal setter, someone that understands what it means to set goals, and go after them, and achieve them. (*She*) never believes that you can't do something, (*she's*) just always going after it. Kind of like the perfect wife for being a coach.

Another coach explained that as a judge in the sport, his wife had the background to understand his profession. He also compared her work-ethic and personality as similar to members of his National Championship team.

...my wife has a horse background and she judges like I do and she is very familiar with what we do. She is very much like the Type A hard driving, very choleric personality, that we have on the team, like many of the successful ones are (Participant 9).

Although some coaches reported their wives as having no direct connection with their sports, they still described their wives as being "understanding" and "supportive" of their careers. Two of these coaches suggested that just being married to coaches' has resulted in their wives becoming more "understanding of the profession." For one of these

coaches, his wife supported and followed him throughout his professional career, coaching career, transition from coaching, and return to coaching.

She has always followed me with my jobs, and you know I think she would say, 'this hasn't always been easy, but it's been an adventure.' I mean, she's been a golfer's wife for 32 years, and a lot of that was traveling all around the world. So this job really doesn't sound too bad to her, you know. So for her, she looks at this like a vacation. And she doesn't think this is a real job anyway. She says, 'all you do is coach in something you love. That's not a real job.' So she says I've never had a real job. And that I'm just one of the lucky ones. I do enjoy it, and I'm pretty thrilled to be back in it again, so that's really nice (Participant 6).

Another coach commented that through the course of his extensive involvement as a coach, he thought his wife had come to understand his profession. He explained that this was not always the case for all coaches in their marriages.

...I think she understands it, and you think, well, everybody would understand. Well, they don't, because I've been in this a long time, and I've had a lot of assistant coaches, or I've known a lot of assistant coaches that, I always tell them, I said, 'Get married before. Don't get married after, because if you're doing this, and then you get married, it doesn't usually work.' Especially if they lived somewhere else, because they think they understand the system, but they don't (Participant 12).

Likewise, during the follow-up interview Participant 8 elaborated on the ways in which his wife's experiences with him as a coach have helped her become more "prepared" and understanding of the coaching profession.

If I am never at home, working all hours of the day, I think my mind just shuts it out. I think coaches have that ability to switch everything off, and just have that tunnel vision. When you jump into something like this, at least I know my wife, the second time through it, we've done this before. So she was way more prepared to handle it, and was in no hurry to get there (Participant 8).

Component B: Listening and Giving Advice. The second component was connected to coaches' experiences of their wives' listening and giving them advice. Four coaches recalled incidents when their wives provided this support for them in their

experiences (Participant 8, 9, 10, & 11). One coach described his wife as being “very positive,” and explained that on days when things were not going so well, he could come home and she would listen, give him some “logical” advice, and “support” him.

...she would be very positive on those days when I would come home and things are not going so hot. She would just say something and be so logical about it, and then support me (Participant 10).

Participant 10 also described how his wife was able to give him good advice for coaching women. He felt that she “(*understood*)” the differences between men and women, and was able to provide a better perspective for working with his female athletes.

...so she understands some of the things that are different between the men and the women I think. She could appreciate and talk me through at the same time (Participant 10).

Participant 9 also described his wife as significant in helping him understand the differences among men and women, and further how to utilize his knowledge of those differences to influence his coaching.

This experience has caused me to grow greatly as a person. I will never forget in my first year here driving home one day and I called my wife and I said, ‘you will never believe this. *Athlete A* just called me and told me what she made on her test.’ And my wife said, ‘yes that is communication that is what people do.’ I learn a lot from her...she also thinks it’s great that after having to deal with a lot of the drama...that I come home and how easy it puts things in perspective, so to speak (Participant 9).

Two of the coaches described experiences where their wives helped them reflect and better understand their coaching experiences. Participant 11 explained that “getting married made (*him*) take a step back,” “look at things” from a different perspective, and provided him with an “outlet” to work through challenges he faced in coaching. For Participant 8, his wife pointed out the fact that during his first year as the head coach of his current program he stopped “singing in the shower until the season was over.” He described this incident in the following passage:

My wife laughed at me or she jokes with me. She said for a year...this is funny to put this on here, but one of my habits is to sing in the shower, and she said that she did not hear me sing in the shower until the season was over, and then she remembers me finally singing again, if that tells you what this season was really like.

This coach was unaware that the stress caused by the challenges he faced during his first year, was so severe and apparent to others around him. His wife was significant in his experience, because she was able to give him the perspective to better understand his coaching experience.

Component C: Taking Care of “Things.” In this final component, participants’ descriptions of their wives “taking care of things” were explored. Coaches’ described different situations where their wives were responsible for managing their families, while they were busy with their coaching careers. Six of the coaches explained that their wives, had to “take care of kids,” “take care of things at home,” and even for some of the coaches’ wives, take care of their “careers” and “community involvement” (Participants 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12). Three of the coaches made references to the fact that their wives had to be “single parents” during certain times of the year (Participants 7, 8, & 12). Participant 12 explained this point clearly.

So there’s some flexibility, but I think my wife understood that, and when I say supportive, I mean supportive in taking care of things like, the kids and getting them places, and letting me, understanding that if I’ve got to go somewhere, it’s not a big deal and making it easy for me to focus on that instead of well, she really didn’t want me to go, you could tell, but you know. ‘It’s okay that you’re going,’ you know what I mean, but no, but really being okay with it, so I could really focus on what I’m doing. So she’s been really supportive as far as that (Participant 12).

In summary, nine coaches described “the support of (*their wives*)” as significant in their experiences. Analysis of participants’ descriptions of certain aspects of their

“wives’ support” revealed the following components: (a) understanding of profession, (b) listening and giving advice, and (c) taking care of “things.”

Subtheme 3: Family Involvement

In this subtheme, participants’ experiences of their families’ involvement in their programs were discussed. All ten of the coaches’ who were married and had children reported different aspects of this subtheme as important in their experiences. Through the analysis of their families’ involvement, the following components were found to be significant: (a) making time for family, (b) family participating in program, (c) coaching influence on life at home, and (d) family’s influence on coaching.

Component A: Making Time for Family. The first component developed from coaches’ descriptions of “making time for their family,” in order to create a balance between coaching and their home lives. As previously mentioned, many of the coaches reported that there have been certain times in their coaching careers when the job “came before the family.” They explained that in general, their wives had supported them at these times because they understood their “goals” and “supported” them in what they were trying to accomplish or “get done.” However, coaches also understood that while they needed their “wives support” in order to be successful, they also needed to take responsibility for their roles in “making time” for their families when possible. Five of the coaches in the present investigation discussed this component as being significant in their experiences. Participant 8 explained this point clearly in the following passage:

I try to make a point to make sure that the family is first, but I know there have been times when, without thinking, I have not put the family first, and my wife has stuck with me with those decisions.

One coach described his experience of learning the importance of this balance after completing his first season as a head coach.

I beat myself up over it, and maybe it was for a good cause; it was probably one reason why we did so well, but it was definitely not good for my home life, for sure. I kind of let, softball definitely took over at my house as well. There wasn't a clear separation between the two, but it wore me out mentally too. I was just exhausted by trying to do all that stuff...It definitely paid off, and this next year, the year after this past season, we had the same success, but I don't think I could have gone through another year of that. I probably wouldn't be married right now. And you know, I told myself hey, 'I want to win, and this is what I do; this is my livelihood; I want to do good, but I'm not going to ruin my marriage and my relationship with my kids for all that,' you know. We'll still be pretty darn good; I'm not going to put myself through that again, you know, just for one more game, for one more W. I'm just not going to do it. So I've tried to come up with different ways; I've delegated a lot more this year (Participant 4).

Another coach explained that although his wife was not extensively involved in the program, they had found a way to make "it work" in their marriage, by establishing a clear separation between "his life," "her life," and the "life" they choose to share together.

Well, she's just real supportive. She doesn't get heavily involved in the coaching. She works, you know, and she's got her life, I've got my life, and we have our life, and it just happens to work out really well (Participant 6).

Many of the coaches described their jobs as anything but "typical." From "traveling," to "long hours," to phone calls at all hours of the day and night, their jobs did not require them to "clock in from 9 to 5." Therefore, they reported that in their experiences it was important that they made the most out of the "time" they did get to spend with their families. Participant 12 explained in the following section that he was not trying to "substitute" his role as a father, and further explained how he had found a way to make the time to "make it work" in his family.

So, you know, the biggest thing for me is if, you know, is not trying to substitute what I've got to do as a father and taking my role out of it, but you know, maybe doing some of the little things that make it a little bit easier for me to, you know, to be able to do my job, but at the same time, I don't know the word. I'm trying to think of how I'm trying to say it. I'm not trying to miss out on the kids, maybe I can't take the kids to their practices, but maybe then if I do have them and I have other time, I can actually make it to some of their games, you know. You know what I mean? Like that. So she's been good as far as that goes. So I've been able to have some of those little moments and you know, some I don't. I mean in the spring, my son plays baseball. I don't really get to see him play, because he plays every Saturday and Sunday, and we play every Saturday and Sunday. It's hard. That part's hard. But there's not much you can do about it.

Some of the coaches explained that although there are a lot of long hours in their profession, there are also a lot of "good hours." Allowing the family to participate and be involved in the program was another way that coaches made time for their families.

Component B: Family Participation in Program. The experiences of families' participating in these athletic programs were central to the formation of the second component. This component focused on ten of the coaches' experiences of whether or not their family members became involved in their programs. Eight of the ten coaches (1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12) reported their families' as participating in their programs. Involvement ranged from having family members "travel with the teams," children feeling they were "members of the teams," wanting children "to go to (*their*) Universities" for their educations, representing the team through their "involvement in the community," and one coach even had the experience of having his "son participate as a member of (*his*) team." Participant 8 characterized the coaching profession, and explained that coaches' have the ability to "involve" their families despite the nature of their profession.

...to do this job successfully you have to be completely committed to it, and committed to your players. I am not saying that coaches are the hardest working people. That is not true. It is a lot of hours, but there are a lot of good hours in the day. There are a lot of good hours with your job, there are a lot of good hours where your family can actually be part of it. So it is not like you are going to the office at 8 and leaving at 5, and they do not come to the office. The family can be involved and you have to make sure that you let them do that.

In connection with this philosophy, one coach stated that “(*his*) family comes on a lot of trips” (Participant 11). Another coach, commenting on his wife’s involvement, described her as having “been good in the community,” in that she had “gone to a lot of functions,” and “(*knew*) a lot of people” (Participant 12). Participant 9 recalled his family’s involvement as a “great experience for (*his*) family.”

They are very much a part of it, and very supportive. They come to the games, and wear the tattoos. *My daughter* knows a lot of the different teams and their colors and she just turned 6. Of course thinks that she is a part of the team. She asked me during the search for the Hunt-seat coach if she could be the Hunt-seat coach, because she just loves it. The girls on the team are just great with her. It has been fun, and it has been a great experience for our family to be involved in the program.

Two of the coaches expressed desires for their families’ involvement in their programs to include them “establishing roots” in places where their children would be able to attain “good educations” (Participant 1 & 2). Both felt that their current positions provided those opportunities for their families. Participant 2 clearly illustrated this concept in the following excerpt:

...it’s a big part because, you know, it’s my goal to build something that’s really special, and we’re on the cusp of building that’s very, very special that will last a long time, you know, and I want my boys to go to *University A*, you know. I want my boys to go to *University A*. This is what I choose for them, you know. If I could choose, I’d like them to go to *University A* (Participant 2).

One coach clearly illustrated the impact that his son's participation as a member of his team has had on his overall coaching experience. Participant 7 described the "sacrifice" his son made to play on his team.

I coached him in high school, he played for us, he played on three state championship teams in high school... he was highly recruited, committed to the *University of C* in March of his junior year. After some soul searching on his part, (he) decided that this was a pretty unique situation for his dad to get a Division 1 head coaching job, and him to be in that same window of time, a Division I caliber quarterback. About five months after he committed to *University C*, he came and said, 'Dad, I want to come play for you.' And so he made that decision, and he's with us, and he red shirted last year as a true freshman. He'll be a red shirt freshman that will be our starting quarterback. So I'm very proud of him as a father, but I'm also very excited that we were able to recruit a guy like that, because he was one of the top quarterbacks in the *State* coming out his senior year. He made a huge sacrifice. You know, he could be playing in a program at the *University of C* (Participant 7).

Participant 7 also expressed his initial concern that his son might come to regret the decision he had made, because the team had failed to reach a high level of success his first year, where as *the University of C* had competed for the National Championship title.

He knew that as we went through this next four or five year window, he would never see me coach, I'd never see him play, we'd be in totally, you know, Saturdays would be our work day. And the one thing I really respect about *my son* last year is we went through, we went 1 and 11 last season. It was just one of those years that really motivate you for the next one. But you know, I always used to think about, I mean I wonder, what he's thinking, you know, that he's grown up, his room has been (*University's colors*) his whole life, he gets to go play where he always wanted to play. He had that opportunity; they were vying for the national championship all last year. I'm wondering, you know...not one time has he ever said, 'boy I just wish I'd have gone to *University of C*,' you know. 'I made a mistake.' He's the total opposite. 'This is where I want to be,' you know, and that kind of deal. So, I'm pretty excited about our opportunity (Participant 7).

Only two of the coaches described their families' lack of involvement in their programs (Participant 4 & 6). Both cited their wives as being supportive of them in their careers, but elaborated on the clear separation between family and their sports. The participants'

did not describe their families' lack of involvement as negative, rather a decision they made to create a balance between work and family.

But, you know, it's kind of, there's a separation there, and I think they kind of understand that, and I try to keep that too because I'm happily married. I make a lot of comments to them about the fact that 'I'm not going to answer my phone at night.' I mean, there are certain things that I just won't do, because it interferes with my private life, and they respect that. I said, 'I'm not going to, I'm going to give you the same kind of respect,' and I think they appreciate that (Participant 6).

Component C: Coaching Influence on Life at Home. The third component dealt with coaches' experiences of how their coaching influenced their lives at home. Ten coaches reported both positive and negative examples of these experiences. Of these ten coaches that were married with children, five of them were coaching female athletics programs (2, 4, 6, 9, & 10). All of these coaches along with two other coaches of male teams (Participant 7 & 11) reported that working with their athletes had "influenced their lives" in a positive way, and that they were "better husbands" and "better fathers," because of the individuals they had coached. Participant 6 discussed his experience in this area:

I am going into my 12th year coaching females and I think coaching females has done more for me than coaching males ever did. In the regard that I think my relationship with my wife is much stronger, and I think my ability to be a dad is a lot better because of it... I don't know if that is the right way to say it, but I was forced to look at things in a different light coaching women, because women do not think the same way as men...I have found out two things, one I know a lot about women, that's one, second, I know nothing about women.

Participant 7 explained that through his coaching career, he had become a "better person," because of how athletes had affected him. Another coach explained that his coaching experience had prepared him to be "a better parent."

Being a coach first and not having any children, and having to deal with, and even though they're 19, 20 years old, there are still a lot of similarities between them and a 2 year-old, I learned a lot of how to deal with different kinds of personalities, different kinds of situations, even though a lot of them don't have a lot of similarities between them. Just the idea of having to deal with different people, I think has helped me to become a better parent at home. I'm maybe a little more prepared than another guy that didn't, you know (Participant 4).

Finally, all of the coaches recalled situations where their careers had negative influences on their families. Examples included their families "making sacrifices," "uprooting their families," "never living in one place for longer than four years," "limited time" with children and wives, and an underlying feeling that their families had to face "challenges," "struggle," and "adjust," as a result of the choices they made in their careers. One coach's description of his experience clearly illustrated this point:

I beat myself up over it, and maybe it was for a good cause; it was probably one reason why we did so well, but it was definitely not good for my home life, for sure. It, I kind of let, softball definitely took over at my house as well. There wasn't a clear separation between the two, but it wore me out mentally too. I was just exhausted by trying to do all that stuff...I don't think I could have gone through another year of that. I probably wouldn't be married right now (Participant 4).

Component D: Family's Influence on Coaching. The final component revealed the significant influence that their families had on participants' coaching experiences. Eight coaches reported their families as having influenced their coaching (2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11). For one coach, the influence extended beyond his wife and children to include his parents in his desire to "fulfill (*his*) birthright," and "destiny." He explained his experience in the following section:

And so it is a big deal to me. It's not a job to me. It is not just taking this team and making them win, alright. It is, in some ways, fulfilling my destiny; in some ways fulfilling my birthright; in some ways, you know, building something special and giving back to the town that I love more than anything else (Participant 2).

Four coaches recalled their wives influencing their coaching, through the “perspectives” they offered, “insight” they provided, and the “outlet” they created (Participant 8, 9, 10, & 11). For example, Participant 10 described his wife in the following section:

She is a big sports nut, and really enjoys competing and enjoys a lot of male pro sports as much as she does anything else. So she has been able to totally relate to my coaching experience in terms of having been a player, having been close to her coach actually in college and appreciating somebody that really cares and is going to be there for you, is going to have the phone on at night if you need to talk to them or whatever.

Participant 11 explained that “getting married” allowed him to “take a step back,” and view things from another perspective.

...so getting married made me take a step back and look at a lot of things and it gave me an outlet and understand that the things that happen out there are sometimes in your control and sometimes are not. I think as all young coaches, I was a young coach, we take the actions personal (Participant 11).

He also explained that because his family traveled with the team, they provided good role models for his young athletes. Furthermore, the interaction with his family, influenced the development of athlete - coach relationships as players were allowed to “see the human side” of their head coach.

My family comes on a lot of our trips so (*players*) will see my interaction with my son, and with my wife, and how I care about my family. Hopefully I can be a role model to some in that area of their lives. Who might need that...some do not need it, some do...It also gets them to see the human side of (*me*) that if they only saw me for the two and a half hours a day that we had practice, and on game night, which are probably the most pressure filled activities of my day, they are not going to get a true feeling for who (*I am*).

Participants 6 and 9 also described the influence their families had on their athletes by modeling “what it (*meant*) to have a healthy relationship with (*one*’s) spouse and child” (Participant 9). Participant 9 elaborated on this topic, suggesting that many of his

athletes were “missing certain things” in their lives. He explained that for many of the girls on his team, he had become a “pseudo father.”

I think probably the biggest thing for me is that there have been some of the athletes on the team that have become almost my daughters. *Athlete A* is my team captain and is the only person in the world to win four youth world championships in one year. Her father left her, and her mother when she was 6 months old, and he facebooked her two years ago, and that is the only time she had ever heard from him. *Athlete B*, who was my Hunt-seat team captain the year that we won the national championship, and is coming back to be my assistant coach, her little sister is on the team now. Their father died with cancer when they were 8 and 10. I have almost become a pseudo father for them during this four year period, and it had been a unique experience for them to call me crying when they made an A on a test or those sorts of things that you would expect to have your daughters do (Participant 9).

Participant 4 also found that he was a “better coach,” because of his family’s influence, and explained:

Being a parent of two kids has helped me be a better coach, because I understand how to be sympathetic when they need someone just to, you know, give them a pat on the back and say ‘it’s okay.’ It’s helped me in both areas.

Finally, none of the coaches described their families as having had a negative influence on their coaching.

This final subtheme emerged from participants’ descriptions of their families’ involvement in their programs. All of the coaches’ who were married and had children reported different aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences. From the analysis of their experiences of family involvement, the following components were generated: (a) making time for family, (b) family participating in program, (c) coaching influence on life at home, and (d) family’s influence on coaching.

Advice for Future Practitioners

This final section compiled the additional advice coaches provided during the second interviews following their discussions of their individual analysis of their experiences. From this final question, no new information was gathered. Every coach used the opportunity to summarize the points they felt were most significant in their experiences. Their comments only provided further support of the thematic description already reported in this chapter. The following topics were reiterated by coaches in the advice they provided: (a) confidence as a coach, (b) handling the pressure, (c) implementing a plan, (d) managing others, and (e) having support.

The first topic, confidence as a coach, was discussed by nine of the coaches during their follow-up interviews (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, & 12). Comments included for coaches to “keep a level head,” “be confident in what (they) do,” “know who (they) are,” “trust the process,” “stay the course,” “stick to (their) guns,” and “stay the process.” Participant 1 provided his thoughts on this topic in the section below:

My biggest advice to a coach is that every situation is different, you know. You have to apply what you know, and use as many resources as you have to help you out along the process to adapt to the situation that you're in, you know...because I think sometimes if you try to run a program, I am fortunate because I have been in a bunch of different types of programs and so it's a little easier to adapt now, and so if you're really rigid...you know you need to be flexible, but confident I guess is the bottom line. You need to be confident in what you do, but flexible because every situation is different, every program is run differently, and every athletic department is run differently, and if you're flexible but confident then you'll find success.

The second topic, handling the pressure, was mentioned by seven of the coaches (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, & 11). Their suggestions included for new head coaches “(not) to panic, because a lot of the problems will work themselves out,” and to “hold

(*their*) nerves,” because “problems seem larger when (*they*) are in the middle of them,” but in reality “they are not that big.” Participant 3 explained that “everything in life is all about pressure and dealing with issues.”

Everything in life is all about pressure and dealing with issues...there is this great quote, “life is never as good as it can be, but life is never as bad as it seems.” Particularly as you get older you go through ups and downs and go through a lot of personal issues because of age and its factors and in, and sometimes it’s hard and you get a little bummed out...but there’s a lot of truth to that, being a coach is never as good as it can be, it isn’t, but it’s never as bad as it seems. And it’s a great gig, I think you just have to weather through the positives and negatives, just like an athlete does with the highs and the lows and that is the only important thing.

Participant 7 reiterated his thoughts on remaining consistent with one’s emotions throughout the coaching process:

Don’t get too high with your highs and too low with your lows, if you allow yourself to be an emotional rollercoaster, you’re not going to last very long in this business (Participant 7).

The third topic, implementing a plan, was discussed by eight coaches in this investigation (Participants 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, & 12). Comments included for new head coaches to “have a plan,” “know where (*they*) want to go, and what (*they*) want to do, and the level (*they*) want to do it at,” “know how (*they*) are going to do it,” “be reasonable,” “stick to (*their*) plans,” “see (*them*) through,” “be organized in the process,” “be flexible in implementing (*their*) plans,” “be willing to take a step back” to examine how it is going, and “focus on the process and not the outcome.” Participant 2 provided further thoughts on this topic:

And when I say know what you want to do...it’s not for everybody, it’s not for everybody because I think there are some people who would be perfectly, if you could be perfectly happy coaching at a high school, I would coach at a high school. I would coach at a high school because that is a good level for you. If you would be happy coaching kids, coach kids. If you’re happy coaching college, coach college. But I think it’s

something you really have got to want to do and don't expect anyone else to understand what you are trying to do. Because, just by the nature of it, you will probably want to win in a lot of places, at a more intense level than other people want to do (Participant 2).

Another coach further illustrated the need for coaches to be flexible when implementing their plans:

I would say the most important thing is to have a plan, to have a plan and then to not be afraid to deviate from that plan. I think that takes a lot of courage sometimes to admit that oh I planned this poorly or improperly. But you have to have a plan in order to be successful and then you have to be willing to deviate from that plan when necessary in order to be successful (Participant 5).

The fourth topic, managing others, was discussed by two of the coaches (Participants 2 & 4). These coaches readdressed their experiences as first time head coaches and learning the importance of managing others. Again, they both advised coaches to teach their assistant coaches their former responsibilities, and that head coaches "can't do everything, they have to manage others." Participant 4 gave the following advice for head coaches going through this similar experience:

Continue to do your job, keep doing what you're suppose to be doing in terms of a coach, but be a coach to your assistants, be a mentor to your assistants and allow them to take over your role that you were coming from. Instead of still trying to be an assistant, keep doing your job, keep being a coach, but now you're more of a coach to your coaches, versus the whole coaching staff.

The final topic, having support, was only mentioned by Participant 8. He described the importance of coaches needing support as they go through this experience.

In the passage below he provided his advice for other coaches:

They need a mentor, they absolutely need to have a support system in place and it's a noncompetitive group, you can't have a support group within your conference, or people that you're nationally or directly competing with, because it would be hard for them to...you just have to have that support system and you have to set it up. Normally when you

interview for a head coaching position, you already have those people in place because they are the one's who are trying to help you get the job. And in order to get the job you need to rely on them and bounce ideas off them...and have the confidence that you can communicate about your program and it will get, you will find a way to work it out...everybody needs somebody to rely on to support them. So you have to have that in place and you have to use it (Participant 8).

In summary, this final section compiled the additional advice coaches provided during their second interviews. From the final question, no new information was gathered. Every coach used the opportunity to summarize those points they felt were most significant in their experiences. Their comments only provided further support of the thematic description already reported in this chapter. The following topics were reiterated by coaches in the advice they provided: (a) confidence as a coach, (b) handling the pressure, (c) implementing a plan, (d) managing others, and (e) having support.

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THE EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING THE NEW HEAD COACH
OF A COLLEGIATE PROGRAM:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Volume II

By

Tracy Ilene Carrington

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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine coaches' experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs from a phenomenological perspective. Twelve male NCAA Division I head coaches were interviewed using phenomenology as the theoretical framework and procedural approach. In the previous chapter, the results were presented in the form of five themes, which were all comprised of subthemes and subsequent components for each subtheme. In this chapter the themes and subthemes were discussed in relationship to existing scholarly literature. In addition, recommendations for coaches, administrators, sport psychology consultants, and researchers were offered.

Theme 1: Taking Over Someone Else's Program

This first theme examined coaches' experiences of taking over a program that was not their own and what that process entailed. The majority of the coaches in this study inherited teams that were not in good standing athletically and for many this included academically. Many of the participants entered their new positions completely unaware of the structural and organizational problems associated with their new programs. While they knew problems would exist, they were often uninformed to the extent of which these problems were integrated within their new programs. This is not to say that administrators were purposely trying to deceive their new employees, as it is likely they too were unaware of the magnitude of these situations.

They detailed the process they went through to start building their programs describing the role of "time" throughout this early process. They further discussed their

experiences of what it was like to inherit a team of athletes' they did not recruit, and the way they approached and handled these experiences of getting these players to "buy-into" their new programs and philosophies. Finally, they illuminated the psychological impact of this transitional process. Other researchers have examined coaches' experiences of building a successful program, uncovering the coaching tactics, characteristics, and qualities utilized during this process (Vallée & Bloom, 2005). The present investigation however, provided greater insight on the topic, in that it uncovered significant aspects of the experience that had been left untouched. The study was comprised of all male participants, which remains a limitation of the results.

Subtheme 1: There's a Reason Why the Job is Open

This subtheme speaks to participants' early experiences with their new programs, specifically the unknown status of their programs prior to them taking over the positions. Eleven of the coaches described specific reasons for their jobs being available, with only one of them (Participant 1) describing his program as having been left in good standing after the retirement of the former head coach. The remainder of the coaches described their programs being "different" than what they had expected, being in "disarray" filled with "problems," and some described their experiences of taking over relatively new programs. The majority of these coaches were not first time head coaches. They had taken over programs prior, and were prepared to "face challenges" and "obstacles" throughout this process. Yet, the majority reported this early phase of their transition as being "trying," "exhausting," and extremely "challenging." All of these coaches expressed their abilities to "manage" and "handle" these challenges effectively. However, when they described these early experiences, they were filled with "emotional

suffering” they endured through this process. These findings held true for coaches of both male and female athletic programs, as well as revenue versus nonrevenue producing teams. The research on this topic is extremely limited. Further research is needed to examine whether or not these experiences differ in reference to program status, organizational support, head coaching experience, as well as the gender of head coaches.

Subtheme 2: It takes Time

This subtheme focused on coaches’ experiences of the “time” needed for taking over someone else’s program effectively, specifically to implement their plans, build relationships, take inventory of their programs needs, and go in stages to facilitate the necessary changes. The majority of sport psychology research focused on “time” in connection with coaching, centers on the long hours, extended travel, imbalance between salary and hours worked, and time spent away from family and friends (Croft, 2007; Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004). The present investigation uncovered coaches’ perceptions of “time” on a different level. These coaches were more focused on the “time” required to build their programs, the “time” they needed to facilitate changes, the “time” they took to assess they programs’ and athletes’ needs, and even the “pressure” of “time” to achieve success. This corresponds to Vallée and Bloom (2005) who reported that coaches in their investigation spent a significant amount of time building confidence, enhancing maturity, and creating a sense of ownership in their athletes. The present investigation suggests that a relationship exists between the significant role of “time” and taking over someone else’s program.

Participants reported “time” as significant for “building relationships.” They also cited “building relationships,” specifically functional athlete / coach relationships, as

necessary prior to their “developing athletes.” Therefore, it could be argued, that coaches in the present investigation experienced “time” as a limiting factor, and a “challenge” to overcome, in their athletes development. This corresponds with Gould, Medbery, Damarjian, and Lauer (1999), who found “time” to be one of the challenges reported by coaches regarding mental skills training. Further research is needed to examine the role of “time” in new head coaches’ experiences of building programs. Administrators’ perceptions of “time” in terms of organizational support or pressure created while coaches build their programs should also be examined.

Subtheme 3: Inheriting a Team

This subtheme dealt with ten of the participants’ experiences of inheriting teams which entailed coaching someone else’s athletes, athletes’ loyalty to their former coaches, and discourse among their teams. The participants entered groups that were already formed, had clear expectations, team norms established, as well as role clarity and acceptance from team members. Although unavoidable, during their process of taking over these programs, it could be argued that participants disrupted the structure of that already formed group creating insecurity and hostility among group members. The literature on team dynamics and group cohesion is extensive, focused on different factors relating to team building and group cohesion (Carron & Sphinks, 1995; Prapavessis, Carron, & Sphink, 1997; Widemeyer & Williams, 1991; Yukelson 1997). Carron and Dennis (2001) argued that the most important factor for the development of both task and social cohesion on sports teams is individual satisfaction. Participants in the present investigation, clearly characterized their “inherited” teams as initially being dissatisfied with their being named as the new head coaches of their programs. Furthermore, many

of the coaches' also reported being dissatisfied with team members, as well as coaching staff members. Investigation is needed to examine both athletes' and coaches' experiences during this transitional phase involving groups being destroyed in order to form these new cohesive groups.

Subtheme 4: Getting Athletes to Buy-In

This subtheme captured all of the participants' experiences of getting athletes to "buy-into" their coaching philosophies and the programs they aspired to create by earning athletes' respect, maintaining the same standard for everyone, managing the upperclassman, and peer pressure. Another study examining coaches' experiences of building successful programs discovered this topic as relevant for coaches. Vallée and Bloom (2005) found that coaches created a powerful vision, fueled by their motivation and passion, which enabled them to convince athletes to follow them and buy into their programs. Further research of elite coaches has discovered that a coach's modeling of confidence is a vital source of confidence for athletes in this area (Gould et al., 1989; Weinberg et al., 1992). The present investigation uncovers specific factors relevant for this process of getting athletes to "buy-in" that have not been examined. Other researchers provide support that this process is necessary and important for overall team building and success (Coté & Sedgwick, 2003; Saury & Durand, 1995; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986). However, none have examined the methods utilized and factors related to this experience of getting athletes to buy-into coaching philosophies and programs. Because the present investigation was limited to the head coaches' perceptions, it would be interesting to examine whether or not athletes valued the same criteria as necessary for them to "trust" and buy-in to their new head coaches

philosophies and programs. Furthermore, examining the experiences of freshman versus senior athletes, as well as recruited versus “walk-on” athletes would greatly enhance the literature in this area.

Subtheme 5: Psychological Impact of the Process

This subtheme uncovered the psychological impact of becoming a new head coach of a collegiate program. All of the participants described both negative and positive aspects of the psychological impact they experienced throughout this transitional process. Although both positive and negative aspects were mentioned throughout their experiences, the majority of their comments tended to lean more towards the emotional stress and suffering they endured during this process. However, they all relied on their “passion” for coaching, and the “rewards” of helping others achieve success as reasons they gave that made this “trying” process worth while. Despite their attempts to shadow the negative aspects of their experiences, the participants throughout their interviews continued to illustrate the emotional suffering they experienced while becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. Participant 12 described his experience as feeling like he was “beating (*his*) head against the wall 23 hours a day,” and not getting anything accomplished. One concern addressed in the literature, common to other helping professions, was the tendency of coaches to place others needs above their own; often ignoring their personal needs (Giges, Petitpas, & Vernachia, 2004). Vernacchia (1995) explained that coaches were apt to spend the majority of their work day telling others what to do, and thus had little interest in taking time from their busy schedules to focus on dealing with their own psychological needs.

The majority of research on this topic is focused on the stressful aspects involved in coaching, specifically the pressures to succeed, constantly being in the spot light, managing budgets and paper work, and even job security (Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004). Giges and colleagues (2004) pointed out the cost inefficiency of the entire profession in that the majority of coaches work long-extended stressful hours with little compensation from salaries and benefits. Giges, Petitpas, and Vernacchia (2004) also explained that “Coaches of elite and world-class teams and athletes appear to live in a ‘fishbowl’ world of absolutes: winning and losing” (p.434).

However, the present investigation sheds a different light on the topic. Although they agreed that these aspects of their profession were stressful, they were not at the center of the emotional suffering they discussed. Their experiences were more focused on the fact that they felt they did not have control, that the circumstances were unfair, that their plan was not being executed the way they had expected, that the process was taking longer than what they had initially intended, and some even mentioned a lack of organizational support as adding to their negative experiences in this area. The previously mentioned stressors of the coaching profession (public position, hours spent, compensation, travel, and even the pressure to win) were expected by the participants in this study. They described those stressors as being “part of the job,” and situations they were ready and prepared to handle. However, the emotional suffering they discussed (“pounding my head against the wall 23 hours a day,” “running on a treadmill and not getting any where,” “personally taxing,” “suffering mentally,” “did not want to go to practice or a game”) dealt more with the unexpected situations they encountered which created this intense psychological impact (i.e., relating to athletes’ entitlement, teams’

work ethic, other job requirements). Within the literature, coaches have identified the pressure to win and create a successful program as their single greatest source of stress in athletics, as well as one of the more negative aspects of the coaching profession (Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). The present investigation details more effectively this concept of taking over a program and different stressors involved in that process.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) explained that due to the immense stress of the coaching profession, coaches are likely to experience physical and emotional exhaustion, disengage themselves from their athletes, and lose site of personal accomplishments, and thus, experienced decreased job satisfaction. Maslach and Jackson (1997) identified six types of person-job mismatches as possible causes of burnout, including work overload, lack of control, lack of fairness, lack of reward, lack of social support and community, and value conflict. Although, only two of these, work overload and lack of reward, have been linked with coaching burnout (Capel, 1986; Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992). This research investigation provided a great platform to argue that all of these types of person-job mismatches exist within the coaching profession, especially during this transitional process of becoming a new head coach. Future research is needed to better understand the psychological impact of this transitional phase so as to prepare and equip coaches and sport psychology practitioners with the tools necessary to manage these stressors effectively.

Theme 2: The Role of Being the Head Coach (Leader)

This theme was of particular interest in that it illustrated the way that new head coaches utilized their leadership roles to facilitate the effective transitioning of their teams. They had to enter groups that had already formed strong, cohesive relationships,

and essentially destroy those existing groups in order to rebuild their new teams. Thus, their behaviors and qualities as leaders of these new groups greatly influenced their teams' transitions. This investigation highlighted the significant role that coaches' leadership plays in becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs.

Subtheme 1: Transitioning from Assistant Coach to Head Coach

This subtheme examined coaches' experiences of transitioning from assistant to head coaching positions. Although only four participants described this as significant in their experiences, the relevance of this topic in all fields directly and indirectly associated with coaching deemed it essential to report these limited findings of the study in this area. Despite the lack of attention in the coaching literature on this topic, these findings have a significant relevance to the knowledge of coaching in that they shed some light on a process that virtually all head coaches face at some point in their careers. Participants described their position transitions as taking on a different level of responsibility, being compared to former head coaches, changing relationships with the athletes they had come to know, and learning to delegate responsibilities. Taking ownership of their leadership roles and learning to delegate responsibilities seemed of particular importance for future practitioners. Research is needed to examine this process in greater detail, in terms of coaches transitioning from follower to leader, and what that process entails. Only one of the male coaches mentioned taking over after a female head coach, and reported no significant differences in his experiences of this process (Participant 5). It would be interesting to examine whether first time female head coaches not only differ in their experiences of transitioning from follower to leader, but also whether or not the gender of their predecessor plays a role in their experiences. Researchers should also examine the

similarities and differences among assistant coaches promoted within their programs, versus outside of their programs. Athletes' perceptions of their new head coaches' expertise and coaching knowledge should be taken into consideration as well.

Subtheme 2: Making Unpopular Decisions

This subtheme captured coaches' experiences of having to make unpopular decisions regarding team rules, disciplinary actions, and the starting line-up. All of the coaches reported that making unpopular decisions was inherent to their jobs. However, they stressed that the decisions they made were done so with the best interests of their teams in mind. In connection with the coaching literature, the mentoring relationships between coaches and athletes have not been found to be free from conflict. Miller and colleagues (2002) explained that some tensions existed surrounding primarily academic and eligibility issues. The participants' described specific situations where the decisions they made greatly impacted some of their individual athletes negatively, such as equal treatment for stars versus non-star athletes, following through on punishments for unacceptable behaviors, and benching players they thought might "choke." This corresponds with the finding in the literature that suggested that the decision-making styles of coaches, plays a central role in shaping potential psychological, emotional, and physical effects, both positive and negative, of an athlete's sport participation (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001). Likewise, the coaches in the present study explained that in these situations though the decisions seemed to affect lone individuals, for the long term growth of their programs, they were beneficial for their teams.

Research on this topic has also examined the decisions coaches make in a variety of conditions within the sports context, proposing that the effectiveness of any decision-making style relies on specific situational variables which include the importance of the decision, the amount of information relevant to the situation, the complexity of the problem, the cohesiveness of group members, the presence or absence of time restrictions, the degree to which the groups acceptance of the decision was necessary, and the status or power position held by the coach (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001; Smoll & Smith, 1989). In general, the coaches described a variety of decision-making styles they utilized in their coaching experiences. However, when it came down to making these difficult decisions, the coaches tended to be more autocratic in the decisions they made. Some discussed consulting coaching staff members during this process, and one coach described a judicial committee comprised of team members to handle player disciplinary actions (Participant 9). However, the majority were autocratic in their decision-making styles surrounding difficult situations. This may be explained by the limited time these coaches had spent with their teams, and their needs to assert their “power” and “authority” in these situations. Furthermore, because they were also engaged in the process of trying to change the expectations, behaviors, and attitudes within their teams, they may have felt this style was the most appropriate given the circumstances.

Subtheme 3: Developing Athletes

This subtheme captured coaches’ experiences of developing athletes in all areas in order to help them reach their potential. The process involved them building functional athlete – coach relationships, in order to develop their athletes athletically, academically,

and mentally, essentially influencing all facets of their athletes' lives. The significant athlete – coach relationship described by coaches in this investigation was not a new concept for the coaching literature. The relevance of this mentoring relationship has been well documented in the research (Coté & Sedgwick, 2003; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007; Horn, 1987; Martens, 1988; Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2002; Vallée & Bloom, 2005). Miller, Salmela, and Kerr (2002) conducted interviews with eight Canadian university coaches to examine whether or not mentoring athletes was perceived as one of their responsibilities as university athletic coaches. Similar to the findings of the present study, their investigation revealed that coaches believed mentoring was an important part of their professional responsibilities, and felt they had a positive impact on the growth and development of their athletes. Likewise, Vallée and Bloom (2005), in an examination of how expert university coaches of team sports built successful programs, found four common qualities among college coaches, one of which focused on coaches' personal desires to enhance their athletes' individual growth in all areas. Participants' responses in the present investigation also support researchers' contentions that most coaches in their careers are typically one of a few influential adults with whom athletes will share meaningful relationships in their lives (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1988). Participants in the current investigation stressed the importance of building relationships that extended beyond their sports. They wanted their players to feel that as coaches they were "committed" to them, and even more importantly that they "cared" about them as people, versus just athletes. It would be interesting to examine whether athletes training with coaches during this transitional phase perceive new head coaches, and mentoring relationships in this way.

The findings of the present investigation also indicated that coaches' development of their athletes academically extended beyond player eligibility. They wanted their athletes to have "futures," and believed that helping them graduate, and achieve success beyond the field, would be beneficial for their lives. Miller, Salmela, and Kerr's (2002) examination of the mentoring process revealed a commitment of coaches to the intellectual and personal competence of student-athletes that was consistent with the results of this investigation. For the majority of coaches in this study, the development of athletes academically was significant regardless of the academic status of their inherited teams. However, the circumstances surrounding their experiences seemed to create differences in their focus. For some, academic excellence was representative of their sports and the types of athletes their sports attracted; for others, academic success was merely one piece of the puzzle in an important picture; some found academic improvement as essential for player eligibility and ending their probations; and for the majority, academic development was key in helping athletes achieve success in their lives. Further research is needed to examine the way in which these circumstances may alter a coach's focus, thus possibly influencing athletes' development in this area. The present investigation was limiting in that it did not examine the success rate of these coaches in this area in terms of their improved team GPA, eligibility, and rate of graduation. A few coaches referred to their teams' overall improvement in this area, but specific documentation relating to positive academic changes occurring after their arrival was not gathered.

Ten coaches described their experiences of developing athletes' mentally. This process involved more than just teaching mental skills to their athletes. They were trying

to accomplish this task with athletes they did not recruit, in situations where “trust” was limited, and with groups that had already established clear team norms regarding their “attitudes,” and “behaviors” in terms of how they “worked,” and “competed.” They were also trying to accomplish this task on a team and individual level. Many of the coaches described their experiences of working with their athletes to develop a “culture of excellence.” From a mental training perspective, this meant that coaches were striving to instill a philosophy of what it meant to “compete,” and even more important what it meant “to prepare to compete.” Participants’ descriptions on this topic included, developing “championship attitudes,” “persistence to overcome challenges so as to continue when things (*weren’t*) going their way,” “a culture of excellence,” “a culture of success,” “personality changes to become intense and hard-nosed competitors,” “the ability to work outside their comfort zone,” and “the fire to never give up and always find a solution.” The development of athletes mentally is a topic that has been well researched and is commonly discussed within applied settings (Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987; Gould, Medbery, Damarjian, & Lauer, 1999; Kimiecik & Gould, 1987; Sullivan & Hodge, 1991; Weinberg, Grove, & Jackson, 1992). However, the present investigation offers insight regarding changing the identity of teams through mental preparation, as well as coaches’ experiences of fighting and struggling with these already formed team identities while trying to prepare athletes mentally. Future research is needed to uncover the similarities and differences of mental preparation for newly formed teams versus well-established programs. It would also be of interest for researchers to

examine athletes' experiences throughout this transitional process, as well as their perceptions regarding their new head coaches' effectiveness.

Finally, the current investigation also uncovered coaches' experiences of shaping athletes' lives. Ten coaches referenced this aspect of athletes' development, discussing their desires to produce "good human beings" and "people productive in society," and essentially "shaping their lives" by teaching them through their participation in sports "things" that would benefit them later in their lives. Participant 9 claimed that as a coach his "biggest goal" was "to make this an experience that (*his athletes could*) leave, and go into the world and be successful." Participant 7 stated that his athletes' mere association with the program would "help them become better (*fathers*), better (*husbands*), and better (*workers*)." He felt so strongly about shaping his athletes lives, that he argued that situations where their development did not occur in this way, were representative of him "*(not doing his)* job." In connection with these findings, many researchers have argued that the world's greatest coaches are those individuals who are not only committed to teaching their athletes how to excel in athletics, but more importantly, how to excel in life as well (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007; Horn, 1987; Martens, 1988). Like the coaches in the present investigation, 10 highly experienced football coaches were found to emphasize critical life-skill development not only at the start of the season, but constantly reinforcing important components of their message throughout the entire season (Gould et al., 2007). The findings of this study add to the knowledge of coaches' life-skill development of their athletes. However, the investigation highlights the relevance of this process despite the limited duration of these newly formed teams. Although, athletes were not given the opportunity in this investigation to express their

thoughts on this topic, feedback from the participants suggests that as new head coaches, they were successful in accomplishing the task of “shaping the lives” of many of their athletes. It would be interesting to examine whether the situations mentioned by coaches were representative of the majority of their athletes’ experiences, or were merely highlighting the limited positive experiences they had in this area in spite of the challenges they faced while taking over someone else’s program.

Subtheme 4: Adjusting Coaching Style for Athletes’ Differences

In this subtheme coaches described their experiences of adjusting their coaching styles for athletes’ differences as significant to becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. Ten coaches reported making adjustments in their styles of coaching for their new athletes in terms of adapting to gender differences in coaching, as well as adapting to a different generation of athletes.

The seven male participants that had been working with female athletic programs at the time of the study, or had previously worked with female athletes, described adapting to gender differences as significant in their experiences. Gill (2000) contends that “gender exerts a complex, dynamic influence on the sport world and on all our behaviors and relationships within that world” (P. 355). However, the influence of gender on behavior and performance within the sports world has not been widely researched. Gill (2000) explained that despite the powerful influence of gender in sports, as well as the countless psychological questions regarding this topic, gender research is limited to research questions and methods focused on differences that neglect complex gender issues and relationships. The current investigation provided evidence that athletes’ gender may play a significant role in athlete / coach relationships, preferred

styles of coaching, as well as development of coaches in their relationships outside of sports.

Participants in the study who had worked with women described the “communication,” and “compassion” that was needed in their coaching relationships with women. These findings support results from Tuffy’s (2003) investigation of 14 collegiate coaches, who had successfully coached both male and female athletes, regarding their perceptions of the differences between male and female athletes (As cited in Lidor & Henshen, 2003, p. 131). Overall, coaches viewed male and female athletes as being more similar than different, but also that there were some gender differences that affected the coach-athlete relationship. Tuffy (2003) found that coaches perceived female athletes as being more emotional and expressing emotions differently and also having a higher need for social validation (As cited in Lidor & Henshen, 2003, p 132).

Coaches in the current study also explained that their female athletes “did not do well” when they were asked to compete against their teammates in practice. In fact, none of the participants coaching women described situations during practices where they tried to initiate inner-squad competitiveness; rather they worked individually or as a collective group to enhance the competitiveness of the entire team. Whereas, those who coached men’s programs specifically outlined methods and tactics aimed at creating competitiveness among their athletes. They explained that their male athletes “thrived in these conditions.” Those who had coached both male and female athletes explained that they could never do that with their female athletes, as it would have adverse effects on team chemistry, individual confidence, as well as performance outcomes. Chelladurai and Arnott (1985) examined gender as a factor affecting athletes’ preferences for

different types of coaching behaviors. In a study of 144 basketball players, findings revealed that males preferred training and instructive behaviors and an autocratic coaching style. Female athletes preferred more democratic coaching behaviors and a participatory coaching style that allowed them to help in the decision-making process. The current investigation did not address specific styles of coaching or athletes' perceptions of their head coaches' chosen styles. However, it clearly illuminated that coaches perceived differences and made adaptations in their styles of coaching to account for these differences. Although this study was limited in terms of generalizability of these findings to larger populations, it provided support as well as posed interesting questions regarding the complex nature of athletes' gender on coaching relationships and behaviors.

Finally, unique to this investigation was the finding that female athletes' positively influenced their male head coaches' relationships with family members, specifically children and wives. Coaches who had worked with women in this investigation reported being more "sensitive," "better at communicating," and some claimed they were "better fathers" and "better husbands" because of the women they had coached. Relevant to the purpose of this investigation, athletes' gender appears to have played a significant role in the experience of becoming a new head coach in terms of how participants initiated changes, developed team cohesion, communicated on an individual and team level, as well as the ways they structured their programs. Because this study was limited to male head coaches, researchers should examine whether female head coaches have similar experiences working with the opposite gender in terms of male athletes positively influencing their relationships with their husbands and children. It

would also be interesting to examine the influence of opposite gender on athlete – coach relationships, specifically highlighting coaches’ effectiveness of adapting to gender differences.

The current investigation also raises questions as to whether or not these adaptations were in response to differences in gender or rather a new generation of athletes. As previously mentioned, research has supported the idea that coaches perceive more similarities than differences between male and female athletes (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Nine of the coaches in this study made references to coaching a different generation of athletes as significant in their experiences of becoming new head coaches. They described their athletes as coming from a “different” generation, in comparison to “when they played,” or even just “different” in the last five to ten years in terms of “the athletes they use to coach.” Participants described their athletes as being more “sensitive,” and “not having thick skin.” Participant 2 for example suggested that in today’s society “we are not raising Rambo.” Coaches also explained that they had to communicate with their athletes differently than they had with other athletes in the past. The “different” generation of athletes mentioned by coaches in the present investigation is commonly referred to as the Millennial Generation or Generation Y and has been well documented in the literature (Alsop, 2008; Strauss & Howe, 2000; Wilson & Gerber, 2008).

Wilson and Gerber (2008) explained that the Millennial Generation, like other generations, has been shaped by the events, leaders, developments and trends of its time. This literature suggested that the rise of instant communication technologies made possible through use of the internet, such as email, texting, and IM and new media used

through websites like YouTube and social networking sites like Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter, may explain the Millennials' reputation for being somewhat peer-oriented due to easier facilitation of communication through technology. Expression and acceptance has been highly important to this generation. Alsop (2008) discussed how the Millennials are sometimes referenced as the "Trophy Generation," or "Trophy Kids," reflecting trends in competitive sports, as well as many other aspects of life, where "no one loses" and everyone gets a "Thanks for Participating" trophy, sometimes symbolizing a perceived sense of entitlement. Athletes' entitlement was one area reported by participants in the present study where they did not make adaptations for their athletes; instead they tried to eliminate it from their programs (Eliminating athletes' sense of entitlement was discussed further in Theme 3, subtheme 4). Alsop (2008) explained that this had also been reported as an issue in corporate environments, where there is a growing concern among employers that Millennials have too great expectations from the workplace and desire to shape their jobs to fit their lives rather than adapt their lives to the workplace. It would be interesting to examine whether or not this holds true in an athletic setting, determining whether Millennial athletes have too great expectations from athletic departments and desire to shape their athletic careers to fit their lives rather than adapt their lives to their sports. Furthermore the two youngest coaches (Participants 4 & 5, both in their early 30s) did not mention this "different" generation as significant to their experiences. On the cusp of this generation themselves, it would be interesting to examine whether or not coaches derived from this generation exhibit similar characteristics in their styles of coaching. Relevant to the purpose of this investigation, the Millennial Generation appeared to pose an obstacle for coaches establishing themselves as new head coaches.

The majority of coaches in this study described using autocratic leadership styles initially with their teams, as a means of asserting their power and authority. However, this style does not seem to be as effective with Generation Y athletes. Research investigators should examine the preferred coaching styles of Millennial Athletes, as well as the effectiveness of these styles with newly formulated teams

Subtheme 5: Handling the Pressures of Coaching

This subtheme centered on coaches' descriptions of having to handle the pressures of coaching as relevant in their experiences of becoming a new head coach. All of the coaches recalled experiences during this transitional phase when they had to "deal with the pressures" of their jobs, specifically external pressures, the internal pressures they created for themselves, and the criticism inherent to their profession. A coach having to handle all types of pressure within sports is not a new concept. Giges, Petitpas, and Vernacchia (2004) explained that "Coaches of elite and world-class teams and athletes appear to live in a 'fishbowl' world of absolutes: winning and losing" (p.434). Within the literature, coaches have identified the pressure to win and create a successful program as their single greatest source of stress in athletics, as well as one of the more negative aspects of the coaching profession (Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). Relevant to the purpose of this study, the majority of coaches experienced external pressures as part of their jobs, but differed in their experiences of administrative support in handling these pressures. Four coaches reported "frustration" in their past and current positions where administrations "pressured them," and were "unsupportive" of their coaching process (Participants 1, 2, 3, & 8). The majority of coaches agreed that since the "pressure to perform" and "expectations of success" were built into their programs,

“administrative support” should be as well. This raises questions as to whether or not the coaches’ who experienced unsupportive administrations were aware of the significance of administrative support during their interview process. Implications of the findings suggest the importance of coaches investigating the philosophies and structures of athletic departments, and the support they provide for coaches in dealing with the pressures of coaching.

Another important concept revealed during the analysis of this study was the internal pressure participants created for themselves while becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. As previously mentioned, the pressure to win and create a successful program has been identified by coaches as their single greatest source of stress in athletics, as well as one of the more negative aspects of the coaching profession (Weiss, Barber, Sisley, & Ebbeck, 1991). Participants in the present investigation present a slightly different outlook on this self-imposed internal pressure. The majority of the coaches recognized this internal pressure as “part of the process.” They believed that it motivated them to “push through challenges,” “overcome adversity,” and “compete” at the highest level. This finding offers support that a positive relationship may exist between internal pressure and coaching motivation. Significant to this study, new head coaches may utilize their internal pressure as a coping strategy to make it through this challenging transitional phase in their careers. This further suggests a need for future investigations to examine the coping strategies of new head coaches.

Participants’ reports of being criticized in the field offered one new insight for the coaching literature. All of the coaches’ agreed that criticism was “part of the job,” and that as coaches they had to “handle” criticism throughout their careers. However,

participants provided insight and advice for coaches dealing with this criticism while trying to build their programs. First, they felt it was imperative that as new leaders, coaches did not waver from their plans in response to the criticism they received. They reported the challenges of being criticized while they were still in the beginning phases of forming their programs, and had not been given the opportunity to achieve the level of success they expected, and knew their programs were capable of achieving. They suggested that in these situations coaches should think long-term regarding their programs' development, and not allow the results to distract their focus away from their "plans." Second, participants stressed the importance of not making excuses and deflecting criticism away from athletes. They explained that their athletes already had to deal with so many outside pressures involving not only their student-athlete responsibilities, but also the pressures of being critically involved in the transformation of their new teams' identities. Therefore, participants felt that athletes should not have to balance the weight of their new programs successes or failures on their shoulders. It would be interesting to examine whether athletes perceived the outside "criticism" described by new head coaches versus the actual "criticism" given by new head coaches to their teams, as having a greater influence on their performances.

Subtheme 6: Leading Others

This subtheme dealt with coaches' descriptions of leading others as significant in their roles as new head coaches of collegiate programs. All of the participants referenced different qualities of this subtheme including that the impact of the position, confidence, passion for the job, organization, communication, and continuous learning. Relevant to the purpose of this study, coaches suggested the importance of "making an impact" as

new head coaches, so as to demonstrate to their teams the reasons they were hired for these positions. Participant 3 described the process of becoming a new head coach as having a “window of opportunity,” in which a coach needed to make an impact. The “impact” of a coach has been well-documented in the research as a position of leadership that involves inherent power, authority, and influence (Chelladurai, 1993; Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989; Chelladurai & Trail, 2001; Smoll & Smith, 1989). However, the present investigation offered support that specific leadership behaviors are needed to initiate athletes’ transitions from followers of the former head coaches, to followers of their new head coaches. Further investigation is needed in this area to examine coaches’ behaviors during this phase of transition to determine whether or not specific leadership behaviors are more effective than others during this process.

The second significant finding revealed “confidence” as a critical component for participants in their roles as new head coaches. They explained that they could not please everyone with the decisions they made as head coaches. Therefore, they felt that it was more advantageous for them to “trust” themselves, “believe in their systems,” have confidence in their plans, and make their decisions based on what they thought was “right for their teams.” Participant 1 recalled his experience of taking over as head coach for his former boss, who was highly respected in the field. He explained that in situations like that where comparisons were being made between coaches, it would have been easy for him as the head coach to lose confidence, but this was when it was critical that he remained “confident” and “stayed the course.” Coaches also described the significance of confidence as new head coaches, because of the “influence” it had on their players. Coaches explained that their new athletes “looked to them” for confidence during this

unstable phase of transition, and therefore they had to be “consistent” and “keep the same mentality.” Finally, the majority of coaches made references to experiences where their confidence was “shaken,” because of their new teams’ performance outcomes. However, they all agreed that it was imperative at these times to remain confident, “think long-term,” and “trust their plans.” Research supports “confidence” as a quality common among successful leaders (Parcells & Coplon, 1995). The current investigation illustrated the significant role coaches’ confidence played in terms of their abilities to positively influence their new group of athletes, and remain consistent throughout this unstable phase of transition in their careers. Due to the limited nature of this inquiry, questions remain as to whether or not their lack of confidence at times had adverse effects on their new teams during this transitional process.

The third finding significant to the purpose of this research investigation was the role of passion for coaches in their experiences as new leaders of teams. Passion in coaching has been well-documented in the research, suggesting that coaches’ “love of the game” is responsible for keeping them in a profession that requires “long hours,” “travel,” “pressures to perform,” “insufficient salary compensation,” and so many other tedious obligations beyond the scope of actual coaching (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Cassesse & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, Eklund, & Ritter-Taylor, 1999; Vallée & Bloom, 2005). The present investigation offers further insight on passion in coaching, specifically the way new head coaches utilized their passion to “sell” their new programs to their teams. Participants explained that as new head coaches they were trying to “lead” a new group of athletes and if they were not “passionate,” and “did not believe” the message they were sending, no one would have followed them.

The fourth relevant finding in this area was that for eleven participants “organization” played a significant role in their leadership as new head coaches. They believed that “organization” impacted the way their programs were formed, their plans were executed, and their structures were protected. Participant 5 cited “preparation” and “management” as key during this transitional period, so as to be able to “put out the fires as they (*came*).” Finally, coaches described “organization” as playing a significant role in helping them get through the process as new head coaches. Coaches’ ability to organize and prepare for training and competition has been of significant interest to sport psychology researchers examining the coaching process. However, in line with this research investigation, Vallée and Bloom (2005), in their examination of how expert university coaches built their successful programs, reported findings similar to the present study. Like the participants in this study, they found that coaches valued specific organizational skills that allowed them to reach their goals, which included planning and management/administration. Planning was found to include establishing a plan for the season, organizing practices, making certain athletes were ready for competition, and giving enough time for rest and recovery. This investigation expands these findings to include organization as a tool helpful in managing challenges as they arise during this unstable phase of transition, as well as offering coaches a form of protection when under scrutiny.

The fifth finding of interest, uncovered the role “communication” played in head coaches’ experiences of leading new groups of athletes. The concept of “communication” for these coaches involved their being “upfront” and “honest” with their athletes, so as to “develop trust,” and “build relationships” with their players. The

results of this investigation supported research findings that suggest that team leaders need to create environments where open communication is considered appropriate and encouraged (Carron, 1993; Orlick, 1990; Yukelson, 1997).

The final component found coaches' experiences of leading others as involving a "continuous learning" process. All of the coaches discussed learning from "coaching experiences," "other experts in the field" and "research" relating to the profession. This finding highlights the gap in formalized training of coaches. It is no secret in sports that coaches' past experiences and other coaches provide the greatest source of knowledge for practitioners working in the field (Gould, Giannini, Krane, & Hodge, 1990; Wernther & Trudel, 2006). However, this is one of the only fields in which individuals are working in helping professions where such a limited level of formalized training is permitted (i.e., teaching, nursing, social services, counseling, and medicine). Turnover rate among coaches is common in collegiate sports, and yet the only sources of knowledge these participants had to prepare themselves for this challenging career transition was past experiences, and other coaches. Furthermore, the implications of this limited knowledge source extended to the influence of organizations and the support they provide for these coaches, because they too are limited in their understanding of methods to facilitate this phase of transition more effectively.

Subtheme 7: Requirements of the Job – "It's not just coaching"

This subtheme uncovered participants' experiences of handling the requirements of their jobs outside of coaching athletes as new head coaches. All of the coaches referenced the idea that their jobs "were not just coaching," but also included recruiting, managing budgets, setting the schedules, and NCAA rule compliance. None of these

findings were necessarily different because they were new head coaches, but rather they created more stress on participants on top of everything else they were trying to balance during this transitional process. Implications of these findings suggest that administrators would be wise to provide additional support for coaches in these areas during the early stages of their transitions as new head coaches to possibly alleviate some of the emotional suffering described by participants in this study.

Theme 3: Implementing the Structure – “Functioning Like a Business”

This theme uncovered the methods new head coaches utilized to implement their structures in their new programs. While many similarities were discovered between this investigation and Vallée and Bloom’s (2005) examination of how expert coaches build successful programs, results of this study expanded the scope of this topic. This exploration of coaches’ experiences of becoming new head coaches was not focused on their building successful programs, but rather their experiences throughout this transitional process. The majority of coaches in this study inherited dysfunctional programs, with ineffective structures, that were comprised of “underachieving” athletes. Thus, their experiences provided great insight regarding the “struggles” and “challenges” coaches face when implementing their structures. These results offer guidance for coaches, administrators, sport psychology consultants, as well as athletes.

Subtheme 1: Laying the Foundations

This subtheme dealt with the coaches’ experiences of laying the groundwork for the structure they intended to implement in their new program. All of the coaches expressed the importance of this process including their having a plan, initiating change, and establishing the team standard.

Eleven coaches discussed their experiences of “having a plan,” which centered on their knowledge in the field and ability to utilize that expertise, to formulate their approaches for taking over new programs. Specifically, they stressed the importance of knowledge, organization, and a well-matriculated means of implementing their plans. Finally, ten of the coaches compared their experiences as head coaches to running a business. In their descriptions of their fluidly operating companies, organization was stressed as a significant factor relevant to the process and their overall “plan.” In connection with these findings, Vallée and Bloom (2005), in their examination of how expert university coaches built their successful programs, found that coaches valued specific organizational skills that allowed them to reach their goals, which included planning and management/administration. Like coaches in this study, their planning was found to include establishing a plan for the season, organizing practices, making certain athletes were ready for competition, and giving enough time for rest and recovery. Vallée and Bloom (2005) also suggested that regardless of the sport, coaches’ ability to organize before, during, or post-season established the foundation for the entire season. In connection with these ideas and those expressed by participants in the present investigation, it would be interesting to examine the similarities and differences between coaching an athletic program and running a successful business.

Another finding significant to this investigation dealt with the process coaches’ underwent to “initiate change” so as to establish a foundation for their new programs. In these situations, participants described their experiences of making changes and the impact of these changes on their new teams. Furthermore, many of the changes coaches initiated had some negative effects on their athletes and the program itself. For example,

coaches required drug testing, resulted in athletes' dismissal (Participant 7 & 11), academic ineligibility for prospective professional athletes, resulted in zero playing time during the post season (Participant 12), while maintaining equal standards for all athletes, resulted in star athletes quitting or transferring (Participant 10). All of these reported situations initially hindered the outcome success of these perspective teams. However, the coaches explained that initiating these changes were necessary to move their programs in the "right direction," and that their actions were in the best interest of building their program and its long term success. This study suggested that initial performance outcomes are not the best indicator of a new head coach's ability to build a successful program. Furthermore, new head coaches should be prepared to make difficult decisions which may negatively impact their teams' performance outcome, to promote the long-term growth and development of their programs.

Establishing the team standard, characterized by ten coaches "spelling out" specific guidelines, rules, and responsibilities for their athletes, was another important aspect of new head coaches' laying their foundations. Coaches stressed the importance of discipline in this process and reported experiences of having to "tighten the reigns quickly," "put (*their*) foot down," and "put in a (*stricter*) environment." Three coaches inherited teams currently on NCAA probation, and described significant changes made, strict disciplinary actions taken, and standards implemented to regain control of their teams (Participants 3, 7, & 12). Participants explained that their athletes were not aware of "where they (*needed*) to be," so as coaches it was their responsibility to "set the bar," and clearly establish the standard for how their teams would function on all levels, and in all situations. Within the literature researchers have stressed the importance of coaches

clarifying athletes roles and expectations (Weinberg & Gould, 2003), and promoting fairness in the policies they create (Anshel, 1994). While participants in the present investigation appeared to have been fair in their policies, and clear in terms of their expectations, they also seem to have used their positions of power to assert authority over their groups to gain control. All of the coaches stressed the importance of consistency in both words and actions during this process. This corresponded to the importance of fairness in team dynamics described by Anshel (1994). Findings indicated that athletes' who perceive their coach's behaviors as fair, regardless of their status on the team, are more likely to buy-into the philosophies of the new program. Ultimately, participants' "stricter" style seemed to be necessary given the circumstances surrounding the majority of their situations. It would be of interest for researchers and practitioners to examine the styles new head coaches utilize and their perceived effectiveness, among teams in good athletic and academic standing versus teams that are not in good standing in one or both of these areas.

Subtheme 2: Defining Roles

This subtheme dealt with coaches' experiences of clearly defining the roles for everyone involved in their programs. While they did not all implement this effectively their first seasons with their teams, ten of the participants expressed that it was necessary for their teams to function smoothly and effectively. In fact, two participants reported having learned from mistakes they made by not defining roles their first seasons in their current positions, while four other participants discussed learning from these same mistakes while in their previous coaching positions. The significance of defining roles in terms of role clarity, role acceptance, and role conflict has been addressed within the

coaching literature (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). However, the present investigation uncovers the significance of this process when taking over teams with structural problems and poor athletic standings. Due to limitations of this study, programs with traditions of athletic excellence did not characterize this sample. Thus, future research should examine whether programs with sound structures and excellent athletic reputations require the extensive defining of roles described by the majority of participants in this investigation. Furthermore, while discussed in sport psychology texts (e.g., Weinberg & Gould, 2003) as significant in group and team dynamics, there appears to be a lack of research on defining roles in sports. Insight on this topic would greatly benefit coaches, athletic directors, and sport psychology consultants.

Subtheme 3: Changing the Culture of a Team

This subtheme revealed the significant process new head coaches undergo to change the culture of their teams. All of the participants reported aspects of this subtheme as significant to their experiences of implementing their structures as new head coaches, with six of them characterizing this process as the most significant and most trying aspect of their jobs. This process involved them establishing a culture of excellence, rebuilding reputation, instilling a code of conduct, changing the inner working of the team, developing team chemistry, and establishing institutional loyalty. While the present investigation uncovered significant aspects regarding changing the teams' culture, the sample was limiting in that the majority of the teams required drastic measures in the changes initiated by new head coaches.

Establishing a culture of excellence was derived from coaches' experiences of trying to set standards of excellence for their teams. Participants' experiences differed in

this area due to the fact that three coaches inherited teams on NCAA academic probation with scholarship penalties, three coaches were working with relatively new programs, three coaches transitioned from assistant to head coaching positions of the same teams, two coaches inherited teams with good reputations of athletic excellence, and the majority of the coaches reported that their teams were “underachieving.” Despite these differences in program longevity, coaching experience, team rankings, program reputation, and NCAA penalties, the majority of coaches reported that establishing a culture of excellence was significant to their experiences. However, the method utilized during this process varied. Some of the coaches explained that their programs had not experienced success; therefore, the athletes struggled to believe they were capable of achieving that level of excellence. Other coaches, both coming from programs and into programs, that had already experienced success, described the pressures faced to not only maintain high levels of performance, but rather to exceed those expectations. Two of the coaches (Participant 5 & 6) inherited teams with little talent, and zero experiences of success. The external pressure to perform was not present within these programs, and thus, coaches reported focusing on “getting (*athletes*) on track” and “establishing the proper mindset.” Most of the coaches reported their teams as “underachieving,” and expressed frustration with their teams’ initial mentality. They stressed the importance of changing that mentality to an “overachieving” mindset as significant in establishing a culture of excellence for their teams. The participants also explained that although it was challenging to establish a culture of excellence for their teams, once the changes were in place, and the “culture” had been accepted, the teams took responsibility and helped maintain the culture. While the present study uncovered the significance of establishing a

culture of excellence with newly formulated teams, further investigation is needed to examine in greater detail the methods used to accomplish this task, as well as coaches' rate of success in this area. Researchers should also take into consideration whether or not "establishing a culture of excellence" is dependent upon the status of programs prior to new head coaches arrival.

Another significant finding of this investigation was coaches' experiences of having to alter the reputation of their new programs in some form or fashion. Whether it was overcoming NCAA violations (Participants 3, 7, & 12), disliked predecessors (Participant 4 & 5), highly revered predecessors (Participant 1 & 10), assistant coach assumptions (Participants 1, 4, & 10), or program rankings (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12), coaches' all reported having to "rebuild" the way their programs were viewed as a whole. While the process was different for coaches in this area, the message was still that they were trying to change the way different people viewed them, their policies, and their new programs. The question remains as to whether or not this process was productive and adaptive in nature, as in many situations it would be difficult to assess their rate of success. Plus, the benefit of focusing on changing the perceptions of others in some of the areas mentioned by these coaches is questionable.

In connection with the purpose of this study, coaches codes of conduct played an important role in changing the culture of their teams. Eleven of the coaches' described different aspects of instilling codes of conduct, specifically defining the rules and responsibilities of their teams, in terms of acceptable behaviors on the field, in the classroom, and in the community. These guidelines were found to "create structure" for team members, getting everyone on "the same page." All of the coaches, who discussed

instilling codes of conduct, stressed the importance of their roles in the process. They explained the need to be “upfront and honest” with athletes and staff, as well as reasonable in the rules and expectations set. In line with coaches’ experiences of establishing the same standard as part of the foundation for their new structures, coaches’ codes of conduct played an integral role in changing their teams’ culture as necessary for implementing the structures of their programs.

Changing the inner workings of the team, focused on coaches’ experiences of establishing the way their teams worked and functioned on a regular basis, as well as coaches’ perceptions of why these transformations were significant in changing the culture of their teams. Specifically, this component dealt with the systems coaches implemented during practices and conditioning to prepare their teams for competitions. Nine of the coaches reported having to make significant changes in this area, describing their teams as incapable of getting through practices their first seasons. They stated that athletes were either “unprepared,” “unmotivated,” or “out of shape.” One coach explained that it was a real struggle trying to prepare his team when the athletes “didn’t bring their lunch pails everyday” (Participant 10). Coaches’ preparation and management of training and competition is not a new concept for researchers and practitioners. However, this study provided evidence that new head coaches, more specifically, those who were working with dysfunctional programs, are likely to have to make drastic changes in how their new teams train and compete. While Vallée and Bloom (2005) found that one of the challenges reported by coaches involved them being able to create a good learning environment that was fun, but also effective, this investigation offers insight for how these good learning environments are created by new head coaches.

Developing team chemistry, centered on eight participants' descriptions of bringing their teams together. Coaches described their experiences of taking a "mish mash of personalities," getting them "all on the same page," developing "trust" and "camaraderie," in order to function as a cohesive unit. Some coaches explained that their athletes were acting like they were participating in individual sports, rather than members of team sports. Six of the coaches cited "overcoming adversity," as a key aspect involved in bringing teams together to develop team chemistry. They explained that during this process, athletes are "forced to trust" one another. Coaches agreed that without team chemistry, teams were limited in the success they could achieve. Finally, coaches explained that while the development of team chemistry was "gradual" and "took time," the process had positive impacts on the way their teams functioned on all levels, including their attitudes during practice, training, and competition, their behaviors on and off the field, their travel experiences, and how they functioned during competitions. Developing team chemistry seems like a natural aspiration of a new head coach. The relevance of this finding lies more in the methods new head coaches utilized to develop chemistry, specifically "overcoming adversity." It would be interesting to examine athletes' perceptions of factors that aided and detracted from the development of chemistry on their teams.

Finally, establishing institutional loyalty emerged from coaches' experiences of having to eliminate athletes' sense of entitlement to develop their loyalty to their teammates, their programs, and the institutions supporting the advancement of their sports. Some of the coaches were shocked by athletes' sense of "entitlement" versus gratitude for the resources given to them in their programs (Participants 2, 3, 8, 10, &

12). As previously discussed, coaches perceived their athletes as being part of a generation of “kids today,” where everyone “expects a trophy” or award of some kind “just for showing up.” As new head coaches, they believed it was imperative to eliminate that type of mentality from their teams. Furthermore, coaches also stressed the importance of respecting the “whole process.” Coaches felt that athletes were given an unbelievable staff of people and resources designed to assist them, and that it was critical that their athletes’ demonstrated respect in all situations. Another aspect mentioned by coaches in relationship to establishing institutional loyalty, was that their athletes developed “pride” and “ownership” of their teams, facilities, and institutions. Finally, all eight of the coaches felt that it was important for athletes to understand that they were involved in a program that was bigger than any one individual. While coaching the Millennial generation of athletes seems to have impacted some of the participants in this investigation, it raises concerns as to what differences should coaches adapt and adjust, and what adaptations should coaches expect their athletes from this generation to make? Furthermore, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being a coach from this generation? It would be interesting to examine whether new head coaches from this generation value the same factors as relevant for changing a team’s culture. Further investigation is needed to examine the impact of this generation on the coaching process.

Subtheme 4: Building an Army to Support Your Program

This subtheme focused on participants’ experiences of “building an army” to support their programs in terms of assessing which individuals would support and help facilitate necessary changes, and which one’s would detract from that process. All of the

coaches described different aspects of this process that involved housecleaning, recruiting, getting good people to carry out their messages, and administration support.

Coaches' experiences of housecleaning involved "cleaning up" the attitudes and work-ethics of their teams in order to build the programs they wanted. The coaches recognized the situations their inherited teams had to face, and agreed that an opportunity should be given for them to "comply" and "get on board" with their programs. All of the coaches explained that there were certain areas where they were willing to be flexible, but other areas where "lines had to be drawn." Specific incidents cited included, "disrupting the team," "inappropriate behaviors," "not taking care of business," "attitude problems," "dishonesty," and "being disrespectful." The majority of coaches in this investigation inherited programs with structural problems that were essentially underachieving. In order to facilitate the positive growth of their programs, they had to make changes and "clean up" these programs. Therefore, in these situations the athletes were expected to adapt and make the necessary changes. Results of this investigation posited that while coaches recognized the stressfulness of these transitions on their athletes, the circumstances required them to make changes that greatly disrupted the flow and functioning of these teams. This raises the question as to whether or not new head coaches' (brought in from outside the athletic department) taking over programs with traditions of athletic excellence, would experience "housecleaning" as relevant in their experiences. In fact, in the present investigation, the only coach who suggested that there was no need to worry about clearing out difficult athletes, because "in time" those players would be gone, was the one coach who inherited a team as a former assistant of that team, which was in excellent athletic standing. While the present investigation

uncovered significant aspects regarding coaches' experiences of "housecleaning" as a critical piece of their becoming new head coaches, it raises questions regarding whether these experiences are limited to dysfunctional teams, or exist within teams on all levels. Furthermore, because coaches in the present investigation expressed expectations for athletes to adapt and "get on board" with their programs, it would be interesting to examine whether or not these experiences hold true within a professional sports model.

Participants' experience of recruiting athletes was found to play a significant part in how new head coaches implemented the structures of their new programs. Coaches described recruiting athletes who "want to be there," and who understand the philosophy of the program, as one of the most instrumental components involved in building their programs. Furthermore, coaches explained that recruited athletes "know what to expect" and that helped eliminate some of the problems faced early-on during the transitional phase. Coaches explained that team members were often the one's who attracted better players to their teams. These findings correspond to Vallée and Bloom's (2005) investigation of coaches building successful programs, where coaches stressed the importance of recruiting athletes that matched their philosophy and fit into their program. They further explained that recruiting the best athlete was not their top priority; they were more interested in finding players who were first "coachable" and reliable, looking second at their potential talent. This "coachable" concept mentioned by coaches' in the Vallée and Bloom (2005) investigation, related to the recruiting "mistakes" and "challenges" discussed by coaches in this study. Despite their clear descriptions of the athletes' desired on their teams, a few coaches reported challenges faced during the recruiting process, and mistakes they made in recruiting. Coaches in response to "time

pressures” and “program reputation,” referenced getting caught up in a player’s statistics versus the qualities they brought to the entire team. While their “talent” was viewed as an important piece of the puzzle, it was more important that the athlete was “a good fit” for their new teams. This finding offers further support for Vallée and Bloom’s (2005) investigation. Coaches in this study also mentioned the important role that athletes play in “attracting” good recruits to their teams. It would be interesting to examine the role of athletes in the recruiting process, specifically those on newly inherited teams.

Researchers could also examine the similarities and differences between new head coaches and established coaches in the ways they utilize their teams in the recruiting process. In situations where relationships have not been established between athletes and their new head coaches, it seems likely that highlighting upperclassmen will not be the central focus of the recruiting process.

Coaches’ experiences of getting good people to carry out their messages was discovered to be significant for all the coaches in building armies to support their programs. For these coaches, the list of “good people” included players, assistant coaches, support staff members, and anyone else directly involved in their programs. Coaches explained that by “surrounding” themselves with “good people,” they knew that everyone involved had their programs’ “best interests” at heart. This concept stressed by the coaches in this study offers support for the idea of groups being “only as strong as their weakest links.” These coaches recognized that there were numerous individuals working directly and indirectly with their programs that spent a lot of hours with their athletes, and that the influence of these individuals could not be ignored. While coaches stressed the importance of these individuals being “good people to carry out their

messages,” no evidence was provided to illustrate how these qualities were assessed and these tasks were accomplished. Insight on this topic would greatly benefit coaches in being able to define and evaluate whether those involved are meeting the needs of their programs. In business, employees are given personality profiles to determine whether or not they are a good match for organizations. It raises the question as to whether or not these assessment tools would ever have a role in the sports interview and recruiting process.

Outside support has already been discussed in relationship to coaching education and the role of other coaches and mentors in this process. This finding revealed the importance of other coaches and mentors in the support they provided for new head coaches during their career transitions (Participant 2, 6, 7, & 8). The coaches characterized their having support outside of their departments, as significant aspects of their experiences. They described it as being an “outlet,” “someone to go to for tough decisions,” and responsible for the formation of their coaching philosophies. These individuals included other coaches in their athletic departments, coaches working for other organizations, as well as their mentors. These findings are similar to those of Stevens and Weiss (1991), who found that high school and university level coaches reported high job satisfaction when they worked in an environment that was collegial. Coaches in the current investigation explained that these individuals helped them make it through this challenging transition. In fact, they advised new head coaches to establish systems of support prior to accepting new jobs. Due to the limited scope of this investigation, only a few coaches mentioned this as significant to their experiences of

becoming new head coaches. Future investigations should examine whether or not outside support plays a critical role in becoming a new head coach.

Also significant to the purpose of this investigation, administration support emerged from eleven of the coaches' descriptions of the support and lack of support they experienced within their programs' administrations. Although a few of the coaches discussed challenging experiences they faced working with their current administrators (Participants 2, 3, & 9), all of them felt that having the support of their administrators was important in building effective programs, and that without that support the process would be hindered and slowed drastically. These findings correspond to Steir (1985), who claimed that successful athletic programs were those that established and nurtured functional relationships between coaching staff members and athletic administrators.

Coaches in this study also characterized this support in terms of "backing them up" when dealing with player issues, providing "financial support" through facilities, equipment, travel, and support staff, accessible when needed, visible during practices and competitions, and "open to getting the right things in place." These findings support Pastore, Goldfine, and Reimers' (1996) study of 173 NCAA collegiate coaches where coaches' perceptions of important areas where athletic administrators could provide support were examined. Analysis revealed the following six categories as significant to coaches' perceptions of administrative support: game management, decision making, nondiscriminatory work environment, job benefits / salary, program support, and evaluation.

Some of the coaches in their descriptions of their first years on the job described their experiences as "challenging," "frustrating," and "mentally exhausting" in response

to the lack of support they received by their administrations. This finding corresponds to thoughts expressed by Croft (2007), who claimed that regardless of the previous successes and experiences that have resulted in the coach being hired by the institution, the moment the incoming head coach steps on campus, he or she is unfortunately placed under an intense microscope and is forced to prove him / herself all over again. While limited to only one participant's experience, this finding raises questions surrounding the effectiveness of certain behaviors by administrators during this phase of transition.

Interestingly, one coach suggested that it was not only the responsibility of the administration to support head coaches' decisions, but also coaches, particularly those coaching "nonrevenue sports," not to "cause problems," and "do the right things." This poses an interesting question as to why some coaches may perceive revenue producing sports as having different standards than their teams. Future investigations should examine coaches' and administrators perceptions in this area.

Finally, during the second interview Participant 8 stressed the importance of coaches' understanding the culture of their athletic departments prior to accepting their jobs. He explained that finding programs with similar philosophies that were willing to support coaches in building their programs was fundamental in building successful programs. In support of this concept, other coaches in this study explained that changing the structure of a team was difficult in and of itself, thus it was imperative to have that support to back up their actions. Based on these findings and those of other researchers, it could be argued that although able to establish complete control of their own teams, coaches overall success in a program could largely depend on the level of support provided within the organization (Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Kim, Cunningham, & Sagas,

2005; Pastore, Goldfine, & Reimer, 1996; Preist, 1990; Steir, 1985). Athletic departments would greatly benefit from examining the coaches' perceptions of their supportiveness and make necessary adjustments to enhance supportiveness throughout their organizations.

Theme 4: Understanding the Dynamics of a New Coaching Staff

The literature on coaching leadership has been well documented and already discussed in this chapter. While many of the underlying facets pertaining to the leadership, and group cohesion research apply to its basic conceptual framework, this theme of understanding the dynamics of a new coaching staff has uncovered a significant aspect of coaching leadership that has not been examined within the literature.

Specifically, the experiences of what it is like for new head coaches to have to lead a group of people so that eventually as a collective unit they can go out and lead another group. This raises many questions regarding the complexities of coaching leadership, and the factors associated with coaching staffs' facilitation of successful programs being built. These concepts were discussed further in the following sections.

Subtheme 1: Hiring a New Coaching Staff

The first subtheme, hiring a new coaching staff centered on coaches' experiences of selecting their new staffs, giving them time to make their transitions, and deciding whether to fire or hire the previous assistant coaches as members of their new staffs. In these situations, the "time commitment" and "politics" involved in the hiring process were revealed. Coaches reported that on top of all of their other responsibilities they also had to develop a staff of people they trusted, with comparable philosophies, who could help them build their programs. In response to these time constraints, some participants

reported making bad decisions in the people they hired. In an already unstable situation, these coaches found themselves in their second years as new head coaches having to hire new staff members. These findings suggest that the time constraints placed on new head coaches may result in their making poor decisions regarding new staff members.

Coaches also reported this as true with recruiting. To reduce turnover and promote stability within new programs, new head coaches would benefit from taking the time to hire staff members that are a good fit for their programs, as well as avoiding the pressures to make “quick hires.” Administrators in this area should become more aware of the pressures they create for coaches, and be more proactive in conveying these pressures in a constructive manner.

The politics surrounding the hiring process were also of particular interest in this study. Some of the coaches hired individuals based on the advice or persuasion of individuals within or associated with their athletic programs. Only one of the twelve coaches reported success in retaining one of the former assistant coaches (Participant 8). This raises the questions as to the success rate of head coaches who have to retain staff members or are pressured to hire personnel by individuals directly or indirectly associated with their athletic programs. Advice provided by participants in the current investigation suggested that new head coaches should “hire their own people.” Despite the apparent significance of this topic in the sports world, the research in this area is nonexistent. Limited knowledge in this area had been presented for coaches in manuals, but lacks the rigor of scientific inquiry (Martens, 1990). Future research investigations could inform administrations as well as coaching practice regarding the hiring process of new coaching staff members.

Subtheme 2: Managing and Developing Assistant Coaches

This subtheme emerged from ten coaches' experiences of managing and developing their new coaching staffs. Coaches reported that working as a cohesive unit, establishing similar coaching philosophies, and developing assistant coaches to be assistant coaches as relevant to their experiences. As discussed previously, the majority of the literature on coaching leadership, team dynamics, and group cohesion is focused on the athlete – coach level or athlete – athlete level, versus leadership and group cohesion among colleagues. While many similarities exist regarding leadership and group cohesion on any level (i.e., communication) (Yukelson, 1997), group goals (Widemeyer, Silvia, & Hardy, 1992), consequences of leadership style (Chelladurai, 1993), questions remain as to the significant differences in the leadership head coaches utilize working with their staffs. It would be interesting to examine coaching staffs' perceptions of their head coaches' behaviors and the success rate of those programs in relationship to head coaches chosen styles of leadership. The present investigation offers support for a more democratic style of decision making where assistant coaches are consulted and utilized to enhance the overall success of the program. Research investigations should examine the influence of head coaches' decision-making style at different times throughout the development of programs in terms of member satisfaction, turnover, and performance outcome.

Subtheme 3: Building a Program with a New Coaching Staff

This final subtheme was generated from ten coaches' experiences of developing their programs with their new coaching staffs. The different aspects significant for the coaches included utilizing the knowledge and expertise of their staffs, helping to execute

their plans, and sharing responsibilities. This corresponds with Valle and Bloom's (2005) investigation where coaches reported having developed "mutually respectful relationships with their support staffs and viewed them as valuable sources of help, encouragement, and insight, both on and off the court" (p.191).

At the time of their interviews, all of the coaches in the present investigation who discussed their coaching staffs reported being satisfied with current staff members.

Although some had made changes earlier during the course of their transitions as new head coaches of collegiate programs, their descriptions of their staffs at the time of the interviews were positive. Eight of the coaches when discussing their programs, recognized the strengths of their assistant coaches in terms of their expertise and knowledge in the field. They described their coaching staffs as playing an "integral role" in their teams' success. Many characterized their assistants as "brilliant," "talented," "experts in the field," "competitively driven," "excellent technicians," "highly decorated" as players, and "one of the top coaches" in the United States. These coaches wanted to "surround themselves with good people," and furthermore acquire staffs of coaches with knowledge and expertise in their fields that could take their programs to the next level. This finding presented alone does not appear note worthy, as it seems only natural that new head coaches would want their staffs to be knowledgeable. However, a few coaches reported experiences of hiring or retaining staff members who did not demonstrate the level of knowledge and expertise they expected from their assistants. This raises the question as to how coaching knowledge and expertise is assessed during the interview process. Furthermore, what characteristics, qualifications, and situational circumstances do new head coaches consider in making their decisions regarding the hiring process.

Due to the apparent lack of research on this topic, further inquiry is needed to better assist coaches in this area.

Other relevant findings from this subtheme centered on participants' experiences with their new coaching staffs helping them execute their plans to build their programs. Nine of the coaches described incidents where their assistants "helped facilitate" their programs and moved them in "the right direction." They described experiences where, as teams, their staffs would "come together" to develop plans, and then set out to implement those plans effectively. These head coaches' recognized that without their assistants they would have been unable to accomplish their goals. They also described situations where assistants were expected to "discipline players when the (*head coach*) was not present," "make decisions" regarding practices, travel, and competitions, as well as "model appropriate behaviors" to uphold the standards of the program at all times.

Finally, many coaches recalled experiences where they took advice from their assistants and made changes in their plans. These coaches explained that they "trusted" their assistants and "valued" their ideas. In light of the significance new head coaches placed on this process, it raises the question as to the success rate of first time head coaches in this area. As discussed in the results, two of the participants (2 & 4) recalled their experiences as first time head coaches, and their inability to delegate responsibilities, "trust" that assistants could accomplish these tasks successfully, and it appeared that they lacked the "confidence" to effectively lead others. Due to the lack of formal coaching education and literature on this topic, first time head coaches along with new head coaches are limited in their preparation to handle these situations and essentially lead their new staffs.

Theme 5: The Role of Family

The theme, the role of family, captured the significant influence of coaches' families on many different levels during their transitions as new head coaches. While work-family conflict has been well-documented in the sport psychology literature, the present investigation not only provided support for research investigations in this area, but also uncovered significant characteristics of family involvement in sports relevant to the purpose of this study. These concepts were elaborated in greater detail in the sections that followed.

Subtheme 1: Recruiting the Family

This subtheme was developed from nine coaches' descriptions of having to recruit their families into supporting their new head coaching positions. Coaches reported that "selling" their new jobs to their families, "acknowledging" their families sacrifices, and "living" in transition was significant in their experiences. These coaches explained that the decisions they made to take on their new positions, greatly "impacted" their families. Therefore, they felt it was important to include their families in their decisions. However, none of the coaches reported changing their decisions' based on the feedback from their family members. Yet, these coaches stressed the importance of their families "being happy," "living in places" they "liked," and being in a location where they "could become part of a community." The coaches' who reported this subtheme as significant stressed the fact that their families' happiness also impacted their ability to do their jobs effectively. These findings correspond to previous literature that found a relationship between a family supportive culture and reduced work-family conflict (Allen, 2001; Clark, 2001; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Despite the findings of having their

families support their changes in coaching positions, none of the coaches reported making changes regarding their families' unhappiness. Rather, they mentioned their families' ability to "adjust" and make sacrifices, so they could achieve their goals. It would be interesting to examine whether or not female head coaches would respond differently in these situations when faced with their husbands' and children's unhappiness as a result of their decisions.

Subtheme 2: Support from Wife

Out of the ten coaches who were married, nine of the coaches specifically stressed the significance of their wives' "support" for them in their experiences. The one married coach, who did not mention this subtheme (Participant 4), addressed the significant impact that his work-family conflict created on his marriage, explaining that he "probably wouldn't be married," if he had not found a better balance between coaching and his family. Research on conflicts between work and family roles have been shown to result in poor marital adjustment, inadequate role performance, decreased verbal communication, and other negative outcomes (Jones & Butler, 1980). The majority of the married participants in this study stressed the importance of having their families "support," specifically addressing their wives' supportive behaviors of "understanding the profession," "listening and giving advice," and "taking care of things" at home and within the community. Allen (2001) found that family-supportive work cultures were related to lower work-family conflict and higher job satisfaction and commitment. Bedeian, Brurke, and Moffett (1988) found for both men and women that work-family conflict served as a link between work-related stress and marital satisfaction. These research findings suggested that stress created within the work role may have

dysfunctional consequences for individuals' lives outside of their professions. Therefore, because the majority of participants in the present investigation reported family-supportive work cultures as significant in their experiences, it could be argued that they had already learned from previous experiences and other coaches that having this "support" would be beneficial to their job / life satisfaction. Further research is needed to examine the roles of coaches' spouses regarding the significance they play in their husbands'/coaches' experiences. Research investigations should also include female head coaches to examine whether or not the "support of husbands" is relevant and present in their experiences.

Subtheme 3: Family Involvement

All of the participants in this study, who were married with children, reported their families' involvement as significant to their experiences. Specifically, coaches mentioned the "time" they allotted for them, their "participation in the program," their coaching "influence on lives at home," and their "families influences on their coaching." Research on the topic clearly documents the numerous ways in which work penetrates the home, as well as how family life influences experiences at work (Moen, 1982). However, the majority of this research focuses on the negative influences created in this area. As previously mentioned, conflicts between work and family have been found to result in poor marital adjustment, inadequate role performance, decreased verbal communication, and other negative outcomes (Jones & Butler, 1980). The present investigation revealed positive aspects of these roles intermixing. Specifically coaches' felt that they were better coaches because of their families' influence, and better fathers as a result of working with their athletes. Foley and McGillivray (2000) reported that

long hours and intense work-related demands created tensions between work and participants' lives outside of their professions. However, participants in the present investigation recognized that their jobs required long hours and travel but felt that coaching allowed some "flexibility" in this area where they involved their families in their professions, having them "travel" and participate in team activities. These findings support Dixon and colleagues' (2006) conclusions that giving family members the opportunity to travel on some trips helped young baseball players find a better balance between family and career.

The majority of the coaches in the present investigation stressed the importance of finding a "balance" between work and family life. These findings correspond with Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000), who argued that the relationship between work-family conflict and job / life satisfaction reflected participants' greater desires for balance and their feelings of dissatisfaction when that balance was not achieved. Burgess and Masterson (2006) argued that due to the nature of the job, coaches spend an excessive amount of time away from home and were often unaware of the impact of their behaviors until faced with a traumatic event such as a family member suddenly taken ill. However, only one coach in the present investigation reported a "traumatic event" as relevant to his making changes in the way he approached his coaching profession. Although they had not undergone a "traumatic event," the other coaches still regarded having a "balance" between their coaching careers and their families as a significant aspect of their experiences. Similar to findings in the current investigation, researchers in business have found that employees who have been able to achieve this balance have experienced greater job, family, and life satisfaction (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000), as well as increased

employee involvement, decreased absenteeism, decreased turnover, and increased employee performance (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, et al., 2005; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandy, 2003). Due to the “role conflict” and gender differences, the possibility that female head coaches experience greater difficulty in creating this balance cannot be discounted and should be examined further.

Theoretical Significance – Grounding New Head Coaches’ Experiences

Researchers contend that “for existential-phenomenological thought, lived experience is always situated within the grounds of body, time, and others, and only (*when*) these grounds are described experientially (*is*) it possible to use them (*to develop*) a first-person, descriptive psychology where human experience is the central focus” (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, p. 58). Therefore, in line with the purpose of this research investigation it was important to discuss the ways in which body, time, and others were discovered as being grounded in the overall structure of the experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program.

The Experience of “Body.” Phenomenological researchers contend that “to be in-the-world means to be in an embodied relation to that world” (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, p. 67). This concept suggests that people experience things in life in and through their bodies. As a researcher who chose to examine human experience, it was important to discuss the way coaches’ viewed their career transitions in reference to their bodies. Phenomenological researchers also argue that in order to investigate other human phenomenon “the body” must be situated in its “landscape.” For the participants in this study, significant aspects of the ways in which they experienced their bodies in their “landscapes” (i.e., coaching environments) were grounded within the overall

structure of the experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program. Specifically, within their coaching environments (i.e., “landscapes”) participants described their “bodies” in terms of their engagement in new leadership positions, appearance to others, and physiology.

Engaging in their new leadership positions, coaches described contrasting images of being aware of their bodies (i.e., “got to keep grinding”) versus feeling completely engaged in an activity with no physical sense of their bodies (i.e., “completely lost in the work”). For example, one coach described the repetitive motion of hitting balls during practice. He explained that he was “swinging the bat,” “hitting balls, just kept hitting balls.” It was a repetitive motion he clearly remembered doing, which he described as “basic,” yet he was very aware of his body during that activity. The significance of the story the coach told was in reference to his players inability to complete a simple 45 minute fielding practice, and his account of that experience was centered from the perspective of what his body was doing in that specific situation. In reference to the long hours and extensive work requirements of a new head coach, another participant described his ability to get “sucked into work” and lose track of himself. In light of the long hours and other challenging demands of the coaching profession, it seems only natural that new head coaches would at times find themselves aware of their bodies as they engaged in activities and, yet at other times completely lose that awareness.

Participants’ experiences of their bodies in terms of their appearances to others offered interesting insight into the complex nature of this experience. Coaches frequently described conflicting images of how they wanted to be portrayed to their new athletes. For example, when they discussed implementing discipline their appearance seemed

similar to that of a dictator, and yet, when they described developing athlete/coach relationships their appearance was more in line with that of a mentor. Other appearances mentioned by participants were similar to that of a father, role-model, teacher, judge, CEO, and boss. This divide between the autocratic versus the democratic appearance of the “body” suggests that coaches were in conflict with the messages they were trying to convey to athletes. On the one hand they wanted to “appear” to their athletes as approachable and trustworthy; however, they also wanted their athletes to recognize their authority, and thus seemed compelled to demonstrate an outward appearance of power.

Participants also experienced their bodies’ in terms of their bodies’ physiology. This concept was most clearly captured as they described the physiological results of the stress they experienced while becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. Coaches described themselves as feeling “taxed,” “exhausted,” “tired,” and “emotionally drained.” They also depicted painful scenarios to further illustrate how stressful these experiences were for them, such as “pounding (*his*) head against the wall 23 hours a day,” “running on a treadmill and not getting anywhere,” feeling like he wanted “to pull (*his*) hair out.” Another coach recalled his experience of his heart “about to explode from (*his*) chest,” in response to the anger he felt over an athlete’s sense of entitlement. As previously mentioned, the stress involved in the coaching profession has been well documented in the literature (i.e., long hours, travel, and compensation). However, the current investigation provided additional information for coaches in terms of the stress experienced during a transition in their careers.

The Experience of “Time.” Time has been described as one of the most stubbornly abstract, yet concretely relevant facets of human existence (Pollio, Henley, &

Thompson, 1997). For the participants in this study, “time” was found to be deeply rooted within the overall structure of the experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program. From the speed at which these positions were filled, through the duration of the transitional process, “time” functioned as a powerful influence on many levels and in profound ways. Situated within the context of participants’ experiences, “time” was found to guide, create pressure, form obstacles, and establish boundaries upon which the development of long-term plans were facilitated. While “time” eluded their control, coaches demonstrated that certain perceptions and behaviors were more effective than others for managing “time” within the confines of this experience.

Relevant to the structure of the experience, the context of “time” seems to have guided and given focus to participants. Moving from the past reputations of their programs, to the present circumstances they faced, coaches tried to center their attention on the future directions of their new athletic programs. Participants discussed changes they experienced in themselves, their coaching, their athletes, and the new athletic programs they were creating over the course of “time.” Their descriptions formed a framework of their experiences as they unfolded throughout the transitional process. This awareness of the past, present, and future relevance of time, helped them set goals, and establish their plans for their programs growth and development. This aspect of their transitions allowed them to look across time from where their programs had been, to where they wanted to take their new programs. During this time, it was easier for them to look past early performance outcomes (i.e., “have to be willing to take a hit that first season”) and remain focused on their long-term plans. Furthermore, it allowed them to better handle some of the challenges they faced during the early phases of transition (i.e.,

“developing team chemistry”), because they were able to see that long-term vision for their new teams.

Time was also found to create pressure beginning with the interview process, and extending well beyond the scope of this research investigation. For example, the pressures for administrators to hire “the best” and “most qualified” coaches as quickly as possible often resulted in a delicate race with time, which was felt by many of the participants in this investigation. In these situations, administrators appeared to coaches as driven to fill the gaps as quickly as possible to maintain a facade of control of the situation. Often to alleviate time pressures, administrators hired interim head coaches to “man the front,” and “quiet the masses.” However, even this strategy did not lessen the pressures created by time, as the weight shifted onto interim head coaches who then felt the need to demonstrate success quickly in hopes of being recognized and chosen as “the best fit” for the job. Under intense time pressures, administrators were also described by coaches as flying through the hiring process while operating in “stealth mode” in an attempt to hide potential candidates from the media and rival programs. In some instances, the time pressures experienced by coaches during the interview process forced them to make quick decisions, without taking the time to “research the programs” extensively, and thoroughly discuss their decisions with significant others in their lives. Once they accepted their new positions, many coaches reported feeling time constraints to hire staff members, build relationships, recruit “good athletes,” and develop successful programs. As a result of the pressures created by some of these time constraints, coaches reported making poor decisions when recruiting and hiring new staff members.

All of the participants described themselves as not having enough time to do everything they wanted to do. These limitations, however, were experienced as forcing them to prioritize choices and accept that they could not “do everything at once.” They had to be willing to “put some things on the back burner.” In this way, time was experienced by participants as a commodity that they spent, wasted, or invested. Although the coaches expressed frustration with the fact that they did not have enough time to do everything, they were aware that these limitations forced them to “take inventory” of their situations so that they could choose to spend time on the things they valued most. Recognizing that time was beyond their control was a good reminder which helped them be more patient throughout the transitional process, especially when things did not happen as quickly as they would have liked.

Finally, the rate time passed was also experienced by coaches in terms of the contrast they felt between things happening too “quickly” or “slowly.” When coaches described things as moving too “quickly,” there was an implication that they were behind and not doing things fast enough. On the other hand, when they recalled situations of things taking “too long,” time appeared to have moved painfully slow for them as they waited to get those things they desired most in time (i.e., “building a team,” “changing a culture,” ending an “APR penalty”). Chapman (1997) explained that time spent doing things that are not enjoyable is often experienced as going more slowly. Likewise, participants in the present investigation described these experiences of time moving slowly as “frustrating,” “disappointing,” and “stressful.” Although they experienced stress and frustration regarding the rate at which time passed, they also described ways in which they altered their perceptions and behaviors to manage “time” effectively.

The Experience of “Others” – Family. Participants’ experiences of their families influenced them on many different levels during their transitions as new head coaches. Phenomenological researchers contend that in order to appreciate what it means to be human, it is critical to consider the sociopersonal world forced upon human existence (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Furthermore, they argue that in connection with the major grounds of time and body, the phenomenology of others is needed to contextualize human experience. Participants’ descriptions of their families illustrated a clear example of how others were profoundly grounded within the overall structure of the experience of becoming a new head coach of a collegiate program. Uncovering different facets of coaches’ experiences with their families revealed the way in which they dealt with aspects of their relationships involving responsibility/concern, acceptance/respect, and closeness/involvement.

The sense of responsibility and concern coaches expressed for their families centered on their perceived obligation to provide their families with financial security, education, and a “good place to live.” They recognized the many sacrifices their families had made to allow them to pursue coaching careers, and expressed concern for their families’ happiness. Coaches alluded to the idea of “selling (*the new job*)” to their families, inferring that discussion with family members occurred prior to accepting the new positions. However, while these coaches expressed a strong sense of responsibility for their families “happiness” and well-being, none of the coaches reported changing their minds or turning down coaching positions in response to their families “unhappiness.” This could be largely because of the conflict which often occurs between happiness and well-being. Sometimes the things that individuals perceive as bringing

them the most happiness are not always the best for them, and the things that enhance their well-being are identified as causing them unhappiness. For example, these coaches viewed their new positions as enhancing their careers, thus allowing them to better provide for their families. While their families may have initially resisted and been unhappy with this change, perhaps participants felt they made the best decision for the long-term well-being of their families.

In their experiences of their families, acceptance and respect were also significant in their relationships with family members. This involved coaches' perceptions of how their families' accepted their career choices. Coaches clearly elaborated on this concept in terms of the support they received from family members, primarily their wives. Coaches experienced family support when their wives offered understanding and guidance. In connection with coaches' feelings of acceptance from their spouses, participants described the mutual respect present within their marriages. This level of respect implies that within their marriages, they were accepting of each others differences and valued one another. As previously mentioned, this transitional process was an extremely trying and mentally exhausting experience for coaches, and having their families' acceptance and respect seems to have played an integral role in having a more positive experience.

Finally the closeness and involvement of families in coaches' experiences appeared to have helped them balance the challenges involved during this significant change in their lives. Family involvement ranged from traveling with teams, visiting the office, participating in certain team functions, and coaches allowing their families "to be a part of it." Only two of the coaches described a clear separation between their families

and their coaching (Participant 4 & 6). However, these two coaches were also the ones who described experiences of burn-out. Participant 4 mentioned that “he wouldn’t be married” if he had continued doing the things he had done his first year, and Participant 6 actually left coaching in response to feeling burn-out. This raises the question as to whether or not involving family lessens work-family conflict experienced by new head coaches and enhances overall job satisfaction. For the majority of the coaches, family involvement appeared to have positively influenced their experiences as new head coaches by making the transition more bearable and essentially possible.

The Experience of Body, Time and Others – Changing the Culture of a Team.

Participants’ experiences of changing the culture of their teams were characterized as the most significant and trying aspect of their new jobs. To accomplish this task, the majority of the teams were reported as needing drastic measures as part of the changes initiated by their new head coaches. Within that experience, the phenomenology of body, time, and other people was discovered to be grounded within the overall structure of changing the culture of a team.

Participants’ in this investigation experienced their bodies while changing the culture of their teams through their engagement in activity, appearance to others, and limitations of bodies. Actively engaging in this process of changing their teams’ culture, participants described situations where they were completely aware of their bodies. For example, when discussing the concept of changing the way their teams worked and competed, participants recalled descriptions that involved an endless amount of repetitions (i.e., “we just had to keep grinding,” “keep pounding the pavement”). The most apparent integration of participants’ “bodies” was found in terms of their

appearance to others. While trying to establish a culture of excellence and rebuild their teams' reputation, participants felt they had to model the proper mindset. Their teams were underachieving for the most part, and they had to give an "appearance" of confidence and control to their players. Participant 11 described it as being "the lightning rod," so he would never appear weak in front of his athletes. Finally, participants discussed their bodies' limitations in terms of the stress and fatigue created by trying to alter their athletes' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to change their teams' culture.

The phenomenology of time was particularly relevant for participants in their experiences of changing the culture of their teams. In these situations, time was found as significant in terms of how it guided, created pressure, was limited, and the rate at which it passed. The changes coaches initiated to facilitate this process required planning and a long-term vision of what they wanted their teams to accomplish. They had to study the past, acknowledge where their programs were, and set future goals. In this way, time functioned to form a framework for coaches throughout this process. The pressure time created could be felt throughout this experience. Many coaches explained that changing the culture of their teams was the most important aspect of their new jobs and without it, nothing else really mattered. Thus, coaches experienced the pressures of time to accomplish this task, as they perceived that it would influence their teams' performance outcomes. Time was also experienced by coaches as limited, which caused them to focus their attention and prioritize their actions. While trying to change the way their teams functioned on all levels, they had to choose the things they felt would benefit their teams the most. Finally, coaches also described time while changing their teams' culture in

terms of it passing too slowly. For the participants in this study, the process seemed to always take longer than they expected.

Examining the way in which coaches' sociopersonal world was ingrained in their experiences of changing their teams' culture offered significant insight on this topic. Participants' experiences of other people were a central focus of this process of changing the way their teams functioned. Relevant to changing the culture of their teams, participants specifically described other people in terms of the relationships established, comparisons made, and benefits weighed. This process was mostly centered on the relationships developed with athletes and coaching staff members. Without the development of these relationships, coaches' perceived cultural change as an almost impossible task to accomplish. Coaching staff members were needed to implement the plans of their new head coaches. Athletes were at the heart of the changes being made within these programs, and the relationships coaches developed with their players seem to have greatly influenced this process. The comparisons coaches made when working with their new athletes highlighted the relevance of coaching the millennial athlete. While coaches felt it was important to adapt to athletes' differences, they also expressed the need to eliminate athletes' "sense of entitlement," a common characteristic of this generation of athletes. Finally, coaches experiences of evaluating the benefits of relationships with other people throughout this process, uncovered the relevance of assistant coaches' ability to support and help implement head coaches' programs. Furthermore, the benefit of having certain athletes remain or leave their programs was also assessed by new head coaches while changing their teams' culture.

Discussing the ways in which the phenomenology of body, time, and others were grounded within the overall structure of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program was fundamental to this phenomenological research investigation. Though not a part of the research question, this discussion demonstrates that these three concepts are figural to the human experience as exemplified by the participants in this study.

Study Limitations and Future Research

While this research investigation has enhanced the understanding of the experience of becoming a new head coach of a collegiate program, some limitations need to be addressed. First, these interviews were focused solely on the coaches' perceptions. Therefore, the viewpoints of athletes, administrators, support staffs, and coaches' families were not examined or considered. Therefore, the validity of these findings could be confirmed with a qualitative assessment of these individuals actively participating in new head coaches' lives. For example, this study uncovered many important aspects of what coaches go through as they adapt to their career transitions. However, coaches are not the only ones affected by this process. Athletes are forced to either adapt to the "new way," or "leave" the program entirely. In this study, coaches discussed having to adapt to athletes difference, and yet the question remains as to who is forced to make the greater adaptations, the new head coaches or the athletes. This imbalance of our knowledge of the differences and similarities between individuals involved in this experience, demonstrates the crucial need for researchers to investigate athletes' experiences of getting new head coaches, and having to adapt to those changes. Furthermore, coaches' descriptions of their families' active role in their experience, suggests that gaining family members perceptions of this process is a critical piece needed to solidify the true

understanding of the influence of this transitional process. It would also be interesting to examine the similarities and differences between the experiences of others who have had to make similar transitions (e.g., military families). Once again, these new head coaches were not the only one's affected by this experience, their families were also forced to move and adapt to these changes. While coaches expressed concern for their families' happiness and well-being, and furthermore described their families as supportive throughout the change, it raises the question as to whether or not their families were happy with their husbands'/fathers' decisions, and whether or not their thoughts were taken into consideration during the decision-making process.

Second, results may only be applicable to male head coaches. Although none of the coaches during their interviews addressed topics relevant only to men, it would be of interest to examine whether female head coaches' experiences are comparable to male head coaches. Attempting to examine whether gender-related differences exist during this transitional phase in coaches' careers was beyond the scope of this investigation. Finally, the results might only apply to NCAA Division I head coaches. It would be interesting to examine whether similar results would be found at all levels such as, professional, NCAA Division II and III, and high school coaches. Furthermore, looking at University coaches' experiences outside of the United States would also be of interest.

Practical Implications

Many of the implications for coaches have already been discussed in detail throughout this chapter. One important implication for coaches and researchers not mentioned was the way in which the interview process served as a therapeutic tool for coaches. All of the coaches thanked the primary investigator for participating in the

study. Ten of the coaches specified that the process had been very helpful as it allowed them to reflect on their coaching. Many of the coaches cited specific examples of making changes in their coaching after their interviews, as the process gave them a better perspective on where they were, and the direction they intended to take their programs. They also mentioned using their transcripts to remind themselves of important topics they had discussed. This suggests that self-reflection by coaches could positively impact the coaching process. Furthermore, it demonstrates the possible benefits of participating in a qualitative research study.

This study also offers several implications for administrators and sport psychology consultants, by highlighting some important aspects of coaches' experiences during this challenging phase of transition. First, administrators should realize that providing support for their new employees may lead to better long-term results and job satisfaction among coaches. Furthermore, it is important that coaches are given the support they need from administrators, versus the support administrators may think they need (i.e., pressuring new head coaches to hire specific individuals as members of their new staffs). Second, sport psychology consultants should assist new head coaches in focusing on their plan, which includes their goals and directions for their new programs, and discourage a focus on unrealistic performance outcomes. Furthermore, consultants could help new head coaches manage the psychological impact of this process. Third, consultants should also be aware of the implications of this investigation when working with their athletes. Helping athletes better understand the experiences of their new head coach, may foster the development of better coach-athlete relationships. Finally, this study offers insight for consultants working with teams during this transitional process.

Coaches in the present investigation stressed the importance of athletes “buying-in,” and bringing the team together, as a significant aspect of becoming a new head coach. Therefore, sport psychology consultants should utilize team building activities, and open communication to better assist coaches and athletes throughout this process.

Although it is clear that there still remain many questions surrounding this topic, the current study is the first step in uncovering coaches’ experiences of becoming new head coaches of collegiate programs. The relevance of coaches’ experiences associated with this extreme change in their lives has provided great insight for coaches, athletes, administrators, and practitioners in this field.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Demographic Questionnaire

Age: _____ (years) **Total years coaching:** _____ (years)

Education: (circle highest level) High School Associate Bachelors Masters
other _____

Ethnicity (circle one): African American Asian American Caucasian Hispanic
American Indian Other (please identify) _____

Relationship Status (circle one): Single Married Divorced Remarried
Other (please identify) _____

Children (circle one): Yes (number) _____ No

College/Professional Sports Played: (please list most recent sport experience first)

Sport	Level	Years
Track and Field	College	4

Time in current position: _____ (years) _____ (months)

College / Professional Coaching Experience:
(please list most recent coaching experience first)

Sport	Level	Position	Years
Track and Field	College	Volunteer Assistant	1

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

(1) Describe your experience of being the new head coach of a collegiate program.

******The general topical guide (used only in cases where sufficient meaning and depth has not been reached), consisted of broad questions that could “facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, and substantive descriptions of the participant’s experience of the phenomenon” (p. 116, Moustakas, 1994). The following questions were never needed, to facilitate full disclosure of the experience:

- (1) What incidents and people intimately connected with the experience stand out for you?
- (2) How has this experience affected you? What changes do you associate with the experience?
- (3) How did the experience affect significant others in your life?
- (5) What feelings were generated by this experience?
- (6) What thoughts stood out for you?
- (7) Have you shared all that is significant with reference to this experience?
(Adapted from Moustakas, 1994).

******Finally, due to the recognized elite status and revered knowledge of this group, a Qualitative inquiry was used for the last question involved in this research investigation. This final question was posed to the coaches:

- (8) After reflecting on your experience as a new head coach, what advice do you have for other coaches going through this transitional process?

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Hi, my name is Tracy Carrington, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Kinesiology Department at Michigan State University. I would like to talk with you individually (for about 45-90 minutes) to gain depth, description, and detail regarding your experience of becoming the new head coach of a collegiate program. The interviews will be audio taped and subsequently transcribed.

All results of the interview will be confidential. Because confidentiality is an important issue, several measures will be undertaken. Be assured that all discussions taking place during the interviews will be kept private and confidential. Furthermore, access to the information from the study will be limited to the researchers and the transcribing typist. The audio taped interviews will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the home of the principal investigator (Tracy Carrington). Also, neither your name nor the name of your University will be used in the transcribed interviews, nor will it appear when the results are described in any written manuscript. A pseudonym will be assigned to each. After the interviews are transcribed the audio tapes will be destroyed. Taking part in the project is voluntary; there will be no penalties should you choose not to be involved. Also, if you agree to take part you may stop at any time, or choose not to answer any questions you do not feel like answering.

If you want to know more about this research project please call me at (817)313-0121 or email me anytime (email: carrin15@msu.edu). This project has been approved by the Michigan State University Social Science/ Behavioral/ Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB). If you have any questions regarding the regulations for research at Michigan State University, please call (517)355-2180, ext. 239 or email irb@msu.edu.

APPENDIX D

An Examination of the Experience of Coaches Establishing Themselves as New Head Coaches of Collegiate Programs Participant Consent Form – **Participant's Copy**

Hi, my name is Tracy Carrington. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Kinesiology at Michigan State University, and need your assistance in a research study I am conducting. The purpose of this study is to understand coaches' experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs. As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed and asked to talk about some of your experiences as a coach. The interview will be conducted in or near your university and will last approximately 45-90 minutes. At the time of the interview you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

The interview will be audio taped, transcribed by medical transcriptionist, and transformed into thematic categories. All results from the interview will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Because confidentiality is such an important issue, several measures will be undertaken. The audio tapes and transcripts that are used for this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home for 3 years past the completion of this study. Then the audio tapes will be erased and the transcripts will be destroyed. Anonymity will also be maintained as the actual name of any participant and the university will not be used on the transcribed interviews, nor will they appear when the results are described in any written manuscript. A pseudonym will be assigned to participants and their places of employment. In addition, I will conduct a follow-up interview to verify responses and seek additional information if needed. Only university members of the research team, including the IRB will have access to the transcribed interviews in which your identity will not be known.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this research study. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research study. However, your participation as an expert in the field may contribute to a greater understanding of the intricacies involved in the coaching process. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any concerns or questions about this research study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact one of the investigators [either Tracy Carrington at 6408 Fianna Hills Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 79109, (817) 313-0121, carrin15@msu.edu or Dr. Martha Ewing at 201 IM Sports Circle, East Lansing, MI 48824 (517) 353-4652, mewing@msu.edu]. If you have questions or concerns regarding your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at (517)355-2180, Fax (517) 432-4503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. **(Please retain this copy of the consent form for your files)**

Your Printed Name

Your Signature

Today's Date

APPENDIX D

An Examination of the Experience of Coaches Establishing Themselves as New Head Coaches of Collegiate Programs Participant Consent Form – **Research Investigator's Copy**

Hi, my name is Tracy Carrington. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Kinesiology at Michigan State University, and need your assistance in a research study I am conducting. The purpose of this study is to understand coaches' experiences of establishing themselves as new head coaches of collegiate programs. As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed and asked to talk about some of your experiences as a coach. The interview will be conducted in or near your university and will last approximately 45-90 minutes. At the time of the interview you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

The interview will be audio taped, transcribed by a medical transcriptionist, and transformed into thematic categories. All results from the interview will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Because confidentiality is such an important issue, several measures will be undertaken. The audio tapes and transcripts that are used for this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home for 3 years past the completion of this study. Then the audio tapes will be erased and the transcripts will be destroyed. Anonymity will also be maintained as the actual name of any participant and the university will not be used on the transcribed interviews, nor will they appear when the results are described in any written manuscript. A pseudonym will be assigned to participants and their places of employment. In addition, I will conduct a follow-up interview to verify responses and seek additional information if needed. Only university members of the research team, including the IRB will have access to the transcribed interviews in which your identity will not be known.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this research study. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research study. However, your participation as an expert in the field may contribute to a greater understanding of the intricacies involved in the coaching process. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any concerns or questions about this research study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact one of the investigators [either Tracy Carrington at 6408 Fianna Hills Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 79109, (817) 313-0121, carrin15@msu.edu or Dr. Martha Ewing at 201 IM Sports Circle, East Lansing, MI 48824 (517) 353-4652, mewing@msu.edu]. If you have questions or concerns regarding your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at (517)355-2180, Fax (517) 432-4503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. **(Please retain this copy of the consent form for your files)**

Your Printed Name

Your Signature

Today's Date

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