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An Examination into the Underlying Factors that Promote the Effectiveness

Emily Kate Cripe

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An Examination into the Underlying Factors that Promote the Effectiveness of the Most Successful Division I NCAA Women’s Soccer Programs

by

Emily Kate Fischer Cripe

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

April, 2017
An Examination into the Underlying Factors that Promote the Effectiveness of the Most Successful Division I NCAA Women’s Soccer Programs

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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May 17, 2017

Final Approval Date
INFLUENCES THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVENESS

Abstract

The growth of competitive collegiate women’s sports and specifically, women’s soccer, in the collegiate, professional, and national realms has not been matched by research in the field. Currently, there are courses, conventions, and literature about all different aspects of soccer, but the field of collegiate coaching is missing detailed education about the holistic influences and aspects of creating a winning women’s collegiate soccer program. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to discover which major factors influence the effectiveness of a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I women’s soccer program to consistently win. Data and analysis yielded four major factors. The first major factor is the university which includes four aspects: financial support, supportive management and collaborative colleagues, standard of excellence, and university reputation. The second major factor is recruiting, which includes two aspects: talent and right-fit. The third major factor is development, which includes four aspects: player development, person development, coach development, and team development. The fourth major factor is head coach drive which has three aspects: head coach evolution, head coach confidence, head coach fear of failure. Results produced practical application for current collegiate women’s soccer coaches to analyze strengths and weaknesses within their programs.
Acknowledgements

To my parents, thank for instilling a sense of curiosity in me at a young age and modeling life learning. Your unconditional love is my fountain of confidence and self-belief, thank you for always saying yes, go, do. Allison, thank you for challenging me by teaching me that education is indeed the great equalizer for people of all walks of life and that compassion is necessary for every leader, parent, and older sister. Kathryn, thank you for your endless joy, you are a gift to the world. David, thank you for your boundless curiosity and infinite creativity, you are my favorite brother.

To the coaches I interviewed, I am so grateful for your time and knowledge. You have inspired me to be a better coach on the field and better person off the field. Thank you for being students of the game and dedicating your lives to the greatness of women’s soccer.

To my University of St. Thomas family, thank you for supporting me through this adventure. Cohort 26 you challenged me to grow deeper roots and stronger wings. I am forever grateful for our time together and collective learning. Barb Tigan you were a light in my life and I thank you, and the rest of the Research Department for supporting me through this program. Mark Dienhart and Steve Hoppener, thank you for showing me the way to leadership, allowing all around you to develop while being a supportive boss with standards of excellence. Sheila McGill and UST Women’s Soccer, my favorite days were on the field with you practicing purpose, presence and perspective.

To my Minnesota Thunder Academy littles who turned into strong, hard-working, kind young women before my eyes. The class of 2017 as well as the 2018 stragglers Mickey and Mere, this research is for you, and all the young women like you, so you may have the best collegiate experience possible. It is written, may you be strong in this resolve. I began this
journey when we met as I coached your U13 age group. My goodness it has been such a pleasure watching you grow into young adults. Each of you has been a source of happiness in my life. Keep working towards your 10,000 hours to become excellent in your life’s passion and purpose. I can now proudly wear my purple Dr. Fish crocs.

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To my committee, thank you for allowing my idea to grow. Dr. Navarre you have been a mentor since our first breakfast which was the seed to this dissertation. Thank you for pushing me towards my UNC experience and being my content expert. I look forward to continuing our soccer, leadership, and life discussions. Dr. Noonan I adore your spunk. I so appreciated your knowledge, excellence, and energy every time I came into your classroom. Thank you for taking the time to make me a better student and writer. Dr. Hanson I have enjoyed my whole dissertation process because of you. You protected my idea, cared for it, fed it, worked with it, played with it, and most of all gave it your attention; picking you as my dissertation chair was the best decision I made throughout the whole process. Your kindness and guidance will be paid forward as there is no possible way I can thank you. I hope to continue meeting you at Turtle Bread to discuss current events and life, while enjoying a delicious meal.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my greatest distraction and my life’s most important journey, Dustin Matthew Cripe. Thank you for your support, encouragement, and needed honey-dos. Every day with you I learn, grow, and love. Thank you for showing me the world. Now, let us continue onto our next and greatest adventure together…parenthood!
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this qualitative study is to seek a better understanding of what influences the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs to be effective. I aim to learn from proven and effective coaches about different aspects of collegiate soccer that enhance team effectiveness and gain insight into building and sustaining effective collegiate soccer programs that allow soccer players to grow and thrive. With this new insight, I hope to become a better soccer coach and share what I learn for all coaches and their players to benefit.

I grew up playing soccer and was fortunate to play Division I collegiate soccer at Seton Hall University (SHU) in the Big East Conference. During my time at SHU Manfred Schellscheidt was the Head Men’s soccer coach and I was lucky to have him as a mentor. Schellscheidt is a member of the National Soccer Hall of Fame and known by many on the East Coast as the godfather of soccer. During my time with Schellscheidt I was greatly influenced by his philosophies about coaching and life. He believes the game is the greatest teacher and if you pay attention, it gives you all the answers. Schellscheidt taught me the power soccer can have in the lives of youth and the life lessons it provides. He was my original inspiration to aspire to be a collegiate coach.

My previous collegiate coaching experiences include serving as a volunteer assistant coach at SHU for two seasons, assistant coach at the University of St. Catherine’s (Division III) for one year, and assistant coach at the University of St. Thomas (Division III) for four years. I also coached club soccer for the Minnesota Thunder Academy (MTA), the only Elite Club National League (ECNL) club team in Minnesota. The ECNL was created by the top female soccer clubs in the country to enhance the competition and elevate the level of female soccer in the U.S. I assisted the 1999 and 1998 birth year age groups that are arguably the best teams for
their age in the state. In addition to my previous coaching experience, I had the opportunity of a life time to spend two years as a volunteer Performance Analyst for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill women’s soccer team. While studying and coding game film, scouting opponents, and analyzing data, I had an incredible experience learning from the talented coaching staff and players deep in a culture of excellence.

I have speculations about aspects that influence a team’s success and would like to confirm these hypotheses before becoming a head coach. By interviewing active and effective coaches in the field I intend to add to the overall body of knowledge about women’s collegiate soccer.

**Statement of the Problem, Purpose and Significance**

Since winning is essential to the success of the coach and the overall program, my research will address this question: what are the underlying factors that influence the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs? For the purpose of this study, I will define an effective team as a team that maintains consistent winning season records and I will define successful as a team with a very strong winning record. Considering the lack of research in this area, further study could provide an additional toolkit for success. I will describe the potential significance and benefits for current coaches, aspiring coaches, female collegiate student-athletes, and the sport of soccer in detail.

**Benefits to current coaches:** Research about the many influences necessary to create a successful program is important to coaches because securing and maintaining a college coaching job often hinges on the effectiveness of the team. A better understanding of the aspects instrumental to team effectiveness and ways to successfully influence those aspects can enhance results. The data may also inform current college coaches and athletic departments about the
level of resources and environmental factors needed for the university to compete at the top level.

According to the academic literature, there are elements of coaching that correlate to performance and winning such as defined team goals, clear individual roles, team culture, talent identification, team cohesion, and team efficacy (Christensen, 2009; Thomas, Fellingham, & Vehrs, 2009; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). Presently, there are courses, conventions, and literature about various aspects of soccer, but the field of collegiate coaching is missing detailed education about the holistic influences and aspects of creating a winning women’s collegiate soccer program. There is also a need to document and make available the knowledge of current coaches for the next generation to tap into and build upon. Researching and recording the lessons and insights of mastered coaches can offer valuable information to the professional field of coaching. Learning what these ideals are and educating aspiring coaches about common themes will advance coaches, players, and the sport. It is my hope that the 300,000 youth soccer coaches, of the reported 3,020,633 youth soccer players (as of 2012), can also utilize ideas and information from expert collegiate coaches about how to influence team effectiveness (US Youth Soccer, 2012, p. About).

Benefits to female collegiate student-athletes: The passing of Title IX produced a much greater opportunity for girls to play high school sports and created a platform for girls who wanted to play college sports after high school like their male counterparts. Since women’s collegiate soccer is relatively new (1981), there is limited research about women’s collegiate and competitive soccer. It is my hope that improving collegiate coaching will also positively impact the experience of the many female collegiate soccer players. It is my personal belief that
attention given to female sports and athletes, specifically female soccer players, enables professional coaches to more readily create female leaders for the future.

**Benefits to Athletic Department Administration:** Learning the influences of the most successful soccer programs will assist athletic directors and administrators in supporting collegiate women’s soccer programs. The findings will shed light on the important aspects universities and athletic departments need to provide for their women’s soccer program if they want to compete to be the best. It is possible the findings will also be transferable to other team sports, and give administration a model of the major influences that impact collegiate sports.

**Benefits to the sport of soccer:** Finally, it is important to move the sport forward through research, both on the field (e.g. technical or tactical) and off the field (e.g. team cohesion or leadership). Sharing knowledge about effective coaching will encourage growth for collegiate programs around the country and increase the competition within the sport.

**Research Question**

**Primary question:** With over 1,000 collegiate women’s soccer teams in the US, some teams are consistently at the top of the rankings. What are the factors that lead to winning teams? Within that context of exploration, the primary question for this study is as follows: what are the underlying factors that influence the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs?

**Secondary questions:** Since the NCAA is competitive at each level, my secondary research questions include: how does a collegiate women’s soccer head coach influence the effectiveness of his/her team? Furthermore, how does a head coach develop a winning team year after year and sustain a consistently effective collegiate women’s soccer program?
Overview of Chapters

I begin chapter two with a review of the historical context of collegiate women’s soccer followed by a literature review. The literature review covers three themes related to building effective teams including coach leadership, coaching the team, and coaching the individual. I also describe the theories I used to analyze my findings including an overarching theory of reframing organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013), organizational culture theory (Schein, 2010), and the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management (Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015).

In chapter three I explain the methodology for my qualitative case study. I give details about my participant selection process, and the steps I took to gain approval from the Institutional Review Board to move forward with the interview process, including ensuring participant anonymity. Finally, I explain my data collection and analysis process, validating my research process and the reliability of my findings. I end with an overview of my findings.

In chapter four I present the findings of what influences the most successful women’s soccer programs to be effective. The findings are followed by an analysis of the findings in chapter five, using the theoretical frameworks. I use the reframing organization, organizational culture and multilevel conceptual model of leadership theories mentioned above to interpret my findings.

To conclude, in chapter six I provide ideas for application. I explain the limitations of my study and provide recommendations for future areas of study. I end with a personal reflection of my experience. I conclude this chapter with a definition of terms. In chapter two I
review the historical context of collegiate women’s soccer and give orientation of the sport of soccer as it relates to this research.
**Definition of Terms**

**1-verse-1:** when one attacker goes at one defender, trying to beat him/her by getting beyond them, usually trying to move toward the goal.

**Division I, Division II, Division III:** NCAA division based on student body size, athletic budgets, and number of scholarships awarded. Division I has the largest budget, followed by Division II. Division III does not award athletic scholarships.

**ECNL:** Elite Club National League, which was the most competitive league for girls soccer at the time of my writing this dissertation.

**Effective team:** consistent winning seasons.

**Evolution of a head coach:** choosing to constantly learn and grow while striving towards excellence in the field of soccer.

**High-performing culture:** “the shared perception and action of elite team environment members (a) supports sustained optimal performance; (b) persists across time in the face of variable results (i.e., wins, losses, ties); and, most importantly; (c) leads to consistent high performance” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340).

**NCAA:** National Collegiate Athletic Association, the major collegiate athletics governing body.

**NSCAA:** National Soccer Coaches Association of America, a large educator of soccer coaches across age groups and levels.

**Possession:** keeping control of the ball so your team can systematically move the ball towards your attacking goal.

**Social Cohesion:** “the degree to which team members empathize with each other and enjoy the group fellowship” (Marcos et al., 2013, p. 222).

**Successful Team:** A team with a very strong winning record.
**Talent-yield Rate:** Number of successfully contributing recruits brought in per class year compared to the total number of students brought in for the class year.

**Task Cohesion:** “the degree to which group member’s work together to achieve common goals” (Marcos et al., 2013, p. 222).

**Team Culture:** An accepted definition of team culture is “a dynamic process characterized by the shared values, beliefs, expectations and practices across the members and generations of a defined group” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340).

**Video Break Down:** Using game film to analyze moments of a soccer game to teach student-athletes about technical or tactical aspects of the game or to scout opponents.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review of multiple sources of research in the field identified several themes and characteristics of winning teams. According to the academic literature, there are several elements of coaching that correlate with performance and winning such as defined team goals, clear individual roles, team culture, talent identification, team cohesion, and team efficacy (Christensen, 2009; Thomas, Fellingham, & Vehrs, 2009; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997).

There are also data about soccer-specific technical and tactical aspects that a coach should teach individuals and teams to enhance performance. There is plenty of non-academic, mainstream literature about winning coaches or how to win (e.g. Anderson & Sally, 2013; Colvin, 2010; Crothers 2006; Kuper, 2014) in soccer’s professional circles. However, there is no peer-reviewed academic literature defining or guiding how to influence the effectiveness of a NCAA women’s program. I discovered a wide range of academic literature about different aspects correlating to performance and winning in elite and collegiate athletics. I also found limited literature about what influences and affects performance and winning in elite soccer and more specifically NCAA women’s college soccer.

Despite the scarce literature about how a collegiate women’s soccer coach influences the effectiveness of his/her soccer program, my research builds on the historical context of women’s soccer and three main themes that emerged from the academic literature; first is coach leadership, second is coaching the team, and third is coaching the individual. The following section addresses the historical context of women’s soccer and the current state of women’s collegiate soccer. The literature review ends with a summary of gaps in the literature.
Historical Context: Growth in Women’s Soccer

A lot has changed since the early 1980s in women’s soccer. In this section, I will review the impact of Title IX and the Education Amendments Act of 1972 on females’ participation numbers in soccer. Next, I will highlight the current state of collegiate women’s soccer across the U.S., and specifically, how competitive women’s collegiate soccer has become. I will then present the current numbers of NCAA student-athletes playing soccer and conclude with a review and analysis of the most successful NCAA women’s soccer coaches.

The Influence of Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 was signed into law on June 23, 1972. It stated that “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied of benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal finance assistance” (Title IX of the Education Amendments, 1972). Title IX’s effect is seen in the dramatic growth of female athletics throughout the U.S., including soccer, as indicated by Hesse-Bieber and Carter (2005) in this trends description:

Girls’ participation in school sports programs has increased dramatically—in 1972, there were fewer than 300,000 girls participating in high school sports programs, compared to more than 3.6 million boys, a ratio of about 1:12; however, by 1995, there were 2.2 million girls involved in high school sports, compared to 3.5 million boys, a ratio of about 2:3 (Malec, 1997) and, by 2003, nearly 3 million girls were involved, versus nearly 4 million boys. (p. 119) Participant numbers in female athletics, and specifically girls’ soccer, have increased. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) conducted a High School
Athletics Participation Survey during the 2013-2014 school year. They found in the 2013-2014 school year there were 11,354 high schools offering a soccer team to 374,564 high school girl participants, and 11,719 high schools offering a soccer team to 417,419 high school boy participants (NFHS, 2014, p. 53). These statistics indicate a 1:1.11 ratio of girls to boys playing high school soccer. In addition, soccer was the seventh most popular boys’ high school sports program and the sixth most popular girl’s program for the 2013-2014 school year (NFHS, 2014, p. 55). Consequently, increasing opportunities for girls to play high school sports influenced the number of females wanting to play collegiate sports like their male counterparts.

**Collegiate Women’s Soccer**

Although there is no specific mention of athletics in the bill, Title IX led to an increase in the participation and popularity of women’s athletics. Girls’ participation in high school sports created a desire within them to compete in collegiate sports. The Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), founded in 1971, governed women’s collegiate athletics. AIAW sponsored the first collegiate women’s soccer championship game in 1981, which the University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill, won. The NCAA quickly followed by sanctioning the first NCAA women’s soccer Division I national championship tournament in 1982 (Crothers, 2006). Only 25 NCAA varsity teams existed in 1982. By 1985, the teams doubled to 54 programs and quadrupled to 103 teams by 1992 (Crothers, 2006). The NCAA offered the first Division III Women’s Soccer Championship in 1986 (NCAA, 2014, p. Division III) and Division II Women’s Soccer Championship in 1988 (NCAA, 2014, p. Division II).

**Current Numbers of NCAA Soccer**

For the 2013 collegiate soccer season, there were 1,826 NCAA collegiate soccer teams with 49,449 participant athletes (Irick, 2013, p. 73-74). Of those, 26,084 were female collegiate
soccer players (Irick, 2013, p. 73) playing Division I, Division II, or Division III NCAA soccer. There was an average of 25.8 student-athletes on each team (Irick, 2013, p.73). Table 1 shows the detailed breakdown of 2013 collegiate soccer participation.

Table 1. 2013-2014 NCAA Division I, II, & III Men's and Women's Soccer Participation

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<th>Men’s NCAA Soccer Teams</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>Number of Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division II</td>
<td>6,038</td>
<td>205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division III</td>
<td>11,621</td>
<td>406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
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The Competition: Current Most Successful Coaches

There are several examples of NCAA women’s soccer coaches who built and sustained winning programs. The top three most successful Division I coaches in collegiate women’s soccer in order of number of wins, through the 2013 season are: Anson Dorrance with 763 wins, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Len Tsantiris with 511 wins, University of Connecticut; Becky Burleigh with 419 wins, University of Florida. Each of them has coached for more than 25 years. Table 2 shows the NCAA list titled top 10 winningest Division I coaches by victories through 2013.
Fort (2006) wrote that the two most important factors for understanding the sports world is understanding economics and common sense. Historically, the teams that spend the most win the most. Anson Dorrance, head coach of UNC and former U.S. Women’s National team coach agrees with Fort. Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s when competitive women’s soccer
began, Dorrance believed that with the right support from UNC’s athletic department he could build a power house program that would perpetuate dominance into the future; and he did (Crothers, 2006).

Dorrance knew soccer was going to explode and was able to get ahead of the curve to build a tradition of excellence at UNC (Crothers, 2006). Including the 2016 NCAA season, Dorrance was the head coach at UNC for 38 years with a record of 809-66-36 overall. That is a .888 winning percentage that includes 22 National Championships (Lohse, 2014, p. 1). As the coach with the most wins, by a significant margin, Dorrance has clearly built an effective program. With this overview of the historical growth in women’s soccer, I will review the literature related to building effective teams.

**Coach Leadership**

The first theme to emerge from the literature review was *coach leadership*. In this section, I describe the six subthemes related to coach leadership: leadership styles; student-athlete preference of leadership style; the significance of clearly defined team goals, vision, and values; the importance of recruiting and talent identification.

**The Role of the Head Coach**

Research shows that the head coach of a NCAA program plays an important role in the development of individual players and the team, as well as the effectiveness of the program (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). Head coaches have demanding roles, and are commonly held to the standards of their respective academic institution. In competitive collegiate soccer programs, these high standards typically include goals such as a winning season and meeting the needs of the athletes, both on and off the field. According to Carron,
Hausenblas, and Eys (2005) the unique objective of every sport competition is winning, which provides at least one shared common purpose for all sport teams. Another unique aspect of sport is the undeniable fate of winning and losing. Winning is often an overarching goal for a team and leaders who achieve the goals set forth by the academic institution and athletic department are considered effective (Carron et al., 2005). In contrast, when a team is unsuccessful according to the win-loss ratio, the head coach is seen as ineffective and usually held directly accountable (Carron et al., 2005; D’Addona & Kind, 2014; Frontiera, 2010; Schroder, 2010). The tendency for head coaches to be held accountable for losses highlights the importance of a head coach’s ability to develop a winning team.

**Preferred Sports Leadership**

One simple way to measure a coach’s performance is by his/her team’s win-loss record. Researchers created alternate models to help analyze a coach’s performance from different perspectives. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) created the Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML), a measurement tool specifically applied to coaching sports and the effect of leader behavior on performance and athlete satisfaction. The MML measures leadership style from three perspectives: leader behavior, leader behavior preferred by the athletes, and required leader behavior. Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) proposed an athlete’s satisfaction and performance are strongly related to the above-mentioned aspects measured in the MML.

As leadership models developed, so did the measuring of leadership. Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) to measure leadership behavior in athletics. They identified five dimensions of leadership behavior to test: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. The LSS has three purposes, 1) to test athletes’ behavior preferences of their coach, 2) to test athletes’
perception of their coaches’ behavior, and 3) to test the coaches’ perception of his/her own behavior (Chelladurai, 1985). Zhang, Jensen, and Mann (1997) developed the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS). The RLSS examines the various styles of coaching behaviors: autocratic, democratic, positive feedback, training and instruction, social support and situational. The MML, LSS, and RLSS have all been used to analyze coaches. The models have been used to analyze club and professional soccer coaches and NCAA coaches. Alternatively, there are no published peer-reviewed studies that specifically analyze the leadership of collegiate soccer coaches.

Hoigaard, Jones, and Peters (2008) used the LSS to examine preferred coaching leadership behaviors of elite soccer players in Norway. They found that positive feedback, training and instruction, and democratic behavior were the most preferred leadership behaviors. Beam, Serwatka, and Wilson (2004) studied athletes’ preferred leadership behavior of NCAA Division I and Division II coaches using the RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997). Similar to Hoigaard et al. (2008), Beam et al. (2004) found that female, interdependent (team sports), open sport (respond to objects that move in space) athletes prefer democratic leadership behavior. Democratic leadership behavior referred to the amount of participation the student-athlete is allowed in decision making. In short, NCAA female athletes prefer a coach who considers time, environment, and individual student-athlete goal setting and methods to achieve (Beam et al., 2004).

Coach Efficacy and Performance

Feltz, Chase, Mortiz, and Sullivan (1999) defined coaching efficacy as “the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes” (p. 765). Using game strategy, motivation, teaching technique, and character building
as the four dimensions of the Coaching Efficacy Scale, the authors found coaching efficacy predicted coaching behavior, player satisfaction, and current success. Feltz et al. (1999) also found that coach efficacy is predicated by a coach’s previous success, coaching experience, perceived player talent, and social support. Generally, research supports the Pygmalion Effect which states that a leader’s actions are consistent with the expectation that he/she has formulated for the team members according to Navarre (2011). “The behavior, beliefs, and expectations of coaches can be manifested, both positively and negatively, in the efficacy beliefs held by the players” (p. 42). If the head coach believes with conviction in the opportunity for the team to succeed, the team has a higher likelihood of being effective.

**Leading Team Vision, Including Goals and Values**

Research shows it is important for the head coach to clearly communicate a vision, goals, and values to the team (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley et al., 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). One core component in building an effective team is a shared vision and unity of purpose (Yukelson, 1997). Further research shows athletes who participate in creating and setting the team’s goals have a better understanding of the goals and believe the goals have a stronger influence on the team (Brawley et al., 1993).

Price and Weiss (2013) found a collegiate coach is effective when he or she successfully communicates a vision about team goals, encourages participation towards team success, and acknowledges the individual’s role. Similarly, Fletcher and Arnold (2011) defined vision as the team’s ultimate aspiration. They identified vision as a characteristic of effective Olympic performance leadership. Performance leadership is leadership that creates, fosters, optimizes, and maintains a sustainable high-performance environment. Frontiera (2010) found that a
leader’s ability to communicate and *show the way*, through values, personnel, clearly communicated vision, and employee development is necessary for success. Frontiera (2010) also found it was important for leadership to *walk the talk*, meaning the leader’s daily actions promoted his or her espoused values to the athletes in the organization.

Overall, the research provided evidence that athletic leaders must define and clearly communicate a vision, goals, and core values for the team in order to influence team effectiveness. While research about which goals or values a leader should define for the organization varied slightly, the data clearly showed the importance of both. A well-defined vision reflects positively in the performance and effectiveness of athletic teams.

**Recruiting**

Clearly, the level of talent coaches can recruit to their NCAA soccer programs can help or hurt team performance. Research on the influence of recruiting in NCAA women’s soccer is minimal. Magnusen (2011) wrote a dissertation about the effects of the recruiter characteristics on recruiting effectiveness in Division I women’s soccer. He specifically studied head coaches and the quality of recruits they were able to sign. Magnusen (2011) found that political skill, agreeableness, neuroticism, behavioral integrity, career record, and NCAA rank significantly impacted the recruiting effectiveness of a coach.

There is some variation in the research about the most important factors for a student-athlete recruit during the college selection process. Popp, Pierce, and Hums (2010) studied the most important factors in the college selection for both international and domestic student-athletes attending NCAA Division I schools. The most important factor for domestic student-athletes in choosing a university was a college degree leading to a job followed by the overall reputation of the university. Popp et al. (2010) also found that female student-athletes rate
academic factors significantly higher than male student-athletes, regardless of residence. The most important factor in the college selection process for international student-athletes was the amount of scholarship followed by the personality of the head coach. Slightly different, Doyle and Gaeth (1990) found the main factor for student-athlete’s college choice was the perceived financial need followed by amount of scholarship.

**Talent Identification**

While reviewing the literature, I found research about recruiting in several collegiate sports, however, there is limited research about elite or collegiate soccer recruiting or player talent identification. Christensen (2009) researched how top-level Danish soccer coaches identify talent. The research showed three trends in talent identification. First, the coaches used practical sense, relying on their experience with soccer and recruiting to recognize patterns of movement. Second, the coaches looked for dedicated and coachable players who were willing to work hard and learn. Third, coaches looked for talent while recruiting top-level players (Christensen, 2009). “Coaches’ construction of talent is based on a taste for certain perceived traits” (Christensen, 2009, p. 379). Coaches identify important talents for their program based on experience; talent preferences vary for each coach.

Thomas, Fellingham, and Vehrs (2009) developed a notational system to evaluate technical soccer skills and how each relates to creating scoring opportunities. Although Thomas et al. (2009) did not relate their study to recruiting, they identified important skills for recruiting. They found that dribbling was the most effective skill to create scoring chances, specifically creativity and improvisation while dribbling. Dribbling was followed by the combination of first touch and passing as an important skill to create scoring opportunities. More research is needed on women’s collegiate soccer recruiting and talent identification.
Coaching the Team

The second theme in the review of literature is coaching the team. This section reviews the literature about coaching different aspects of a team to improve performance and winning percentage. I begin this section with literature about team culture, high-performing team culture, the effect culture has on performance and motivational climate. Next, I analyze the literature about cohesion and team efficacy, and their correlation followed by group dynamics in sport. Finally, I finish this section with a review of the literature related to changing team culture to improve performance.

Team Culture

According to Pensgaard and Roberts (2002), elite athletes believe their coach plays a significant role in creating the culture of the team. The methods in which leaders create their team culture is discussed widely, both in professional circles and the mainstream media. There is ample data on organizational theory culture and the elements that create culture. However, I did not find any peer reviewed academic data about collegiate women’s soccer team culture and how it is created or influenced by a coach.

Created in 1941, the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) is currently the world’s largest soccer coaches’ organization serving members at every level of the game (NSCAA, 2012). At the 2013 NSCAA national convention, Donna Fishter (collegiate coach), with the assistance of Michelle Akers (former national team player) and Amanda Cromwell (current UCLA head coach, 2013 NCAA champions), gave a presentation called Gain Competitive Advantage by Mobilizing Strong Team Culture (Fishter, 2014). They discussed the importance of team culture and the positive or negative effects culture can have on a team throughout a season. Cromwell spoke about the importance of team culture for UCLA to win the
2013 NCAA National Championship and Akers spoke about the importance of team culture inspired by coaching leadership throughout her U.S. national team experiences. Throughout the presentation, all three speakers reiterated how important team culture is for the success or failure of an elite soccer team and that it is the head coach’s job to create the team’s culture; insisting good team culture was necessary for success (Fishter, Cromwell, & Akers, 2014).

Krane and Baird (2006) believed it was “impossible to comprehend athletes’ mental states and behaviors without understanding the social norms and culture that encompass them,” (p. 88), so they encouraged an ethnographic approach to understanding the culture of a team from the perspective of team members. “The group culture will lend insight into the behaviors, values, emotions, and mental states of the group members” (p. 88). An accepted definition of team culture is “a dynamic process characterized by the shared values, beliefs, expectations and practices across the members and generations of a defined group” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340). Fletcher and Wagstaff (2009) found culture had the potential to significantly impact an individual’s well-being and performance. Their findings also indicated that the climate and culture in elite sports require careful and informed leadership (of a coach) in order to optimize each individual’s experiences.

**High-Performing Culture**

Several researchers studied performance-optimizing cultures (Martens, 1987; Schroeder, 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Frontiera, 2010; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Krane & Baird, 2005; Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Consistent with the definition of culture, high-performing culture is created when “the shared perception and action of elite team environment members (a) supports sustained optimal performance; (b) persists across time in the face of
variable results (i.e., wins, losses, ties); and, most importantly; (c) leads to consistent high performance” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340).

Cruickshank and Collins (2012) studied high-performing cultures and concluded the culture emerged and evolved from interactions between coach ideals and their athletes’ beliefs and expectations. While researching team culture they differentiated between change in culture (doing something better) and change of culture (introducing new practices). Cruickshank and Collins (2012) highlighted specific group dynamics process markers which may be potential areas for analysis and action to better optimize team culture and performance: role clarity, sound coach-athlete relationships, optimal achievement goals, performance feedback, and goal setting.

The culture of the team provides insight into the behaviors, values, and emotions of the players (Krane & Baird, 2005). Fletcher & Wagstaff (2009) suggest that scholars focus their attention on organizational factors that promote excellence. Fletcher and Arnold (2011) identified characteristics of effective Olympic performance leadership that created, optimized and maintained a sustainable high-performance environment. Fletcher and Arnold (2011) defined culture as the shared beliefs and expectations within the team. (See the team efficacy section for more about shared beliefs.) Through their investigation of leadership management in elite sports, they found the main culture issues for the leader to address were first, to establish role awareness, and second, to build organizational and team atmosphere:

Leading and managing elite sport teams is a multifaceted phenomenon involving the development of a vision, the management of operations, the leadership of people, and the creation of culture. More specifically, in order to sustain the highest levels of performance in their teams, leaders and managers must identify their people, and transform individuals’ attitudes and group cohesion. (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011, p. 238)
To be effective leaders, coaches must create an environment for the whole team to sustain high-performance levels. However, it is necessary for each athlete to know her or his role within the whole (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). The coach needs to communicate roles frequently to maintain high-performing culture. Where there is some variation throughout the research regarding the different aspects that create team culture, however, professionals, mainstream media, and peer reviewed research agree team culture can positively or negatively affect the performance and effectiveness of a team.

**Achievement Goal Theory: Goal Orientation and Motivational Climate**

According to Nicholls (1984), achievement goal theory assumes a person has the desire to develop and demonstrate competence and avoid demonstrating incompetence. Achievement goal theory includes two main aspects: goal orientation (how an individual perceives success) and climate (situational determinants). Nicholls (1984) differentiates between types of goal orientations in achievement situations: task and ego. Both are a reflection of how an individual perceives his or her success. Task-involved goal orientation succeeds by improving performance. Ego-involved goal orientation succeeds when an individual’s performance compares favorably to other’s performance. The goal state is dynamic and changes as information is processed.

Ames (1984 & 1992) differentiates between two types of climates: performance climate and mastery climate. The premise of motivational climate research is that “the individual perceives the degree to which task and ego criteria are salient within the context (Roberts & Treasure, 2012, pg. 15). According to Ames (1992) performance climate occurs when success and failure are other-referenced and ego-involving and mastery climate occurs when success and
failure are self-referenced and task-involving. Climate is dynamic and should be conceived as a continuum, not an either-or situation.

Kuczka and Treasure (2005) examined the influence of perceptions of the motivational climate, self-efficacy, and perceived importance of the claimed situational self-handicaps of 70 collegiate golfers. Kuczka and Treasure (2005) found participants who perceived the event to be of low personal importance reported more self-handicaps. Their suggestion to coaches was “to facilitate a reduction in situational claimed self-handicapping, then the results of the present study suggest that he/she should strive to de-emphasize ego-involving cues and emphasize task-involving cues in the achievement context” (Kuczka & Treasure, 2005, p. 549).

Cohesion

Team cohesion is necessary to sustain the highest levels of performance and effectiveness (Candan, 2008; Carron, Widmeyer & Brawley, 1985; Carron, Bray & Eys, 2002; Carron et al., 2005; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Marcos, Sanchez-Miguel, Sanchez-Oliva, Alonso, & Garcia-Calvo, 2012; Mullen and Copper, 1994; Pain & Harwood, 2007; Weinberg & McDermott, 2002; Yukelson, 1997). The widely-accepted definition of cohesion proposed by Carron, Brawley, and Widmeyer (1998) stated group cohesion is “a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” (p. 213) (Candan, 2008; Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002; Carron, Hauserblas, & Eys, 2005; Marcos et al., 2012; Yukelson; 2008).

Carron, Brawley and Widmeyer (1985) saw the need to create a tool to measure group cohesion in athletics, so they created the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) to assess task and social cohesion on athletic teams. The GEQ measures four aspects including group
integration—task (GI-T), group integration—social (GI-S), individual attraction to group—task (ATG-T), and individual attractions to group—social (ATG-S) (Carron et al., 1985). Carron et al. (2002) and Marcos et al. (2013) differentiated between task cohesion and social cohesion. Task cohesion is “the degree to which group members work together to achieve common goals” (Marcos et al., 2013, p. 222). Social cohesion is “the degree to which team members empathize with each other and enjoy the group fellowship” (Marcos et al., 2013, p. 222). Environmental, personal, leadership and team factors influence task and social cohesions.

Yukelson (1997) highlighted cohesiveness as one of the six most important components to building a successful team. Further research shows there is a correlation between team cohesion and effectiveness in sports, measured by wins (Carron et al., 2002; Mullen & Copper, 1994). Carron, Bray and Eys (2002) also found a strong relationship between cohesion and success. They suggested that coaches develop and implement team building strategies to influence team cohesion because they found task cohesion correlated to team effectiveness. Focusing on task cohesion, they tested the generally held assumption that the greater team cohesiveness the greater the team effectiveness. Brawley, Carron, and Widmeyer (1993) found that group cohesion and participation in setting group goals to be the most reliable predictors of group goal satisfaction for both practice and competition.

Carron et al. (2002) examined the relationship between team perceptions of task cohesion and team success (measured by win-loss percentage) in elite basketball and soccer teams. They found a very strong relationship between cohesion and success in team sports. Carron, Bray, and Eys (2005) found task cohesion correlated to team performance success. They suggest “coaches and sport psychologists would do well to develop effective team building strategies in an attempt to influence cohesiveness directly” (p.124). The current research clearly shows the
importance of a head coach creating team cohesion because of its relationship with performance (Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2002; Carron et al., 2005).

**Team Efficacy**

For the purpose of this study, both collective efficacy and team efficacy will be defined as, “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment” (Bandura, 1977, p.477). Research shows the athletes’ belief that the team will be effective directly affects the team’s effectiveness (Bandura, 1977; Short, Sullivan, & Feltz, 2005; Navarre, 2011, Marcos, et al. 2012). “While athletes need strong beliefs in their individual ability to perform well, successful performances by teams are usually achieved through athlete’s beliefs in their team’s ability to be successful” (Navarre, 2011, p. 37). Bandura (2006) discovered the more collective efficacy a team has, the more invested, determined, and accomplished they will be. Overall, teams with higher collective efficacy perform better (Bandura, 2006; Navarre, 2011; Short et. al. 2005).

**Group Cohesion and Collective/Team Efficacy**

As stated above, research shows both cohesion and team efficacy have a positive impact on team effectiveness. In addition to the independent importance of cohesion and team efficacy, researchers found evidence that they are predictors of each other and important factors in team sports (Marcos, Sanchez-Miguel, Sanchez-Oliva, Amado & Garcia-Calvo, 2013; Carron et al., 2002). Furthermore, research has positively linked cohesion and team efficacy with performance and effectiveness (Carron et al., 2002).

Marcos et al. (2012) used the GEQ to study male soccer players ages 15-19 and their perception of cohesion and efficacy throughout the season in relation to their expectations for
success. Marcos et al. (2012) used the GI-T (group integration—task) and GI-S (group integration—social) dimensions to measure team cohesions. They measured four types of efficacy: self-efficacy (belief in self), collective efficacy (belief in the team), teammate perceived efficacy (teammate’s perceived efficacy in the team), and coach-perceived efficacy (coach rates each player) which were all grouped together to form a single factor perceived efficacy. Marcos et al. (2012) concluded that coaches should clarify players’ personal and team goals for the season in an effort to create realistic expectations. If the players’ expectations are higher than the team’s realistic potential, levels of cohesion and perceived efficacy will decrease which may have a negative effect on performance (Marcos et al. 2012).

Marcos et al. (2013) studied 235 Spanish, under-18 soccer players and 15 coaches to further research cohesion and perceived efficacy. They found that players with high cohesion and high efficacy had greater success in several areas. Players with high cohesion and high efficacy had higher expectations, played for more minutes, performed better (peer and coach perception of efficacy), and played for higher performing teams (wins). Marcos et al. (2013) recommended future research for strategies in “intervention programs to improve cohesion and collective efficacy and to achieve better performance in team sports” (p.228).

**Group Dynamics in Sport**

Carron, Hausenblas and Eys’ (2005) studied group dynamics in sport, specifically how team members work together to be winning sport teams, based on the premise the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. According to Carron’s et al. (2005) group dynamics in sport theory, outcomes are based on member attributes, group environment, group structure, group cohesion, and group process, many of which are found in the literature. Group dynamic theory in sports is based on Carron’s et al. (2005) model below:
INFLUENCES THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVENESS

Figure 1. Group Dynamic Theory in Sport

(As cited Figure 1.4. A conceptual framework for the study of sport teams, Carron et al., 2005, p. 19)

The model starts with the member attributes and group environment and moves through group structure, group cohesion, and group process. In the end there are individual outcomes and team outcomes.

Team Building

Yukelson (1997) studied college athletics and identified six fundamental practices of effective teams, all of which correlate to team building. The first practice of an effective team is collaborative and synergistic teamwork, where there is common vision and purpose for the group and each individual knows her abilities and role, the roles of others, and accepts these roles. The second, individual and mutual accountability, means individuals need to be dedicated, committed and willing to sacrifice to do everything in their power to be the best they can be. The third practice of an effective team is positive team culture and cohesive group atmosphere:

It has been noted that when team culture is not adequately developed; or is incompatible with the direction the team is heading, the team will most likely function below its performance capabilities (Martens, 1987). As such, the coach needs to be aware of the
prevailing attitudes and feelings that exist within the team at all times (Yukelson, 1984).

Moreover, every team member should be made to feel valued, appreciated, and empowered. (Yukelson, 1997, p. 84)

The fourth practice of an effective team is team identity which means taking pride in group membership. The fifth is open and honest communication processes, where effective communication is based on trust, honesty, mutual sharing, and mutual understanding. The sixth and final practice of an effective team according to Yukelson (1997) is peer helping social support, which refers to a family-like support group. Understanding that team building is a dynamic process, Yukelson (1997) found that adhering to these practices maximized a team’s potential.

**Managing Culture through Change**

As collegiate student-athletes move through the natural four-year cycle of college, the staff must recreate or maintain team culture as players annually come and go (Aghazadeh & Kyei, 2009). There is ample data about what elements create, influence and change culture (Andersen, 2011; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Krane & Baird, 2005; Martens, 1987; Schein, 2010; Schroeder, 2010). Since I did not find literature on how collegiate soccer coaches create or change high-performing team culture, I will review the literature of changing the culture of elite or professional teams and programs. Kotter and Heskett (1992) and Frontiera (2010) found it was essential for athletic organizations to be adaptable and open to change and this openness was directly correlated to effectiveness.

Schroeder (2010) conducted a qualitative study interviewing 10 Division I newly appointed softball, football, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and men’s volleyball head coaches to determine if the team’s improved success also changed the team culture. He used
organizational culture framework as he studied coaches who took over a collegiate program and led their team to the NCAA tournament in their respective sport. Since the NCAA only allows athletes four playing seasons, collegiate coaches must manage and maintain culture every year in spite of high turnover with new first years coming in and seniors graduating. Schroeder (2010) noted the ability to change the culture in athletics quicker than other organizations may be due to the high turnover rate. Although Schroeder (2010) looked at Division I coaches and changing the culture, he did not include any NCAA soccer coaches in his study and recommended further research on team culture change be done on a wider sample to enhance the research literature. Schroeder’s (2010) research found evidence for a positive relationship between culture and team effectiveness that he believes should be further explored.

Frontiera (2010) examined the phenomena of leadership and organization culture change in professional sports. He wrote that underperforming teams are usually blamed on the coach, and when a coach is let go from a team, it suggests that culture change is needed. He explained organizational culture in lay terms as “the way we do things around here” (p. 71). Frontiera (2010) interviewed six professional team owners or managers who had successfully changed the culture of an organization, as evident by team performance. He found to create high performing culture, a new leader must lead with strong and clear expectations. The research is clear that it is necessary for organizations to consistently evaluate performance and look for ways to improve culture to stay at the top (Frontiera, 2010; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Schroeder, 2010).

Coaching the Individual

The third theme to emerge from the literature review is coaching the individual. This section comprises a review of soccer specific training and instruction including technical,
tactical, physical, and psychosocial aspects. A second subtheme focuses on the importance of clearly communicated and accepted formal and informal roles for each individual.

**Training and Instruction**

Improving the performance level of a student-athlete through training and instruction is possibly the most important role of a coach (Beam et al., 2004; Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). According to Perez (2014), the U.S. Soccer Curriculum highlights four key components of soccer that a coach should teach to develop each player: technical, tactical, physical, and psychosocial. The technical skill component of soccer includes passing and receiving, shooting, dribbling and turning with ball control, heading, 1v1 attacking and defending, shielding the ball, crossing and finishing. The attacking tactical strategy aspects of soccer or knowledge of how to play, includes possession of the ball and movement off the ball around the field, transition from offense to defense, and from defense to offense on a counter attack, combination play, switching the point of attack, playing out from the back through the midfield towards the goal, and finishing or scoring goals in the final third. The tactical component also includes defensive principles, such as pressure, cover, balance, tracking and switching marks, zonal defending, pressing, dropping, and compactness. The physical component of soccer includes speed, agility, endurance, strength, and power. The psychosocial component of soccer encompasses respecting teammates, coaches, referees, and opponents, as well as discipline, competitiveness, and cooperation to achieve the objectives of the training session, game and season. The four components are taught at each U.S. Soccer certificate and license course and are widely known and used (Perez, 2014). The components are meant to guide training sessions to develop and prepare players for games. In addition to coaching the
four key components of soccer, Perez (2014) also included set pieces, formations, and goalkeeping as necessary coaching content.

There are very few peer-reviewed studies about the technical and tactical aspects necessary to perform, excel, and win at the NCAA women’s soccer level. I will highlight the two studies specific to NCAA women’s soccer. There is an opportunity for research in each of the four key component areas, specifically to NCAA women’s soccer and how each component relates to winning. I will also report Anderson and Sally’s (2013) study about the importance of possession in regards to winning.

Ali (2011) found it is most important for a coach to teach their players fundamental technical motor skills to successfully pass, dribble and shoot the ball at goal. Ali (2011) found the most important tactical aspects include decision making and using high levels of perceptual and cognitive skill. Ali (2011) found players with technical abilities and tactical awareness are able to find necessary information on the field and process efficiently before making a decision and taking action.

As stated in the recruiting sections, Thomas, Fellingham, and Vehrs (2009) developed a notational system to evaluate technical soccer skills and how each skill relates to creating scoring opportunities. Thomas et al. (2009) studied technical aspects of soccer and found that dribbling was the most effective technical skill to create scoring chances, specifically creativity and improvisation while dribbling. Dribbling was followed by the combination of first touch and passing as an important technical skill to create scoring changes. Mainstream literature analyzes soccer statistics including how technical and tactical skills can help a team win (Anderson & Sally, 2013; Kuper, 2014); however, they focus on men’s professional soccer and do not review NCAA women’s soccer.
Anderson and Sally (2013) published a statistical analysis book about soccer, using statistics from the best men’s leagues and tournaments around the world, including Bundesliga (German), English Premier League (EPL), La Liga (Spanish), and Serie A (Italian). Anderson and Sally (2013) wrote about the importance of possession which they defined as “having control over the ball” (p.139). As stated above, technical skill of first touch, dribbling, and passing is necessary for keeping possession, as well as tactical knowledge and movement off the ball (Perez, 2014). In the EPL, Anderson and Sally (2013) found the following about the critical role of possession influencing wins:

Teams that do a better job of keeping the ball away from their opponents do have more shots and do score more goals…whatever possession statistic you look at—overall, completion percentage, volume—having more, rather than less, possession of the ball increases offensive output…keeping hold of the ball, completing at a higher rate, and not surrendering it so often to the opposition means more wins, more points and more success. (p. 155-156)

In the profession, it is common knowledge that keeping possession is an important aspect of team effectiveness on the field. Coaching possession is also an excellent example of teaching both technical skill and tactical knowledge to increase effectiveness of individual players and the team.

**Roles: Formal and Informal**

Several researchers noted the importance of the head coach in providing role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al. 2007; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). Not only is role clarity important, but role clarity and role acceptance influence team effectiveness (Yukelson,
Within each collegiate soccer team, there are several roles, both formal and informal (Martens, 2004). Formal roles may include head coach, assistant coach, captain, senior, junior, sophomore, freshman, or redshirt. Informal roles may include peer-leader, starter, non-starter, or practice player. According to Fletcher and Arnold, (2011), athletic leaders must create an environment for the whole team to sustain high-performance levels; however, it is necessary for each athlete to know her/his role within the whole. The coach needs to communicate roles frequently to maintain high-performing culture.

Fletcher & Arnold (2011) investigated the performance of leadership management in elite sports and found one of the main culture issues was establishing role awareness. Cope, Eys, Schinke, and Bosselut (2010) researched how “cancers,” or negative players, can distract others on the team, bringing a negativity which can derail cohesion, team efficacy, and performance (p. 420). Price and Weiss (2013) found a NCAA women’s soccer coach finds more success winning when he or she effectively communicates a vision about team goals, encourages participation towards team success, and acknowledges each individual’s role. Yukelson (1997) identified six fundamental practices of effective teams which included each individual knowing her abilities and role, the roles of others, and acceptance of both. He also found each individual needs to be dedicated, committed and sacrifice to do everything in her power to be the best they can be.

Each individual athlete on a team has unique strengths that must be utilized. The research stated the importance of the leader establishing role clarity for each member of the team.

More specifically to soccer teams, Beam et al. (2004) found that athletes with a non-starting role preferred positive feedback while the team was successful and democratic behavior while the team was unsuccessful. Beam et al. (2004) elaborated that this may be due to non-starting athletes needing confirmation of their impact and role while the team is succeeding.
without their contribution on the field. Athletic leaders benefit from creating an environment for the whole team to sustain high-performance levels and informing each athlete of his/her role within the whole (Fletcher and Arnold, 2011). The coach needs to communicate roles frequently to maintain effectiveness.

**Summary, Gaps, and Limitations in the Literature**

I reviewed three main themes of literature including coach leadership, coaching the team, and coaching the individual. According to the literature, there are five elements of coaching that clearly help the effectiveness of teams in general. To summarize, the first element the literature illuminated was the importance of the head coach as a leader to develop individuals and the team in athletics (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). Second, the literature showed the significance of a head coach clearly communicating a vision, goals, and values to the team (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley et al., 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). Third, the literature illustrated the importance of the head coach creating a team culture in regards to effectiveness (Martens, 1987; Schroeder, 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Frontiera, 2010; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Krane & Baird, 2005; Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Fourth, the literature strongly stated team cohesion is necessary to sustain the highest levels of performance and effectiveness (Candan, 2008; Carron et al., 1985; Carron, et al. 2002; Carron, et al., 2005; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Marcos et al., 2012; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Pain & Harwood, 2007; Weinberg & McDermott, 2002; Yukelson, 1997). Fifth, and finally, the research showed strong data in support of the need for the head coach to provide role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al. 2010; Cruickshank &
Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). Furthermore, along with clearly communicating roles, the head coach must work towards student-athlete acceptance of her/his role because it influences performance (Yukelson, 1997; Brawley et al., 1993). Although these aspects were found to enhance individual and team effectiveness, further research on each element should be tested specifically in NCAA women’s soccer.

Research about collegiate women’s soccer is limited. Focused research on what influences the effectiveness of collegiate women’s soccer programs including individual and team soccer instruction as well as organizational team culture factors that promote excellence and influence performance. The current limited range of research and literature about NCAA women’s soccer leaves coach practitioners pulling methods and ideas from several sources and in need of a more comprehensive picture of the specific influences of the most successful Women’s soccer programs.

While there is research on many different aspects that influence team sport such as coach leadership, recruiting, and cohesion, there is very little research about NCAA women’s soccer programs. For example there is minimal data about recruiting, specifically collegiate women’s soccer recruiting. As noted throughout the course of this review, there is a gap in the peer-reviewed literature about several aspects of NCAA women’s soccer, especially holistic research about all of the major influences of NCAA women’s soccer programs.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

In choosing theoretical frameworks to analyze my literature review findings and interpret my research data, the goal was to provide coaches with a holistic view of what influences the most successful women’s soccer programs. I chose to use more general theoretical frameworks
about factors that influences the effective organizations in order to shed light on how an effective collegiate women’s soccer coach builds his/her program.

I adopted three theoretical frameworks to analyze my literature content review findings. The first theoretical framework is Bolman and Deal’s (2013) reframing organization theory which I will use as an overarching framework to view my overall findings through different lenses. The second theoretical framework is Schein’s (2010) organizational culture, used to understand the influence of the university, the organization that houses women’s soccer program. The third theoretical framework is Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton’s (2015) interdependent leadership process which analyzes coach leadership within the many relationships of the sport management field. In this section, I summarize the basic assumptions of each theoretical framework.

Reframing Organization Theoretical Framework

I chose to use Bolman and Deal’s (2013) reframing organization theoretical framework. The authors state that: “A good frame is a mental model—a set of ideas and assumptions—that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular ‘territory.’ A good frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and ultimately what you can do about it,” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 11). This particular framework calls for leaders to assess their organization from multiple angles in order to find pathways to effectiveness. Bolman and Deal offer four lenses which they call the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. According to Bolman and Deal (2013) “Each of the frames has its own image of reality…learning to apply all four deepens your appreciation and understanding of organizations” (p. 18). The model touches on all the themes in the literature related to building
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Team effectiveness. Next I will describe the four frames for viewing organizations and the relationships to focus areas in the literature.

The structural frame examines an organization as a “machine,” highlighting leadership competence as that of the social architecture (p. 19). The central concepts of the structural frame include roles, goals, policies, technology, and environment. An example of the structural frame is roles of the players, both formal and informal within the team. The human resource frame examines an organization as a “family” where the organizational and human needs are aligned (p. 19). Using this frame, the needs, skills, and relationships related to group members are central concepts. An example of the human resource frame found in the content review is coaching the individual, specifically training and instruction to develop players. The political frame explores an organization as a “jungle” with an agenda and power base (p. 19). The central concepts are power, conflict, competition, and politics. The political frame can also be found in the content literature review within the ideas of recruiting when looking at the most important factors in the college selection process. The political frame helps highlight how those factors either help or hinder collegiate women’s soccer programs from getting top recruits. Finally, the symbolic frame views an organization as a “carnival,” “temple,” or “theater” creating faith, beauty, and meaning (p. 19). Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories and heroes are central concepts to the symbolic frame. The symbolic frame is found in coach efficacy and performance, if the coach believes a team can succeed, he/she is a symbol and role model to the players who will start to believe they can win.

An overview of the four-frame model is shown below, highlighting the metaphor for organization, central concepts image of leadership, and basic leadership challenge:
### Table 3. Overview of the Four-Frame Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Human Resource</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor for</td>
<td>Factory or machine</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Jungle</td>
<td>Carnival, temple, theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central concepts:</td>
<td>Roles, goals, policies, technology</td>
<td>Needs, skills,</td>
<td>Power, conflict, competition,</td>
<td>Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and environment</td>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>politics</td>
<td>ceremony, stories, heroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of leadership:</td>
<td>Social architecture</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Advocacy and political savvy</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic leadership</td>
<td>Attune structure to task, technology</td>
<td>Align organizational</td>
<td>Develop agenda and power base</td>
<td>Create faith, beauty, meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenge:</td>
<td>and human needs</td>
<td>and human needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(As cited Exhibit 1.1. Overview of the Four-Frame Model, Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 19)

Within the literature there were examples of each frame. An example of the structural frame is found in how coaches organize the formal and informal roles to their student-athletes since several researchers noted the importance of the head coach in providing role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al., 2007; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). The human resource frame can be found in the development of the group dynamics and team cohesion. An example of the political frame can be found in athlete preferred coaching leadership behaviors. Several researchers have studied preferred coaching leadership behaviors with varied results, however, democratic leadership behavior seems to be favored by NCAA female team sport athletes (Beam et al., 2004). Finally, an example of the symbolic frame found in the literature is in coach efficacy or “the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes” (Feltz, Chase, Mortiz, & Sullivan, 1999, p.765). The
coach’s efficacy is symbolic and infectious for the players, in what they believe they can achieve. Next I will give an overview of the organizational culture theoretical framework.

**Organizational Culture Theoretical Framework**

According to Schein’s (2010) culture through an organizational framework lens, leaders provide the framework for their followers through the mission, vision, and environmental context. Organizational culture theory provides the assumption that leaders create culture using tools to teach their organization how to “perceive, think, feel, and behave” (Schein, 2010, p.236). The culture-embedding mechanisms are found throughout the literature. Below are Schein’s culture-embedding mechanisms, for leaders to use as tools:

*Figure 2. Culture-Embedding Mechanism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture-Embedding Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Embedding Mechanisms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How leaders allocate resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How leaders allocate rewards and status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Articulation and Reinforcement Mechanisms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organization design and structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organizational systems and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Organizational rites and rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Design of physical space, facades, and buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stories about important events and people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An example of deliberate coaching, a primary embedding mechanism would be improving the performance level of a student-athlete through training and instruction, which is possibly the most important role of a coach (Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980;
Beam et al., 2004). Schein’s (2010) organizational culture perspective, with a leader-centered model, was strongly reflected in the literature to examine the culture of intercollegiate athletic teams (Frontiera, 2010; Schroeder, 2010). “The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead,” wrote Schein (2010, p. 22).

Schein’s model measures culture on three levels: artifacts, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. I will review the three levels of embedding culture and how they were found and supported throughout the literature.

**Level I: Artifacts.** The first level of culture, artifacts, includes public aspects of the culture that can be seen or heard. These artifacts may consist of the physical environment such as a locker room or field. Artifacts also include language used, mission statement, vision statement, published list of values, emotions displayed, behavior, habits, or routines. Finally, artifacts also include myths and stories told about the organization, and observable rituals and ceremonies (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) noted that the observer always brings his/her own assumptions, but if the observer lives in the culture for an extended time, the meanings of the artifacts will become clearer.

There were many artifacts mentioned in the literature that were deemed important for the success of the team. An example of artifacts found in the literature is clearly communicated vision, goals, and values (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley et al. 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). For example, a written document of the team or program’s vision (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley et al., 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997).
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**Level II: Beliefs and values.** The second level of culture, beliefs and values, should reflect the leader’s ideals and influence the team to adopt his/her approach to win. This includes how members interact with each other and their environment. The espoused beliefs “serve the normative or moral function of guiding members of the group in how to deal with certain key situations, and in training new members how to behave,” (Schein, 2010, p. 27), so they must be continually expressed. Schein (2010) noted that expected behavior does not necessarily reflect observed behavior within an organization. When observing values and beliefs the differences between “underlying assumptions that guide performance, those that are part of the ideology or philosophy of the organization, and those that are rationalization or only aspirations for the future,” (Schein, 2010, p. 27), must be distinguished.

Optimizing culture on collegiate and elite teams is important (Martens, 1987; Schroeder, 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Frontiera, 2010; Krane & Baird, 2005). Martens (1987) wrote team culture consists of “selecting, motivating, rewarding, retaining, and unifying members of your team—players, assistants, everyone who helps your organization” (p. 33). The role of beliefs and values was also a strong focus in the literature. Athletes’ beliefs in their team’s ability to win, team efficacy, is one example of the beliefs and values level of culture found in the literature. Research also showed the importance of the athletes’ belief that the team will succeed and how that belief affected team success (Bandura, 1977; Short et al, 2005; Navarre, 2011; Marcos, et al., 2012). Overall, teams with higher collective efficacy are more effective (Bandura, 2006; Navarre, 2011; Short et al., 2005).

**Level III: Basic underlying assumptions within and organization.** To deeply understand culture, Schein (2010) recommended observing the third level of culture, basic underlying assumptions within an organization, to decipher patterns and predict future behavior.
Basic assumptions are usually taken for granted and tend to be very difficult to change. Since individuals tend to find security in their beliefs, changing a basic assumption can be destabilizing. However, this may be necessary to change a negative culture.

In the literature content review, the studies related to daily training and instruction constituted on level III culture embedding mechanisms. An example of a necessary change is the idea of changing an organizational culture from losing to winning with a new leader (Schroder, 2010; Frontiera, 2010). A new leader has the opportunity to change the shared basic assumptions that influence the group because the team will interact according to the shared assumptions.

**Interdependent Leadership Process**

The interdependent leadership process in sport management by Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton’s (2015) is the third theoretical framework I chose to aid analysis of the literature and research findings. In an attempt to develop off field sport-focused leadership theory, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) conducted a comprehensive synthesis of the off-field sport management leadership literature since the 1970s and created a leadership in sport management conceptual model in which they hoped to “challenge those interested in leadership research to take up and further develop our understanding of this complex phenomenon” (p. 577). The multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management shown below, includes the coaches and athletes as one aspect of a very large and interdependent organization.

*Figure 3. Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management.*
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(As cited Figure 1. Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015, p. 578)

I adopted this framework to analyze the systems and environments that house the women’s soccer programs. The head coach functions within the sport management leadership process interdependently, not separately. The interdependent leadership process can be found in the content literature review of the role of the coach as it relates to the individual players, team, and program. Research shows that the head coach of a NCAA program plays an important role in the development of individual players and the team, as well as the effectiveness of the program (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997) however it is important to keep in perspective that the effort of the coach is not isolated.

The literature focused on the team organization but the multilevel conceptual model points to the need for examining the relationship of the team and program to the larger university context. The coaches and athletes are working within a larger university organization with a set governance structure along with influential fans and alumni (shown in Figure 3.) that impact the
athletic department and women’s soccer program. “As a process leadership is dynamic, fluid, and affected by numerous factors” (p. 577). Additionally, the head coach, usually reports to an athletic director who reports to a Provost, who reports to the President of the University. Each layer of leadership adds to the organizational complexity.

On the left side of the model, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015), introduce individual antecedents to leadership in their conceptual model. They proposed four antecedents to leadership including ‘darker’ traits, moral identity, lived experience, and sport participation. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton (2015) recognize the ‘darker’ traits of leadership as hubris, narcissism, social dominance, and Machiavellianism. The second antecedent to leadership is moral identity where leaders “recognize and highlight the importance of ethical and moral development of leaders” (p. 579). The lived experience antecedent includes “exploring the concept of leadership requires an acknowledgment of identity and history and a sense of place” (Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015, p. 579). Finally, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) propose “participation in sport will affect leadership behavior in sport organizations.” Previous experience as a player and coaches will impact a coach’s ability to lead.

In the next chapter I will explain my methodology including a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured interviews for data collection.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

In this chapter, I explain the methodology of the study and measures taken to ensure reliable results. Since the purpose of this study is to gain insight and understanding about the influences of the most effective collegiate soccer programs, I chose to use a qualitative research design. The qualitative research method is a holistic approach that is rich in description and meant “to investigate topics in all their complexity” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 2) in order to gain deep understanding. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explain the goals of qualitative research:

Qualitative research’s goal is to better understand human behavior and experience. They seek to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are. They use empirical observations because it is with concrete incidents of human behavior that investigators can think more clearly and deeply about the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 49).

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) describe the five elements of qualitative data: naturalistic data, descriptive data, concern with data, inductive, and meaning. Naturalistic refers to the researcher collecting data on location. I visited two coaches for on location interviews; however, because of financial constraints, most of my interviews were conducted over phone conversations at the convenience of each head coach-participant. In my search for understanding, descriptive data includes analyzing all data collected, “with all their richness” and examining the data knowing “everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 5) of the influences of the most effective women’s collegiate soccer programs. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) wrote that a qualitative researcher must
be concerned with the process of how participants negotiate meaning in their lives, not just the outcome. As described by Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers analyze data inductively and build theory from the bottom up so the theory is grounded in data:

Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic. Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the ‘bottom up,’ by organizing the data inductively into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process involves researchers working back and forth between the themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes... (Creswell, 2013, p. 45)

Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) final component to qualitative research is meaning: the researcher is interested in participant perspectives and how the participants make sense of their lives and the world around them.

According to Bazeley (2013), using a qualitative research method I, as the researcher, am focused on “observing, describing, interpreting, and analyzing the way that” collegiate soccer coaches “experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them,” (p. 4). A qualitative research study allowed for the experts to inform me of their experiences and ideas about what influences effectiveness within their soccer programs. Since “the purpose of qualitative research is to learn about the world through deep and respectful interaction with the insiders in that world” (Hanson, p. 74, 2001), I chose to interview the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches, a semi-structured qualitative interview was the central instrument for gathering data that met the Bogdan and Biklen (2007) criteria for qualitative data. Using my interviews as primary data, I found insight about the phenomenon of successful NCAA Women’s Soccer programs. My qualitative research embraced “evolving design, the presentation of
multiple realities, the researcher as an instrument of data collection and a focus on participants’ views” (Creswell, 2013, p. 53). I gained cohesive insight about effective programs through qualitative interviews in a case study approach to inquiry.

**Case Study Research Approach**

My qualitative inquiry used a case study approach. Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011) suggest researchers use case study research in real-life settings while drawing information from other methodologies such as interviewing, observations, and historical research. Case study research in sport management is used to “gain a deeper understanding of an actual (real-life) sport industry phenomenon or issue” (p. 132). According to Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011) a case study typically explores, describes, illustrates or explains a selected phenomenon in sport management. I chose to conduct a case study to gain a deeper understanding about the influences of a phenomenon within the sport industry that has not yet been fully studied; this phenomenon is most successful NCAA women’s soccer programs, as observed by the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches (Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2011).

Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest while studying a phenomenon, the researcher should determine a sampling strategy that is “purposeful and representative” (p.50). The coaches I interviewed comprise their own case study because they represent a standalone, unique group of experts who have had unmatched success. “A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases (Cresswell, 2013, p. 100). For the purpose of choosing participants, I defined *effective coaches* as those with a consistent winning season record over many years. In the upcoming selection and recruitment of participant section I give details about my exclusive
participant selection process, the boundaries of cases, and participating members. By conducting a case study, as the researcher I gained insight from several of the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer head coaches, to discover themes throughout multiple successful programs about the underlying factors that promote the effectiveness of the most successful women’s soccer programs.

Yin (2003) defines case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p.13). Yin (2009) explains the “distinctive need for case studies arise out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” (p.4). I choose the case study approach to contribute to the knowledge of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches as a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). To gain a holistic understanding of how an effective women’s soccer coach influences his/her team, my primary sources of data were interviews with some of the most effective coaches in the current collegiate game. Secondary sources of data included observations, interactions, and material gathered about the head coaches and his/her collegiate soccer program. Materials were gathered from each head coach’s university website including biography and annual records. Additionally, material was gathered from NCAA records.

Using a case study approach allowed me as the researcher to study the phenomenon of excellence in collegiate soccer using several individual cases. I created a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions that allowed the interviewee to provide the data about what he/she believes influences the effectiveness of his/her collegiate women’s soccer program. The data collection process consisted of going back and forth between the participant’s data and the evolving theory “to fill in the gaps and to elaborate on how it works” (Creswell, 2013, p. 85).
After identifying my case and participants I requested approval from the Institutional Review Board, a requirement of all research involving human subjects which I will explain in the next section.

**Institutional Review Board**

The Institution Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research exists to safeguard the rights, safety, and welfare of research participants. Prior to conducting my study, I considered ethical issues that may arise (Creswell, 2013). I submitted my research proposal to the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research at the University of St. Thomas. In doing so, I provided the committee with a detailed description of the study and its potential participants and assessed the potential risk to the coaches that I would be interviewing. The research process met ethical standards in regards to the study of human subjects and the IRB application was approved. My IRB application can be found in Appendix A.

After my IRB was approved by the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board, I developed a detailed process for assessing confidentiality of the research participants and data collected. I prepared consent forms for each participant that included the purpose of my dissertation and procedure (see Appendix C, Consent Form). My consent form also included a confidentiality clause regarding the data formats, storage, access and transcription:

I used my iPhone to create audio recordings of the interview. I transferred the audio recording to my personal computer to create transcripts. I personally transcribed each interview. After transcribing, I created a pseudonym, for each participant, to uphold anonymity in all of my coding charts and dissertation. My computer is accessed using only my finger print or password.
Having each participant understand and approve the consent form was a key step in launching an ethical process of study. In addition to emailing each participant a consent form, I verbally, explained all details of the consent form to start each interview. As the researcher, I considered the ethics of my study and remained sensitive to all participants. I worked diligently to keep my participants anonymous by using a pseudonym for each participant as well as removing language that would reveal the participant’s gender in documenting my findings. As a result, I sought to eliminate the risk of sharing valuable knowledge with other coaches with whom some of my participants may directly compete.

**Selection and Recruitment of Participants**

In my qualitative case study, the main goal was to develop and advance themes from the most successful coaches to inform the ongoing practice and further research in the field of effective coaching. To that end, participants were chosen based on their recognized experience as an effective head coach (Creswell, 2013). I selected the participants using the table titled “2014 Division I Women’s Soccer Coaching Record, Winningest Active Coaches by Percentage” (NCAA 2014 Division I Women’s Soccer Coaching Record, 2014, p.3).

Not only did I want to interview effective coaches, I wanted to make sure they were currently effective coaches. The game is always evolving, and with new technology, such as video break down and heart rate monitors, as well as the ongoing improvement of the female game, it was important to choose coaches who have both past and current effective records. To find these coaches, I cross-checked the top 30 most winning coaches with the consecutive winning season’s records. In addition to utilizing the 2014 Division I Women’s Soccer Coaching Record, and Consecutive Winning Seasons data, I double-checked my lists with recent
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years’ Final Four teams and the past five years (2010-2014) of teams participating in the national championship games.

Based on the above criteria, I created a proposed list of 17 interview participants. Initially, I reached out to each of the coaches through email; introducing myself, my dissertation topic and interest in an interview. Each email I sent included an attachment of my participation consent form. Some responded and immediately set up an interview with me. I sent a second email to those who did not respond and in some cases a third. I proceeded with eight participants who each agreed to a qualitative interview. Next I explain primary and secondary data collection sources and methods.

Data Collection Method

Interviews

My primary data source was interviews with head coaches. According to Creswell (2013), the interview questions should “focus on understanding how individuals experience the process and identify the steps in the process” (p.88). My case study approach called for a semi-structured interview, with open-ended questions that allowed the participants to shed light on my topic (Charmaz, 2006). This allowed me some flexibility in the sequencing of questions and to ask more in-depth follow-up questions as needed. Johnson, (2002) explained, “As the name implies, in-depth interviewing seeks ‘deep’ information and understanding. The word deep has several meanings in this context.” Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2010) summarize Johnson’s (2002) four meanings of the word deep:

First, the interviewer is seeking to achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding as the participants. In this sense, the interviewee functions as a teacher, and the interviewer functions as a student. Second, deep understandings go beyond
commonsense explanations by exploring contextual boundaries of a particular experience of perception. Third, deep understandings ‘reveal how our commonsense assumptions, practices, and ways of talking partly constitute our interests and how we understand them’ (Johnson, p.106). Finally, deep understandings allow the researcher to articulate multiple perspectives and meanings because interviewees on a given subject may provide different points of view (p. 96).

Two interviews were conducted on-site, while all other interviews were conducted over the phone because of financial constraints related to long-distance travel. Each interview included a written record of the type of interview, time of interview, date, location, interview subject, questions asked, and interview field notes. In addition to interview field notes, I wrote post-interview memos of personal thoughts, observer comments and a general summary while the interview was still fresh. I recorded each of my interviews using the recorder on my iPhone and saved them on my personal, password protected, computer.

I created open-ended questions and allowed the head coaches to tell me what they believed to be the influences of their success. Ideas for deeper and further questioning of the most successful coaches can be found in chapter six, suggestions for future research. The following guide is a detailed description of the interview questions used with participants:

Table 4. Interview Guide

**Introduction**
The purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine the underlying factors that promote the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA women’s soccer programs. As a successful head coach of one of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer programs, you offer a unique perspective. Please share about your experiences as a head coach and how you have influenced the effectiveness of your teams.

**Primary Questions:**

- What factors make (insert school) women’s soccer a consistently top program?
o How do you, as the leader, influence these factors?
o How does the team influence these factors?
o What do you do differently than your competition?

- You are one of the most successful coaches in the history of women’s soccer, why? (Leadership/Coaching)
- What are the important elements needed to build (or develop) a winningest NCAA women’s soccer program?
- What are the important elements in sustaining (or maintaining) a winningest NCAA program?
  o On the field
  o Off the field
- What challenges have you previously encountered that hindered the effectiveness of your program and how do you manage these real or potential challenges?
- What challengers do you foresee happening in the future?
- What is your coaching philosophy?
- Is there anything else that I should have asked you about your leadership or program that I didn’t?

**Exploring Questions:**
- Can you tell me about that?
- That sounds interesting?
- What else?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you elaborate?
- Give me some detail for your strategy about…?
- Give me some detail for how you use your…?

During the interviews with several of the most successful coaches, I gained insight, about the influences they believe have affected their collegiate soccer programs. Seidman (2013) wrote, “by asking participants to reconstruct their experience and then reflect on its meaning, interviewers encourage participants to engage in that ‘act of attention’ that then allows them to consider the meaning of a lived experience,” (p. 19). The interviews produced ample data and information about the practices used in effective collegiate women’s soccer programs.

**Historical Documents**
For secondary data, I conducted basic historical research on each of the coaches I interviewed, mostly by using their respective university website. I read the professional biographies of the head coaches, the history and record of the team, as well as recent news accounts. I was well informed about each coach’s program before I began my interview. Next I explain how I moved from the raw data of my interviews to developing findings.

Data Analysis

Data Transcription

After interviewing each participant, I personally transcribed the entire conversation. This process allowed me several benefits as the researcher. First, transcribing the interviews allowed me to re-listen to each interview several times, and each time, I was able to “soak up” more of the interviewee’s information, ideas, and voice fluctuations that highlighted what was important to him/her. Second, while transcribing each word of every interview, I became immersed in the data. Typing out each sentence deepened my understanding of each coach’s perspectives and ideas. Finally, taking written field notes and post interview memos throughout the interview process, provided insights for potential codes, themes, and frameworks. As part of transcribing the data, I gave each participant a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes.

Once the data was collected, I started reviewing and working to make sense of it by coding each interview (Creswell, 2013) using Microsoft Word and Excel. I chose to use Microsoft Word and Excel to code my data over a qualitative data coding software because I was living internationally for some time during my data analysis phase and was unsure about internet and computer issues that may arise. Using Microsoft Word and Excel, I had access to all of the transcribed interviews which were saved on my desktop allowing me to work without the need for internet. I used the review function in Microsoft Word and coded each sentence with a code
note. I also copied the data into excel, to better visualize how the codes cut across several if not all interviews.

After my initial coding, I found strong themes in the data, but my analysis seemed incomplete. Yin (2003) suggests that case study analysis depends on “careful consideration of alternative interpretations” (p. 110). Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2010) proposed that researchers exhaustively examine all explanations stating that, “the best case study analyses are accomplished when the researcher exhaustively examines all of the available evidence, explores all possible alternative explanations, focuses on the most significant findings and issues, rigorously separates the findings from the interpretations, and uses and demonstrates expert knowledge of the subject matter” (p.144).

Taking this into consideration, I went back to my data for a deeper study of my initial findings. I “listened” to the interview data a second time focusing on each coach and program in order to discern the system of strategies, practices and factors each coach deployed to achieve a consistently effective program. After identifying each coach’s main ideas about the key pressure points for influencing the effectiveness of his/her team, I created concept maps charting the conditions that impact the phenomenon of influencing team effectiveness (Creswell, 2013). The analysis of the “system of pressure points” brought new focus to the 22 common themes identified in the initial synthesis of insights shared by all coaches.

My interviews with top coaches resulted in substantive findings related to the primary research question: What are the underlying factors that influence the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs? Four major factors emerged, each of which had sub-aspects that influence the effectiveness of a collegiate women’s soccer program.
These themes and sub-themes constitute the findings of this research. I discuss them in detail in chapter four.

**Interpretation and Analysis**

In the analysis phase, I sought to examine the findings further by seeing how they related, illuminated, contradicted or added to the scholarship in the field that I reviewed at the start of the study. How did the coaches’ insights about building winning women’s soccer programs at the collegiate level connect, compare, and/or enrich various theories about building team and organization effectiveness? I present the results of this examination in Chapter 5.

In the final phase of the research process, I returned to the original purposes and expected benefits of the study to identify how current collegiate coaches might apply the research learnings to enhance their practice. I also reflected on the implications for my personal and professional development. Lastly, since the pursuit of answers usually leads to more questions, I considered the limitations of my study and offered analytically grounded directions for future research.

**Validity and Evaluative Criteria for Qualitative Studies**

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) it was important for me as the researcher to address four questions about the validity and reliability of my qualitative case study. First, how credible are the particular findings of the study? Second, how transferable and applicable are these findings? Third, how can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context? Fourth, “how can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself rather than a creation of the research’s bias or prejudice?” (p. 143).
I took many steps to ensure the credibility of the findings. I researched and created a case-study of a very select group of potential participants as a phenomenon of the most successful current women’s collegiate soccer coaches. Additionally, by interviewing eight of the 17 proposed participants who met the extensive criteria was a 47% success rate. In the field of sport management, Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011) recommend validating research using outside sources. I utilized both my committee members and collegiate coaches not involved in my dissertation to confirm my interview questions were collecting data to measure influences that impact collegiate women’s soccer programs. As a control for data quality, I also utilized collegiate coaches for member checking, to review the accuracy of my findings and confirm both validity and reliability.

Second although there was a lot of consistency in my data, to ensure my findings are transferable, further studies need to be conducted. Recommended studies can be found in the Suggestions for Future Research section in chapter six. The application of my finds are ample and many examples can be found throughout my analysis in chapter five and application section in chapter six. The findings are most helpful for collegiate women’s soccer coaches but can also be useful for athletic administration especially athletic directors.

Third I am confident the findings could be reasonably replicated if a researcher followed my prescribed research process interviewing the same participants and using my interview guide. As noted I avoided my personal bias using objective methods of coding and re-coding to let the data percolate the themes of what influences the most successful collegiate women’s soccer programs to be successful.
Fourth in order to ensure the findings were reflective of my participants and not my own bias or prejudice, as stated in the Data Analysis section, I used Microsoft Word and Excel to objectively code and analyze the data. Using Microsoft Excel helped me keep an unbiased opinion about the data to find what influences the effectiveness of the most successful collegiate soccer programs. I also utilized my dissertation committee and member checking of collegiate soccer coaches not involved in my interviews to critically question my analysis.

**Role of the Researcher**

Given my background of playing and coaching soccer, it was important I acknowledge any biases or potential influence of my past experiences before engaging in the research. It was my goal to let the experts I interviewed provide the data to drive the analysis through a verbatim transcription of each interview, systematic coding of data and all the other protocols described earlier in the data collection and analysis sections. I also utilized my dissertation chair and committee to hold me accountable to a fair and just report of the findings.

**Protecting Confidentiality**

All of the recordings of interviews, transcripts, and notes of this study remain confidential. They have only been viewed by myself and my dissertation chair, Dr. Mirja Hanson. Interview recordings and transcripts remain on a password protected computer. To keep the anonymity of my participants, all dissertation reports use pseudonyms for each participant and his/her respective university. As noted above I worked diligently to not to include any information that may identify participants in my report including gender. I plan to shred all documentation after my successful graduation from the program.

**Summary**
I conducted a qualitative research study with a case study approach to answer my primary research question regarding what influences the most successful collegiate women’s soccer programs to be effective. I received Institutional Review Board approval from the University of St. Thomas Review Board to assume an ethically sound study of human subjects. Following the procedures outlined in my IRB proposal, I identified the members of my case and created an exclusive list of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches as possible participants. From that list, I recruited eight interview participants. My primary data collection was through interviews and secondary data collection was through historical documents. After personally transcribing each of my interviews, I began the data analysis phase. Deeply immersed in the data, I coded each interview and re-coded each interview allowing themes to bubble up from within and across each coach and program. I validated my data using peer debriefing and member checking.

In chapter four, I begin with a summary of my findings about the influences of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer programs and proceed in further detail about the aspects of each influences.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Four major factors emerged from the data as key aspects that influence the effectiveness of a NCAA Division I women’s soccer program. The first major factor is the university which has four aspects: financial support, supportive management and collaborative colleagues, standard of excellence, and university reputation. The second major factor is recruiting which has two aspects: talent and right fit. The third major factor is development which has four aspects: player development, team development, person development, and coach development. The fourth major factor is head coach drive which has three aspects: head coach evolution, head coach confidence, head coach fear of failure. All are shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 4. Influences of the Most Successful Women’s Soccer Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Recruiting</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support: Budget and Facilities</td>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>Player Development</td>
<td>Evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Management &amp; Collaborative Colleagues</td>
<td>Right Fit</td>
<td>Team Development</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of Excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Person Development</td>
<td>Fear of Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coach Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The placement of each section in the figure does not indicate a greater percentage of influence on success. The placement on the figure is in order of the influences which the coach controls the least (University on the left) to the influences the coach has the most control over (Drive on the right). Each major factor influences the ability of a NCAA Division I women’s soccer program
to win consistently. In this chapter I will explain how each major factor and the aspects that influences the most successful teams and coaches to be successful.

**University**

The first major factor that promotes the effectiveness of the most successful Division I women’s soccer programs is the university they are housed within. For this dissertation, this concept will be referred to as university. All of the coaches interviewed spoke to the university playing an important role in the effectiveness of a women’s soccer program. When asked why Coach B is one of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches, Coach B gives recognition to the university. “Well I definitely have to give credit to being at a great institution,” said Coach B. “You could be a great coach, and if you aren’t in a place that supports it, it’s tough.” The university impacts the soccer program in many ways. Throughout my interviews, four university impact aspects reoccurred: financial support, management support and colleague collaboration, standard of excellence and university reputation, each of which will be explained in detail in this chapter.

**Financial Support**

The university impacts the effectiveness of the most successful women’s soccer teams through financial support. Six out of the eight coaches interviewed touched on the financial support or lack of financial support from their respective university, and how it enables or inhibits their ability to succeed. The three areas of financial support noted by coaches were facilities, budget, and ability to hire great staff. Coach G spoke in detail about how the financial support of the university empowers team operations and increases expectations to produce:

We were better prepared at University G because they [the university and athletic department] had a commitment to the women’s program. They had a commitment to all
their sports, they strive for excellence in everything they do both academically and athletically. So we just had more resources at University G than some of the other places I had been at. So I think the university can help make or break a good coach too because I think so many universities want to win or use the words they want to win but they don’t give you the kinds of resources you need to create the environment to win. So I think that is a big key, so I think a lot of good coaches are at universities [where] they’ll never have a chance to win because the university itself is not fully engaged in winning. So much money is in athletics now and there is so much money in football and basketball for men and women, there’s a lot of schools where the focus is just on those primary revenue generating sports. I think you can have a certain level of success in those programs but then the coach himself or herself has to really take it over the top because the school doesn’t give you the things you need. Whereas I think at University G, they really genuinely want to win with all of their sports, so even the quote, kind of the Olympic sports or non-revenue sports, they had a commitment there. We had a nutritionist that oversaw our team, we had a sports psychologist, we had GPS/Heart rate monitoring systems. They put the funding in… we were given every chance to be the best. Now with that comes a high level of expectation. I think it puts a lot of pressure on the coaches because you have to win or you’re not going to be there. When they give you those things, then you got to produce.

Other coaches emphasized the significant impact of financial support from their universities. According to Coach G, University G was committed to providing resources for all athletic programs. Coach F also noted the success of all University F’s athletic teams, not just the revenue generating sports, claiming that “they support all of the sports across the board equally
which is fantastic.” No coaches spoke about women’s soccer being the most supported sport at a university, but several coaches spoke about the university supporting all programs, not just the men’s revenue generating programs. As stated above, Coach B credited success as a coach to being at a great institution noting that “you could be a great coach, and if you aren’t in a place that supports the soccer program, it will be tough to succeed.”

However, not all coaches that I interviewed felt financially supported by their athletic department budget. However, even without direct funding support, Coach A spoke positively about overcoming underfunding stating that, “well we have always been horribly underfunded. I’ve never looked at that as a disadvantage because we are forced to think outside the box.” Coach A has taken on the search for other sources of funding for the program to succeed since the athletic department wasn’t providing a budget to compete with the top programs in the country. Coach A has been able to find outside funding, which provides the women’s soccer program a very competitive budget. It is worth noting that the previous success of University A and university reputation assist in fundraising endeavors. Thus, the University indirectly supports acquisition of needed resources.

Coach D spoke about the positive impact of a competitive budget and facilities, specifically noting the importance of having the financial ability to hire a great staff. When asked what factors made University D women’s soccer stay a consistently top women’s soccer program, Coach D pointed to the hiring of quality staff as a cornerstone to “breeding” success:

I think we are able to combine a lot of advantages including great facilities, the conference, and the quality of the opponents in the conference. The University has afforded me the opportunity to go and hire a very good staff and that staff is not only the technical staff, but the support staff around our program. You know success often breeds
success and the fact that we have had some decent success has led to more good players coming here. So I think when you take all those factors and kind of put them together along with a great deal of drive and determination to be successful, it certainly points you in the right path to being successful.

A resounding theme throughout my interviews was the coaches’ recognition that the financial support of his/her university, impacts the success of the women’s soccer program. The financial support benefits the team by providing the base structures of success—facilities, ability to hire quality staff and support staff (athletic training or academic advising), recruiting budget, team travel costs, and other team needs each season.

**Supportive Management and Collaborative Colleagues**

Overall, the financial support aspect of university is a factor that promotes the effectiveness of the most successful Division I women’s soccer programs. Another aspect of university is the head coach’s management support and peer colleague collaboration. The manager is either the athletic director or an associate athletic director who the head coach reports to, and peers are colleagues within the athletic department, usually head coaches of other sports. For the purpose of this paper, support will be defined as being helpful or willingness to assist when needed. Five of the eight coaches spoke about their supportive management and collaborative colleagues.

The management and colleagues serve as human resources for the women’s soccer program. For example, when University B was starting its women’s soccer program Coach B spoke about how important the other head coaches were: “I think it was really helpful to lean on other programs here. Because obviously the first year, we didn’t even have hosts for kids to stay with when they visited so we relied on other teams. And that was great because we had some
great collaboration from other sports that helped us a lot.” The top women’s soccer programs collaborate with other head coaches at their institutions and therefore programs within the athletic department. The success of other programs within an institution seems to be infectious, and colleague head coaches can share important information and ideas if they are willing to collaborate. Coach B reported the following about how B women’s soccer program benefited from the collaboration of head coach colleagues support:

I think it was pretty evident before University B even had a soccer program that they would be successful. I mean every sport we’ve started we’ve become successful in. And a big reason is because the support of the other programs and the support of the athletic associations as a whole. I think coaches, whether it’s coaches of soccer or coaches of other sports make that happen like the collaborative environment, its non-territorial, it’s a good environment to work in…And you can learn a lot from other people too. ‘Cause when I got here I had no idea what I was doing at this level and I had a lot of people around me that helped me.

I found that the most successful head coaches are influenced by their peers within their universities because of the collaborative environment in the athletic department. In addition to collaborative peers, Coach D spoke in detail about a supportive management leader, who often asks what he can do for the women’s soccer program:

Well you know, University D is much different…than anywhere else I’ve been. Here we have the luxury of having good budgets and stuff like that and I have the best management in America. So oftentimes what I find is that in some of my other positions, I found that the people who should be the biggest assets and biggest allies to you, are the biggest detractors. Whereas here, my boss is Associate AD…he oversees football and
every time I see him his comment to me is, ‘hey what can I do to help you?’ Can you imagine? Can you imagine that every time or most times, ‘hey Coach D, how’s it going? What can I do to help you?’… to be honest with you, the reason I’m here and the reason I’m not going anywhere is because I have the best job in the world.

Having worked at several other universities, with managers who were usually coming to Coach D with problems instead of solutions, Coach D appreciates a boss who is willing to support the women’s soccer program one hundred percent.

**Standard of Excellence**

The third type of university impact that influences the most successful women’s soccer programs is the standard of excellence set by the university. All the coaches interviewed spoke about the standard of excellence. When high academic and athletic standards are set by the university for all students and teams, excellence is infectious. Coach F spoke about the standard set by University F when asked what factors make the women’s soccer program a consistently top program: “I think that there is a level of excellence at University F and that all the players and the students realize that and they all work hard to achieve that level of excellence through their day to day work ethic.”

Coach C explained that University C’s standards attract players and persons “that don’t feel the entitlement that a lot of kids feel. I get kids that want to get better and want to put in the work and realize what it takes. It’s harder because their time is always taken. Academics are incredibly hard and there is no free time during the day.” The standard at University C is to work hard to achieve academic and athletic excellence. Similarly, when asked what factors make University H women’s soccer a consistently top-ranked program, Coach H explained how
the standard of excellence at University H attracts and fosters student-athletes that seek to be “pushed and challenged”:

It’s an opportunity for young ladies to come and get an education; we are one of the top academic institutions in the world. What we sell here is a world-class education while playing in the best women’s soccer conference in the country. And we understand that’s not for everybody, which is fine. The great thing is, is that there is a place for everybody out there. Women’s soccer has gotten to the point where DI, DII, DIII, NAIA, Christian colleges, there is a place for everybody. But we look for women that want to be challenged and they want to be challenged academically and they want to be challenged athletically. They have got to want both of them if they are looking… there is a very strong academic environment at University H on Sunday through Thursday. If you are looking for a big school, or a big football school, or academics are important but soccer is way ahead of your books then University H is not the right place for you. It’s got to be a place where you want to excel in both because you are going to be pushed, you are going to be challenged in both areas so we have to find the right women that want to buy into what we sell. We have just been very very fortunate to be able to find that.

The most successful DI women’s soccer programs are housed within universities that have a high standard of excellence. Most of the coaches I spoke with, not only explained standards of academic and athletic excellence, but also a character standard of excellence, which will be explained further in the person development section. In addition to supportive management, the most successful women’s soccer programs are also influenced by the university’s reputation and ability to appeal to recruits.

**University Reputation**
The fourth type of university impact is a university reputation that appeals to recruits. Every coach interviewed spoke to the importance of the university reputation. The literature shows that there are effective ways to recruit athletes and specifically, the ways that appeal to Division I women’s soccer recruits. According to Popp, Pierce, and Hums (2010) the most important factors in the college selection process for domestic student-athletes were a college degree leading to a job, followed by the overall reputation of the university. Popp et al. (2010) also found that female student-athletes rate academic factors significantly higher than male student-athletes, regardless of residence. The most important factor in the college selection process for international student-athletes was amount of scholarship followed by the personality of the head coach.

I found the conclusions of Popp et al. (2010) to be true in my research. The head coaches I interviewed use the university’s reputation to recruit the top women’s soccer student-athletes. When asked why Coach E is one of the most successful coaches in the history of women’s collegiate soccer, Coach E zeroed in on the role of the university’s reputation in attracting female athletes:

I’m in a really really good place. I’m in a school that is incredibly supportive, that is attractive to female prospects in soccer. I could be at a University in the middle of nowhere that doesn’t have an academic reputation and isn’t fully funded and isn’t fully staffed and I wouldn’t be, as you described, successful or one of the most successful women’s soccer coaches, I just wouldn’t. So the school is a big part of it and I was very very fortunate to get the job here and to be supported as well and have them really invest
in women’s soccer and wanting to support making it competitive and making it great.

That is big time number one.

The university’s reputation impacts the program’s ability to recruit top women’s soccer student-athletes which influences the program’s overall success. The women’s soccer program will struggle to recruit the top student-athletes and compete at the top level if the university is not appealing to top domestic student-athletes, because it is not a top academic institution, or if it is not appealing to top international student-athletes because it is not fully funded and able to give athletic scholarships.

Repeatedly, my interviews underscored that top coaches in the country work within universities that positively support the ability of the women’s soccer program to compete at the top level. When asked how Coach H became one of the most successful DI women’s soccer programs in the country, the answer was succinct: “I’m at University H, I didn’t screw it up. I am at an unbelievable place in an unbelievable conference that attracts.” When asked what factors make the University B women’s soccer a consistently top program, Coach B answered, “great infrastructure and support from the University…good leadership from our athletic association, weather, and a really good academic institution. Our population are good students so they are attracted to good academic institutions.” When asked if high academic standards make it difficult to recruit, Coach F said, “I think it is beneficial… They are here to get a great education and move on in whatever field they choose. So I think it helps us select the right people for University F.” Coach A noted the difficulty of not being a top 10 ranked university but recognized the appeal of the university once a student comes to campus to visit:
We still struggle to get that kind of elite player that is looking predominantly at schools that are ranked in the top 10 in US News and World Report and unfortunately University A hovers around 30. So those are all of our recruiting challenges. Having said that, if they come onto campus, it’s a beautiful place. If they meet our kids, our kids in general are great recruiters, and the kids that have played here most of them are very loyal and brag about their experiences so from all of those different respects, we certainly have opportunity in recruiting.

Overall a consistent finding was that the university housing the women’s soccer program greatly influences the women’s soccer program’s ability to recruit.

In conclusion, according to some of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches, the foundation and first major influence that impact the most successful women’s soccer programs is the university impact. There are four ways in which the university foundation impacts the women’s soccer program, first is the financial support including budget and facilities, second is support from management and collaborative peers, the third is a high, university-wide standard of excellence and the fourth is the university’s reputation, which plays a very important role in effective recruiting.

Recruiting

The second major factor that influences a NCAA Division I women’s soccer program to win consistently is effective recruiting. Effective recruiting means bringing in student-athletes who positively impact the soccer program both on and off the field. It includes two aspects, both talent and right-fit. Talented student-athletes have competitive technical, tactical, physical, and mental platforms to compete and contribute at the Division I collegiate level (Perez, 2014). The
right-fit means the student-athlete matches the university’s academic standard, soccer program’s style of play, team culture and values. All coaches focused on player recruitment as a key influencer of team success.

In this section, I will go into greater detail about talent recruiting and right-fit recruiting. I also include a section about what coaches identified as the difficulties of recruiting for some of the most successful programs in the country and how it effects the recruits that commit to their universities.

**Talent**

Every coach spoke about the importance of recruiting talent, for example when asked why University E was one of the most successful collegiate soccer programs in the country, Coach E stated it was the quality of the players that had been recruited as well as the daily expectations of the players during their time at University E. It is no secret that collegiate athletic teams are successful in large part because of the athletes recruited. Coach G spoke about a “blue chip” recruit, meaning an excellent, usually a United States Soccer Federation youth national team member, highly recruited soccer player. Coach G said it was very difficult to recruit blue chip recruits but once you get them on campus, it is easy to coach blue chip recruits. In other words, once you get blue chip players on campus, it makes winning a lot easier. As stated in the previous chapter about the impacts of university reputation on recruits, recruiting top women’s soccer student-athletes influences the program’s success. Coach A states the importance of recruiting talent as the “bottom line” for a program’s success:

Obviously anyone that is successful in collegiate athletics can point to their success primarily to effective recruiting. It’s impossible to compete at a high level without effective recruiting, so that’s probably the most important thing. Everything else on top
of that is window dressing, so recruiting is the bottom line. If you end up with an extraordinary collection of athletes, you are going to be able to compete effectively, so that’s probably number one.

It is no secret that great soccer players can help a team win. Coach H spoke about recruiting a high-leveled player that is both skilled and athletic. “Athleticism is such a big important part. And I think that is one of the reasons when we started to grow probably in 2009 or 2010, we were always a good program, but we took a step forward because we ended up getting better athletes.” Finding recruits who had the technical talent and physical talent to compete in a top conference in the country elevated University H into the national scene.

Coach C credits the consistent success of University C’s soccer program to the level of recruits brought in: “You have to get the right players, you have to push them, every player needs to get a little bit better so your team gets exponentially better every year.” The most successful coaches in Division I women’s soccer agreed that talented recruits certainly help the program become successful. Coach E recruits on both current talent and potential talent. “There has to be a level of competency, talent is competency,” said Coach E, but adds that, “the potential for someone to get better is more important than talent at any moment in time.”

**Right-Fit**

In addition to talent, a second aspect of recruiting that influences the most successful women’s soccer programs to be successful is recruiting student-athletes who are the right-fit. The right-fit means student-athletes match the academic standard of the university, style of play for the program, team culture and values. All eight coaches explained the importance of recruiting student-athletes who are the right-fit for their respective university. For example, Coach E noted that one way to teach the program’s core-values is through player selection.
Getting the right players at University E influences the culture of the team and program. Coach G said, “I think we did a really good job of recruiting the kind of player that I felt would fit the way I wanted our team to look on the field and the way I wanted them to look off the field.” Coach G recruited high character people that went to class, conducted themselves professionally both on and off the field, and were not getting in trouble at night. Coach G explained the importance of recruiting specifically for “moral fit” at University G:

I wasn’t hung up on the resume of the youth player, just because they were a national team player, didn’t mean that that was a player that I thought fit University G. So I always went after the players that I felt fit the standards that I had, that fit the moral compass of what I wanted on my team, and that fit what the university stood for. Because University G stands for something a little different than what University D stands for, no disrespect to University D but they are a different kind of University. And you know as going to Seton Hall [University], Seton Hall stands for something a little bit different because of the fiber of the University. So I always took really great pride in recruiting character kids, top kind of kids that I wasn’t going to have to worry about at night, were they going out and getting in trouble.

Each coach I spoke with had a particular academic, athletic, and character platform they were recruiting because it matched with the fiber of their university and program. For example, Coach F spoke about finding recruits that are the right fit for University F, first looking at them as athletes, then as students, and trying to find the best in the country. Coach F emphasized the role of character and the need to “assess their character and make sure they are a good person and they care about others and they are going to work hard and become competitive.” A second example is Coach C who looks for good soccer skills, but more importantly, a good mentality
regarding work; finding “kids that want to do the work, when everyone else is quitting they are still the ones doing the work.” Coach C recruits student-athletes who have the number one quality of being driven: “they want to be as good as they can and work as hard as they can and get better, every day.”

Coach D discussed the importance of the professional environment that recruits can expect at University D: “when we recruit them, I talk with them about this is going to be a professional environment. We are going to help to train you to be the best you can be.” The professional environment that both Coach G and Coach D spoke about mirrors an environment of a professional soccer club where players are treated as competent and capable adults and the program operates in an effective and efficient manner. Coach G and Coach D are preparing their student-athletes for soccer after college, hopefully professionally. Their university training environment should make the transition to a professional league very smooth. When recruiting student-athletes for the right-fit, Coach D also points to three different qualities of University D soccer players: “These three topics are not mutually exclusive and that is being an outstanding player, an outstanding student, and an outstanding person. And my belief is that you can be all three and that is what we strive for, that is what the goal is.” Finding the right-fit during the recruiting process is key. “Why try to fit a square peg in a round hole,” said Coach B, “it’s not that we don’t try and recruit the high-profile kids, but not all of them exactly fit us.” Since the University B women’s soccer program has an important character platform, Coach B recruits student-athletes who really want to be at University B, play their style, and have a willingness to build character and grow as a person. Coach B looks for a student-athlete who is going to work really hard both on and off the field; someone that wants to be a part of it, put in the time and become a better person and player. Coach B shares all of this during the recruiting process so
the student-athlete can decide if they are interested in that type of collegiate experience.

Communicating expectations early helps both Coach B and the student-athletes in the recruiting process. Coach B discusses the importance of being up front in communicating team expectations in order to identify players that fit the university:

I am really really clear when I am recruiting that this is what we are going to be doing, so if you like this, then you are going to love it here. If you don’t like this and you say you know what I just want to train for two hours a day, I don’t want to do all this crazy stuff, I don’t really want to learn this much about myself, then we are really a bad choice, because you will be disruptive if you are not willing to take part in this. And I think from an on the field part too, it’s not that we don’t take kids who don’t fit our style of play but again, it’s more like, if you don’t want to play this way, then don’t come here, because we are going to play this way.

Sharing the coach’s, program’s, and university’s academic, athletic, and character platforms with recruits during the recruiting process benefits all parties. Student-athletes know what kind of an environment they are signing onto for four years. They know what will be expected of them academically, athletically, and in character. Coach H always played a big role in recruiting the right student-athletes to University H, and has played a bigger role over the last years because of the rising trend for early recruitment.

You don’t get to nearly know the young ladies like you used to before they’d make commitments. It is kind of ironic we are talking about this on signing day here today. But you really don’t. And I will go on record, I’m not a big fan of the early commitment…But I also cannot stick my head in the sand because someone else will be sitting in this office if I do. It’s unfortunate but it’s like that.
Coach H shows recruits what University H offers: “we are very very proud of what we have.” After confirming a student-athlete has the academic and athletic platforms to compete at University H, Coach H brings them to campus and spends a whole day with the recruit to make sure a student-athlete is a right fit for the program:

I am the one that is going to be spending time. I am going to spend six or seven hours with them [recruits]. And it takes up my day, no question about it. It puts me behind on a little bit but in that five to six-hour period, you can learn a lot about a young lady. They can hide from you for about an hour, hour and a half, but you can see. And you are just very much watching how they interact with their parents, how they interact with other people, how they interact with you.

After finding student-athletes who were the right academic and athletic fit for University H, Coach H had to confirm each recruit was a right-fit by spending significant amounts of time with each recruit. University H attracts really good people and Coach H recruits high quality people because they make the program better. “I just don’t want good soccer players in our program,” said Coach H, “I want good people and if we get good people, good things are going to happen. Coach H went on to explain good people are key to getting you through difficult times stating that, “you have tough games, they come together as a group. They sacrifice, they have a vision. They sacrifice their individuality maybe for the team.” The right-fit for University H is a good person who is willing to sacrifice self for the good of the whole—that is who Coach H is looking for on the recruiting trail, along with many other successful coaches.

The literature review discussed talent identification. Christensen (2009) found three trends in talent identification: coaches used practical sense, relying on their experience with soccer and recruiting to recognize patterns of movement; coaches looked for dedicated,
coachable players, who are willing to work hard and learn; coaches looked for talent while recruiting top-level players. Additionally, Thomas, Fellingham, and Vehrs (2009) developed a notational system to evaluate technical soccer skills and how each relates to creating scoring opportunities. Although Thomas et al. (2009) did not relate their study to recruiting, they identified important skills for recruiting. They found that dribbling was the most effective skill to create scoring chances, specifically creativity and improvisation while dribbling. Dribbling was followed by the combination of first touch and passing as an important skill to create scoring opportunities. More research is needed on women’s collegiate soccer recruiting and talent identification.

Recruiting for talent and right-fit is easier said than done. The coaches I interviewed were forth coming about the challenges in successful recruiting. In the next section, I will discuss the difficulties of recruiting for some of the most successful women’s soccer programs in the country.

**Difficulties of Recruiting**

One difficulty of recruiting is how early student-athletes are being recruited to play in college. Coach A also spoke about the current climate of early recruiting. Since student-athletes are making their decisions so early, it is more difficult to accurately predict their potential:

What is interesting in the current climate it is actually harder for us to recruit because our hit ratio has dropped. In the old days when kids were making a decision late in their junior year or in their senior year, if we would bring in a 5 player class, 4 would help us. Now when we bring in a 5 player class, only 3 help us, so our hit ratio has dropped because we are making decisions on kids we haven’t really seen closer to their collegiate experience and we are making some mistakes and so that has hurt us a bit.
Coach A added that because these kids are making such early decisions, their youth poses an issue related to leaving home. A student-athlete that is deciding as an 8\textsuperscript{th}, 9\textsuperscript{th}, or 10\textsuperscript{th} grader, may not have the maturity to feel confident enough to go to a school located across the country. The dilemma for Coach A is that, “soccer hot beds in America are basically West Coast; Southern California, Northern California, Texas, the Seattle area. So it’s hard for us to recruit in those areas the way we used to so all of these things are making the recruiting game for us a lot harder.” Competing with other top collegiate soccer programs and the side effects of early recruiting including lower talent-yield rates, (see definition of terms on p. 12) and cross country recruiting makes it difficult for even the most successful women’s soccer programs to sign top student-athletes.

It benefits coaches and their programs to recruit as close to the athlete’s collegiate experience as possible, except the competition to recruit the best players has driven the recruiting timeframe younger and younger. A peril of early recruiting is the coaches’ need to recruit early to commit the best players or else risk losing seasons and potential jobs. Coach H confirmed, “I will go on record, I’m not a big fan of the early commitment. I think its way way too early. But I also cannot stick my head in the sand because someone else will be sitting in this office if I do. It’s unfortunate but it’s like that.” Coach E spoke about consistently evolving which includes “adjusting recruiting and the speed of recruitment. You know, I’ve said I would never do this in recruiting, I’d never commit to a kid this young in recruiting, and then I’ve changed.” With the current competitive climate, coaches are recruiting younger than they ever thought they would, because if they don’t, they will miss the opportunity to recruit some of the best soccer players.

Since thus far coaches have not been able to regulate themselves to later recruiting ages, I asked Coach H if the decision to stop early recruiting has to be NCAA mandated and Coach H replied:
Yeah, yeah I think it has to be. I think we, through the coaches’ association I think we have proven that we can’t really mandate ourselves. Because people want to win, and people are losing jobs because of wins and losses, and that never has happened before. So people are losing jobs, I’m still surprised, and I think I’ll see change, you know we in women’s soccer have the verbal commitment and right now we kind of hands off for most of the cases for people who have verbal commitments to schools. I am still surprised and I think you’ll see that be the thing unless the NCAA comes in and mandates things that it is so hands off.

I recommend future research be conducted on the effects of early recruiting, on behalf of student-athletes and collegiate programs.

Coach A also spoke about the recruiting challenges or competing for recruits against other very successful programs. University A struggles to get elite players who are looking predominantly at schools that are ranked top 10 in US News and World Report because of the weight that academic reputation holds in the selection process and strong parent opinions about their children attending the best academic institutions. Considering the state of academic competition, as noted before, Coach A stressed the importance of a campus visit: “Having said that, if they come onto campus, it’s a beautiful place. If they meet our kids, our kids in general are great recruiters, and the kids that have played here most of them are very loyal and brag about their experiences so from all of those different respects, we certainly have opportunity in recruiting.”

While coach A spoke about competing with top 10 US News and World Report ranked universities, there is another difficulty in actually being a top 10 ranked university—extremely high academic standards. In the earlier section this was acknowledged as an asset but it can also
hinder recruitment. A renowned academic reputation can be a blessing or a curse; a blessing to recruit academically excellent recruits, but a curse to recruit academically average recruits. After identifying recruits, Coach H and his staff have to find out if the student-athletes have the academic background to be accepted and perform as a student at University H. These high academic standards can be very challenging for some recruits. In 2015, University H only accepted approximately 5% of applicants, due to the extreme competition of applicants, so the soccer program is limited in who can be brought in based on academic standards. This limitation makes it more difficult for Coach H and staff to recruit.

When asked if high academic standards are barriers for the women’s soccer program, Coach F said the academic standards were beneficial. “I think we get the right student-athletes at University F. They are not here just to become a pro-soccer player. They are here to get a great education and move on in whatever field they choose… And all schools are doing that, they are looking for the right fit for them.” All coaches I interviewed agreed with Coach F about finding recruits that were academically the right-fit for the women’s soccer program at their respective university.

In conclusion, I found agreement among most successful Division I women’s soccer coaches that recruiting is one of the most important factors that impact their program to be successful. They also identified that there are two aspects of recruiting student-athletes; talent and the right-fit for the program and university. Once a recruit comes to campus, the next step towards success is development.

**Development**

The third major factor that influences a NCAA Division I women’s soccer program to win consistently is development. Development will be defined as the process of learning and
improving. Player-development is an obvious category, but the data revealed development as a multi-layered endeavor that was identified by all coaches as a key to team effectiveness. In my interviews, development surfaced in four areas: player-development, team-development, person-development, and coach-development. Each aspect of development was necessary for consistent success. While most successful collegiate soccer coaches develop players throughout the season, the coaches I interviewed placed an enormous value on each student-athlete’s development on and off the field and how each person has a role within the team. Development was a process on a never-ending continuum, or “never ending ascension,” according to Coach A. Additionally, each coach explained multiple ways in which they continue to develop themselves to be the best. This chapter contains a detailed section of each area of development.

One area in which development surfaced in my literature review was under the training and instruction section. Improving the performance level of a student-athlete through training and instruction is possibly the most important role of a coach (Beam et al., 2004; Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). According to Perez (2014) the U.S. Soccer Curriculum highlights four key components of soccer that a coach should teach to develop each player: technical, tactical, physical, and psychosocial. Each of the components was addressed by the coaches I spoke with. The technical, tactical, and physical components were addressed in player and team development. The psychosocial aspect was addressed in person development.

**Soccer-Player Development**

Recruiting is time-sensitive, and every August the season starts with a set roster for each collegiate soccer program. Developing each freshman recruit, transfer, and returning player, especially over the course of a four-year collegiate career, improves the team exponentially. The most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches create an environment for student-
athletes to learn, grow, and improve on the field. Although every coach spoke about player
development, each coach takes a different approach to developing soccer players. In this section
I will give several examples of the systems of strategies used by the most successful coaches to
develop players and thereby help their programs be successful.

Coach A uses competition to develop players. Players are measured on every training
aspect including fitness, 1-verse-1 ability (see definition of terms, p. 12), possession, and ability
to win regardless of the details of the training session. Coach A stated, “It is a very successful
way to take your players and get them to an elite level, I think at a faster rate than any other kind
of training environment. So I think what we do in training is absolutely unique.” Coach A is
trying to develop players to be universalists, meaning a complete player that can attack, play-
make, and defend all over the field. “To play at University A you have to defend, so if you
won’t or can’t defend you don’t play. It’s not like defending is a talent, it’s just a decision.”
Another advantage for University A is how game minutes are managed. “Since our girls don’t
play 90 minutes a game, our training platforms can afford to be more aggressive.” With only 20
regular season games, developing players in training session is crucial, especially players who
are not getting a lot of game minutes. Coach A quantified the difference that effective talent
development makes in overcoming talent recruitment disadvantages:

So we genuinely believe that we do a better job developing our talent, because of the way
we play and because of our training environments, than anyone in the country. And I
think if you look at the history of our success in the NCAA tournament but also the
history of our success developing players, where we’re not the first choice of schools,
where we probably rank around 6th in terms of recruiting collusions, our success
contradicts our recruiting rank and it’s a positive contradiction cause I think what this
means is we’re developing our players at a much more effective rate and better than anyone else that is out there.

Using competition as a driver, coach A develops players by measuring all of their successes and failures. With extensive experience Coach A established ideas of the most important aspects of soccer-player talent to develop players to reach their full potential. Coach A uses the data as a driver to improve performance.

University B has a different style of play and therefore a different training platform. Coach B emphasizes a possession style of play. Possession style of play means keeping control of the ball so your team can systematically move the ball towards your attacking goal. The idea is that the other team can’t score without the ball, and your team can score with the ball. The possession style of play at University B drives the player development necessary to play in the system. Coach B described development with a long-term view of gaining capacity for constant winning over time:

I think two specific things separate us. One is our style of play. We put a lot of work into a developmental style of play which is probably not as efficient as it could be in terms of winning but in terms of long term development and making players better it is really unique. So that in itself leads to it but you have to be patient with it leading to it because initially it could lead to losses because we are going to deal with a lot of mistakes and people playing outside of their comfort zone but in the big picture, when we are very good at what we are doing, it’s almost un-defendable if you ask me.

Coach B spends about a third of every practice on passing, receiving and solving pressure, which means trying to keep the ball while being defended in a tight space. “The whole point is; how do you solve pressure without just giving into clearing the ball.” Demanding a possession style of
play means each player on the field needs to develop the technical and tactical skill to solve pressure and keep possession. In practice, players are going to be put under pressure to try to push their limits to keep possession. “It’s just a lot of work, a lot of technical work, a lot of trying to get them to understand the simplicity of soccer like recognizing the 2v1, 3v2 or the other way around.” At University B, players are developed at every training session so they improve the skills to better play the system and program’s style of play. With similar intent, Coach G tells the players, “the faster you fail, the more you are learning. If you are not making any mistakes, you are either not pushing outside of your comfort zone or you are just not growing, you are staying in the same place that you’ve stayed.” Setting this precedent means the coaching staff and team have to have a tolerance for failure, which makes self-control necessary for coaches in the process of developing players to fit the system.

Coach D develops players like professionals by creating a professional environment for players to reach their potential. A professional environment would be similar to that of a professional team in the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL). Some elements of a professional club include showing up on time, expectations of each player taking care of her body and health, readiness to perform at top level, and providing efficient and effective training. Another aspect of this professional environment includes the communication between coaches and players. Players hear honest feedback about their play so they can address problems and get better to increase game minutes. This honest and clear communication helps in the player development process. Coach D describes how the professional environment maximizes player’s opportunities to play beyond college:

Well of course at the end of the day it is the players that are playing. The hope and the goal is for us to develop the best team that we can to represent University D but also to
develop the players the best that we can so that when their time to leave comes, that they have improved and they have a chance to go and play beyond college. So it’s not a single-minded focus of just, we want to win games at University D. We want to win games but we also want to develop players so that they do have an opportunity to play beyond college so I think that our vision is fairly clear and I think the players recognize that vision and they buy into it. They want to be the best that they can be and it’s probably multiple beneficiaries of that and certainly our team and our program is a primary beneficiary, but also the players. At the end of the day, if they are able to continue to develop and then go and have a chance to play, making a living doing what they love, then it’s a real win-win.

Coach D develops collegiate student-athletes with a long-term vision and intent of professional opportunities beyond college. The success of University D women’s soccer programs proves that creating a professional environment to train and develop players can impact a collegiate women’s soccer program to be successful. Coach C also uses long term vision. “I don’t think they are a finished product ever. I always believe people can work hard and get better and once they get better, you set higher goals. So it’s just pushing them to reach higher levels.”

After recruiting the right player talent to campus, Coach E guides the hard work and development of players. Through preparation, effort, focus, commitment, and motivation, players develop by working hard towards excellence each day. Coach E explains how pushing beyond comfort zones is a key to pushing through the perceived glass ceilings to top performance:

They are the ones putting the sweat in, putting themselves on the line every day to be uncomfortable, to push through thresholds of what they think they can do. And I
challenge them, we challenge them physically, we challenge them mentally and a lot of it is pushing through what they perceive as the glass ceiling for themselves in lots of areas. They probably don’t realize what they are capable of. Some of them can push through pretty naturally; others it takes a bit more work and that’s hard work on their part. That is not comfortable, and I’m not always comfortable challenging them, but I know in the end it’s for the best because they wouldn’t necessarily get where they get if I didn’t support them, challenge them, and I think show them I believe in them but, you know, push them. But they do all the work.

Coach F influences the level of excellence in the women’s soccer program by putting together good practice plans, teaching the highest level of the game, and inspiring hard work by being a good role model. Coach F admits making student-athletes the best they can be is the main job and adjusts the coaching approach of the staff every year to cater to the current players. The approach is adjusted every year because of the change of personal on the roster and, as Coach F states, the constant turnover in teams is challenging:

You have to adjust every year. That is probably the hardest part of college coaching is I feel like once you just get your team organized or your players organized maybe by junior or senior year, you feel like you got them where you want them to be and they understand the game how you want them to, they graduate and you have to start again. So that can be a challenge.

While developing players, Coach F focuses on the intelligence of playing soccer. “I think the aspect of the game that is neglected is the intelligence, teaching players the reasons to make decisions and the reasons they do things on the field.” So, in addition to teaching the technical aspects of the game, Coach F develops players by teaching the thought process of why and how
to make decisions on the field. “You design your own [training sessions] to fit your style of play and how you want your team to play and teach them the different movements and time to do it and try to get them to execute,” said Coach F.

Coach G is a former educator and believes this experience was a big advantage as a coach. It improved Coach G’s knowledge of pedagogy and therefore the ability to coach. Coach G knows what it takes to get players to learn. With the knowledge of how student-athletes learn, Coach G was able to develop all players on the roster. “Any coach can recruit talent. But the difference to me with the team is, it’s what you do and it’s what you can get out of not only those talented players, but what you can get out of your 18th player on the roster, your 20th player on the roster.” Coach G made it a point for each player on the roster to understand their value stating that, “each player had something that they gave to the team that enabled us to win championships.” Similar to Coach A, Coach G keeps most players engaged by playing a deep roster for games, changing starting line-ups and substituting many bench players. What the substitutes do each day in practice is important to the success of the overall team. Coach G works to create an environment where everybody is pushing everybody and does not want players to see the pecking order of the roster because some players start to lose interest and competitive edge. Coach G spoke about developing every player in training sessions: “What you do every day in training is going to help us determine whether we win at the end because while we need to get you to improve in some areas to play more, it’s very important your value to us that you are pushing the players that are in front of you, and if you check out on us now then we have no chance of succeeding.” Coach G also spoke about developing players in games by playing a deep roster so many players get game-time experience:
We are still developing players and I think those subs have to learn how to play in games that are tight. If I am a sub and every time I come in we are already 3 or 4 goals up then I can’t get better, I’m just getting playing time. So we always believed in, at the risk of maybe losing some games we still had to have enough faith and belief in those players because we recruited them that we gave them a chance to play. They need to know what playing against North Carolina, at North Carolina in a tight game they need to know what that feels like. That’s the only way they get better. I think that was a big key for us and I think we did something there that a lot of teams don’t do. I think that really kept our team not only closer chemistry-wise as a team but kept them more engaged and more focused because they knew they were going to get a change. So we didn’t lose them in the month of September, we had them all the way engaged till early November until we go to the play-off time. So that’s another thing that we really did differently that I think helped us continue to establish this excellence that we had over time.

There is a wide range of technique used by the most successful coaches to develop soccer players. With so many successful programs doing things a little bit differently, there does not appear to be one successful approach to developing players. One consistency is that all of the most successful coaches develop their student-athletes to be better soccer players for their program. The developing of better soccer players helps the most successful women’s soccer programs to continue to be successful and stay on top.

**Team Development**

In addition to the individual player development, all of the coaches I interviewed also recognized another aspect of development: team development. The most successful coaches in women’s collegiate soccer create an environment for student-athletes to learn, grow, and
improve on the field both as individuals and as a collective unit. Maximizing potential as a collective unit or whole is team development. Seven coaches spoke about how the team is developed throughout the season, both on and off the field, influences the success of the team.

The most successful coaches use long-term vision and patience to develop the team throughout the season. Each coach develops his or her team slightly differently depending on the program’s style of play. Coach D develops the University D team by emphasizing a playing style that values and keeps the ball. “There are so many different approaches to the game,” said coach D, “and there is beauty in all of the approaches but for me and my vision of the game it’s about having the ball and keeping the ball and spreading the field and movement without the ball.” Coach D is not willing to sacrifice that vision just to win a game. University D could have won a few more soccer games early on if Coach D had compromised the playing style but the team and program would not have developed at the same speed or with the same skill level. Coach D knew that sticking to the player and team development would pay off in the long term:

I wasn’t willing to compromise it and I knew that if we were able to survive it, that those players going through that the first year that were coming back for their second and third year would be so much further ahead when we brought in some of our own players. So I do think that patience is an important element in setting the foundation for your program and the development.

University B also persisted with their player and team development plan because Coach B believes “it’s what’s going to produce the best results in the long run, but the key words to that is the long run.” Team development for Coach D and Coach B meant sticking with the university’s respective style of play, and holding steadfast, regardless of the score. Coach B explains how
some teams give up trying to play a possession style of play similar to University B because it can be dangerous:

There are other teams who have tried to play like we do and then they lose a couple of games because of it and then they are like, shoot we can’t do this anymore, it’s too high risk. We lose games too, but then that just means, okay we’ve got to get better at it. So we just have this resolve about, we are going to do this and we are going to solve pressure and do it to a fault probably.

While developing teams, coaches often see mistakes, even game-losing mistakes, but that is part of the process of developing the team. Coach E recognizes it’s not necessarily about the way to get the quickest results but about the long-term process of teaching the game. The focus is not on any particular opponent but on the development of University E players and team. “The standard is: what is the best soccer playing team we can be?” said Coach E. For Coach E, the standard is a vision of University E’s best attack and best defense each year with each new roster:

It’s not about tomorrow. It’s not about the opponent. It’s not about what’s the quickest way for us to win the next game. There is very much a faith foundation of my approach and it takes a lot of time and sometimes you don’t see the results immediately.

Team development is a process and takes time but Coach E believes the University E approach will develop players to have the option to play professionally and the team to have national success. Additionally, each season, Coach E sees progress in the team:

Our team gets better from the beginning of the season to the end of the season generally, we have a team that has gotten better from the beginning of the season to the end of the season and that makes me proud. Right? We can’t be our best on August 30th, we can’t,
it’s not the way that we are doing things and that may mean that someone gets us on August 30th, maybe we didn’t play as well to win that specific game but we are building for, not only do we want to win, we obviously want to win on August 30th but it’s the start of building a foundation of how we are going to be our very best soccer team come the end of November.

Successful team development is maximizing potential of the team. According to Coach E, to be successful a collegiate soccer programs needs consistency of approach and consistency of expectation on a daily basis. Coach F also influences the development of the team on a daily basis through teaching the highest level of the game in training sessions designed for University F’s style of play.

If you are teaching the players the right way to play and they are genuinely getting better through the season, the team should gradually get better and better through the year…I think if you are teaching the right methods and you are really having each player grow and then the whole group comes together collectively. I think they should be getting better and better. You know, your only concern is injuries. Injuries can prevent you from going a little further. But if everyone stays healthy your hope is that you’ve taught the team the right way and they are getting better and their chemistry is strong, that they should go far.

Team development is a process that should be peaking near the end of the regular season or conference tournament and taking the team into the NCAA tournament. Injuries can impact the success of a team, which is one reason why Coach A plays a deep roster. Playing a deep game roster also helps to develop the University A team. The style of play at University A is to play the game at a sprint defensively and offensively. To do this effectively, University A plays
around 19 players a game in order to maximize the whole team’s development while minimizing the impacts of potential injury setbacks:

If you are going to play at a sprint defensively and offensively there is no way that you are going to last 90 minutes. So as a result we’re going to try and play a deep roster and there is a wonderful plus to that, one is in years when you graduate a lot of talent you are still competitive…So a part of our substitution, what most coaches would consider madness, benefits us in terms of the pressure we are able to consistently exert, that makes playing North Carolina a very unique experience, no one gets used to it. Also the fact that since we play so many players, graduation losses don’t cripple us the way they do other programs and that is a huge advantage for us.

In addition to developing the team, two positives of playing a deep roster are the ability to overcome individual injuries and graduating talent because so many players have game experience, roles can be filled seamlessly. Coach G reiterated the importance of making sure every player on the roster knew her role, regardless of whether or not they are a starter:

They’ve got to understand the position that they play and what that job description is for that position…So there are a lot of things that go on with team building and job description and those kind of things that we constantly did so our players were very clear in what their own expectation was for them with the position they play and how that translated on the field and what the jobs were and it gave them something really clear to know what they had to do better and focus on to get better and to play.

Coach G also tried to keep players engaged by playing a deep roster. Part of the team development process for Coach G was developing the program and team each season to the point where the players believed they could win, and would “step up” when the pressure was on:
I always knew it would happen, because we had just engrained it...we just knew, that we weren’t going to lose and the players believed, over time they believed it and they bought into it and one of the things that we were really able to do at University G, is regardless of how our season was going, we kind of knew that if we got ourselves at a point where we were in a position to get into the NCAAs we kind of knew that that was a second season and we knew we were always good in the NCAAs. We had some season where we struggled early in the year, and we had to really make a big push from the middle of the season. I can remember a couple of seasons where in the month of September we are looking at it going, if we don’t get this thing turned around we aren’t even going to make the NCAAs, we may not even make the conference tournament. But when that pressure really got on, we knew the players would step up, and they always did. So you kind of learn how to do that, you know, you can learn how to finish out not only a game but you learn how to finish out a season. So that’s one thing that we had a University G.

Coach G developed a standard that included winning at University G. Coach G did not speak about winning or national rankings with the team, but enforced a high level of performance every single day. The high level of performance was a standard for University G student-athletes both on and off the field. “Whether it was training, whether it was video study, whether it was a walk-through, whether it was regeneration or refueling, we wanted that to be done properly, every day.” Part of the team development process is setting a standard. Another example of a team development standard is excellence at University D. Included in Coach D’s standard of excellence is a standard of play that is not valued in wins and losses but in performance:

The expectation here is excellence. That expectation of excellence has translated into an awful lot of wins I guess, but I am much less worried about wins and losses than I am of
performance. If we perform well and we lose, I feel we are much better off than if we play poorly and win. I think if you play poorly and win, eventually it catches up with you and you aren’t going to win. Where if you play well and you’re losing, eventually you will find a way to get out of that and win your share of games.

One of the major factors prohibiting team development is the fact that there is a new roster each year. “You lose the top core and gain the bottom quarter every single year,” said Coach B. “Imagine if you were a CEO of a corporation where you lost a quarter of your employees every year and you gained another quarter, brand new. It’s crazy.” Another potential challenge of team development is a bad apple, for example a selfish or unaware student-athlete. Coach G noticed that on good teams, there are no Prima Madonnas’s or players with a sense of entitlement.

A common theme in successful teams is “hard-working, willing to give everything to the coach, willing to give everything to the program, and players that just want to win,” said Coach G.

Coach A does not think the head coach alone has enough energy to drive the players and team. To help with the development process, University A uses “every conceivable tool” including video, data, and statistics. “All of these things factor into holding players accountable, making them responsible and hopefully, driving them to their potential,” said Coach A. In training sessions, Coach A develops the team using competition. “I think the game is the best teacher and success and failure are wonderful teachers as well,” said Coach A. In all training sessions the University A team is put into environments that encourage team development through competition and the team gets to decide who they want to be:

They have to fight to win. Where basically you are going to succeed with effort. You are going to succeed with investing in your technical and tactical platforms. You are going to succeed by solving problems, but you are also going to succeed because you take full
responsibility for your success and failure, and that’s what critical, because then you get to make a decision about who you want to be.

According to Coach A, coaches facilitate team development and players make individual and collective decisions about what they want the team to become. It is important to note that team development requires selfless team members. Team members need to be willing to give without necessarily having an immediate reward. “You don’t always get to take out, you might have to either be patient or if you are keeping score, you might have to give a little bit more than you are receiving but if you trust it, at the end you realize you got much more than you put in,” said Coach E. Coach E believes that great soccer teams rely on the development of every player on the roster:

Something I think makes a great team, particularly a soccer team that is so reliant on the unit from player one to player twenty…is everybody having that as part of their belief system on a daily basis because that is when your environment is the absolute best it can be in the most positive way.

**Person Development**

The third area of development, in the most successful women’s collegiate soccer programs is development of the person which all eight coaches spoke about during their interview. This means the student-athlete’s development to positively impact the team, the university, and society as a human being. Coach G said, “We all want to win games and win championships, but I think the coaches that you see that are really successful, also want to teach those life lessons.” Coach G took great pride in finding high-character recruits who became high-character University G women’s soccer team members. Coach G did not want his players drinking, out all night, or using bad language but instead, setting good examples. Coach G
believes every top coach takes pride in not only graduating every player but watching each graduate go on to do something special that positively impacts the world.

We have a responsibility to do as well… we have to win enough games to keep our job, but I think at the same time we have an obligation to make sure we are teaching life lessons to the players that come through our program.

Several coaches taught person development through program values. Coach G believed one of the reasons University G women’s soccer was successful year in and year out was the players’ commitment to the team through teaching selflessness to develop the person. Every soccer player was treated equally at University G and everyone was in it for the whole team, no one was going to be bigger than the program.

Coach B believes a big difference University B offers that other programs do not is the commitment to coaching the person. “I don’t think there are many programs that coach the person. I think they may do some things that are personal based or that type of thing, but it’s not systematic, and I think we are systematic about coaching the person.” University B’s women’s soccer staff put a big emphasis on separating the person from the player. To Coach B, this means student-athletes should understand that their value on the team does not come from minutes played or statistics. “We put a lot of time and effort into developing people, which I think then gives them tools to be successful in soccer, said Coach B, “so it’s not all just a great citizenship project, it benefits us on the field.”

The University B soccer program has weekly messages including a performance and moral skill that players practice both on and off the field. An example of such a message would be resilience as a performance skill and honesty as a moral skill. The players will see the messages in many ways throughout the week and be given opportunities to practice the
performance skill and moral skill both on and off the field. Coach B does not separate the player from the person and explains how cultivating the person builds needed resilience:

When you walk into our practice field, there is a sign that says ‘person greater than player’ and what that means is, so if you only gave yourself as a player, a lot of things become threats. So playing a good team becomes a threat, or making a mistake becomes a threat. But if you gauge yourself as a person, it’s an opportunity because we all have the opportunity to react to whatever happens good or bad. So if you lose a game, then as a person you have the opportunity to show what resilience looks like. What does it look like to have class when you lose?

For person development, Coach B believes the developing of the person makes each player better, the team better, and the program better. Coach A agrees that developing the person makes the program better. Similar to how University A uses competition to develop the player, character is also measured through peer evaluation. Each player receives a rank for where they fall within the team in living out the core values of the program. Coach A shared a powerful example that shows the link between boosting team achievement and person-improvement in a story about sharing very low results with a player: “Are you glad I shared this with you?” asked Coach A. And in a very low voice she said, “Yes.” And Coach A asked, “Why?” And she said, “Cause I have to change?” From that conversation on, everyone saw incredible growth in the player’s personal development. Once she was made aware of her negative persona, she took responsibility and transformed her life. Coach A believes one of the best things ever done for the program was implementing the core value’s peer review: “it’s been incredibly powerful, it’s one of the best things I’ve ever done for culture.” Coach A also believes these core values create
consistency and explains that a key is to clearly show that character development is important to the program:

We value character and the development of character as the main priority and the main mission of the program. And I am absolutely convinced, if you can recruit young women of great character, and then give them a principle-centered set of core values to live by, and then enforce those core values, you are going to have an incredibly successful program.

Developing the character of each player and making them a better human being has influenced the success of University A’s women’s soccer program. Coach F agrees that being a person of character and caring about others they serve is the most important lesson University F players learn before they graduate. Coach F tries to create a culture for all players to develop as people, with a strong work ethic and constant growth:

I like to think that team culture I’m trying to create is that they are all great human beings. They conduct themselves in the proper manner off the field and on the field. That they have a great strong work ethic and they want to each day become the best they can be and grow each day. Have a growth mindset.

Coach F was the only coach to directly mention growth mindset, but all of the coaches I spoke with work to develop players, people, and teams because they believe in the idea of growth mindset; a mentality for always learning, always getting better, and always setting new goals.

With yet another approach of personal development, Coach D focuses on how to be a good teammate as a way to develop the person throughout a player’s career. University D soccer players are asked to act as good teammates, and these skills, according to Coach D, are invaluable and great life skills. “We are always trying to reach for and find ways to give kids the
opportunity to grow which clearly will help them in the world of sport but in my mind, clearly will help them greater as they become a mom or as they go into the corporate world after the soccer is done.” Coach D goes to great lengths to make sure all the players are learning how to be excellent teammates. For example, Coach D may bring in video staff to tape a player’s bad body language and then sit down with the player and help her become aware of her body language and the effect it has on teammates and coaches.

An additional life skill that Coach D tries to instill in University D players while developing the person is that hard work pays off. According to Coach D, if players are willing to work hard for what they believe in, then their likelihood of success is greatly enhanced:

So if you show up every day, whether it’s as a trash man emptying trash or whether it’s to be a freshman on your first day of preseason, if you show up with the idea of I am going to do the best job I can today and I’m going to be better tomorrow than I was today, then I think you will have a lot of success in life. If you show up and you expect things to be handed to you and given to you, then that success is going to vary for sure.

Coach E also spoke about daily habits. University E women’s soccer players have high expectations to show up and engage in class, represent the program by being socially responsible, and give back by doing community service. Coach E is developing the person through the “grandmom-standard” and community service. Coach E set this standard as a question for players: “would you want your grandmom to know that?” Community service is core component of the team. Here Coach E explains how “giving back” to the community is a way to teach her student-athletes how lucky they are and is key to their personal development:

Community service, giving back, we are very fortunate, they are very fortunate, I am very fortunate, we have good lives, and we are lucky, we were born in the right family and we
were given opportunity and a lot of it you know we worked hard for it but our circumstances certainly put us in a better situation so giving back to those that are less fortunate to have as good of circumstance and that is something we believe in and something we have standards for, the amount of hours that are put in.

Both Coach E and Coach H hope the lessons their players learn during their collegiate career guide them in life. Coach H believes University H’s success has as much to do with off-field (person) development as on-field (player) development. Team bonding sessions make University H better on the field. Coach H pointed out that due to the nature of college soccer, opportunities for team building are abundant being together for three to four months every day; traveling, in hotels, training, in restaurants, on planes and buses. “So you’ve got to have a really strong group and a group that really enjoys each other and wants to be around each other and has one goal and one purpose.” Team bonding helps players to be resilient when times get hard.

Each coach I interviewed cared about the people in their program and wanted each student-athlete to develop as a person throughout their collegiate career. Several coaches emphasized that student-athlete person development influences the success of the women’s soccer program.

**Coach Development**

As students of the game, coaches also need to develop to keep up with the advancement of the game, technology, and how student-athletes, especially millennials, communicate and learn. Seven of the eight coaches spoke about their personal development. For example, after over 25 years of coaching Coach G believed in always developing as a coach:

I think as a coach, one of the things I’ve always believed in, you know I’ve been doing this a long time 25+ years coaching and one of the things I’ve always felt strong about is
if I am going to ask for a commitment level from our student-athletes to give us their time, give us their energy and their minds and their commitment to being better players, then I always felt like I couldn’t stay put as a coach of just doing the same things each and every year. I’ve always believed that I’ve got to continue to educate myself, and I’ve got to continue to get better and I’ve got to stay on top of the new trends in the game and the new things that were coming out in sports science you know that we know now that we didn’t know 10 or 15 years ago about how to train our athletes. So I think our players could see that I worked really hard in always trying to be the best coach I could be for them. I think sometimes coaches maybe stay put, they don’t continue to go out and they don’t continue to education them self. They go out and just run their program year in and year out. So I think that’s one thing, the individual coach, and how they handle those resources they are given and how they are going to implement their style and their philosophy. So I do think the coach them-self can have a big influence.

Continuing to develop as a coach, even after 25 years of success, was important to Coach G. The most successful women’s collegiate soccer coaches are no different and take various measures to make sure they stay at the forefront of the sport.

One aspect of coach development aligns with the supportive management and collaborative colleagues aspect of the University section. Coaches can develop from a mentoring manager and learn from and collaborate with athletic department peers. When Coach B first became head coach at University B, several peers assisted in Coach B’s development as a coach: “When I got here I had no idea what I was doing at this level and I had a lot of people around me that helped me.” Currently, head coaches at University B meet monthly and collaborate. “You just learn something every single time. And then in between that, the coaches here, they are all
awesome, so you can just ask anybody anything,” said Coach B. Coach B seeks out teachers in all areas of life and in all sports. In addition to head coach co-workers, coaches also learn from their staff. Two coaches spoke about debating with their staff over on-field soccer tactics before learning from each other and coming to a unified decision. “I want him to constantly remind me of what works for us,” said Coach A about an assistant coach and added, “so if I change it, I’m changing it because what I’m selecting to do instead of it, I’m absolutely convinced it’s better.” Coach D realizes that part of being successful is recognizing your own strength and weaknesses and then complimenting your program with staff that can support what you are doing and teach you.

Coach C is a student of the game and continues to learn by going to coaching courses, running training centers, and watching what other coaches do. In addition to University C student-athlete development, Coach C and staff are developing to improve as coaches believing that: “just to get better, we have to get better as well.” Most coaches use the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) courses and annual convention as well as United States Soccer Association (USSF) courses and continuing education; the What Drives Winning conference, and NCAA Women’s Coaches Academy platforms to teach and learn from others.

Several coaches learn from observing top-level professional coaches and managers. For example, Coach F learns from mentors that have played and coached at high levels including watching and reading about elite coaches such as Alex Ferguson, former Manchester United manager and Pep Guardiola current manager of Manchester City and previously with Bayern Munich and Barcelona. “I try to read everything that I can read…a bunch of leadership books, athletic books, tactical books, tactical areas…” said Coach H. Coach H also explained how a change in staff, after many years, was an opportunity to look at the strengths and weaknesses of
the staff and the program and assess where improvement was needed. Coach H found a new assistant coach who would challenge Coach H to grow remarking: “yeah, we were challenged, so you always have to keep learning. You always have to. This game changes, like every sporting attitude changes and if you let yourself just sit back and think that what you’ve done will always work, it affects it for sure.” One reason Coach E has been successful is by changing with the times:

And that’s hard for me, because it’s hard as you get a little bit more, not older but more experienced, to not just default to what has worked before. So to constantly be looking at changing methods, adjusting recruiting, the speed of recruitment. You know I’ve said I would never do this [early recruiting] in recruiting, I’d never commit to a kid this young in recruiting and then I’ve changed.

Coach E isn’t the only coach who has changed with the times. When asked if Coach D has changed as a leader the response was, “I sure hope so!” All of the coaches I spoke with continue to learn about soccer, leadership, and management. Each coach is striving to constantly evolve and continue to successfully compete at the top level, I will go into further detail about this in the next chapter about Drive. Player development, team development, person development, and coach development are about nurturing growth to maximize potential. These individual aspects of development all influence the success of the soccer program.

**Drive**

The fourth and final major factor that influences a NCAA Division I women’s soccer team to be effective is head coach drive. All of the coaches spoke about different aspects of drive. Drive is the head coach’s determination and ability to keep striving for excellence. Regardless of the challenges, the most successful head coaches find a way to be great.
“Consistency comes with repetition of excellence and wanting to be the best,” said Coach D, “and that is what we are working towards.” Many of the coaches appreciated their jobs hinge on their ability to win, however, none of the coaches I spoke with talked with their team about wins and losses. The coaches were primarily concerned with the development and growth towards excellence for themselves and every member of the team. Coach D’s expectation at University D is excellence rather than focus on wins and losses:

That expectation of excellence has translated into an awful lot of wins I guess, but I am much less worried about wins and losses than I am of performance. If we perform well and we lose, I feel we are much better off than if we play poorly and win. I think if you play poorly and win, eventually it catches up with you and you aren’t going to win. Where if you play well and you’re losing, eventually you will find a way to get out of that and win your share of games.

The idea of excellence circles back to player and team development. Excellence is not a goal to accomplish, but rather a state of being. Coach D is concerned with consistent and effective performance because daily habits of excellence influence a team’s ability to compete and win. Coaches must teach, remind, and motivate players and the whole team daily to train and develop at a level of excellence. Coach G spoke about the difference between success and excellence:

I think so many programs that you’ll see, maybe they win and they are successful one year or two years, and then they drop out again and it’s a couple of years before they are back. One thing that we really strived to achieve there [at University G] is what I refer to as excellence, because I do think there’s a difference between success and a difference between excellence. Success, I think, and what I would always talk to our players about is, success is kind of, you know, fleeting. You can have a successful season one year and
then not be successful the next. What we wanted to strive for is that we had this consistency of being excellent all the time. We knew we weren’t going to win it every year but we had set standards within the program that we wanted to be in the hunt at the end of every year.

Every coach has a first day, first training session, first game, first season at each of their respective schools. The coaches I interviewed had the awareness and drive to set a standard of excellence at their university to make it into one of the collegiate women’s soccer programs with the most wins. At a previous school, Coach D spoke about getting very frustrated with the players because they didn’t want to succeed as badly as Coach D:

I was really frustrated with the players because I wanted it, I wanted to be successful more than they wanted to be successful and that was probably the best lesson I’ve learned in coaching. That you need to surround yourself with people who have a similar goal to what your goals are.

The group Coach D had inherited at a previous school did not have the same soccer goals as Coach D, but over time, Coach D recruited players with the same mindset, having the right fit and right talent and quickly became very competitive. Coach D’s drive lead the program to be more effective. Head coach drive showed up in three different ways throughout my interviews: evolution, confidence, and fear of failure.

**Evolution**

One aspect of head coach drive is his/her mindful personal evolution. I define evolution of a head coach as choosing to constantly learn and grow while striving towards excellence in the field of soccer. Each head coach must evolve as the game of women’s soccer evolves. They figure out how to manage their teams as they learn the complexities of the world of collegiate
women’s soccer. Evolution takes commitment. The evolution of the top head coaches happens through hard work, dedication, and perseverance. All eight coaches spoke about personal evolution in their interviews. To evolve in collegiate soccer, a head coach must be able to recognize change and be willing to adapt as needed. One aspect of head coach evolution was found in the previous Development chapter in the coach development section that went into detail about the importance of and diverse ways the most successful head coaches continue to develop themselves. All of the coaches I interviewed are proactive in seeking ideas, information, and technology to get better at their job and continue competing at the top level. Coach E spoke about the challenges of changing with the times throughout a long career:

That’s hard for me, because it’s hard as you get a little bit more, not older but more experienced, to not just default to what has worked before. So to constantly be looking at changing methods, adjusting recruiting, the speed of recruitment, you know I’ve said I would never do this in recruiting, I’d never commit to a kid this young in recruiting and then I’ve changed.

Change can be difficult but since the game is always evolving, the coaches I interviewed realized they needed to evolve as well. They need to continue to develop themselves professionally to stay on top.

Confidence

In addition to continuous head coach development another aspect of head coach drive that influences NCAA Division I women’s soccer teams to be successful is head coach confidence. Not only do the most successful coaches have efficacy that their teams can compete at the top level, they also have a fierce conviction that they know how to lead and develop a team to compete at the top collegiate level. Six of the coaches spoke about confidence in a vision of
what a top Division I women’s soccer programs plays like and confidence in a development plan to get their respective team there. One example of comes from Coach G’s self-belief in being willing to stand firm:

I’ve always had a real clear picture of what I want things to look like both on and off the field. So I think that’s something that is in a coach’s development. Either a coach is going to be mature enough or strong enough or experienced enough to know what that’s like, or they’re not. I was always willing to stand firm, stand firm to the way we wanted.

Another example of confidence is knowing you are good enough as a coach to use what you have and who you have to compete. “Despite having no resources, despite not having first pick in recruiting, despite absolutely everything, we’re going to figure out a way to succeed together,” said Coach A. The success of Coach E is attributed to “believing in the way and being confident.” One reason the most successful coaches have confidence is because they have had long tenures and with that comes time to make and learn from a lot of mistakes. This self-belief does not come easy for everyone.

Coach E explained the difficulties of staying confident while leading a team that plays such a volatile game:

Even though it’s not working every single minute. You lose some games. You start to look around like, do I really have it right? Am I going about things the right way in how I build the team and coach the team and coach individuals and philosophy of how we do things? And do I have it right? Because when you fail, you question it and you think you’re not very good at it. You question whether or not you should be doing it at all or whether you should just tear everything up and just start over or have a change of
philosophy? So I think you are going to be tested in that you are going to have failure and it’s staying the course with your belief and staying confident.

Coach E explains that there will be trying times throughout a season and career, but the head coach has to stay the course. The head coach must have confidence that his/her recruiting, player development, person development, and team development both on and off the field will get the team where it needs to be to compete at the top level.

Fear of Failure

The final aspect of head coach drive is the fear of failure by not producing a product that competes at the top. Only three of the eight coaches spoke directly about a fear of failure, but it was done with such clarity and conviction, it was a clear point of head coach drive. I also believe if I had asked each coach about fear of failure, I would have had a strong response. The most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer coaches have a fear of failing, especially after having succeeded. “I think one of the worst things about success is, you do start to get convinced that it doesn’t matter what you do you are going to be successful, and that is when you start to fail,” said Coach A. “That’s why what is absolutely critical, is during any kind of success you try to keep your humility and you keep trying to change what you are doing.” Coach A insisted that, “the stuff you’ve done in the past, will not help you win in the future.” As expected, with success comes a pressure or heightened expectation for performance. Coach E agrees: never take success for granted. Just because something worked in the past doesn’t mean success is your right. Coach E advises those who have been successful to celebrate and move on:

Once you have achieved something and you’ve celebrated it, you should celebrate it, we take time to celebrate achievement, it’s over, it’s done. What are we going to do next? Let’s do more. We did this, let’s expect a little more. Or we didn’t achieve this, we’ve
got to look at why. If we do things exactly the same way, why do we think we are going
to get different result? So we have to fix something or some things. So I think not
resting on your laurels, [not] continuing to celebrate what you’ve achieved, because its
move on time. So I think that is just my own mentality, I think I’m relatively humble, I
believe in myself and I believe in my abilities and my values and my philosophy and
coaching so it’s not that but I think it’s about being humble that you are only as great as
the last thing you’ve done, so you better keep after it because there’s lots of people that
are trying to be great, and there are a lot of good people that are trying to be great so you
better stay on top of your game every single second, you can’t rest.

Coach E illuminates the importance of moving on from success, because if a program rests on its
previous achievements, other coaches and program are going to take their spot-on top. It is not
easy to stay on top. It’s hard work. Coach D believes many coaches fatigue. Coach D’s biggest
fear was being a one-year-wonder:

I didn’t want to go there [the Final Four] my first year and never make it back again. So I
think that the fear of failure was much more motivating to me than the thrill of winning.
Again, I think that all of us are motivated in different ways at different times and under
different circumstances but for me, I look at it and our expectation this past year was to
win the national championship and in my mind we fell short so how do you make sense
of it. As I said to the team after the game, there are 300 teams in the country that would
have been thrilled to go to the Final four and we are all disappointed and dejected that we
lost and not that we lost in the Final Four but that we didn’t win the national
championship. So in my mind, the bar is set in the right place it’s just a matter of, are we
all working in the same direction and are we all willing to make the sacrifices that it takes to get back to the promise land [NCAA Championship].

Fear of failure motivates the most successful head coaches to continue to succeed. In addition to fear of failure, the most successful coaches also want to succeed because it’s fun! Coach H wanted to be consistent because “it is such an unbelievably great experience to go to a Final Four you want all of your teams to at least experience that.” Head coach drive including evolution, confidence, and fear of failure all influence the effectiveness of NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs.
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

I began this research to discover what underlying factors promote the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA Division I women’s soccer programs and learned there is no one factor or secret to success. According to the head coaches of eight programs, a multitude of influences play a role in building a consistently winning team and program. Specifically, a program with a consistent record of winning seasons is the result of underlying factors related to (a) university resources and relationships; (b) recruiting strategies; (c) multi-level development of players and coaches; and (d) the coach’s drive to succeed.

To further analyze and interpret my findings, I chose to apply three theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter two in the theoretical framework section (p. 49), which illuminate and underscore factors related to the findings. The first framework, highlighting organization effectiveness as developing close working relationships within levels of leadership, is Peachey, Damon, Zahou and Burton’s (2015) multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management. The multilevel conceptual model highlights the impact of the larger university organization on the women’s soccer program. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) note it is important for researchers to explore both leadership’s influence on organizational culture and an organization’s culture influence on leadership within sport organizations. Often, coaches have very little, if any, control over the university influences.

To this effect, the second theoretical framework I choose to analyze my findings with, Schein’s (2010) organizational culture theory from the perspective of the head coach, recognizes organization effectiveness empowered by institutionalizing a supportive culture. The organizational culture framework highlights the culture embedding mechanisms head coaches can influence to improve team effectiveness.
While the first two theoretical frameworks provided useful analysis, I believe there was still a gap which necessitated the application of an innovative third theoretical framework to elucidate a more complete view of how an effective collegiate women’s soccer coach builds his/her program. To view my data holistically, I chose to apply Bolman and Deal’s (2013) reframing organization theoretical framework to gain a deeper understanding of the many intricate and interdependent aspects of the influences that effect collegiate women’s soccer programs. Reframing organization theory identifies organization effectiveness can be enhanced by deploying structural, political, human resource and symbolic factors. Using this framework allowed different lenses through which to view my findings, providing insights about the many influences that promote the effectiveness of successful teams.

This framework brought my data to life, allowing me as the researcher to view the data from different perspectives. Bolman and Deal’s (2013) reframing organization theoretical framework has four lenses to analyze the influences of a winning women’s soccer program, including structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. The frames helped ground my data analysis. While all the frames provided insight on my findings, the human resource frame analysis of my data was the most insightful and useful for practical application. Additionally, I found the political frame was helpful for informing how outside influences impact a women’s soccer program. The human resource and political frameworks gave me a more comprehensive view of how the university, recruiting, development, and head coach drive are created and manipulated for the use of the women’s soccer program. Examples of how a head coach can practically apply the frameworks and findings to his/her program are provided in this chapter.
In this chapter I will analyze how my findings regarding the keys influences winning collegiate soccer programs connected to the above-mentioned theories about organizational effectiveness. In the first section I explain the interpretation of the overarching theoretical framework of Bolman and Deal (2013) because it is the most holistic approach. Followed by further analysis of my findings, with the theories named above and other theories found in my literature review. I move through each section of analysis in the following order: university, recruiting, development, and drive, in the order my findings were presented.

**Building Effectiveness Through the Reframing Organization Frames**

In the following sections I use Reframing Organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013) to interpret my findings. I begin with the interpretation of my university findings using the political frame. Next I analyze my recruiting findings using the political frame and human resource frame. For the development findings, I begin analysis with the human resource frame followed by the structural frame. Finally, I end the reframing organization analysis with the symbolic frame to analyze my drive findings.

**Examining the Political Frame for Interpretation of University Findings**

While analyzing data found in the university section of the findings, the political frame sheds light on the resources that may or may not be available for a head coach at his/her respective university and shows how much negotiating time is needed to access those resources. In my findings, I establish that University resources that influence the effectiveness of the women’s soccer program include: financial support, supportive management, collaborative colleagues, standard of excellence, and university reputation. All of the University resources contribute to the head coach’s ability to recruit.
One of the political assumptions that allowed me to analyze my data through the political lens is that “most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources—deciding who gets what” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 188). No universities have unlimited resources, but it is ideal if the women’s soccer program does not have to spend time negotiating and fighting for resources deemed necessary for success. Funding for the women’s soccer program, including facilities, season budget, staff payroll budget, and recruiting budget, play an important role in the success of the women’s soccer program.

Another assumption is that “scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the center of day-to-day dynamics and make power the most important asset” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 189). These political propositions encouraged me to look at the scarce resources that coaches negotiate for, and in many cases, discover that some of the coaches I interviewed did not have to negotiate for resources because they were given everything they needed to compete from the university. If a coach has no additional financial needs because of the funding that has been put in place by the athletic department, the coach can spend that time working on other aspects of improving the women’s soccer program instead of negotiating for scarce resources. Next I explain how the political frame gives interpretation to both the university reputation aspect of the university findings and the recruiting findings.

Examinining the Political Frame for Interpretation of the Interconnected University (Reputation) and Recruiting

The political frame also shows the impact of university reputation on the head coach’s ability to recruit. Technical, tactical, and physically excellent recruits are a limited resource. The political frame highlights how universities with strong reputations can get ahead in the recruiting aspect. University reputation allows the women’s soccer program to compete in
recruiting the best women’s soccer players in the country, as highly ranked division I academic institutions have reputations that appeal to the women’s soccer recruit population. The more top student-athletes in the country a coach can recruit, the higher hit rate, or commitment rate of top student-athletes. The top student-athlete recruits have the potential to be the best players on the team and help the team to compete with other top programs. If your soccer program is successful, next year’s top student-athletes being recruited will be interested in your university and program. The ability to compete to recruit the top student-athletes starts a cycle of potential success:

Figure 5. Impact of University Reputation on Recruiting

The cycle doesn’t work perfectly with every recruit, but generally, the top coaches want to recruit the top student-athletes because they consistently perform and help the team be successful. To get the top recruits on campus, the women’s soccer program must be housed in a university with a renowned reputation. These top academic universities, combined with a successful women’s soccer program, are better positioned to recruit the best student-athlete
recruits. The top recruits, in turn, help teams to be competitive, win more, and increase future recruiting opportunities as a result. Although head coaches may have little to no influence on the university reputation, it greatly impacts their ability to have success contending for recruits. In addition to the political frame analysis of university reputation and how strongly it correlates to recruiting which I further analyze next.

**Examining the Human Resource Frame for Interpretation of Recruiting Findings**

One of Bolman and Deal’s (2013) basic human resource strategies is to “hire the right people,’’ which in the case of my findings can be translated into recruiting the right student-athletes (p. 140). According to the human resource frame, the needs of individuals and organizations can and should be aligned during the recruiting process—*right-fit recruiting*. During the recruiting process, it is crucial for the head coach and student-athletes to clearly communicate and negotiate needs. The human resource frame shows places an enormous value on recruiting talented players and players that are the right fit for the coach’s vision. The relationship between the women’s soccer program and the recruit is very important:

The human resource frame highlights the relationship between people and organizations. Organizations need people (for their energy, effort, and talent), and people need organizations (for the many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they offer), but their respective needs are not always well aligned. When the fit between people and organizations is poor, one or both suffer: individuals may feel neglected or oppressed, and organizations sputter because individuals withdraw their efforts or even work against organizational purposes. Conversely, a good fit benefits both: individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 135)
When the fit between recruits and the women’s soccer program is poor, it will negatively impact the women’s soccer program. When the fit between recruits and the women’s soccer program is strong, including both on field talent and off field culture, it will positively impact the women’s soccer program.

A practice for the head coach is to “know what you want” out of a recruit for both on field talent and off field culture (Bolman and Deal, 2013, p. 140). The head coach must also “be selective” in who they allow into the program to ensure an enduring standard of excellence (Bolman and Deal, 2013, p. 140). Each coach I spoke with had a particular academic, athletic, and character platform that they used for finding the best student-athlete matches for the fiber of the university and program. For example, Coach F spoke about finding recruits that are the right fit for University F, first looking at them as athletes, then as students. Coach F also emphasized the role of character and the need to “assess their character and make sure they are a good person and they care about others and they are going to work hard and become competitive.” A second example is Coach C, who looks for good soccer skills, but more importantly, a good mentality regarding work; “kids that want to do the work, when everyone else is quitting they are still the ones doing the work.” Coach C recruits student-athletes who have the number one quality of being driven: “they want to be as good as they can and work as hard as they can and get better every day.”

Another basic human resource strategy is “promote diversity” (Bolman and Deal, 2013, p. 140). Other than diversifying student-athlete talents for specific positions, diversity did not appear in my data or the literature as an influence on the effectiveness of women’s soccer programs. Recruiting diverse talents for specific positions helps organize a well-rounded team with goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and forwards. As a practitioner, I know that
international recruiting continues to grow and many of the coaches I spoke with have
international players on their rosters. Future research should study the influence of diversity on
the effectiveness of women’s collegiate soccer.

My recruiting findings support the work of Bolman and Deal (2013) particularly the
human resource frame and basic human resource strategy to “hire the right people” (p. 140). In
addition, my right-fit recruiting findings strongly align with the idea of recruiting the right
student-athletes for the program. In summary, it is ideal if the women’s soccer program’s needs
and the recruit’s needs are aligned. Next I explain how the human resource frame also gives
interpretation to the development finding.

Examining the Human Resource Frame for Interpretation of Development Findings

As a soccer coach for most of my adult life, I had not thought about coaching from a
human resource development point of view. So, applying the human resource frame to my
findings provided great insight and interpretation. It is important to note that in the human
resource frame, Bolman and Deal (2013) make an assumption that “organizations exist to serve
human needs rather than the converse.” To effectively use the human resource frame, it is
necessary for the coach to serve the student-athlete rather than the student-athlete serve the head
coach (which would be likely in a structural frame). The student-athletes are the coach’s human
resources and both student-athletes and coaches are human resources for the athletic department
administration. Finally, all student-athletes, coaches, and athletic administrations are inherently
human resources for the University. Conversely, the University is serving the athletic
administration, coaches, and student-athletes as a support and construct entity. The athletic
administration is serving the head coaches and student-athletes and the head coaches are serving
the student-athletes. This idea is found in the supportive boss and collaborative colleague aspect
of university impact and supports coach development. In the context of my interviews, many coaches spoke about how their athletic directors were serving them and the women’s soccer program. More importantly, the coaches I interviewed were serving their athletes through player development, team development, and especially through person development. In the human resource frame, the head coach is like a parent, guiding his/her children through the process of becoming a better soccer player, teammate, and human being.

Bolman and Deal (2013) created a chart for Basic Human Resource Strategies, (p. 140). In my analysis, I used this chart to shed light on the human resource aspects that influence the effectiveness of the best collegiate soccer teams. I adapted the original chart by adding the middle column for women’s soccer program principles.

Table 5. Basic Human Resource Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resource Principle</th>
<th>Women’s Soccer Program Principles</th>
<th>Specific Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build and implement an HR strategy.</td>
<td>Build and implement an HR strategy using program values.</td>
<td>Develop a shared philosophy for managing people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Build systems and practices to implement the philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire the right people.</td>
<td>Recruit the right student-athletes.</td>
<td>Know what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be selective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep them.</td>
<td>Engage student-athletes both on and off the field.</td>
<td>Reward well.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protect jobs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote from within.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share the wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in them.</td>
<td>Develop student-athletes both on and off the field.</td>
<td>Invest in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Create development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower them.</td>
<td>Empower the team both on and off the field.</td>
<td>Provide information and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage autonomy and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redesign work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foster self-managing teams.

Promote egalitarianism.

Promote diversity.

Be explicit and consistent about the organization’s diversity philosophy.

Hold managers accountable.

The middle column of the table, *women’s soccer program principles*, shows the basic human resource strategies within the most effective women’s soccer programs. I will explain how many of the principles, including *build and implement an HR strategy, keep them, invest in them, empower them, and promote diversity*, can help a head coach maximize his/her team’s potential.

**Build and Implement an HR Strategy Using Program Values.** Directly after being hired to coach a collegiate women’s soccer program, a head coach should build and implement an HR strategy. How will the women’s soccer program and head coach serve the student-athletes? The literature shows the significance of a head coach clearly communicating a vision, goals, and values to the team (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley et al., 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997). The HR strategy can be a guiding light for the head coach and women’s soccer program. The HR strategy should *develop a shared philosophy for managing people and build systems and practices to implement the philosophy*. The HR strategy will set the tone for the *team culture* defined as “a dynamic process characterized by the shared values, beliefs, expectations and practices across the members and generations of a defined group” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340).

Through interpretation, my findings included building and implementing an HR strategy in two ways. First, player and team development materialized with a preferred style-of-play used as a guiding light. Second, person development materialized with core-values as a guiding light.
Together, style-of-play and core-values may be considered as an HR strategy of a collegiate women’s soccer program.

**Engage Student-Athletes Both On and Off the Field (keep them).** Head coaches keep student-athletes engaged by providing role clarity for every member of the team and making sure each team member feels valued. My findings are in alignment; the coaches I interviewed worked mindfully to keep all athletes, regardless of their role in the team, engaged. One example is Coach G, who made it a point for each player on the roster to understand their value; “each player had something that they gave to the team that enabled us to win championships.” Like Coach A, Coach G keeps most players engaged by rewarding them by playing a deep roster in games, changing starting line-ups and substituting many bench players. What the substitutes do each day in practice is important to the success of the overall team. Even though substitutes may not be contributing as much on the game field, Coach G attributes success to the actions of the whole team, not just those playing the most minutes (share the wealth). Coach G works to create an environment where everybody is pushing everybody and does not want players to see the pecking order of the roster because some players start to lose interest and competitive edge.

Engaging student-athletes by providing role clarity for each athlete on the team emerged as a key to team development. Several researchers noted the importance of the head coach in providing role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al. 2007; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). Not only is role clarity important, but role clarity and role acceptance influence team effectiveness (Yukelson, 1997; Brawley et al., 1993). According to Fletcher and Arnold, (2011), athletic leaders must create an environment for the whole team to sustain high-
performance levels. However, it is necessary for each athlete to know her role within the whole. The coach needs to communicate roles frequently to maintain high-performing culture.

**Develop student-athletes both on and off the field (invest in them).** My findings illuminated the positive influence of development, in several forms, on the effectiveness of the women’s soccer program. The head coach has a lot of control over how to develop student-athletes. The literature also illuminated the importance of the head coach as a leader to develop individuals and the team in athletics (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price & Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997).

**Create development opportunities.** I found each coach greatly valued the development process of student-athletes and the whole team. All the coaches I interviewed invested in **student-athlete learning and personal coach learning.** Through daily training environments and games, players have many **development opportunities** and should be improving their skill.

Coach G spoke about developing every player in training sessions: “What you do every day in training is going to help us determine whether we win at the end because while we need to get you to improve in some areas to play more, it’s very important for your value to us that you are pushing the players that are in front of you and if you check out on us now then we have no chance of succeeding.” Coach G also spoke about developing players in games by playing a deep roster so many players get game-time experience:

We are still developing players and I think those subs have to learn how to play in games that are tight. If I am a sub and every time I come in we are already 3 or 4 goals up then I can’t get better, I’m just getting playing time. So we always believed in, at the risk of maybe losing some games, we still had to have enough faith and belief in those players because we recruited them that we gave them a chance to play.
The most successful coaches identified a wide range of techniques to develop soccer players. With so many successful programs doing things a little bit differently, there does not appear to be one successful approach to developing players. Consistently, all the most successful coaches use multiple tactics to develop their student-athletes to be better soccer players for their program. The developing of better soccer players helps the most successful women’s soccer programs to continue to be successful and stay on top.

**Empower the team both on and off the field (empower them).** Soccer is widely regarded as a player’s game because soccer coaches have less influence during the games than coaches of other sports. Soccer coaches do not call in-game plays the way basketball and football coaches do, they cannot call timeouts, and they do not have unlimited substitutes, so the game belongs to the players on the field. Consequently, players need to be empowered through development to solve problems, make decisions, and execute the game plan on their own.

While developing players, Coach F provides information focusing on the intelligence of playing soccer, “teaching players the reasons to make decisions and the reasons they do things on the field.” So, in addition to teaching the technical aspects of the game, Coach F empowers players by helping players become aware of the decision-making process itself. “You design your own [training sessions] to fit your style of play and how you want your team to play and teach them the different movements and time to do it and try to get them to execute,” said Coach F.

Bolman and Deal (2013) wrote about empowering employees through an “open-book management” philosophy:

Open-book management works for several reasons. First, it sends a clear signal that management trusts people. Second, it creates a powerful incentive for employees to
contribute. They can see the big—picture how their work affects the bottom line and how the bottom line affects them. Finally, it furnishes information they need to do a better job. (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 148)

An example of open book management from my findings is Coach A, who uses an open-book management system through competition to develop players. Players are measured on every training aspect including fitness, 1-verse-1 ability, possession, and ability to win regardless of the details of the training session. Each player is subsequently ranked for each of the performance measures. At University A, all student-athletes, regardless of role, understand performance measures and where they rank within the team for each performance measure. Coach A stated, “It is a very successful way to take your players and get them to an elite level, I think at a faster rate than any other kind of training environment. So I think what we do in training is absolutely unique.” The open-book management system of competition empowers each individual player to improve her rank, and this stimulates the team to improve.

The human resource frame proved to illuminate the importance of recruiting and development of players in regards to the success of the women’s soccer program. Next I will explain how the structural frame gives understanding to the team development aspect of development, especially how the Xs and Os fit together and in role clarity.

**Examining the Structural Frame for Interpretation of Development**

Many NCAA soccer programs are organized structurally, both on and off the field. Off the field, collegiate soccer teams are usually coordinated from the top-down, from the head coach, to support staff, to student-athletes. The structural frame is most helpful when analyzing the team development aspect of the findings. When considering the structural frame of an
effective collegiate soccer program, it is important for a head coach to define clear and concise goals and roles for individuals, and the team, while remaining focused on the mission.

How a coach structures the team enhances and constrains what the team can accomplish. The X’s and O’s of a soccer team can be viewed through the structural frame by delegating tasks and clarifying the roles of each individual. Many of my interviewees spoke about the women’s soccer program’s style of play at their respective university. Although coaches placed great importance on the style of play, the interviews did not discover in detail what each program’s style of play is and how the coach develops the team to play in that particular style. Further research, perhaps quantitative, should be conducted to discover the most influential style of play in women’s collegiate soccer.

Beyond how the the Xs and Os are structured, another structural aspect a head coach can impact is player roles, role clarity, and role acceptance. Several of my interviewees spoke how they treat every player on the roster and work mindfully to keep them engaged throughout the season. Several researchers noted the importance of the head coach providing role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Carron, 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al. 2007; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). The structural frame highlights how a head coach structures a team to promote effectiveness, both on and off the field. Next I will move into the head coach drive findings and interpret the findings further using both symbolic frame.

**Examining the Symbolic Frame for Interpretation of Drive Findings**

Bolman and Deal (2013) state “meaning is not given to us, we create it” (p. 244). The symbolic frame focuses on how humans make sense of the world around them using symbols, myths, visions, values, heroes and heroines, stories, rituals, and ceremonies. More specifically, I
explain how the head coach is driven to create a reality for their student-athletes which promotes excellence.

The symbolic frame assumes that “symbols carry powerful intellectual and emotional messages; they speak to both the mind and heart” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 243). One of the most important symbols of a collegiate women’s soccer program is the head coach. The head coach emulates the expectations of the program including on and off field behaviors. The head coach is the guiding light of the program, setting the path for the rest to follow.

I will dive further into each aspect of the symbolic frame, including myth, vision, values, ritual and ceremony, and give some example how symbolic frame illuminated aspects of my data.

**Myth.** According to Bolman and Deal (2013), a myth is a narrative used by an organization that tells the story of how it came to be. Within a coach’s collegiate soccer program, a myth could be about how the team previously won a conference or national championship. It is a story that gets retold each year, including elements such as: the road to victory, overcoming obstacles, individual impacts, and finally the success that built the program. Myths are told at every collegiate soccer program. An example, found in the historical review section of my literature review, of a myth told at the winningest women’s soccer program, UNC is that they own the championship. Dorrance said, “The mission of the players is to go out there and say ‘This is the University of North Carolina and we own that championship. Some team is just renting it now, but it’s ours’” (Crothers, 2006, p. 89). Dorrance has been coaching a winning collegiate program at UNC since 1981. Under the leadership of Dorrance, UNC women’s soccer team has played in 24 national championship games and won 21 of the 33 NCAA Division I National Championships. The myth holds true. Considering the longevity necessary to have
several winning seasons, all of the coaches I interviewed had been in their roles long enough to use myth to propel the standard of excellence at their respective university.

**Values.** Values set a tone for individual behaviors and expectations. I found program values throughout each of my interviews. On a NCAA soccer team, often times a head coach sets the values for the team to follow, such as selflessness, which can convey a sense of identity for the athletes. Coach A uses program core values to create consistency and explains that a key is to clearly show that character development is important to the program:

We value character and the development of character as the main priority and the main mission of the program. And I am absolutely convinced, if you can recruit young women of great character, and then give them a principle-centered set of core values to live by, and then enforce those core values, you are going to have an incredibly successful program.

Head coaches should inspire student-athletes to commit to the values yet remain flexible and understanding as student-athletes adopt and learn to uphold the values. Several researchers also found the importance of the head coach to clearly communicate a vision, goals, and values to the team (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1993; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Price $ Weiss, 2013; Schroder, 2010; Yukelson, 1997).

**Vision.** As stated in the literature review, vision gives the organization or team a goal and purpose to strive for and I found vision throughout my data. It gives each student-athlete a clear and conscious objective to work towards and unites the individuals as a collective group, signifying that they all need each other to work together to accomplish the vision set forth. One core component in building a successful team is a shared vision creating a unity of purpose (Yukelson, 1997). Style of play was one way in which the winningest collegiate coaches
provided a vision for their student-athletes. An example of vision, is Coach B’s vision for a possession style of play. Possession style of play means keeping control of the ball so your team can systematically move the ball towards your attacking goal. The idea is that the other team can’t score without the ball, and your team can score with the ball. Coach B’s vision of possession style of play at University B drives the player development necessary to play in the system. “Vision turns and organization’s core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of the future” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 250). At University B, players are developed at every training session so they improve the skills to better play the system and program’s style of play.

**Rituals and ceremonies.** Another symbolic aspect that influences the effectiveness of a women’s soccer program is ritual or ceremony. It is likely that each student-athlete has a personal routine, in addition to routines established for the whole team. Rituals and ceremonies can be positive or negative, so how are head collegiate coaches using rituals and ceremonies to deepen faith both on and off the field? Rituals are frequent or even daily routines that hold meaning. An example of ritual and ceremony found in my data is the standard of excellence enforced by the coach, which is practiced and training and in games daily. An example of ritual is the standard of excellence expected at every University D. Coach D is concerned with consistent and effective performance because daily habits of excellence influence a team’s ability to compete and win. Coaches must teach, remind, and motivate players and the whole team daily to train and develop at a level of excellence.

In conclusion, Bolman and Deal’s (2013) structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames provided an innovative and holistic approach of interpreting my data. Viewing the data through the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frame assisted in the analysis of the many aspects head coaches can impact to promote the effectiveness of their team.
The structural frame illuminates how a coach structures the team to enhance what the team can accomplish. The human resource frame shed light on the importance of recruiting and development for the success of a women’s soccer program. The political frame made it clear that the university of the women’s soccer program greatly impacts the head coach’s ability to recruit. The symbolic frame allowed an understanding about how humans make sense of the world around them using myths, visions, values, rituals, and ceremonies.

Based on my findings and analysis, as a practitioner, I believe the human resource frame is the most helpful for head coaches. Moving forward as a coach, I will assume that the women’s soccer program exists to serve the student athletes, “organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse” (Bolman and Deal, 2013, p. 117). As a coach, student-athletes are my most important asset and my main job is to serve them through developing the player, team, and person.

Bolman and Deal (2013) reframing organization framework, allowed me as the research to take a deeper look at my findings and richly analyze them. As noted, each of the four frames give interpretation to the findings but I believe the human resource frame is the most effective and helpful for practitioners.

**Additional Analysis of Findings**

For my secondary analysis, I rely on the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management (Peachey, Damon, Zahou & Burton, 2015) and Organizational Culture (Schein, 2010) theoretical frameworks. For additional analysis, I refer to framework found in the literature review that illuminated aspects of my data. The next section of my analysis is also organized first by university, then recruiting, development, and finally by coach drive. I begin the university analysis using the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management.
Next I analyze my recruiting findings using both organizational culture theory and talent identification theory. I interpret my development findings using organizational culture theory including the primary culture embedding mechanisms. Finally, analyze my drive findings using organizational culture theory, coaching efficacy theory, and the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management.

**Additional Theoretical Framework Analysis of University Findings: Multilevel Conceptual Model of Leadership in Sport Management**

Interpreting my university findings with Bolman and Deal’s (2013) political frame illuminated many aspects of the findings. However, adding additional analysis lead me to a deeper level of understanding. Examining my university findings through the lens of the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management illuminated the importance of understanding coaches and women’s soccer programs are working within a larger organization that can and usually does greatly influence the women’s soccer program, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.

**Multilevel Conceptual Model of Leadership in Sport Management**

I used the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management work of Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) to further analyze the university findings. To develop off-field sport-focused leadership theory, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) conducted a comprehensive synthesis of the off-field sport management leadership literature since the 1970s. Subsequently, they created a leadership in sport management conceptual model in which they hoped to “challenge those interested in leadership research to take up and further develop our understanding of this complex phenomenon” (p. 577). The multilevel conceptual model was based on Yammarino’s (2013) definition of multilevel leadership:
Leadership is a multilevel (person, dyad, group, collective) leader-follower interaction process that occurs in a particular situation (context) where a leader (e.g., superior, supervisor), and followers (e.g., subordinates, director reports) share a purpose (vision, mission) and jointly accomplish things (e.g., goals, objectives, tasks) willingly (e.g., without coercion). (Yammarino, 2013, p. 150)

The multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management shown below supports and illustrates my findings on how women’s soccer programs are greatly impacted by the university it is housed within.

(As cited Figure 1. Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015, p. 578)

Although the leadership of the “Coaches/Athletes” is unique, it is one level of leadership within several. Head coach leadership is not context free (Yammarino, 2013). Since the women’s soccer program is affected by its environment, it is important to consider organizational culture (Yammarino, 2013; Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015). My findings support
Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton’s (2015) research that sport management leadership is multilevel. I also found the university in which the soccer program is housed greatly influences the effectiveness of the women’s soccer program. Over and over again, my interviews underscored how top coaches in the country are supported within universities that positively support the women’s soccer program and how that translates to an ability to compete at the top level. For example, when asked how Coach H became one of the most successful DI women’s soccer programs in the country, “I’m at University H, I didn’t screw it up. I am at an unbelievable place in an unbelievable conference that attracts.” A second example is provided by Coach B, when asked what factors make the University B women’s soccer a consistently top program, “great infrastructure and support from the University…good leadership from our athletic association, weather, and a really good academic institution. Our population are good students so they are attracted to good academic institutions.”

To further the work of Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) I found four specific ways in which the university foundation impacts the women’s soccer program. The first is the financial support including budget and facilities, second is support from management and collaborative peers, third is setting a standard of excellence and the fourth is the university’s reputation, which plays a very important role in effective recruiting. From the point of view of the head coach, my research supports the work of Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) that there are many more levels of leadership in addition to “Coaches/Athletes.” To fully understand the leadership and effectiveness of a collegiate women’s soccer program, we must assess the complete system it lives within through a multilevel analysis. Next I will analyze my recruiting findings further.
Additional Theoretical Framework Analysis of Recruiting Findings: Organizational Culture and Talent Identification

In addition to the Bolman and Deal (2013) political frame and human resource frame, I used Schein (2010) organizational culture and Christensen (2009) talent identification work, previously mentioned in my literature review.

Organizational Culture Theoretical Framework

Similar to the Human Resource Frame, Schein (2010) the Organizational Culture theoretical framework includes a culture embedding mechanism: “how leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate” (p. 236). Recruiting is a major influence that impacts the effectiveness of an organization and its collegiate soccer program. Recruiting can potentially have positive or negative effects on the field and on team culture. The most successful coaches proved to be effective recruiters by bringing in student-athletes who positively impacted the soccer program both on and off the field. Effective recruiting includes two aspects, talent and right-fit. For example, University H attracts really good people and Coach H recruits high quality people because they make the program better. “I just don’t want good soccer players in our program,” said Coach H, “I want good people and if we get good people, good things are going to happen. The right-fit for University H is a good person who is willing to sacrifice her self-interests for the interests of the team, and thus is exactly the type of person who Coach H, along with many other successful coaches, is always looking for on the recruiting trail.

Head coaches spoke about how they retired players in two ways, first to go on and play professionally and second, to watch the impact they have as they go out in the real world. I did not find any data on excommunicating players, or handling negatively infectious players. Coach A did speak about personal development, instead of excommunicating a negatively infectious
player. Coach A shared the example – repeated here for convenience - of sitting down with a particularly troublesome player and showing her a set of low program core values peer rankings: “Are you glad I shared this with you?” asked Coach A. And in a very low voice she said, “Yes.” When Coach A asked why, she explained, “Cause I have to change.” From that point on, the coaches and her fellow teammates noted incredible growth in the player’s personal development. She took responsibility and transformed her life after she was made aware of her negative reputation.

My findings support Schein’s (2010) Organizational Culture Theory; head coaches influence the organizational culture of the team and effectiveness of the women’s soccer program through recruiting.

**Talent Identification Theoretical Framework**

I did not find any literature about women’s collegiate soccer talent identification. However, my findings are consistent with Christensen’s (2009) research on the methods in which top-level Danish soccer coaches identify talent. The research showed three trends in talent identification. First, the coaches used practical sense, relying on their experience with soccer and recruiting to recognize patterns of movement. Second, the coaches looked for dedicated, coachable players, who are willing to work hard and learn. This idea is in line with my findings on recruiting student-athletes that are the right-fit for the program. Third, coaches looked for talent while recruiting top-level players, which is in line with my findings of recruiting talent. A coach’s construction of talent is based on a taste for certain perceived traits” (Christensen, 2009, p. 379). Because talent needs vary for each program, coaches must identify important talents for their program based on experience.
Additional Theoretical Framework Analysis of Development Findings: Organizational Culture

My development findings account for the majority of my theoretical analysis. I previously addressed Bolman and Deal (2013) human resource frame theory, specifically the human resource basic strategies. Next I use Schein’s (2010) organizational culture theory, specifically the culture embedding mechanism, providing an excellent frame of reference and practical application for my findings.

Organizational Culture Theoretical Framework

Schein’s (2010) organizational culture perspective, with a leader-centered model, was used in the literature to examine the culture of intercollegiate athletic teams (Frontiera, 2010; Schroeder, 2010). Schein’s (2010) organizational culture theory explains how culture is created and the types of culture-embedding mechanisms that affect group culture. I chose to use this framework to help explain and interpret the meaning of my data because it has useful and practical application for a head coach. A head coach should impose his/her cultural assumptions on the soccer program to create a high-performing team culture. Below are Schein culture-embedding mechanisms, for leaders to use as tools:

Figure 7. Culture-Embedding Mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture-Embedding Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Embedding Mechanisms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How leaders allocate resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How leaders allocate rewards and status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondary Artication and Reinforcement Mechanisms

- Organization design and structure
- Organizational systems and procedures
- Organizational rites and rituals
- Design of physical space, facades, and buildings
- Stories about important events and people
- Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters


The culture-embedding mechanisms are woven throughout my findings, however, the bulk of culture-embedding mechanisms analysis happened in my development findings.

Primary Embedding Mechanisms. As shown above in Figure 10., Schein’s (2010) Embedding Mechanisms include: what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis; how leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises; how leaders allocate resources; deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching; how leaders allocate rewards and status; and how leaders recruit (recruiting), select, promote, retire, and excommunicate (recruiting). “The primary embedding mechanisms are the major ‘tools’ that leaders have available to them to teach their organizations how to perceive, think, feel, and behave based on their own conscious and unconscious convictions,” (Schein, 2010, p.236). Head coaches should not only be aware of culture embedding mechanisms but utilize each of them to maximize a high-performance culture for their team.

What leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis. What a head coach pays attention to is the most powerful mechanism to communicate program values (Schein, 2010). The head coach must be aware of how he/she focuses his/her attention because players will focus their own attention on whatever the leader shows them. “If leaders are aware of this process, then being systematic in paying attention to certain things becomes a powerful
way of communicating a message, especially if leaders are totally consistent in their own behavior,” (Schein, 2010, p. 237). The head coaches that I interviewed were very consistent in what they regularly paid attention to, measured, and controlled. The most successful coaches consistently paid far more attention to the development process than the wins and losses or score. I found that a head coach should pay attention to the development of student-athletes both on and off the field by measuring growth and improvement. For example, instead of measuring wins and losses, Coach D measures success with a standard of excellence at University D. Included in Coach D’s standard of excellence is a standard of play that is not valued in wins and losses but in performance:

The expectation here is excellence. That expectation of excellence has translated into an awful lot of wins I guess, but I am much less worried about wins and losses than I am of performance. If we perform well and we lose, I feel we are much better off than if we play poorly and win. I think if you play poorly and win, eventually it catches up with you and you aren’t going to win. Where if you play well and you’re losing, eventually you will find a way to get out of that and win your share of games.

Daily reinforcement in the consistency of approach helps student-athletes find clarity and structure in the overall program. Additionally, student-athletes will make inferences based on what head coaches do not pay attention to (Schein, 2010).

On the other hand, if leaders are not aware of the power of this process, or they are inconsistent in what they pay attention to, subordinates and colleagues will spend inordinate time and energy trying to decipher what a leader’s behavior really reflects and will even project motives onto the leader where none may exist. This mechanism is well captured by the phrase “you get what you settle for.” (Schein, 2010, p. 237)
My findings do not go into detail about what technical and tactical skills lead to success and should be measured but instead provide a framework for coaches to pay attention to his/her vision of what the team should become, and to control the development of the players and team towards that end goal as they move through the development process.

**How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises.** The coaches I spoke with did not refer to critical incidents and organizational crises directly. One aspect of potential “organizational crisis” is losing a game or two early on in the season, which can cause a head coach to question his/her chosen style of play and team development process. I found coaches should decide to stay the course in the midst of organizational crises, “the heightened emotional involvement during such periods increases the intensity of learning” (Schein, 2010, p. 243). For example, Coach D develops the University D team by emphasizing a playing style that values and keeps the ball. Coach D is not willing to sacrifice that vision just to win a game. University D could have won a few more soccer games early on if Coach D had compromised the playing style but the team and program would not have developed at the same speed or with the same skill level. “If people share intense emotional experiences and collectively learn how to reduce anxiety, they are much more likely to remember what they have learned and to ritually repeat that behavior to avoid anxiety,” (Schein, 2010, p. 243). Coach D knew that sticking to the player and team development would pay off in the long term. University B also persists with their player and team development plan through organizational crisis because Coach B believes “it’s what’s going to produce the best results in the long run, but the key words to that is the long run.” Team development for Coach D and Coach B meant sticking with the university’s respective style of play, and holding steadfast, regardless of the score.
While developing teams, coaches often see mistakes, even game-losing mistakes, but that is part of the process of developing the team. A head coach should stick to their valued style of play because over the course of a single season and multiple seasons, the team will learn the coach’s style of play and be able to perform.

**How leaders allocate resources.** From a player’s point of view, one of the most important resources a head coach allocates is the role each student-athlete plays within the team. Who are the starters, substitutes, and bench riders? Roles are often formed in the development of the team and based on the head coach’s opinion of the rank of the best players to the worst players on the team, which usually determines how many minutes each student-athlete gets to play during games. Game minutes are extremely valued by collegiate student-athletes. How a head coach manages playing time or lack of playing time and communicates his/her decision, from the best player on the roster to the worst player on the roster, will impact the team’s culture. Coach A and Coach G keep most players engaged by playing a deep roster for games, changing starting line-ups and substituting many bench players. What the substitutes do each day in practice to develop as players and as part of a team is important to the success of the overall team; their engagement also impacts the team culture. In the literature, several researchers noted the importance of the head coach in providing role clarity for each athlete on the team (Beam et al., 2004; Brawley et al., 1993; Carron et al., 2005; Cope et al. 2007; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Yukelson, 1997). Not only is role clarity important, but role clarity and role acceptance influence team effectiveness (Yukelson, 1997; Brawley et al., 1993).

Fletcher & Arnold (2011) investigated performance of leadership management in elite sports and found one main culture issue to be establishing role awareness. Cope, Eys, Schinke, and Bosselut (2010) researched how “cancers,” or negative players, can distract others on the
team, bringing a negativity, which can derail cohesion, team efficacy, and performance (p. 420). The previously mentioned research is why Coach G did not want players to see the pecking order of the roster early in the season because some players start to lose interest and competitive edge. Coach G made it a point for every player on the roster to understand their value; “each player had something that they gave to the team that enabled us to win championships.” Coach G spoke about developing every player in training sessions: “What you do every day in training is going to help us determine whether we win at the end because while we need to get you to improve in some areas to play more, it’s very important for your value to us that you are pushing the players that are in front of you and if you check out on us now then we have no chance of succeeding.”

University B’s women’s soccer staff puts emphasis on separating the person from the player. To Coach B, this means student-athletes should understand that their value on the team doesn’t come from minutes played or stats. “We put a lot of time and effort into developing people, which I think then gives them tools to be successful in soccer, said Coach B, “so it’s not all just a great citizenship project, it benefits us on the field.”

Head coaches can apply this information by being aware of the roles within their team, communicating the roles and making sure each player accepts her role. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, coaches need to make sure each student-athlete knows they are valued equally regardless of their role. If a coach can do this successful, student-athletes will stay engaged because they realize the head coach (leader) allocates the most important resource, how each individual is valued equally and fairly.

**Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.** The majority of my findings related to deliberate teaching and coaching, a primary embedding mechanism that improves the
performance level of a student-athlete through player-development, team-development, and person-development.

The literature referred to *player-development* as training and instruction, which is possibly the most important role of a coach (Chelladurai, 1990; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Beam et al., 2004). An example of deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching is how Coach F influences the level of excellence in the women’s soccer program by putting together good practice plans, teaching the highest level of the game, and inspiring hard work by being a good role model. Every coaching point made to an individual or the team is a message about head coach expectations. The most successful women’s collegiate soccer coaches are no different and take various measures to make sure they role model the qualities they want to see in their student-athletes.

Deliberate teaching and coaching includes all player development, team development and person development. An example of deliberately teaching player development is how Coach B spends about a third of every practice on passing, receiving and solving pressure, which means trying to keep the ball while being defended in a tight space. “The whole point is; how do you solve pressure without just giving in to clearing the ball.” Demanding a possession style of play means each player on the field needs to develop the technical and tactical skill to solve pressure and keep possession. Thus, in practice players are put under pressure to try to push the limits of their ability to keep possession. “It’s just a lot of work, a lot of technical work, a lot of trying to get them to understand the simplicity of soccer like recognizing the 2v1, 3v2 or the other way around.” At University B, players are deliberately taught and coached to develop at every training session so they improve the skills to better play the system and program’s style of play.
How leaders allocate rewards and status. Throughout my interviews, the most successful coaches did not talk about how they allocated rewards and status other than distributing game minutes.

To summarize the organizational culture embedding mechanisms interpretation of my development findings, the head coach should impose his/her cultural assumptions on the soccer program to create a high-performing team culture. Several researchers studied performance-optimizing cultures, (Martens, 1987; Schroeder, 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Frontiera, 2010; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Andersen, 2011; Krane & Baird, 2005; Kotter & Heskett, 1992), defined as, “the shared perception and action of elite team environment members (a) supports sustained optimal performance; (b) persists across time in the face of variable results (i.e., wins, losses, ties); and, most importantly; (c) leads to consistent high performance” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 340).

Cruickshank and Collins (2012) studied high-performing cultures they believe emerge and evolve from interactions between coach ideals and their athletes’ beliefs and expectations. The culture of the team provides insight into the behaviors, values, and emotions of the players (Krane & Baird, 2005). Head coaches can use Schein’s (2010) organizational culture embedding mechanisms as guides to influence the culture of their women’s soccer program through player development, team development and personal development, including: what leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis; how leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises; how leaders allocate resources; deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching; how leaders allocate rewards and status. Coaches should pay attention to how leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate in the recruiting phase. Head coaches should
not only be aware of culture embedding mechanisms but utilize each of them to maximize a high-performance culture for their team.

Finally, I analyze my drive findings using organizational culture, coaching efficacy theory, and the antecedents to leadership found in the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management.

**Additional Theoretical Framework Analysis of Drive Findings: Organizational Culture, Coaching Efficacy, and Multilevel Conceptual Model of Leadership in Sport Management**

The fourth and final analysis section focuses on head coach drive. Drive is the head coach’s determination and ability to keep striving for excellence while keeping up with the competition and changes in the sport. Regardless of the challenges, the most successful head coaches find a way to be great. Head coach drive presented itself in three distinct ways throughout my interviews: evolution, confidence, and fear of failure. To analyze my drive findings, I used three methods: first, the “deliberate role modeling” organizational culture embedding mechanism highlighted aspects of head coach drive (p. 236). Second, coaching efficacy theory, found in my literature review, to assist in the interpretation of head coach drive. Finally, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton’s (2015) antecedents to leadership found the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management.

**Organizational Culture Theoretical Framework**

One aspect of Shein’s (2010) organizational culture theory used to analyze my head coach drive findings, particularly evolution, is “deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching” (p. 236) also used in the development analysis. I found that the most effective coaches, even after years of success, continue to evolve. One example of “role modeling” is how Coach G believed in being a role model for University G student-athletes:
I think as a coach, one of the things I’ve always believed in, you know I’ve been doing this a long time 25+ years coaching and one of the things I’ve always felt strong about is if I am going to ask for a commitment level from our student-athletes to give us their time, give us their energy and their minds and their commitment to being better players, then I always felt like I couldn’t stay put as a coach of just doing the same things each and every year. I’ve always believed that I’ve got to continue to educate myself, and I’ve got to continue to get better and I’ve got to stay on top of the new trends in the game and the new things that were coming out in sports science you know that we know now that we didn’t know 10 or 15 years ago about how to train our athletes. So I think our players could see that I worked really hard in always trying to be the best coach I could be for them.

Continuing to grow as a coach, even after twenty-five years of success, was important to Coach G. Coach G also learned that modeling the behavior would instill a sense of faith in University G team members. The positive reflection of Coach G’s role modeling on Coach G’s players sheds light on how the evolution of the head coach not only directly effects the coach’s ability to be a better coach, but indirectly effects how the team views the head coach and grows respect for the head coach.

**Coaching Efficacy Theoretical Framework**

The evolution of a head coach, specifically his/her confidence findings is illuminated by the coaching efficacy theory. Feltz, Chase, Mortiz, and Sullivan (1999) defined coaching efficacy as “the extent to which coaches believe they have the capacity to affect the learning and performance of their athletes” (p. 765). Feltz et al. (1999) also found that coach efficacy is predicated by a coach’s previous success, coaching experience, perceived player talent, and
social support. Generally, research supports the Pygmalion Effect, which states that a leader’s actions are consistent with the expectation that he/she has formulated for the team members (as cited in Navarre, 2011, p. 42). Navarre (2011) stated: “the behavior, beliefs, and expectations of coaches can be manifested, both positively and negatively, in the efficacy beliefs held by the players” (p.42). Coaching efficacy theory proposes that a coach who believes they can impact the development of the student-athletes and team comes to fruition as a belief or efficacy that holds true.

The confidence aspect of my head coach drive findings aligns and supports the coaching efficacy theory. If the head coach has confidence and he/she believes with conviction in the opportunity for the team to succeed, the team has a higher likelihood of being effective. It is no surprise that the most successful coaches in collegiate women’s soccer are confident that they know how to recruit the right student-athletes and develop student-athletes within the team to win.

**Multilevel Conceptual Model of Leadership in Sport Management**

To conclude my analysis chapter, I refer back to the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management. Particularly, Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015), who introduced individual antecedents to leadership in their conceptual model. They proposed four antecedents to leadership including ‘darker’ traits, moral identity, lived experience, and sport participation shown on the left side of figure 13 below:

*Figure 8. Multilevel Conceptual Model of Leadership in Sport Management*
‘Dark’ or ‘dark’ traits. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) consider the ‘darker’ traits of leadership including hubris, narcissism, social dominance, and Machiavellianism. It is possible the confidence of the most successful coaches in women’s collegiate soccer crosses over to hubris or excessive confidence. The ‘darker’ trait antecedents to leadership analysis further interpret the head coach’s conviction that he/she is recruiting and developing players to be successful. Confidence, even excessive confidence, can be a valuable trait for collegiate women’s soccer coaches.

Moral identity. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) “recognize and highlight the importance of ethical and moral development of leaders” (p. 579). While moral identity did not percolate as an aspect of head coach drive in my findings, there were examples of moral identity throughout my findings, including how the head coach treats each player, expectations for how the players treat each other, and role modeling good and hard-working behavior. While
further research could be done on the moral identity of head women’s soccer coaches as an antecedent to leadership, the moral identity of each coach influences how he/she leads.

**Lived experience.** “Exploring the concept of leadership requires an acknowledgment of identity and history and a sense of place” (Peachey, Damon, Zahou, & Burton, 2015, p. 579). The evolution aspect of head coach drive incorporates lived experience. The coaches I interviewed have had long and successful careers and have been able to learn from successes and mistakes. They continue to evolve and as their experience grows, it adds to their constant evolution. Additionally, the head coach confidence aspect is not without clout. Through lived experience, the head coaches I interviewed earned their confidence through years of overall successful recruiting and development. Furthermore, the fear of failure aspect also arises from lived experiences. As expected, alongside the lived experience of success comes a pressure or heightened expectation for performance. An antecedent to head coach drive, including all three aspects of evolution, confidence, and fear of failure, is the lived experience of the head coach.

**Sport participation.** Although it rarely came up in my interviews, I know from professional bios on each coach’s university website that the coaches I interviewed participated in playing soccer which is an antecedent to their leadership as head coaches. Peachey, Damon, Zahou, and Burton (2015) propose “participation in sport will affect leadership behavior in sport organizations.” How a head coach played and was taught to play by his/her coaches must influence the way he/she coaches. Further research can be done on player-participation before becoming a head coach.

Head coach drive is an amalgamation of evolution, confidence and fear of failure and all of these aspects are influenced by the antecedents of ‘darker’ traits, moral identity, lived experience, and sport participation.
After a holistic interpretation of the findings using reframing organization theoretical framework (Bolman & Deal, 2013) there were additional frameworks which illuminated the findings further. The secondary analysis, proved very insightful. First the analysis highlighted the organization effectiveness enhanced by recognizing and developing close working relationships within levels of leadership through the multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management (Peachey, Damon, Zahou & Burton, 2015). Second the analysis highlighted the organization effectiveness empowered by institutionalizing a supportive culture through organizational culture (Schein, 2010) theoretical framework. Finally, the analysis highlighted the influence of coach efficacy theory (Feltz et al., 1999) and talent identification theory (Christensen, 2009) in regards to the findings.

In the next chapter I present applications for those they benefit from this study, especially current collegiate women’s soccer coaches. I explain the limitations of my study and give recommendations for future areas of study. I end my dissertation with my personal reflection of my dissertation process and experience.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Application, Benefits, Limitations, Future Study, Personal Reflection

I conducted a qualitative research case study to answer my primary research question regarding what influences the most successful collegiate women’s soccer programs to be effective. My primary data collection was through interviewing eight of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches. Through extensive data analysis, I found four major factors that influence the effectiveness of a NCAA Division I women’s soccer program shown in Figure 14. My findings reveal that the secret to success is not one or two keys but a complex and interconnected system of resources, practices, beliefs, strategies, and relationships.

*Figure 9. Influences of the Most Successful Women’s Soccer Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Recruiting</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Financial Support: Budget and Facilities</td>
<td>• Talent</td>
<td>• Player Development</td>
<td>• Evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive Management &amp; Collaborative Colleagues</td>
<td>• Right Fit</td>
<td>• Team Development</td>
<td>• Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Standard of Excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Person Development</td>
<td>• Fear of Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• University Reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coach Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the final chapter, I will discuss applications for current head coaches. I will also consider the limitations of my research and offer ideas for future areas of study. Finally, I will conclude with a personal reflection of my dissertation journey.

Application and Benefits
My research offers current coaches a framework of the major factors that influence the effectiveness of an NCAA Division I women’s soccer team. The application of my research will also benefit the collegiate experience of female student-athletes provided by their coach and the sport of soccer, through the concentration of player, team, person, and coach development. My research can also benefit athletic directors and athletic administration to better support their team sports to be successful. However, my findings can be primarily used by current collegiate coaches to help pinpoint the soccer program’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by assessing the impact of the university, recruiting, development, and drive.

**Research-based Application Related to the University**

First, collegiate coaches need to assess the university’s support for the program. *Does the university support the athletic department comparably with conference schools? Is the women's soccer program supported at the same financial percentage as other athletic programs within the school? Do the facilities and budget compare with competitive conference universities? Are the facilities and budget competitive with top 25-ranked programs in the country?*

Most head coaches have very little control over the university influences but recognizing weaknesses will allow a coach to allocate the needed time and initiative to overcome disadvantages. If the soccer program is not financially supported (in both budget and facilities) the head coach must find ways to compensate. For example, summer soccer camps, identification camps, concession stands, or donations. If the head coach cannot compensate for the difference, the expectations of the women’s soccer program should reflect the disadvantages.

Next, a coach needs to gauge if they are surrounded by supportive management and collaborative colleagues. *Does the athletic director support the women’s soccer program as much as the other varsity sports? Are all the head coaches in the athletic department willing to*
share knowledge and collaborate? As the women’s soccer coach, do you take advantage of collaborating with other excellent coaches at your university? Throughout my previous collegiate coaching experience, I learned a lot from collaborative colleagues. While coaching at the University of St. Thomas (UST), I spoke with the two-time national champion softball coach, John Tschida. Tschida was one of my most valuable resources. As an experienced coach, he taught me how to best recruit at UST. We also spoke a lot about mental toughness and the pedagogy of coaching. Additionally, I watched and learned from all coaches on campus about in-game coaching, messages to the team, language used, and decision making in difficult situations on and off the field. Depending on the collegial support a coach discovers within the university, investing efforts to create a collaborative environment will be helpful for everyone involved. The whole athletic department improves when best practices are shared.

Third, a head coach must assess the standards of the University that houses the women’s soccer program. What is the standard of my university? What is the standard of the athletic department? What is the standard for the women’s soccer program? Understanding the culture of the university will help explain the culture of the athletic department. A standard of excellence is ideal, however, there are many other university standards that promote success. One example is a standard of service. Schools with a standard of service will likely appeal to student-athletes who seek out opportunities for individual growth and community development.

The overall reputation of the school is the first dimension of the university to consider. What is the university’s reputation internationally, nationally, and regionally? How will recruits view the university? Head coaches have little control influencing the university reputation, but if a head coach knows and understands the university reputation, he/she can use the positives to help recruit and frame the negatives so they are not as influential. For example, a school in
Minnesota may need to negate the winter season when recruiting a student-athlete from the south. A coach will enhance recruiting by understanding and taking advantage of positive reputation areas and use those locations for recruiting.

**Research-based Application Related to Recruiting**

Recruiting is one of the main job responsibilities of a head coach and greatly influences the potential success of the program. *Are you an effective recruiter? Are you bringing in athletes with the right physical, technical, tactical, and mental talent? Do the student-athletes you recruit compete effectively with other conference recruits? If not, what are the reasons? Where are the recruits lacking talent? Can you develop those skills?*

In addition to recruiting talent, the student-athletes should also be the right fit for the women’s soccer program and largely the university. *Are you bringing in athletes that fit the women’s soccer program culture? Will your recruits succeed academically and athletically?* The talent of the team and team culture can be positively or negatively influenced by recruits so finding student-athletes who will succeed with their athletic, technical, tactical, and mental abilities will benefit both the recruit and team.

**Research-based Application Related to Development**

Once the season begins, the head coach needs to utilize the student-athletes on the team and figure out how to maximize team potential. To maximize team potential, the head coach must successfully develop individual players and the team. In addition to on-field skills, student-athletes need to continue developing and maturing as human beings. *Are you developing your human resources? Are you capitalizing on the potential of each student-athlete? Are you providing opportunities for your student-athletes to grow as a human being and contributing*
citizen? Additionally, are you as the head coach and leader still learning and developing? The head coach has a lot of power and influence over player, team, person and coach development.

**Research-based Application Related to Drive**

Are you evolving to stay to stay at the forefront of collegiate women’s soccer? Are you personally driven to succeed? How do you actively continue to learn? Who are your teachers? Mentors, books, conventions, courses, and practice are all effective ways to assist in the evolution of the head coach.

The head coach must also have confidence he/she is a developing student-athletes and the team to reach their potential. Are you confident in your player and team development platform? Will you stick to what you value both on and off the field even if it means losing a few games?

Once a coach has experienced success, the head coach should welcome a fear of failure; a fear of being a one and done team instead of consistently competing as a top 25 team. *Are you willing to do what it takes to compete at the top level? Do you rest on your laurels or are you constantly striving for excellence? Are you uncomfortable with the idea of being average?*

Below is a table to help collegiate head women’s soccer coaches apply my findings about what influences women’s soccer programs to be effective:
**Table 6. Influences of Successful Women’s Soccer Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences of successful women’s soccer programs</th>
<th>Aspects to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the University supporting the women’s soccer program with…</td>
<td>Financial support: competitive budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support: competitive facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic standard of excellence at the institution?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic standard of excellence at the institution?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University reputation for recruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you recruiting effectively…</td>
<td>Talented players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-fit for the program players</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you developing your human resources…</td>
<td>Player development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you personally driven to succeed…</td>
<td>Evolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations

This study produced a holistic view of what influences a women’s soccer program to be effective. The findings and analysis go into further detail about the influences and aspects but I do not directly address all of the ways to put into practice each influencing aspect. For example, player-development can take place through many forms of technical instructional coaching and I did not qualify or quantify the many ways each of the winning coaches has successfully taught technical skill. Both a benefit and limitation of my study is the broad holistic approach to the major aspects that influence collegiate women’s soccer programs to be effective.

My study was limited to two in person interviews and six phone interviews because of financial constraints. It is likely a face to face interview with each head coach would have been more personal and could have led to more depth and data.

Another limitation of my study is that I only interviewed head coaches. I did not observe them coaching, interview assistant coaches and support staff or corroborate my findings by interviewing players. My data is only as good as each head coach’s ability to reflect and communicate his/her thoughts. My findings are solely based on the head coach’s perspective and his/her ideas about the major influences of the program.

My data, findings, and interpretations were based on the experiences and insights of top coaches in collegiate women’s soccer. My research is therefore limited to the ideas of only very successful collegiate soccer coaches and provides a framework for what influences the most successful women’s soccer programs. Although I speculate the framework is applicable to mid-major Division I, Division II, or Division III women’s soccer programs, further research should be conducted to confirm. Additionally, further research can be done applying the model to other collegiate team sports to see if the findings are applicable for other sports.
Finally, a benefit and limitation to my study is my background in collegiate soccer. Since I am an expert in this field I was well positioned to conduct this study, however, I am not immune to my own potential biases and preconceived ideas. While worked diligently to conduct an objective research study, it is important to acknowledge that with my experience come preconceived notions, bias relationships, strong opinions about collegiate soccer.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

In this final section, I will recommend future areas of research. First, I recommend that my findings of the aspects influencing excellent women’s soccer programs be tested on diverse women’s soccer programs including average and below average Division I universities as well as Division II and Division III women’s soccer programs. Second, the findings needs to be tested with other collegiate team sports, especially men’s soccer programs. Fourth, I suggest a mixed-method study to review male and female application and employment in collegiate soccer in order to discover if female coaches are being mentored differently than male coaches to get to the highest level. Fifth, I recommend a multi-case study of the most successful coaches triangulating the data with support staff interviews and current and former player interviews. Finally, I recommend early recruiting be researched on behalf of coaches, institutions, and young student-athletes.

**Study of Women’s Soccer Programs at All Levels**

My first recommendation is to test the influences of success with average and even below average Division I schools as well as Division II and Division III schools. The theory explains what the most successful collegiate programs do and have to be effective—the theory should also explain what less effective schools are missing in their attempt to be successful. Also, does the theory of influences of Division I schools apply equally to Division II and Division III schools?
I recommend qualitative interviews of other women’s collegiate coaches and possibly a survey to quantify the prediction of the theory.

**Study of Collegiate Team Sports, Specifically Men’s Soccer Programs**

In addition to women’s soccer, does the theory hold true in men’s collegiate soccer? Are there different major influences of success on the men’s side of the game? Considering that there is a larger professional league with more monetary incentive, I suspect that men’s programs are influenced by players entering the draft before they graduate to play professional soccer creating turnover of young athletes to Major League Soccer (MLS) before a collegiate career is finished. For example, a second study could parallel my work and interview the most successful men’s collegiate coaches.

Other team sports could also test the theory and see if it holds true. Considering the team dynamic, I would anticipate women’s basketball, women’s volleyball, women’s lacrosse, and women’s softball programs are all impacted by very similar, if not equal, influences. I believe most collegiate coaches of team sports would include elements of university, recruiting, development, and drive as influential. A quantitative study using survey as the method of data collection including a much wider net of collegiate coaches would be an effective way to better understand the top influences for coaches across collegiate sports.

**Comprehensive Study of Each Major Influence**

To support collegiate coaches’ with best practices related to continued practical application of my research, I suggest further detailed research on how to positively impact each major influence: university impact; effective recruiting; player, team, person, and coach development; and head coach drive. Particularly expanded research about the interconnectedness of on-field player development and off-field person development during a
student-athletes transformational time in college. Additionally, I think many novice coaches would learn from the individual and team development periodization of a master coach’s seasons; how they teach individuals and the team to be better at soccer over the course of the season.

Another opportunity for a wealth of knowledge would be narrowing in on the development influence including player, person and team by conducting a multi-case study of the most successful collegiate women’s soccer coaches. Using a multi-case study, a researcher could interview head coaches, assistant coaches and support staff, former players and current players to get a more complete view of the development process and the head coach’s role in that process. Observing the coaches coach, teach, and interact with the team will be an important step in this study. This multi-case study would better answer how a head coach influences and inspires his/her program and how the head coach cultivates passion in their student-athletes.

**Study of Female Coaches in Collegiate Soccer**

Only one coach I spoke with asked if I was interviewing males and females. Although gender is not disclosed, my participant research and interviews lead me to wonder why there were not more female coaches at the top levels of women’s collegiate soccer. There are some excellent female and male coaches in collegiate women’s soccer. I do however, see more male coaches at the competitive club and top collegiate levels. I think it is worth exploring whether female players are being recruited to coach and if female coaches are mentored at the same rate as male coaches. In collegiate soccer, males can apply for both men’s and women’s coaching positions. There are very few if any females coaching men’s soccer every year. Women’s soccer hires both male and female coaches. So, females have half as many jobs to apply for because they are not applying for men’s positions, and double the competition because males are
also applying for women’s coaching positions. I believe research comparing the upward
mobility of male and female soccer players and soccer coaches should be analyzed.

**Study of Early Recruiting Trends**

One evident area in which further research is needed would be the epidemic of early
recruiting. *Early* recruiting encompasses any recruiting taking place before the athlete starts her
junior year of high school. Several coaches commented on the challenges early recruiting
creates for head coaches, collegiate soccer programs, and young athlete recruits. They spoke
about three main perils of early recruiting. First is the inappropriateness of young student-
athletes to make her college choice decision at such a young age. The second challenge was the
recruiting success ratio. The third challenge is the need for the NCAA to mandate late recruiting
rules.

In addition to such a weighted decision being made by such a young recruit, coaches also
have a very difficult time making decisions about young athletes. Since coaches are recruiting
student-athletes at a very young age, a lot can change between the day a student-athlete commits
and the day they step on campus and start their collegiate career. So the success rate of how
many recruited student-athletes come to campus and become impact collegiate players is lower
than it was when student-athletes were being recruited closer to their college experience. Early
recruiting was a central concern related to the “difficulties in recruiting” more discussion can be
found in the findings chapter (p.81-83)

**Personal Reflection**

My dissertation journey turned out to be an unexpected adventure. I began the process in
Minnesota finishing my coursework and coaching competitive Elite Club National League youth
soccer and Division III collegiate soccer. Knowing that I wanted to eventually have my own
INFLUENCES THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVENESS

collegiate women’s soccer program, I have always been curious about coaching soccer and leadership so I began a dissertation to study the best leaders in collegiate soccer. My research took an incredible twist, when my husband decided to attend a Master of Business program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). As noted in my historical review, the UNC women’s soccer program happens to be the most storied women’s soccer program of all time and I decided to move to North Carolina. I did what any unemployed coach would do: persisted until I got my foot in the door. Once I was in, I was given video coding and performance analysis responsibilities. I found myself surrounded by some of the greatest coaches and collegiate players studying training sessions and games in the top women’s soccer conference in the country—it has been an incredible learning experience for me!

I reviewed existing scholarship in the field, interviewed great collegiate coaches and analyzed extensive amounts of data. After a lifetime of playing soccer, my own collegiate experience, and many years of coaching at many levels, I was still learning so much. The coaches I interviewed were experts based on their multiple years of winning season records. They were also incredibly knowledgeable and insightful. Each of the coaches had thoughtful answers to each question. It was clear that they had spent their careers reflecting on their decisions, mistakes, wins, losses, and relationships. Through years of experience, they had a vast body of knowledge about soccer, teaching soccer, teaching life, and leading. They each offered so much and with fierce passion, as I interviewed, I found myself longing to go back to my college days to spend four years with each of them, soaking up their ideas of excellence both on and off the field.

In this study, I set out to understand what elements influence the effectiveness of the most successful women’s soccer programs. I anticipated that recruiting, player development, and
team would have a strong influence on the success of the program. I also expected that a competitive budget and competitive facilities would also have a very positive impact on the program. I did not anticipate the intense effect that the organizational culture of the university would have on the women’s soccer program. Since all collegiate sports compete independently, I thought the women’s soccer program could potentially outperform the other athletic teams at the University. However, the women’s soccer program is tied to the other athletic programs because the limited resources need to be shared between them. They all have the same athletic director leader, and they are all contained within the university and the university’s standards, regardless of how high or low they may be set. I also thought an excellent coach could succeed at most schools but it turns out, even good coaches need to be at good institutions to be especially effective.

Since the NCAA is so competitive at each level, my secondary research questions included the following: How does a collegiate women’s soccer head coach influence the effectiveness of his/her team? Furthermore, how does a head coach develop winning teams year after year to sustain a consistently effective collegiate women’s soccer program? I discovered the best coaches in the country have a lot of support. The most successful coaches influence their programs to be successful through recruiting, player development, team development, and person development, so they are truly good soccer coaches. They are also supported within a university system that provides funding, facilities, a university reputation with appeal for competitive recruits, and a campus to grow and thrive on. The most successful coaches are incredibly driven to consistently learn and do what it takes to stay at the top.

The most important lesson I learned as a coach is to pursue coaching jobs within supportive universities. While I believe great coaches can do good things in an under-supported
program of a university, I do not think it is sustainable for a great coach to maintain a consistently winning level of team excellence at an under-supported university. Without the financial support, facilities, standard of excellence, or university reputation with appeal to recruits, it is too difficult to compete with those programs that are fully supported.

In conclusion I want to leave the reader with an image and metaphor of how I believe a women’s soccer program is most influenced to be effective. The image is that of a tree, a women’s soccer program tree to be specific. The University provides deep and strong roots for the women’s soccer program. These roots are the foundation and beginnings of success. The tree will grow with effective recruiting. The tree will develop with attention, energy, water, and sun similar to the effective development of each person, player, team and coach (branch). Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. The head coach drive will influence and inspire the tree to bloom leaves. Any flowers or fruit symbolize that of a win or winning season, which could be an on-field or off-field victory. The tree is an interconnected organism, living and breathing in an environment of higher education. Much like how a tree moves through the fall, winter, spring, and summer seasons on an annual cycle, so does the women’s soccer program. Water, sun, recruit, develop, and repeat. I hope my research inspires many women's soccer program trees to grow strong and bloom full.
References

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&db=s3h&AN=59345387&site=ehost-live


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Brazil win, and Why the U.S., Japan, Australia—and even Iraq—are destined to become the kings of the world’s most popular sport. (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Nation Books.


Classics


Appendix A

IRB Application

University of St. Thomas
Institutional Review Board
IRB Application Form

Last edited by: Emily Fischer
Last edited on: April 14, 2015

[743573-1] Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women Collegiate Soccer Program

Completion of this form is the first step in seeking the institution approval that is required for all educational and research projects whether or not they are funded. Answer all questions on this form completely, include attachments, and obtain all signatures prior to final submission of this package on IRBNet.

The University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board (IRB) will process your application, coordinate review and notify you of their determination. Research activity may not begin until you receive notification of APPROVAL from the IRB Office. Submissions to the IRB Office that are incomplete will be returned.

I. Principal Investigator

Name: Emily Fischer, Ed. D. Status: Graduate Student
Department: Leadership & Policy Administration
Phone: 6513982633 Email: emily.kate.fischer@stthomas.edu

II. Research Advisors

Name: Mirja Hanson
Department: Leadership & Policy Administration
Phone: (651) 962-4885 Email: MPHANSON1@stthomas.edu

Name: Sarah Noonan
Department: Leadership & Policy Administration
Phone: (651) 962-4897 Email: sjnoonan@stthomas.edu

Name: Michael Navarre
Department: Other - Augsburg College, Head Women’s Soccer Coach
Phone: (612) 330-1623  Email: navarre@augsburg.edu
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Name:
Department:
Phone: Email:

IV. Review Information

Projected Completion Date: 05/05/2016

Protocol Type:
☐ Full
☐ Expedited
☐ Exempt
☐ Classroom

Research Category:
☐ Classroom Protocol
☐ Faculty or Staff Research
☐ Graduate Student Research
☐ Student/Faculty Collaboration
☐ Undergraduate Student Research
☐ Other:

Subject to review by another IRB?
☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, provide the following information for each IRB that must review this research. Upload a copy of the signed approval form for each IRB approval obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRB Name</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Review required by another academic committee?
☐ Yes - Masters committee
☐ Yes - Dissertation committee
☐ No
Lay Summary:

Also complete the "Lay Summary" Form and upload the completed form with this package.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to seek a better understanding of how a head coach influences the effectiveness of his or her women’s collegiate soccer programs outside of the traditional realms of budget, recruiting, and facilities.

Target Population:

My target participant population are Division I, head collegiate women’s soccer coaches. Since the participants must have experienced the process of being an effective coach, I created guidelines of who is eligible to participate. I will conduct qualitative interviews with recent winningest coaches.

Anticipated Participants: 10-15

Special Populations:

- Cognitively impaired persons
  - Requires full board review
- Economically disadvantaged
- Educationally disadvantaged
- Elderly/aged persons
- HIV/AIDS patients
- Hospital patients or outpatients
- Minority group(s) Minors - patients *
  - Requires full board review
- Minors - children under federal exemption for educational settings *
  - Requires full board review
- Minors - volunteers *
  - Requires full board review
- Non-English speaker’s Normal
adult volunteer’s □
pregnant women
□ Prisoners
□ Students (non-minors)
□ UST employees
□ Other special characteristics and special populations:

☑ This project does not purposefully target any special populations.

*Note that the inclusion of anyone under 18 requires a Parental Consent Form.

Does the nature of the research include any type of conflict of interest or power relationships with any of the associated participants or organizations?

□ Yes
☑ No

If yes: Explain the nature of the conflict and/or relationship:

Project Funding:

☑ No funding
□ Federal funding
□ Grant
□ Industry
□ Private funding
□ Other:

Confidentiality of Data:

Also complete the "Confidentiality of Data" Form and upload the completed form with this package.

I will save all of my data (interviews, transcripts, memos, notes) on my personal computer that is password protected. I will transcribe each of my interviews or hire a professional transcriber. Once the data is transcribed, I will give each participant a pseudonym for confidentiality reasons.

Possible Risks or Harms to Subjects:

Also complete the “Risks and Benefits” Form and upload the completed form with this package.

☑ None
INFLUENCES THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVENESS

☐ Use of private records (medical or educational) ☐ possible invasion of privacy of subject or family
☐ Manipulation of psychological or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stresses
☐ Any probing for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews
☐ Use of deception as part of experimental method
☐ Social or economic risk
☐ Other:

Informed Consent:

Simply giving a consent form to a subject does not constitute informed consent. Consent itself is a process of communication. Complete the "Informed Consent Process" Form and upload the completed form with this package.

VI. Assurances and Signatures

Assurances
This research, once approved, is subject to continuing review and approval by the IRB. The principal investigator will maintain records of this research according to IRB guidelines. If these conditions are not met, approval of this research could be suspended.

Electronic signatures certify that:

• The signatory agrees that he or she is aware of the policies on research involving participants of the University of St. Thomas and will safeguard the rights, dignity, and privacy of all participants.
• The information provided in this application form is true and accurate.
• The principal investigator will seek and obtain prior written approval from the UST IRB office for any substantive modification in the proposal, including but not limited to changes in cooperating investigators/agencies as well as changes in procedures.
• Unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events in the course of this study which may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the UST IRB office and to the subjects.
• The research will not be initiated and subjects cannot be recruited until final approval is granted.

The following signatures are required for new project submissions:

• Principal Investigator
• Research Advisor(s), if applicable
• Co-Investigator(s), if applicable

INSTRUCTIONS TO RESEARCHERS

Thank you for completing the University of St. Thomas IRB Application Form. Be sure to review your work and include all required attachments and signatures before submitting through IRBNet.

If you have any questions, please contact the UST IRB Office at 651.962.6017 or email irb@stthomas.edu.
Appendix B

Confidentiality of Data Form

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

Project Name
An Examination into the Underlying Factors that Promote the Effectiveness of the Most Successful NCAA Women’s Soccer Programs

| Researcher Name | Emily Fischer | IRB Tracking Number | 743573-1 |

Confidentiality of Data
Please completely answer each question in clear, easy to read language. As with the lay summary, the information in this section should be used in your consent form. It is extremely important that all information obtained from your participants be kept as confidential as possible.

Data formats
In what format(s) will the data be created? Check all that apply
- [ ] Consent Forms
- [ ] Audio Recordings
- [ ] Video Recordings
- [ ] Photographs
- [ ] Surveys
- [ ] Transcripts
- [x] Written Notes
- [ ] Other

Data storage
Where will each form of data you create and records be kept?
Specify the setting where the data will be kept (e.g. home, work, school, etc.), and indicate how the data will be made secure (e.g. kept in a locked file in a locked room, secured password computer, etc.).
I will save all of my data (interviews, transcripts, memos, notes) on my personal computer, at home. My personal computer is password protected. All documentation that is not electronic will be kept at my home in a three ring binder.

Data Retention
How long will the data and records be kept? Specify the exact date when the data and records will be destroyed. If the data and records are to be kept indefinitely, specify how they will be de-identified.
I will keep the records until I have finished studying the leadership of expert coaches.

Data Access
Who will have access to the data and records? Will data identifying the subjects be available to anyone other than the principal investigator (e.g. school officials, research advisors, etc.)? List these people in the Consent Form as well.

I will transcribe each of my interviews or hire a professional transcriber. Participants will remain unidentified by using initials on transcripts until substituted with pseudonyms for all of the data coding and dissertation report. I intend to use this research for my dissertation. As the researcher I will do my best to be accurate and fair while anonymously reporting on the participant's experiences for my dissertation.

The three individuals on my dissertation committee are the only people who will see the data before my dissertation goes to print. I will work to protect the participant’s identity by making each participant anonymous, however, it is possible that a participant could become recognizable due to his/her answers and/or my participant criteria.

The original request to interview participants for data is for my Ed. D. dissertation. It is possible that in the future I will look to publish my findings through other medias including but not limited to professional journals, books, podcasts, etc.

---

**Data transcription**

Will information from the data be transcribed?

If **YES**, please explain who will transcribe any information from this media and where it will be stored. If the researcher is not the person transcribing the media, attach a Statement of Confidentiality from the transcriber to your project.

As stated above, either I will transcribe the data or I will hire a professional transcriber. I will store all of the media on my personal computer that is password protected. See the Statement of Confidentiality from the transcriber is attached.

Will the data be recorded in any permanent record, such as a medical chart or student file?

If **YES**, please explain
Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program
Emily Fischer
# 743573-1

I am conducting a study about how a head coach influences the effectiveness of his or her women’s collegiate soccer programs outside of the traditional realms of budget, recruiting, and facilities. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because of your success as a Division I collegiate soccer coach. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by:
Emily Fischer, Ed. D. Candidate, Class of 2016, Researcher
Dr. Mirja Hanson, MBA, Ed. D., University of St. Thomas, Dissertation Chair
Dr. Sarah Noonan, University of St. Thomas, Dissertation Committee Member
Dr. Mike Navarre, Augsburg College, Dissertation Committee Member

Background Information:
The purpose of this grounded theory, qualitative study is to seek a better understanding of how a head coach influences the effectiveness of his or her women’s collegiate soccer programs outside of the traditional realms of budget, recruiting, and facilities. Currently there are courses, conventions, and literature about all different aspects of soccer, but the field of collegiate coaching is missing detailed and holistic education about the influences of a head coach on his or her program.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: Allow me to interview you for no more than 2 hours with a possibility of a follow-up phone call, for additional questions or clarification on a later date. I will strive for on-site, in-person interviews at your office or a neutral location. If in-person interviews are not available, I will video chat or phone call your for the interviews. I will record all of our interviews using an electronic recorder and save them in on my personal computer that is password protected.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
This study has minimal risks. The only potential risk I see is sharing your knowledge with coaches with whom you are in direct competition. By keeping all participants anonymous, the likelihood of risk decreases. To minimize risks, I will save all of my data (interviews,
transcripts, memos, notes) on my personal computer, at home. My personal computer is password protected. Participants will remain unidentified by using initials on transcripts until substituted with pseudonyms for all of the data coding and dissertation report. Reasonably, the benefit of this study is for me to learn about in-depth experiences and ideas of very successful women’s college coaches. Outside of my personal benefit, I hope my study contributes to the field of elite women’s soccer. This study might be insightful for current collegiate women’s soccer coaches, rising collegiate soccer coaches, youth soccer coaches, and indirectly to all of their players.

**Compensation:**

There will be no compensation for the participants.

**Confidentiality:**

I intend to use this research for my dissertation. As the researcher I will do my best to be accurate and fair while anonymously reporting on your experiences for my dissertation. I will transcribe our interviews or hire a professional transcriber. You will remain unidentified by using initials on transcripts until substituted with pseudonyms for all of the data coding and dissertation report. The three individuals on my dissertation committee are the only people who will see the data before my dissertation goes to print. I will work to protect your identity by making you anonymous, however, it is possible that you could become recognizable due to your answers and/or my participant criteria. The original request to interview participants for data is for my Ed. D. Leadership dissertation. It is possible that in the future I will look to publish my findings through other medias including but not limited to professional journals, books, podcasts, etc.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with myself or the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time up to February, 2016 when my dissertation has is submitted for final defense. Should you decide to withdraw data collected before February, 2016, I will not use your data. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask.

**Contact Information and Questions:**

My name is Emily Fischer. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me on my cell (651) 398-2633 or email me at Emily.Kate.Fischer@stthomas.edu.

You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Mirja Hanson, at MPHANSON1@stthomas.edu or (651) 962-4885. The University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board can be reached at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns you may have.
You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age.

____________________________________          ______________________
Signature of Study Participant               Date

____________________________________
Print Name of Study Participant

____________________________________          ______________________
Signature of Researcher                    Date

____________________________________          ______________________
Signature of Instructor                    Date
INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

Project Name  Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program

Researcher Name  Emily Fischer  IRB Tracking  743573-1

Informed Consent

- Simply giving a consent form to a subject does **not** constitute informed consent. Consent itself is a process of communication.
- Be sure all required consent forms are attached to your project.
- In addition to consent forms, assent forms are required if your subjects are children ages 10 and older.
- All forms are located in the document library.

Describe Study

In a script, state what you will say to the prospective participant describing your study.

I am currently working on my dissertation for my Ed. D. in Leadership from the University of St. Thomas. The purpose of my study is to seek a better understanding of how a head coach influences the effectiveness of his or her women’s collegiate soccer programs outside of the traditional realms of budget, recruiting, and facilities. Currently there are courses, conventions, and literature about all different aspects of soccer, but the field of collegiate coaching is missing detailed and holistic education about the influences of a head coach and aspects of creating a winning collegiate soccer program.

Participant Questions

What questions will be asked to assess the participant’s understanding of his/her participation in your research? Identify 3-5 open-ended questions (not “yes/no” questions) that address procedures, risks (if any), confidentiality and voluntariness.

Are you be willing to participate in my study? Are you comfortable sharing information about your collegiate women’s soccer program and how you influence effectiveness? Will you be available for an interview, no more than two hours and the possibility of a follow up interview? I will work to protect your identity by making you anonymous, however, it is possible that you could become recognizable due to your answers and/or my participant criteria, are you comfortable with this?
Obtaining Consent

At what point in the research process will consent be obtained? Be specific.

All of my original introduction emails will have a consent for attached. After a participant has agreed to be interviewed, I will resend the consent forms for the participant to review. Before I start the interview I will go over the consent form with each participant for us both to sign. I will secure informed consent of each participant before I begin the interview.

Will the investigator(s) personally secure informed consent for all subjects?

If NO, identify below the individuals who will obtain consent (include job title/credentials):
Appendix E

Interview Guide Form

Interview Guide

Introduction: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine the underlying factors that promote the effectiveness of the most successful NCAA women’s soccer programs. As a successful head coach of one of the winningest collegiate women’s soccer programs you offer a unique perspective, please share about your experiences as a head coach and how you have influenced the effectiveness of your teams.

Interviewer: Emily Fischer, University of St. Thomas, Ed. D. Leadership Candidate
Date:
Location:

Interview Guide Questions

- What factors make (insert school) women’s soccer a consistently top program?
  - How do you, as the leader, influence these factors?
  - How does the team influence these factors?
  - What do you do differently than your competition?
- You are one of the most successful coaches in the history of women’s soccer, why? (Leadership/Coaching)
- What are the important elements needed to build (or develop) a winningest NCAA women’s soccer program?
- What are the important elements in sustaining (or maintaining) a winningest NCAA program?
  - On the field
  - Off the field
- What challenges have you or could you encounter that hinder the effectiveness of your program and how do you manage these real or potential challenges?
- What is your coaching philosophy?
- Is there anything else that I should have asked you about your leadership or program that I didn’t?

Exploring Questions

- Can you tell me about that?
- That sounds interesting?
- What else?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you elaborate?
- Give me some detail for your strategy about…?
• Give me some detail for how you use your…?
Appendix F

Lay Summary Form

**LAY SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Name</strong></th>
<th>Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researcher Name</strong></td>
<td>Emily Fischer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRB Tracking Number</strong></td>
<td>743573-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lay Summary**

Please complete each section in clear, easy-to-read language that can be understood by a person unfamiliar with your research and your field. Written correctly, sections of this summary can be used in your consent form.

**Background**

Provide ONE paragraph to explain the importance of the research and how it fits with previous research in the field.

The purpose of this grounded theory, qualitative study is to seek a better understanding of how a head coach influences the effectiveness of his or her women’s collegiate soccer programs outside of the traditional realms of budget, recruiting, and facilities. Currently there are courses, conventions, and literature about all different aspects of soccer, but the field of collegiate coaching is missing detailed and holistic education about the influences of a head coach and aspects of creating a winning collegiate soccer program.

**Research Methods and Questions**

Specify the overall research question(s), hypothesis, methods you will use to address the research question(s).

Be sure to attach copies of ALL materials to be used in the study to your project (such as surveys, interview questions, dependent measures, and so forth).

My qualitative approach to inquiry is a grounded theory approach, to develop a theory about the underlying factors that influence the effectiveness of collegiate soccer programs, in addition to budget, recruiting, and facilities, through data from very experienced effective coaches. My grounded theory approach calls for open ended interview questions that allow the participant to shed light on the influence of a head coach. My questions have intentional overlap to allow me to gain more insight into the coaches’ experiences. My interview guide questions are organized in four sections: the coach, the individual, the team, and the program. See attachment a for list of all interview questions.
I will strive for on-site, in-person interviews. When that is not available, I will video chat or phone call coaches for interviews. I will record each of my interviews using the recorder on my iPhone and save them in on my personal computer that is password protected. After each interview, I will memo to myself thoughts, observer comments, and a general summary. I will transcribe each of my interviews or hire a professional transcriber. Once the data is transcribed, I will give each participant a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes. I will then put all transcribed interviews into NVivo and code for active categories and subcategories.

**Expectations of Participants**
State precisely what you will have participants do.
Identify the location of data collection and the expected time commitment of participants.
I will interview each participant for no more than 2 hours with a possibility of a follow-up phone call, for additional questions or clarification on a later date. I will strive for on-site, in-person interviews at the participants office or a neutral location. If in-person interviews are not available, I will video chat or phone call coaches for the interviews.

**Analysis of Existing Data**
If you are analyzing existing data, records or specimens, explain the source and type, as well as your means of access to them.
I will utilize each coach's biography for career history, found on his/her school's website. I will also utilize previous season records found on his/her school's website. Both the biographies and records are posted on the internet for public use.
Appendix G

Participant Information Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Project Name: Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program

Researcher Name: Emily Fischer

IRB Tracking Number: 743573-1

Target Population: You described and selected your target population in your application. Provide your rationale for purposefully selecting your target population(s).

My target participant population are Division I, head collegiate women's soccer coaches. Since the participants must have experienced the process of being an effective coach, I created guidelines of who is eligible to participate. I selected the participants using the NCAA's “2014 Division I Women’s Soccer Coaching Record, Winningest Active Coaches by Percentage.” This includes coaches with a minimum five years as a Division I head coach and includes all victories as a head coach at a four-year institution. The original list consists of top 55 winningest coaches, by winning percentage.

Not only did I want to interview effective coaches, I wanted to make sure they were currently effective coaches. The game is always evolving, and with new technology, such as video breakdown and heart rate monitors, I wanted to choose coaches who have previous and current effective records. To find these coaches, I cross checked the top 30 winningest coaches with the NCAA's "Consecutive Winning Seasons" records.

If you are purposefully excluding women or minorities in your study, explain why.

If you are conducting research on school children during class time, please answer the following two questions:

Describe in detail the activity planned for children not participating in your research.
Who will supervise non-participants? Include this information in the consent form.

**Anticipated Participants**
Explain if you anticipate in your study a sample of gender, race or ethnicity that is not proportionate to the general population.

**Recruitment of Participants**
If subjects are recruited or research is conducted through an agency or institution other than UST, submit written documentation of approval and/or cooperation. This document should use the agency or institution’s letterhead and contain enough information to demonstrate the agency or institution understands of their role in your research. Please be advised that you will need a letter of permission from any organization (printed on letterhead) where you will be recruiting.

Please answer the following:
Identify the locations where participants will be recruited (name, city and state).

Who will make the initial recruitment contact (full name)?

If the principle investigator is not the recruiter, describe how contact will be made with those who will be doing the recruitment. Describe what will be said to potential recruiters.

Describe how participants will be recruited. Include a script or other recruitment materials.

Specify what measures you will take to eliminate potential coercion. *Be specific*

Will you have access to existing records in order to recruit? Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, indicate who gave approval to use the records. Approval must be given by an individual who has the authority to release the records. Attach a signed letter of approval from that individual, preferably on letterhead from their organization.
List the name of the person who has given approval to release the records.

Will the participants receive incentives before Yes ☐ No ☑ and/or rewards after the study?

If YES, describe these incentives and/or rewards. Include this information in your consent form.
Appendix H

Risks and Benefits Form

RISKS AND BENEFITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Influencing the Effectiveness of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Name</td>
<td>Emily Fischer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risks and Benefits**

Please complete each section in clear, easy-to-read language that can be understood by a person unfamiliar with your research and your field.

**Minimize risk**

Describe the precautions used to minimize risks. This information must be listed here and on the consent form.

The only potential risk I see is sharing participants knowledge with other coaches in direct competition. By keeping all participants anonymous, the likelihood of risk decreases. This risk will be stated in each participant’s consent form. To minimize risks, I will save all of my data (interviews, transcripts, memos, notes) on my personal computer, at home. My personal computer is password protected. Participants will remain unidentified by using initials on transcripts until substituted with pseudonyms for all of the data coding and dissertation report.

**Use of Deception**

If this research involves the use of deception as part of the experimental method, the method *MUST* include a “debriefing procedure” which will be followed upon completion of the study or subject’s withdrawal from the study. Specify the method here.

**Benefits to participation**

List any anticipated direct benefits for subjects that participate in this research project. This does not include statements like "add to the existing knowledge" or “assisting your school/agency/company, etc." If there are no benefits, state “None”. List this information here and in the consent form.
Appendix I

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement Form

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.
Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Project: Influencing the Effectiveness  IRB Tracking: 743573-1

Name: of a Women’s Collegiate Soccer Program

Agreement

I agree to transcribe data for this study.
I agree that I will:

1. Keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the researcher who is the primary investigator of this study.

2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while in my possession. This includes:
   - using closed headphones when transcribing audio taped interviews
   - keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews in computer password-protected files
   - closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer
   - keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet
   - permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data

3. Give all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the primary investigator when I have completed the research tasks.

4. Erase or destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the primary investigator (e.g., information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Statement of Consent: By checking the electronic signature box, I am stating
that I understand what is being asked of me and I agree to the terms listed above.

Signature of Transcriber

☐ Check to sign electronically

Print Name of Transcriber

Date

Signature of Researcher

☐ Check to sign electronically*

Print Name of Researcher  Emily Fischer

Date

*Electronic signatures certify that:

The signatory agrees that he or she is aware of the polities on research involving participants of the University of St. Thomas and will safeguard the rights, dignity and privacy of all participants.

- The information provided in this form is true and accurate.
- The principal investigator will seek and obtain prior approval from the UST IRB office for any substantive modification in the proposal, including but not limited to changes in cooperating investigators/agencies as well as changes in procedures.
- Unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events in the course of this study which may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the UST IRB office and to the subjects.
- The research will not be initiated and subjects cannot be recruited until final approval is granted.
Appendix J

IRB Continuing Review Approval

**Need to add the PDF in.**