

**DEVELOPMENTAL CRISIS IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS:
A CRITICAL STUDY**

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DEVELOPMENTAL CRISIS IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS:
A CRITICAL STUDY

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by
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To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Barbara Blackston entitled "Developmental Crisis in College Athletics: A Critical Study." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science, with a major in Guidance and Counseling.


Major Professor

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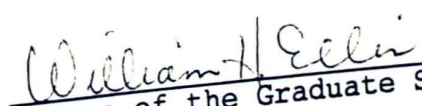

Dean of the Graduate School

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

For the majority of college students, academic studies and career preparation are their highest priorities. The student athlete, however, must also cope with athletic demands which result in unique stresses and pressures. Current research indicates that these demands have a definite effect on the psychological well-being of this special population. During the last four years, this writer has been privileged to work with a large number of athletes at the college level in the capacity of adjunct faculty member and instructional aide in the developmental studies programs at Columbia State Community College and Austin Peay State University. This writer has also come into contact with athletes in practicums as a graduate student and at the APSU Counseling and Testing Center as a graduate assistant.

While the earliest research in athletics dealt mainly with improving the physical conditioning and performance of competitors, research during the last two decades has begun to emphasize the academic, vocational, and interpersonal needs of college athletes. Sports counseling is taking a developmental and preventative approach in a number of colleges and universities. However, many more institutions must become sensitive to the needs of this special

population in order to assist these men and women in healthy psychological development.

From this research it appears that student athletes must be encouraged to cultivate that part of their lives that reaches beyond athletics. They must be able to develop their own identities, based on individual periods of crisis and commitment. Even though this writer believes that it is healthy and normal for college athletes to entertain dreams of being a star and visions of superb performances, the development of future plans which are both appropriate and realistic often seems to be more difficult for athletes than nonathletes.

The following statistics emphasize the importance of developing career plans and options: (a) Only two out of every hundred college basketball players make it to the professional ranks and (b) the average professional football career spans only three years (Figler & Figler, 1984). A 1980 sports editorial (cited in Wittmer, Bostic, Phillips, & Waters, 1981) reported on a study of athletes at the University of New Mexico over a 10-year period and found that: (a) only 5.7 percent of the football players and 7.3 percent of the basketball players earned degrees in four years; (b) only 110 out of 525 football players received degrees, while 302 dropped out, transferred, or were academically suspended; and (c) only 444 of 1537 male athletes in all sports earned degrees.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Identity Development

The college years are a critical crossroad in the lives of students--a time of making decisions and commitments which may carry lifelong effects. Erikson's stages are of particular salience when considering the tasks faced by student athletes. Erikson's theory describes human growth and development in terms of eight stages which bridge the lifespan. It is based on the epigenetic principle that "anything that grows has a ground plan and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (Erikson, 1968, p. 92). The theory is a psychosocial one which involves a basic conflict in each stage. This "crisis" is a turning point, when development must move one way or another and is brought about primarily by a need to adapt to society (Erikson, 1968). Each developmental challenge results in positive growth or unsuccessful resolution and is affected by the negotiation of earlier crises.

The completion of the fifth stage (identity vs. identity confusion) is vital to the successful transition

into adulthood, during which time people not only consider who they are but also who they can be. Marcia (1966) has clarified Erikson's description of this developmental stage. Marcia measured the process of ego identity formation on the dimensions of crisis and commitment. In this conceptualization, a crisis is a period of active and conscious decision-making during which various alternatives are examined and evaluated; a commitment refers to acceptance of a specific identity, a combination of political, social, religious, or vocational alternatives.

Four decision-making modes, called ego-identity statuses, are derived from combinations of these two dimensions. The least sophisticated status is identity diffusion. Individuals in this category have a total lack of commitment and have not experienced an identity crisis. Therefore, they have ambiguous or nonexistent political, social, and religious beliefs and no vocational aspirations. The foreclosure status includes those who have made a strong commitment to an identity without having experienced a crisis. Decisions have been made for the adolescent by parents and significant others and are accepted without question. These individuals place high value on obedience and respect of authority. The third status, moratorium, consists of those persons who actively explore and experiment with a variety of roles. This

period gives adolescents the freedom to be uncommitted to just one life style and the space to investigate a variety of alternatives. Vague and changing commitments result in crisis, but indeed a useful one. Finally, identity achieved individuals are those who have experienced moratorium and have arrived at a commitment due to conscious choices of their own. These persons are more independent, respond better to stress, have more realistic goals and higher self-esteem than those in the other three statuses (Marcia, 1966).

The college years are a prime time for the identity development necessary for positive growth; however, this process may be particularly difficult for college athletes, few of whom successfully complete their college education. An understanding of the issues which affect the psychological well-being of college athletes would be of great value in helping them negotiate this process with more ease.

Concerns Unique to the Student Athlete

Identity Issues

Much research has been conducted with college students on Erikson's identity concept. During the present decade, a good amount of literature has been generated concerning the developmental needs of college athletes (Chartrand &

Lent, 1987; Petitpas & Champagne, 1988; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990; Pinkerton, Hinz, & Barrow, 1989; Wittmer et al., 1981). Farnsworth and Chickering (cited in Pinkerton et al., 1989) applied Erikson's concepts of development to university students in general and named separating from family and assuming independence, forming an identity and a mature sexuality, learning to manage feelings of intimacy, establishing values, and solidifying career goals as normal developmental tasks. However, in the case of the student athlete, the meeting of these student needs seems to be secondary to the winning of ball games in many institutions.

For many student athletes, identity is intricately tied to sport. Studies comparing collegiate athletes with nonathletes have shown that athletes have many characteristics of identity foreclosure. LeUnes & Nation (1983) administered four instruments to 60 college football players, 60 college nonathletes who had lettered in a sport in high school, and 60 college nonathletes who had never lettered in any sport. These authors found that football players were more powerful-other oriented in locus of control and scored significantly higher on authoritarianism than the ex-athletes, who in turn were more authoritarian than the nonathletes. This study suggested that football selects or nurtures a narrow-minded, conventional, and

conservative personality. Petitpas (1981) has noted high authoritarian thinking as a characteristic of college athletes when compared to nonathletes, according to scores on Adorno's F-Scale.

Another characteristic of identity foreclosure, lack of autonomy, was found by Ogilvie & Tutko (1971) in research conducted by the Institute for the Study of Athletic Motivation which they established. They based their findings on data gathered from the administration of the Athletic Motivation Inventory to about 15,000 athletes. These authors feel that "competition doesn't seem to build character and it is possible that competition doesn't even require much more than a minimally integrated personality" (p.63). Earlier research by Ogilvie (1970), based on results of five different instruments including the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and the California Personality Inventory, noted a number of personality traits characteristic of athletes; however, traits such as autonomy and need for affiliation with others were not general traits. Other characteristics of identity foreclosure are low moral development, found in research by Malmisur (cited in Petitpas & Champagne, 1988) and stereotyped sex role expectations noted by Hirt, Hoffman, & Sedlacek (1983).

Petitpas & Champagne (1988) see the identity-foreclosed theme of overidentification with college athletics to be the danger which necessitates specific support programs for athletes. Questioning and exploratory behavior, which is imperative for identity achievement, seems to be incompatible with today's athletic system which promotes conformity and requires large amounts of physical and psychological time and energy (Petitpas & Champagne, 1988; Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). Also, since athletes have an identity on campus, they may not have an urgent need to engage in this type of behavior.

Various studies have documented that when compared to a general population of college students, athletes have been shown to have a lower psychosocial maturity. Schendel (1965) tested male 9th-grade, 12th-grade, and college senior team sport athletes and nonathletes with the California Psychological Inventory. College athletes were found to be more conventional in responding to social situations than nonathletes, even though the psychosocial ratings for the high school athletes were higher than nonathletes. Also, Petitpas (1981) compared male college freshmen and senior athletes and nonathletes on several psychosocial measures and his findings indicated that the psychosocial maturity of senior nonathletes was higher than that of the other three groups. He feels that

participation in college athletics may even stunt psychological maturation.

Chartrand & Lent (1987) and Harrison (1981) are of the opinion that a main concern which emerges as a potential counseling issue for the student athlete is that of role conflict from being both an athlete and a student in a university setting. This occurs when the demands of one role are incompatible with the requirements of another. For example, for a student athlete whose participation in intercollegiate athletics is seen as a means of gaining professional status, the role of student may conflict with the role of athlete. Likewise, for a student who is participating in athletics due to parental and/or social pressure and is serious about academics, the role of athlete may conflict with the role of student. Sack & Thiel (1985) analyzed data from a national survey of college basketball players and found that participation in intercollegiate athletics was strongly related to role conflict. Pinkerton et al. (1989) see another conflict experienced by many athletes as one involving the status and respect, even adoration and hero worship, which comes from peers and society as a whole. As a price for this status, athletes may feel that they must project an invulnerable image, one in which such things as emotional

pain and insecurity are perceived as weaknesses which the athletes must deny to themselves and definitely to others.

Even Herschel Walker, an All-American football player, hinted at the importance of identity achievement when he said the following:

I began to understand that money is not everything. I saw that happiness is the important thing . . . Believe in yourself. Don't be greedy. Try to do what you think is right . . . You owe it to yourself to get a good education, to do the very best you can, to do what you think is right. I made some people angry [but] . . . You can't satisfy everyone. You can just satisfy yourself . . . I'm not afraid to stand alone . . . I am going to play the role that God has set out for me. And I'm playing it one day at a time (1982, p. 32).

Academic Problems

According to Harrison (1981), academic and athletic performance both attract attention, but the media-heightened and pervasive appeal for sports often seems to dominate the student athlete's ego-value system. It seems that athletic ability qualifies the student for acceptance by his peers far more than scholastic achievement.

Numerous studies support the idea that many athletes do not receive their college diplomas because college coaches place little or no emphasis on character, intelligence, study habits, academic ability, or other qualities necessary to succeed in the classroom. Their main concern is on recruiting the best athletes in order to have a winning program which is a source of pride, prestige, and revenue (Wittmer et al., 1981; Harrison, 1981; Pinkerton, et al., 1989; Leerhsen & Cuccio, 1982; Renick, 1974; Underwood, 1980). It seems that many coaches agree with Vince Lombardi's statement that "winning isn't everything--it's the only thing" (Ogilvie & Tutko, 1971, p. 63). Even so, the athlete is expected to perform, while maintaining a certain grade-point average and a minimum number of units to be eligible. Therefore athletes might be tempted to take the least difficult or a minimum number of courses rather than challenging themselves with more substantial ones. Nelson (1983) goes a step further, by suggesting that athletes are often diverted into "crib courses" and expected to stay there in order to maintain eligibility. Nelson continues by noting that physical ability is rewarded by adults and peers and that the development of athletic skills is encouraged over all others; hence, athletes may cease to develop in other directions open to them.

At Washington State University a Freshman Athletic Scholastic Training (FAST) program was developed to improve the academic performance of freshman football players (Harney, Brigham, & Sanders, 1986). Its focus was on class attendance, notetaking, and assignment completion. Concentration on aspects as elementary as these study skills effectively improved the grade point average of a representative sample of male and female freshman student athletes.

Social Isolation

Often, college athletes are viewed as special and are treated accordingly. They may be admitted to classes of choice without having to stand in registration or bookstore lines, they may receive special living quarters and meals, and due to their athletic schedule, are allowed to miss more classes and take exams at times different than nonathletes. In fact, it is this segregation from the total educational structure which may cause many of the problems experienced by athletes (Witmer et al., 1981; Harrison, 1981; Leerhsen & Cuccio, 1982; Hirt et al., 1983; Underwood, 1980). They live in a sort of protected environment, a setting so controlled that it eliminates distractions, problems, and frustrations as much as possible. Hence, the lack of a need and/or opportunity to

engage in exploratory activity in the social realm may take its toll in the long run.

Also, athletes find themselves in a ready-made social support group, the team. Team membership may help allay fears of a lack of interpersonal acceptance and inadequacy, but also may prohibit seeking psychological assistance from other sources when necessary due to subtle or direct injunctions against doing so (Pinkerton et al., 1989). Athletes find themselves in a dense social system, where members know each other well and are very homogeneous. This tends to result in restricting rather than broadening alternatives for action (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990).

Long hours of practice and travel to athletic events also compound the isolation and leave little time for socializing, especially with nonathletic peers. Remer, Tongate, & Watson (1978) noted that "athletes are trapped in a self-perpetuating system set in motion early in their lives . . . They have a special commodity that separates them from the rest of the [college] population--athletic talent. Unfortunately, while they benefit from the special attention, they are also blocked from 'normal' development by being segregated, even if they don't realize it." (p. 628). The authors continue by pointing out that while athletes are protected, excused, supported, and admired, they are also envied, used, and despised. The social

development of the student athlete definitely appears to be stunted, and normal exploratory behavior difficult, if not impossible.

Time Demands

Another area with which college athletes must deal is that of strict time demands. They must learn how to manage time extremely well in order to juggle two full-time jobs--sports and schoolwork. In a sense, these students are working for the college; they serve a public relation's function for their school and are probably the most visible representatives of the school to the public. Since a large portion of the athlete's schedule is spent in practice, travel, and game time, time management workshops would be of particular value to the athletic population.

The exacting program of the student athlete also affects another area of his/her life, a financial one. Since athletes rarely have the time or energy to earn money from a part-time job, they may have financial needs. Athletic scholarships are often designed to cover basic educational and living expenses only (Figler & Figler, 1984), with little attention given to miscellaneous needs and/or spending money.

Career and Vocational Problems

Vocational development is an integral part of identity formation; ideally this occurs in late adolescence and

early adulthood, during Erikson's fifth stage (identity vs. identity confusion). Nelson (cited in Pinkerton et al., 1989) has observed that nonstudent athletes are more likely to resolve their identity crises in more realistic ways and to develop vocational identities more consistent with their capabilities than are student athletes.

Lee (1983) conducted a study to examine the athletic expectations of high school athletes and 386 male high school athletes (215 white and 171 black) completed an athletic data form to compile information on athletic aspirations and expectations, level of athletic participation, parental and coaches' encouragement, socioeconomic status, and achievement test scores. Results showed that 36 percent of the black starters subgroup, 14 percent of the white starters, 11 percent of the black nonstarters, and 8 percent of the white nonstarters expected to become professional athletes. According to statistics reported in the Introduction of this paper, these expectations are very unrealistic.

Since athletes are sometimes so consumed with the intensity of college athletics, they may not take the time to do any future career planning. The glory of the present is all they may think about. Some athletes' futures begin and end with the unrealistic dreams of a career in professional sports and career choice is not an immediately

experienced problem. Even the exceptionally talented athlete should be encouraged to consider alternatives beyond professional sports. Results from a study by Kennedy & Dimick (1987) in which college football and basketball athletes completed the Career Maturity Inventory suggest that intercollegiate athletes who participate in revenue-producing sports possess lower levels of career maturity than do other college students.

In other research, Sowa and Gressard (1983) used the Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI) with 48 athletes and 43 nonathletes, male and female. Athletes scored significantly lower than nonathletes on the subscales of educational plans, career plans, and mature relationship with peers. Blann (1985) administered the SDTI-2 (revised, second edition) to 568 male and female athletes and found that male freshman and sophomore athletes did not form as mature educational and career plans as male nonathletes, while junior and senior athletes did nearly as well as nonathletes; there were no differences among the females.

One of the most difficult things to be faced by the college athlete is the end of his career in active competition due to graduation, injury, or academic failure. For many college athletes, the change from "star" to "has-been" is a kind of death. Energy that for years has

been headed toward improving athletic performance must now be rechanneled. Even when the student athlete realizes that professional sports is not an option, it is not easy to give up the identity of athlete. Moving from a prestigious position in sports to one of average student can be a troubling, narcissistic injury (Pinkerton et al., 1989; Petitpas & Champagne, 1988; Chartrand & Lent, 1987).

A corollary to this issue is that athletes particularly need assistance in identifying a major and maintaining progress toward a degree. Some athletes may not even consider the long-term value of certain academic majors and undecided students may choose the least difficult majors or simply pick one that is identified with athletics, such as physical education or recreation. Also, athletes may eliminate a preferred major and career direction because it conflicts with the sporting side of their lives (Figler & Figler, 1984).

Pearson and Petitpas (1990) emphasize the role that transitions play in the lives of athletes. Not only do they consider retirement from a sport to be an important transition, but they also point out that it generally occurs at a time when the majority of people in the work force are establishing their careers. These authors also note that a physical injury which prematurely ends an athletic career may result in acute depression, alcohol

abuse, or even suicide, as well as impairment of the self-concept. And finally, transition may be involved in team selection, as players' dreams of a starting position disintegrate in a "survival of the fittest."

performance Stress

Intercollegiate athletics are highly competitive, and no athlete can be expected to maintain a peak level of performance continuously. However, personal pressures come from coaches, teammates, and fans, often with the heaviest source of pressure coming from within the athletes themselves. It seems helpful to periodically remind the athlete to put particular games and plays in proper perspective. Tutko (1971) sees the external question "Can I do it?" at the core of the athletic challenge, and feels that how the athlete handles anxiety determines his level of success.

Pinkerton et al. (1989) note that anxiety about sports performance can precipitate emotional distress for the athlete. Whether the lowered performance is actual or fantasized, the result is usually lowered efficiency. It is almost as if a self-fulfilling prophecy is set into motion in this negative spiral. This anxiety is especially dangerous for scholarship athletes who must continually prove their athletic ability.

Tutko (1971) indicates that anxiety does play a leading role in athletics, and may serve as either a positive or negative motivator. Anxiety is positive if it encourages the athlete to work harder, to find ways to improve, and to help set goals; it is negative if it interferes with productive and constructive thinking. The more successful an athlete has been in handling anxiety, the more likely he will be to perform well.

The anxiety related to playing up to one's potential depends on the athlete and whether one is autonomous or is still seeking the approval of others. Athletes who are able to evaluate their own performance are better able to deal with this anxiety than those who are concerned about the evaluation of others. The latter individuals basically feel inadequate and lack self-confidence (Tutko, 1971).

In addition, Bentson & Summerskill (1955) noted that athletes felt that their self-esteem and status on campus were greater as a result of athletic participation. This, too, is intricately tied to performance stress, as it is the athletic heroes and winners who occupy the top rungs on the status ladder. This position, however, is an insecure one, due to the competitive spirit among athletes to be the best. Chandler & Goldberg (1990) have expressed the opinion that maintaining an identity built on athletic prowess and superior performance transforms the athletic

arena into a proving ground. Those who cannot keep up the pace are prone to chronic feelings of poor self-esteem and continued dependence on sources outside themselves, whether individuals or chemicals, for approval and confirmation.

Preventative Programs

Primary prevention is the predominant theme of the current literature. This approach assists individuals by preventing problems before they occur. Several programs are already in place which are based on this idea. Allen (1988) has described a college course for student athletes to influence cognitive variables basic to performance in the sporting arena, as well as in the classroom and in interpersonal relationships. Since the class had a seminar format, enrollment was limited. A total of 38 men and women participated in one of two offerings. Stress inoculation training was used, which involved learning to use processes such as perception, imagery, and thinking to advantage in sport. A weekly journal was also required. Posttest scores on the Psychological Performance Inventory, a self-report instrument, were significantly higher than pretest scores on four of the seven scales. Journal entries which began with skepticism and frustration led to optimism as the course progressed.

A unique counseling program for student athletes at the University of Florida has expanded the athletic counselor's role to that of identifying and assisting with the athletes' personal, vocational, and academic concerns (Wittmer et al., 1981). A course was developed specifically for freshman-level athletes and was highly structured, exploring such topics as: interpersonal communication skills, leadership skills, career planning, academic planning, social skills, understanding self-concept, and time management. During the course each student completed four personal and vocational assessments. In addition, a senior exit seminar was developed which focused on concerns such as financing a home or car, buying insurance, resumes and job interviews, and marriage. Since this article was written soon after the program was instituted at the University of Florida, no statistical data was yet available.

Petitpas and Champagne (1988) of Springfield College (Massachusetts) have examined the problem and suggest an intervention which begins at the freshman year and continues through graduation. The goal of the program for the freshman year is self-exploration, in order to help the college student move from dualistic thinking, in which authority is seen as definite and teachers and coaches are never to be questioned, into more multiplistic thought, in

which the student begins to question the absoluteness of authority. In the second year, the athlete is encouraged to experiment with new behaviors, while evaluating the cost and benefits of such. Reinforcing the benefits of exploratory behavior through career planning is the goal for year three. Finally, the fourth and fifth years assist students in preparing for the transition after college. The authors suggest several assessment tools for program evaluation, including the Student Developmental Task Inventory-2 and the Career Maturity Inventory.

The Freshman Athletic Scholastic Training (FAST) program at Washington State University, which was cited earlier in this paper, was developed to improve the academic performance of freshman football players, and was evaluated as effective (Harney et al., 1986). The Career Assessment Program for Athletes (CAPA) and the Making the Jump Program (MJP) are two recent examples of preventative programs for athletes (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). CAPA consisted of regional workshops open to athletes who had participated in Olympic or Pan-American Games since 1980. The focus of these workshops was to provide a supportive environment in which these athletes could discuss concerns about leaving active participation and understand the process of career development. MJP is a project of Springfield College which offers high school athletes and

their parents seminars, information, and counseling to assist them in making the transition from high school to college athletics.

An interesting approach applies systems theory to college athletic teams (Schindler-Zimmerman, Washle, & Protinsky, 1990). These psychologists see a parallel between the team and the family, with the coach becoming a surrogate parent and the athletes becoming surrogate siblings for each other. These authors present a case study describing consultation work with a women's collegiate basketball team utilizing systems theory and strategic family therapy techniques. The focus of the consultation was on the experience of playing rather than winning and on the roles of each player in the system. Strategies included reflexive questioning of players and coaches, helping the member understand the processes and interactions of the team, identifying patterns and interactions which resulted in successes, reframing game losses and mistakes, developing team rituals to signify unity, looking for purpose beyond winning, and shifting boundaries between coaches and players. The result of this work was positive, as evidenced by the fact that this team contracted for continued work with the consultants; in addition, several other collegiate coaches expressed an interest in the program.

Even though these programs reflect an advance in sports psychology and a few have been deemed successful, there is an underutilization of counseling services by athletes (Pinkerton et al., 1989). Carmen, Zerman, & Blaine (1968) surveyed 106 athletes, and despite the findings that the most common presenting problem of these students was difficulties with studies (41 percent), social difficulties (12 percent), sexual preoccupations (11 percent), or career worries (7 percent), a statistical comparison revealed that athletes used the Psychiatric Service at Harvard University less than nonathletes in a five-year period (1957 - 1962).

Bergandi & Wittig (1984) conducted a survey to assess the attitudes of athletic directors toward athletes' use of counseling services. Approximately 75 percent expressed very positive statements about athletes being involved in counseling. However, these authors were distressed that most counseling centers seem to ignore this population.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research indicates that a great amount of study has been done on the college student athlete. The most recent direction taken by the researchers seems to be a developmental and preventative approach, as evidenced by current preventative programs already in place. Although these interventions sound admirable, there has not been any empirical study on effectiveness. Until follow-up data on existing comprehensive counseling programs are collected and studied, and until the implementation and evaluation of suggested interventions have been documented, colleges and universities will not know if these programs lead to significant differences in the development of college athletes. If these comprehensive interventions are proven helpful, perhaps they could be adjusted and extended to meet the needs of other high-risk groups such as college students enrolled in developmental studies courses, students on academic probation, or freshmen entering college with low ACT or SAT scores. Interventions for these students would be extremely valuable at institutions with minimal entrance requirements and low acceptance standards.

In addition, some of the studies are flawed by small sample size. Competitors in colleges and universities are involved in athletic programs which include such sports as basketball, football, baseball, soccer, volleyball, and hockey, as well as tennis, golf, swimming, wrestling, gymnastics, even cheerleading. Due to the wide diversity of college sports, it seems logical that there is a wide diversity in the people engaged in these sports. Therefore, larger and more representative samples of the total athletic population are in order, if the research is to be generalizable among athletes.

There is also much discussion about the value of intercollegiate athletics. While there is a large amount of negative press concerning such things as recruiting violations, drug abuse and illiteracy of athletes, and while this paper is a presentation of psychological concerns of college athletes, some researchers do see positive effects associated with participation in athletics. Ryan (1989) surveyed a large number of college freshmen in 1981; four years later he collected data from these same individuals with a follow-up survey. He found that participation in intercollegiate athletics is associated, although modestly, with a high level of satisfaction with the overall college experience, motivation to earn a college degree, and the development of

interpersonal skills and leadership abilities. Likewise, Stone & Strange (1989) feel that the evidence that athletes are more or less successful than nonathletes in the academic, personal, or social areas of college life is inconclusive. They sampled male and female intercollegiate athletes and nonathletes and the students completed the College Student Experiences Questionnaire during their freshman year. These authors feel that the team-oriented structure of competition offers good opportunity for interaction, leadership, and development of skills. Perhaps the perceived problems within college athletics have been overstated; future research done from a positive perspective is certainly in order.

In that the majority of the research studies involve male subjects, there seems to be a failure to address the concerns of female athletes. It would also be interesting to conduct comparison studies between male and female athletes along the various dimensions. Other studies might collect data for comparison of athletes who compete individually with those who are members of a team, as well as athletes who are participating in revenue-producing sports with those in non-revenue sports. Intersport study to determine the similarities and differences in psychological traits and development among athletes in various sports is another possibility for research. A

further area of interest is that of the physically handicapped athlete; there is very little research on this subject.

It would be helpful to examine this issue from another perspective--that of the student athlete. Collecting and studying the perceptions of the student athletes themselves with regard to the concerns presented in this paper would aid in developing an effective program. It would be interesting to see if student athletes recognize as valid the developmental problems and athletic demands enumerated here.

Obviously, student athletes could benefit from a comprehensive counseling program. It is hoped that college professionals--coaches, faculty, and staff--will continue working to understand the issues which affect the psychological well-being of this special population by giving careful attention to present and future research. Colleges and universities owe it to athletes to make their college experience a meaningful and productive one, in which each of them not only grows as a person, but also as an emerging professional with definite career and vocational directions. Underwood (1980) says it well: "Ultimately, the solution to the problem is caring. Caring about young people, caring about their being educated,

caring about the contribution they will be able to make to society" (p. 72).

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