To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Chanel Leisa Lattimer entitled "For We See and Know in Part: An Examination of the Portrayal of African-American Female Athletes on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Sport Studies.

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"For We See and Know in Part": An Examination of the Portrayal of African-American Female Athletes on the Covers of *Sports Illustrated*.

A Thesis Presented for
the Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Chanel Leisa Lattimer
December 2008

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Acknowledgements

"For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13: 9-13)

First, all praise and honor belongs to my Heavenly Father and Savior Jesus Christ. Through Him I am able to do all things. To my parents, Ernest and Paula Lattimer, thank you for always believing in me, even when I took this "detour" to Tennessee. Your support, love, and finances, have been endless, and allowed me so many opportunities. I love and appreciate you very much. Mom-thanks for being a great proofreader again! To Alexis, my fiancé, thank you for making the countless trips to Knoxville over the past two years. I appreciate you for always being there for me during the good and bad times. I look forward to spending the rest of my life with you.

Dr. Fritz G. Polite—none of this would have been possible without you. Thank you for "recruiting" me to Tennessee and being such a wonderful mentor. I believed in you and what you were doing and you have more than exceeded my expectations. Because of you I have had many once-in-a-lifetime experiences that will enrich my life and career. I appreciate your friendship, support, advice, and free meals! I wish you all the best in the future and I look forward to our continued partnerships together.

To my thesis committee, Mr. Bemiller, Dr. Fisher, and Dr. Polite; thank you for your patience and support. Mr. Bemiller, you have been a great advisor and friend. I appreciate your advice as I navigated through my career and academic decisions. Dr. Hardin, thank you for answering my questions and being the calm in the storm. Dean Rider-thank you for making my parents and I comfortable with the choice to come here and believing in me and my potential.

Deepest appreciation to the Department of Exercise, Sport, & Leisure Studies and the College of Education, Health, and Human Science and all faculty and staff.

Abstract

This study examines the print media's representation of African-American sportswomen's femininity on the covers of *Sport Illustrated.* Sport is considered a male-dominated institution; a place where masculinity is expressed. Therefore, in spite of the increased participation for women in sport due to Title IX; the media's coverage has been minimal and their representation of female athletes has been ambivalent at best, and trivializing at worse. The conveyance of African-American female athletes remains even more complex. Due to historical experiences, African-American women have developed a femininity that falls outside that of mainstream society. Therefore, the lack of coverage African-American female athletes receive may be a combination of racist and sexist ideology. Moreover, the lack of literature on African-American female athletes justifies the need for this study. This study uses a hegemonic framing theory to explore the topic. According to this theory, messages communicated in the media reflect the values and beliefs of those in charge in society. These messages have an influence on the consciousness, perceptions, and beliefs of their audience (Entman, 1993). The study employs a content analysis to examine all 2,865 covers of *Sports Illustrated* from 1954 to 2008. Content including the gender, race, sport represented, pose, and clothing of the individual(s) on the cover were analyzed. Additionally, a sample of feature articles was analyzed for themes when African-American women appeared on the cover.

Results revealed that over the course of the magazine's history, 35 African-American females appeared on 26 *Sports Illustrated* covers. Results of those representations on 16 covers could be coded as African-American females. Results confirm that African-

American females have had very limited coverage on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. In some way their coverage is similar to Caucasian women in that significant portions of feature articles included non-athletic information that reinforced feminine ideology. On the other hand, the African-American females on the cover were more likely found in action poses and representing sports that are oftentimes considered masculine. Results fit with the Afrocentric-Feminist epistemology that states that African-American females' experiences sometimes correspond more closely with Caucasian women and other times with African-American men.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

"Called Matriarch, Emasculator and Hot Momma. Sometimes Sister, Pretty Baby, Auntie, Mammy and Girl. Called Unwed Mother, Welfare Recipient and Inner City Consumer. The Black American Woman has had to admit that while nobody knew the troubles she saw, everybody, his brother and his dog, felt qualified to explain her, even to herself.
—Trudier Harris[1].

In 1973, the United States Congress passed Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act. Over the next thirty years, this landmark legislation would open up the floodgates of opportunity for female participation in sports (Carpenter & Acosta, 2008). Whereas in 1968, only 16,000 females participated in intercollegiate athletics; today, there are over three million females participating in interscholastic athletics, and another 180,000 participating in intercollegiate sports (Carpenter & Acosta, 2008). Simultaneously, media consumption of sports has grown in leaps and bounds through the development of television and the internet. Today, sport managers spend billions of dollars through print, television, and electronic media to provide audiences with unprecedented amounts of sports coverage. For example, NBC paid a reported $894 million for the rights to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, and provided viewers with over 3,600 hours of television and internet coverage; this is a staggering amount compared to other Olympics (Jackson, 2008).

Despite the simultaneous rise of women's athletic participation and media coverage of sports, an association between the two phenomena has been less dramatic.

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[1] Collins, P. H. (2003). Toward an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. In Y. S. Lincoln & N. K. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research* (pp. 47-72). Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Women constitute approximately 40% of sports participants; yet, they only receive approximately five to eight percent of sport media coverage (Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006). Equally significant is the type of coverage they receive which usually reinforces male hegemonic ideology and sexual differences. As a result, "feminine appropriate" sports receive more coverage (Daddario, 1998; Duncan, 1990; Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006). Additionally, pictorial and written coverage frequently emphasizes femininity and thus detracts from athletic abilities (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006; Kane, 1996).

For African-American women who comprise 11% of all NCAA female athletes and 70% of WNBA players coverage borders on nonexistence (NCAA, 2007). Moreover, their portrayal has been complicated by the intersection of gender and race, the hegemonic ideology of femininity, and historical narratives that date back to slavery (Captain, 1991; Spencer, 2004; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). It is the hope that this study will shed light on the portrayal of African-American female athletes.

Statement of the Problem

"The social reality of the Black women in America has been a much neglected area of social investigation and analysis" (Benton, 1999, p. 12). The unique interrelationship between race, gender, and class distinguish African-American women and their experiences; yet, it has also hindered their portrayal in media and research. In the 1960's a theology called "womanism" arose out of African-American females' discontent with the Civil Rights and second-wave feminist movements. Womanists argued that race, gender, and class are three salient facets of African-American women's

identities. However, their identities and experiences surpass the simple addition of these three elements together. In other words, "race does not simply increase oppression as it is 'added to' other sites and discourses of subordination" (Scranton, 2001, p. 171). Womanist contended that the Civil Rights and feminist movement focused on a single axis of oppression; the former was based on race and the latter on gender. Therefore, neither movement could adequately address the tri-fold struggles of the African-American female experience (Collins, 2000b; hooks, 2000).

The "triple jeopardy" status—as female, African-American and often lower class—has historically led to their economic, political, and ideological oppression at the hand of the Eurocentric patriarchal society. Researchers agree that the selective images offered by the media generally reflect the dominate ideologies and representations of the given society (Bernstein, 2002; Coakley, 2004; Harrington, 1998; Harris, 1991). Therefore, African-American women have lacked the power to control their own image (Collins, 2000b). Instead, stereotypes created by a Eurocentric society steeped in racist and sexist ideology have framed their image in the media. Furthermore, society has traditionally portrayed race and gender separately with depictions of the intersection of these facets as superficial and simplistic (Lotz, 2003). As of result, the media has created a simplistically negative, inaccurate, and single portrait of African-American women (Collins, 2000b; Jewell, 1993).

Since sport is a microcosm of society, African-American women find themselves in a similar position (Coakley, 2004). With the exception of a few distinguished and elite athletes, the African-American sportswoman is "fleeting, unknown, and unheralded in the

consciousness of the sporting public" (Smith, 1992, p. 229). The lack of research on the African-American sportswoman also prevents explanations for the type and dearth of media coverage they receive. Again, the intersection of race and gender appears to be the culprit. When researchers explore aspects of race and gender, a Eurocentric perspective taken by many researchers results in simplistic and monolithic portrayals of athletes (Folan, 1998; Littlefield, 2008). Deliberations on race and sport focus on the African-American man. Similarly, discussions on gender and sports issues focus on Caucasian women. According to Birrell (1990), the majority of the sport research tends to obscure diversity by seldom mentioning the interrelationships between race, gender, and sport; this then obscures class as a factor by lumping it together with race. Therefore, in spite of a rich athletic history, the experiences of African-American women remain largely invisible in the media and in research.

Purpose of the Study

This study takes a hegemonic framing perspective that states that media images reflect the ideology of those in charge, in this case Eurocentric males. This theory will be discussed in detail in the next section. Based on that perspective, the purpose of this study is to investigate the portrayal of African-American female athletes on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. More specifically, the study examines how the portrayals of African-American female athletes exhibit certain aspects of Eurocentric patriarchal hegemony. In particular, the study focuses on the issue of femininity. The focus on femininity stems from the fact that coverage of female athletes usually emphasizes femininity; yet, African-American women have historically not fit within "mainstream" ideology. The

research question follows: How are African-American female athletes portrayed on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*? It is the hope that through this study a better understanding of the lack of coverage for African-American female athletes will be addressed. Additionally, the study serves to add to the limited research on African-American female athletes.

Significance of the Research

As previously mentioned, the combination of racial and gender discrimination and the complexities of identity have severely hindered research on the coverage of African-Americans female athletes. To date, very few studies have included African-American females within their examination of women on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. Of the few studies that exist, results have been purely numerical in nature. In other words, the studies neglected to offer explanations about why there was a lack of African-American women. Moreover, no researcher has done an in-depth examination of African-American women in feature articles in *Sports Illustrated*. This study will be the first of its kind to focus on the portrayal of African-American female athletes and explanations of these portrayals. Additionally, previous studies have looked at a random sampling of covers over a period of time, compared female to male covers, or examined all female covers within a certain time period. This is the first study to analyze all available covers of *Sports Illustrated* in an effort to analyze all covers portraying African-American women and to compare their covers with that of men and Caucasian women.

The effect that coverage (or lack of) and the portrayal of African-American female athletes have on audiences provides another justification for this study. According

to framing theory (Entman, 1993), messages communicated through the media have an influence on human consciousness, perceptions, and beliefs. Framing works by highlighting certain information and making it salient or memorable to the audience. Increased salience helps in the reception, perception, and discernment process, and signifies what events are important (Entman, 1993; Harrington, 1998). Moreover, images in the media, especially photographs, can cause audiences to believe that the images pictured are natural and a necessary reality" (Duncan & Sayoavong, p. 99). Overall, the mass media has become one of the most powerful institutional forces for shaping attitudes and values in American culture (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Since sport is a microcosm of society (Coakley, 2004), these same principles apply to images presented on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. In other words, the sport media tells audiences who and what are valued and esteemed in sports (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). How the magazine portrays African-American females affects the way readers perceive them. If the images shown do not represent an authentic portrayal, then audiences form unrealistic views. Additionally, the omission of African-American women from the magazine devalues their accomplishments and perpetuates their invisibility within society. In order to offer recommendations and implement policies to increase the coverage of African-American female athletes, there first needs to be an understanding of the root of the problem. Therefore, a better understanding of how African-American female athletes are portrayed and why they receive minimal coverage is needed.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used for the purpose of this study:

African-American- A term used to define residents of the United States who have African ancestry. The researcher chose to use this term because it is a contemporary term emerging from the Civil Rights movement. Additionally, as an African-American she uses the term to identify herself.

Civil Rights movement- The movement in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's whereby African-Americans sought to eliminate segregation based on race and to gain equal rights as citizens (Coakley, 2004).

Feminist movement- The movement aimed at equal rights for women that began in the early twentieth century and continues today in the United States. The movement is considered to have three waves or historical junctures (Hine, 1992).

Femininity- Socially constructed set of interrelated ideas used to define what it means to be a woman based on behaviors and secondary sex characteristics (Coakley, 2004)

Womanism- A type of feminist theology that arose during the 1960's that focuses on the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of African-American women (Collins, 2000a).

Title IX- The Education Amendments Act passed in 1972 declaring that "no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." This included interscholastic and intercollegiate sports, and would eventually lead to the growth of women's sport participation (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

Framing theory- A theory describing the power of a communicating text and its influence over the human consciousness. The process by which the media makes certain information salient and influences the perception, attitudes, and opinions of the receivers (Entman, 1993).

Hegemony- The power of dominance that one social group holds over others, and the use of that power to get the masses to consent to a particular ideology. The purpose is to generate attitudes within the masses that are both uncritical and supportive of the status quo (Harrington, 1998).

Ideology- "A set of interrelated ideas that people use to give meaning to and make sense of the world" (Coakley, 2004).

Eurocentrism- The practice of viewing the world from a European perspective with a conscious or unconscious belief in the preeminence of Europe, its people, culture, traditions and society (Singer, 2005).

Patriarchal- Social system in which the male is the family head and is responsible for the welfare of the community and society as a whole (Collins, 2000a).

Paradigm- "Model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand it" (Babbie, 2004, p. 33).

Ethnicity- A group whose members identify with each other usually on the basis of common ancestry and the recognition of common cultural, linguistic, religious, behavioral or biological traits (Coakley, 2004).

Race- A group of persons related by common descent or heredity; the concept of categorizing humans into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of characteristics, including skin color (Coakley, 2004).

Gender- An individual's self-conception of being male or female, especially in relation to culture and society (Coakley, 2004).

Racism- Discrimination, devaluation, and oppression based on one's race (Brooks & Althouse, 1993).

Sexism- Discrimination, devaluation, and oppression based on one's sex or gender (Brooks & Althouse, 1993).

Binary classification system- The way in which the United States treats gender, in that gender characteristics of males and females are opposed or contrasted to one another (Coakley, 2004).

Sexual difference- The cultural construction of differences between female and males; these differences are depicted in the media as natural and real. They include stereotypes of males and females, which contrasts their characteristics, behaviors, appearance, etc… (Duncan, 1990).

Ambivalence- The way in which the print media combines positive portrayals with messages that simultaneously trivialize sportswomen's performances and maintains the status quo (Kane, 1996).

Trivialization- Media portrayals that devalue or do not take seriously the female athlete, her athleticism, or her athletic accomplishments (Kane, 1996).

Sexualization- Media portrayals that overemphasize or focus solely on the femininity and physical attractiveness of female athletes (Kane, 1996).

Gender appropriate sports- Sports that are considered appropriate for women based on society's standards of femininity. Usually these sports emphasize grace, balance, individual participation, subjective judging, and are aesthetically pleasing (Cahn, 1994).

Gender inappropriate sports- Sports that are considered inappropriate for women based on society's standards of femininity. Usually these sports emphasize masculinity through violence, intimidation, physical exertion, muscularity, and team play (Cahn, 1994).

Theoretical Framework

This study will utilize the hegemony framing theory as a means to examine the coverage of African-American female athletes on the covers of *Sports Illustrated.* Hegemony refers to "the power or dominance that one social group holds over others" (Lull, 2003, p. 61). This power is taken for granted and frequently not criticized. As previously discussed, framing theory posits that the media creates a reality by making certain images and messages salient in the minds of the audience. Taken together, hegemonic framing theory contends that the media present images and information that reflect the values of those in control of society; in this case it is Caucasian men (Harrington, 1998; Lull, 2003). Therefore, those in charge use the media to reinforce Eurocentric and patriarchal values that subjugate African-Americans and women. In relation to this topic, the ways in which female athletes are represented in the media reflects male hegemonic ideology on sport and femininity. Furthermore, the portrayal of African-American female athletes derives from Eurocentric male hegemony on sport,

femininity, and race. Hegemonic framing is insidious because the ideologies presented to audiences frequently go without criticism; instead they are considered natural and authentic. In that regards, Harrington (1998) states that:

> The dominated are encouraged to see the world as the powerful do, using the various media in this manner is obviously an excellent and efficient means of control. In our subjugation we don't see that our values are in fact not our own, but we are continuously receiving the messages of the powerful and sublimating them to our conscious every time we consume a media product (p.4).

This study will provide that missing critical lens to the portrayal African-American female athletes.

This theory will serve as the lens by which the forthcoming literature review, results and discussion will be examined. The literature review will begin with a brief overview of women and sport. Following will be an exploration of the role femininity plays in women's sports and how the coverage of female athletes usually reflects feminine ideals. A review of previous research on women's coverage in *Sports Illustrated* will follow. Then, the construction of African-American femininity, the portrayal of African-American women in the media, and finally the coverage and portrayal of the African-American female athlete are explored.

The author would like to note that she is not against femininity or its inclusion in the portrayal of female athletes. Femininity is a natural part of being a woman. The issue lies in who is in control of the portrayals. If women have control of their own images and chose to portray themselves based on society's standards of femininity, then that is their prerogative. The problem arises when female athletes do not have control over their image. The author criticizes the emphasis on femininity when the Eurocentric male-

dominated media restricts the portrayals of female athletes to fit with their hegemonic sexist ideas. This type of domination and control detracts from the athleticism of the female athletes and perpetuates a misrepresentation of them.

Hypotheses

The following five hypotheses were anticipated based on the literature review. Since the majority of research on female athlete coverage deals with Caucasian women, it was important to be able to see how African-American women's coverage relates and differs. Therefore, the hypotheses chosen allows for a comparison of these results to previous studies and also allows for examination of African-American women to other groups; mainly Caucasian women and African-American men.

1. African-American females on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* will more likely be in action poses than their Caucasian female counterparts, but less likely than both African-American and Caucasian males.

The rationale behind this hypothesis is that previous research has shown that photographs of female athletes are more likely to be posed compared to male athletes who have more action photos (Kane, 1996; Luif, 1999). This may reflect an association between active shots and masculinity. If this is true, then African American women may have more active shots than Caucasian women because certain racial ideology has masculinized them as will be discussed in Chapter 2.

2. African-American females will have more coverage on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* during Olympic years.

The rationale behind this hypothesis is that previous research has shown that the performances of women's Olympic teams (e.g., soccer, softball, basketball, gymnastics) have contributed to the popularity of women's sports (Daddario, 1998; (Christopherson, Janning, & McConnell, 2002). Additionally, Olympic sports like track and field, where African-American women have increased participation, generally receive more coverage during Olympic years.

3. The majority of African-American females featured on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* will represent the sports of basketball and track and field.

The rationale behind this hypothesis is that previous research has shown that African-American women participate mainly in these two sports (Cahn, 1994; Schultz, 2005). According to the NCAA, African-American women comprise one-fourth and one-fifth of all basketball players and track and field athletes respectively (NCAA, 2007).

4. A lower percentage of African-American females on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* will be portrayed in glamorous ways based on clothing than their Caucasian female counterparts.

The rationale behind the last two hypotheses is that previous research has shown that trivializing female athletes by portraying them in glamorous and sexist ways are based on Eurocentric hegemonic ideology of femininity (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1996). Since African-American women have a different construction of femininity that differs from Caucasian women will these typical portrayals carry over to them as well?

5. A lower percentage of African-American females on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* will be portrayed in sexist terms based on the cover titles than their Caucasian female counterparts.

Limitations

Despite the best intentions, this study has several limitations related to the sample and the research design. First, there is a certain amount of inaccuracy when the race/ethnicity of an individual is judged on a visual image. Whenever the race or ethnicity of an individual was in question, other sources were utilized to cross-reference the information. Nonetheless, judging someone's race and ethnicity through an image does not take into account how that person chooses to identify him or herself, especially someone who is bi- or multi-racial. Second, content analysis cannot serve as the basis for understanding the producers' intentions for their communicative message and the affect that the messages will have on its audience (Wimmer & Dominick, 1999). Therefore, results from this study can only infer about the magazine's intentions for specific covers and how these covers influence its audience's perception of African-American female athletes through framing. Third, the covers were coded by only one researcher; therefore, content validity may be questionable.

Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Sport and the Male Hegemony

Created by men for men, the history and origins of sport clearly define it as a male institution (Cahn, 1994). Even today, despite significant opportunities for women, sport is still considered a male institution because of the majority of male players, coaches, owners, and sport media moguls. Sport is a cultural institution whereby masculinity based on Eurocentric patriarchy is reproduced (Creedon, 1994b; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). It celebrates a form of masculinity that embraces strength, power, and domination. In fact, research on highly institutionalized team sports has found that "ritualized masculinity is rewarded and reproduced along with practices and attitudes of oppression towards women and marginalized groups of men" (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000, p. 8).

The legitimacy of sport as a male institution was ingrained through society's concepts of gender and sexual differences. The U.S., like many other societies, base gender ideology on a "binary classification system," which places gender characteristics in opposition to each other (Coakley, 2004). Additionally, cultural separations between the genders are created through a concept known as sexual differences. The ideology behind sexual difference is that females are essentially and fundamentally different than males (Duncan, 1990). In a patriarchal society this means that masculinity becomes the standard and femininity the deviation; thus, guaranteeing men's dominance and women's

subjugation (Connell, 1995; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Therefore, sport's synonymy with masculinity opposed traditional notions of femininity and led to women's exclusion from sport. Consequently, women's history in sport has been a struggle for inclusion. Many men saw women's attempts to participate as a threat to the legitimacy of their male-dominated institution, and took action to exclude or forbid them from the sports arena (Bernstein, 2002). The field of medicine played a significant role in the exclusion of women in sport even until the mid-1900s. Doctors (a male dominated profession at the time) perpetuated ideas of feminine inferiority through biology and physical differences by claiming that excessive exercise and physical exertion would threaten women's reproductive ability (Kane, 1996). Regardless of these medical and social restrictions, women still sought to participate in sports. As the twentieth century progressed athletics became an increasingly popular activity for women. The landmark legislation of Title IX opened the floodgates of opportunity for female participation. Today, record numbers of females participate in a variety of sports (Carpenter & Acosta, 2008)

Femininity in Women's Sports

Feminists argue that when the patriarchal society could no longer prohibit women from participation, they sought to limit their participation by attaching gender appropriate labels to sport (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Harris, 1991). Through gender ideology, society defined what sports were considered "appropriate" for female participation. Appropriate sports for women corresponded with Eurocentric patriarchal society's view of femininity and diverged from masculine notions (Harris, 1991; Kane, 1996; Vertinsky & Captain,

1998). This femininity embodied beauty, motherhood, fashion, morality, whiteness, and thinness (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Coakley, 2004). Women were expected to participate in sports that reinforced beauty, grace, slender bodies, and a lack of physical exertion. In general, these qualities limited women to individual sports that included gymnastics, swimming, golf, figure skating, archery, and tennis. According to Daddario (1998), the first Olympic Games that included women limited their participation to several of these aforementioned sports.

Sports that symbolized masculinity—strength, power, team competition, muscularity, and physical exertion did not comply with feminine standards. Females who participated in "masculine" sports were labeled as "unfeminine," but more importantly they threatened the male supremacy in those activities (Harris, 1991). Subsequently, these sports for women fell under attack. The history of track and field provides one such example. In the early decades of the twentieth century, track and field grew immensely popular with national and international competitions for women. Yet, criticism of women's track and field by physical educators and their allies led to a decline in both intercollegiate and amateur competition in the United States (Cahn, 1994; Gissendanner, 1994a). The "reformers" pitted female physical educators against female track and field athletes, coaches, and promoters, with the former characterizing track and field as a masculine sport that compromised women's femininity. The attack on track and field consequently led to the exit of many women (mainly Caucasian) from the sport (Cahn, 1994; Gissendanner, 1994b).

Moreover, women who did not comply with gender standards drew criticism and ridicule. The intimate intersection of femininity and sexuality meant that deviance in one also meant deviance in the other (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Coakley, 2004; Harris, 1991). In other words, within a sexist society, women who had athletic prowess in masculine sports were suspected of homosexuality because they challenged social norms that depended on the acceptance of socially constructed differences between men and women (Griffin, 1993). Consequently, society slanderously labeled these female athletes unfeminine, freaks, and lesbians (Schell, 1999). Over time, as women's sports increased in popularity, the variety of sports open to women increased. Subsequently, some of the strict gender standards from the past have been relaxed.

Nonetheless, society still does not include athleticism as part of its hegemonic definition of femininity. Research on female athletes reveals that many feel that they live two different lives, one as athletes, and the other as feminine women (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004). In other words, many female athletes live by the mantra of "we're winners, but we'll still look pretty for you. We're not threatening. We're strong but feminine. We're not ugly, not bad marriage material" (Nelson, 1998, p. 145). This is especially true of women who play team or non traditional sports where suspicion of sexual deviance and homosexuality arise. This causes many female athletes to either not participate in those types of sports or comply with societal rules and emphasize their femininity (Lenskyj, 2003). The emphasis on femininity has been transferred to the media's coverage of women's sports.

Print Media Coverage of Women's Sports

Mass media "comprise the institutions and techniques by which specialized social groups disseminate symbolic content to large heterogeneous and geographically-dispersed audiences" (Rowe, 1999, p. 24). Media provides information that recipients use to construct and evaluate their reality. As previously mentioned, selective images offered by the media generally reflect the values of the dominate ideology and representations of the given society. The way in which the media not only reflects, but creates cultural and social narratives is linked to power (Douglas, 2003). Moreover the narratives created by the media have the power to influence audiences' values and attitudes. As a result, researchers use media coverage as a barometer to measure a particular concept (Duncan, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). Print media not only offers information through text, but also via photographs that tell stories of moments captured in time. However, photographs can also be manipulated and taken out of context to serve the existing hegemony (Duncan, 1990).

Sport is not immune to the power or influence of the media; in fact, the two have become inextricably linked. Sports have become an important cultural terrain on which groups define and represent their ethnic and gender identities (Primm, DuBois, & Regoli, 2007). However, sport does not exist in a vacuum; instead it reflects the gender, ethnic, and social systems that support it (Douglas, 2003). Unfortunately, research has shown that sports journalism in the print media has been slow to react to social changes (Salwen & Wood, 1994). As a result, while groups utilize sport to define their identities, the

media frequently produce racist and sexist narratives. Sport media then becomes a barrier to contemporary narratives of race and gender.

Researchers use media coverage as a way to gauge social acceptance (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). In regards to women's sports, despite increased popularity, many argue that because dominant ideologies of sport revolve around men, female athletes remain underrepresented (Bernstein, 2002; Duncan, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1996; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). When not ignored, coverage tends to emphasize the sexuality and femininity of female athletes; again reflecting cultural ideology (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). In general, research on female sport coverage falls into two categories—quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative studies examine the amount of coverage female athletes receive. Qualitative studies explore the type of coverage and the portrayal of female athletes in the coverage. Both categories rely on content analysis research. This focus of this literature review will be on studies involving print media, and in particular sport magazines.

Amount of coverage.

The overall trend of media coverage for women's sport has increased in the last fifty years due in large part to Title IX and the popularity of female Olympic athletes and teams (Kane, 1996; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). This trend demonstrates the increasing acceptance of women's sport in society. For example, Nike, a company that in the past did not advertise to women because they thought it would hurt the authenticity of their brand, now has marketing campaigns directed solely towards female athletes (Helstein, 2003). Despite the perceived gains, many researchers agree

that the overall amount of coverage given to women's sports still remains marginal, especially in comparison to their participation rates (Kane, 1996; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991).

A one-year study of the 1989 Saturday editions of *The New York Times* and *The Indianapolis Star* found that women received 2.2% and 2.7% of coverage respectively (George, 2001). The study was recreated ten years later to see if coverage had increased in the wake of increasing participation and burgeoning women's professional teams. Results revealed that *The Times* provided 6.7% and *The Star* 8.6% (George, 2001). The four to six percent increase over the ten-year period represents a miniscule rise especially compared to the fact that women comprised nearly 40% of interscholastic, intercollegiate, and Olympic athletes (George, 2001). Additional studies have found that stories featuring men's sports outnumbered women's by a ratio of 23-to-1 (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Similarly, studies that focused on intercollegiate sports found that men's sports received twice as much coverage in university newspapers compared to women's sports (Cunningham, 2003).

Inequitable coverage does not stop with the number of articles. Not only do men garner more print coverage, but they generally have larger articles as well. A study in the early nineties of four daily newspapers—*USA Today, Boston Globe, Orange County Register,* and *Dallas Morning News)*, revealed that sport columns devoted 28.8 times more inches to male sports as it did to female sports (Kane, 1996). Female athletes are also underrepresented in visual images. A 1990 study of five leading dailies found that photos of male athletes outnumbered females by 13-to-1. Similarly, in the 1999

examination of *The New York Times* and *The Indianapolis Star* female athletes appeared in only 8.9% and 9.8% of photos respectively (George, 2001).

Women's underrepresentation reflected in the lack of media coverage not only gives the impression that women do not participate in sport, but it also provides a false reality of what sports they play (Kane, 1996). Society's notions of the appropriate sports for women reflect in the type of sports covered in the media. Studies have shown that sports embodying feminine qualities like gymnastics, figure skating, and tennis receive more coverage than those considered more "masculine" (Bernstein, 2002; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Even women's sport magazines had similar patterns. Gymnastics had the longest articles and most pictures per article compared to those of "masculine" sports in an analysis of *Women's Sports and Fitness* (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992). The fact that women's sports have begun to receive more coverage, especially during events like the Olympics is somewhat negated since sex-appropriate sports still receive the majority of focus (Bernstein, 2002). Additionally, these results contradict the fact that more women participate in basketball, track, and softball than in sex-appropriate sports like golf and tennis (Kane, 1996).

The media reflects what is valued in society. Therefore, the overall lack of coverage evident in the quantitative research leads to the "symbolic annihilation" of female athletes (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). In other words, the lack of female athletes presented in the media essentially tells audiences that women's sports are not valued or important. While quantitative studies produce significant results showing the

underrepresentation of female athletes, they only show part of the problem. One critique of these types of articles is how progress is measured. If women's coverage increases, but remains stereotypical and reflecting sexist ideology is that progress? Apart from understanding how women are depicted in the coverage they receive, this type of research lacks real relevance.

Type of coverage.

Qualitative research on the type of coverage women athletes receive has revealed two major patterns—"trivialization" and "sexualization." Trivialization refers to portrayals that do not take seriously the female athlete and her accomplishments (Kane, 1996). Trivialization occurs in both textual and visual images of female athletes. Textually, stories about female athletes frequently incorporate irrelevant or extraneous information about their personal lives that reinforce appropriate gender roles and feminine ideals (Christopherson, Janning, & McConnell, 2002; Duncan, 1990). Examples include referencing the athlete's role as wife, mother, and daughter or commenting on her domestic skills or passion for stereotypical feminine activities like shopping. A study of the print coverage of the 1996 and 1998 Olympics found that descriptions of female athletes differed depending on the sport (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). Descriptions of participants in traditionally masculine sports focused on irrelevant information rather than the athletic feat (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Visually, trivialization occurs when photographs of female athletes reinforce stereotypical images. "Sportswomen are often presented as ladies first, and athletes second, if at all" (Kane, 1996, p. 108). In other words, photos of female athletes

generally diminish their athleticism by having them pose in passive positions, without their uniforms or sport equipment, and removed from their sport setting. A comparison of WNBA and NBA media guides reinforces this point. The NBA portrayed its players as athletically powerful by including color action photos; whereas WNBA media guides had black and white photos that showed players sitting in passive positions (Luif, 1999). By contrasting the depiction of male and female athletes, the media reinforces sexual differences that include women being seen as subordinate and passive and men as dominate and active. Additionally camera angles can convey sexual differences. A person pictured is dominate when the photo is shot at above eye level because the reader has to look up at the pictured person (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990). Conversely photos where the reader gazes down conveys inferiority of the pictured person (Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005). Shots taken at eye-level communicate equality between the individual photographed and the reader (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990). Research has shown that photographs of female athletes require readers to gaze down on them more than male athlete photographs (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990).

"Sexualization" refers to the overemphasis of the femininity and attractiveness of athletes (Kane, 1996). In general, attractive and physically pleasing female athletes receive more coverage (Duncan, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). These athletes are considered beautiful according to societal standards and their pictures outwardly display their femininity through their hairstyles, long nails, and made-up faces. Besides physical attractiveness, sexualized coverage of female athletes usually conveys sexuality through suggestive body positioning and clothing. In an in-depth study of images of female

athletes from the 1984 and 1988 Olympics, Duncan (1990) found that some of the photos resembled soft-core pornography as the athletes were in pin-up style poses. These pictures accentuated body parts considered sexual signifiers— breasts, genitals, thighs, buttocks, hips (Duncan, 1990). Clothing also accentuated sexuality by either being athletic, but very form-fitting or non-athletic, glamorous and revealing.

Ironically, photos in women's sports magazines frequently do not portray a better representation of female athletes. Similarly, photographs in *Sports Illustrated for Women* and *Women's Sport & Fitness* featured female athletes posed in compromising positions, clothed in revealing (oftentimes non-athletic) outfits that exposed body parts, and wearing heavy makeup (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Schell, 1999). Sexualization only perpetuates the inferiority of women's sports "by sexualizing sportswomen, the media continually remind [its audience] that sportswomen are not really like male athletes and never can be or should be" (Kane, 1996, p. 110). The positive thing about the qualitative studies is that they included examples of the portrayals of African-American women. For the most part, African-American women were depicted in similarly sexualized and trivialized ways as their Caucasian counterparts (Duncan, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). A more detailed discussion of their portrayal will follow. However, if the researchers were not looking for differences between the races then differences were most likely not found and reported in the results.

Explanation of coverage.

Explanations for the quantity and quality of coverage can be examined using several theories. Several feminist scholars have coined the term "ambivalence," to

describe the media's portrayal of female athletes. As previously defined, "ambivalence" refers to how the print media combines positive portrayals with messages that simultaneously trivialize sportswomen's performances and maintains the status quo (Kane, 1996). In other words, ambivalence allows "those in power to acknowledge the social changes that have taken place…while simultaneously offering resistance through the maintenance of the status quo" (Fink & Kensicki, 2002, p. 335). While ambivalence does frequently offer positive portrayals, it still reinforces patriarchal ideology by those in power in the media. By making men's sports the standard, women's sport becomes categorized as the "other" (e.g. "Final Four" vs. "Women's Final Four)." This reinforces the secondary status of women's athletes and women in the overall culture (Kane, 1996).

A critical theorist would suggest that everything boils down to economics and the benefit for those in power. For many sport publications, the male demographic makes up the majority of their consumers; therefore, the media must cater to the target audience by projecting what they want to see. Men want to see other men playing sports, and if they have to oblige women's coverage, they want to see attractive, slender, and feminine athletes. Therefore, sexualized pictures, passive poses, and photographs shot above eye-level invite the male reader's voyeuristic gaze (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990). Overall, the business of the media also disadvantages equitable coverage of women's sports.

Lastly, the emphasis on femininity, through coverage of sex-appropriate sports and visual trivialization may be explained through gender schema theory. The theory suggests that people are socialized to believe that gender differences are significant and worth maintaining (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). People who violate gender norms are

perceived more negatively than those who maintain the norms. As previously mentioned, athletic participation still does not fall within the norms of femininity, especially if the sport reinforces masculinity. Consequently, some female athletes who participate in gender-inappropriate sports face the risk of being labeled a homosexual (Creedon, 1994b). Gender schema theorists suggest that the emphasis on heterosexuality is a means by which the media tries to protect female athletes from rejection and unfair stigmatization (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). A more cynical and perhaps accurate take would be that the heterosexual portrayal is the media's homophobic way of giving its audiences what they think they want (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). For example, in marketing the WNBA, the league tried to combat negative stereotypes about women who played "masculine" sports by showcasing the athlete's femininity (Banet-Weiser, 1999). This included focusing on maternity and using a pregnant Sheryl Swoopes in advertising the simultaneous birth of the WNBA and her baby (Banet-Weiser, 1999). This may also be a reason why women's magazines frequently portray female athletes in similar stereotypical ways.

Coverage in Sports Illustrated

The previous section discussed common themes regarding the media's portrayal of female athletes. The overall trend of media coverage for women's sport has been growth in the last fifty years; due in large part to Title IX and the popularity of female Olympic athletes (George, 2001; Kane, 1996; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Despite the perceived gains, many researchers agree that the overall amount of coverage given to women's sports still remains marginal (Bishop, 2003;

George, 2001; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Salwen & Wood, 1994). While the previous section focused on all forms of print media, this section will look exclusively at *Sports Illustrated,* and how the magazine depicts female athletes quantitatively and qualitatively.

Sports Illustrated is one of the most frequently analyzed print sources in relation to the media's depiction of female athletes. Researchers have been drawn to *Sports Illustrated* because it is the most popular sport magazine and has had continuous publication since 1954 (Kane, 1996; Salwen & Wood, 1994). Moreover, researchers frequently analyze the covers of the magazine since they represent the most important sport stories of that week; and taken collectively they offer a litmus test of popular sport images over time (Kane, 1996; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Analysis of *Sports Illustrated* has yield three recurring and significant results regarding the portrayal of female athletes.

The first major finding is the overall lack of coverage that female athletes receive within *Sports Illustrated.* In 1991, Lumpkin and Williams (1991) conducted an extensive examination of *Sports Illustrated* feature articles from the magazine's inception, in 1954, until 1987. The thirty-four year period yielded approximately 3,723 feature articles, or 1.9 articles per issue. The researchers defined a feature article as a story about a significant sporting person that included a personal profile along with their athletic accomplishments (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Results revealed a dramatic difference between the coverage of male and female sport persons. 90.8% of the feature articles highlighted males, while only 8.0% covered the profiles and sport accomplishments of female athletes (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Men's articles also tended to be longer,

averaging eleven inches larger than for female athletes (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). In a similarly conducted study, Fink and Kensicki (2002) analyzed a random sampling of feature articles in *Sports Illustrated* between 1997 and 2000. Of the approximately 820 article, 10% featured women (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). The 2% increase between the studies represents a miniscule rise in comparison to women's sport participation rates over the same time period.

Likewise, in studies that have looked at the covers of *Sports Illustrated*, the lack of coverage is apparent as well. Salwen and Wood (1994) examined covers in three-year intervals during the end of four decades—1950 through the 1980's. Results generated 504 covers with 837 identifiable persons (Salwen & Wood, 1994). Not surprisingly, the vast majority of covers depicted men. Of the 837 people, only 55 or 6.6% were females. When the researchers looked only at athletes on the covers, the results were similar. Female athletes represented only 4.4% of the 769 covers (Salwen & Wood, 1994).

Researchers have also tried to assess the coverage afforded female athletes during specific time periods or during significant sporting events, like the Olympics. One of the first studies analyzing the coverage of women in *Sports Illustrated* reviewed feature articles between 1956 and 1976. The researchers chose that time period because it historically represented a change in women's status in society and sport through the rise of the feminist movement and Title IX legislation (Reid & Soley, 1979). The researchers also limited their data collection to four-year intervals that coincided with the Summer Olympic Games during the time period. They assumed women would receive greater coverage during Olympic years (Reid & Soley, 1979). Results showed that the

percentage of articles featuring women had not significantly changed during the period from 1956 to 1976. The researchers took that to mean that a "cultural lag exists between the mass media's presentation of women and their changing roles in society" (Reid & Soley, 1979, p. 863). However, one major limitation of their study was that they only reviewed the first issue of each month, which may not have been representative of the remaining month's issues.

Bishop (2003) conducted a follow-up to the Reid and Soley's study to see whether coverage had increased with the rise in women's sports since the original results. Bishop (2003) replicated the original study by focusing on Olympic years between 1980 and 1996, and reviewed over 569 articles or 7.9 articles per issue. Results revealed that articles featuring men equaled no less than 80% during the given time period (Bishop, 2003). On the other hand, women saw an increase in articles from the original study to 1994; however the increase was not statistically significant (Bishop, 2003). Moreover, the increase dramatically ended with a sharp decline in 1996. Articles featuring women decreased from 9.6% of articles in 1994 to 3.3% in 1996 (Bishop, 2003). A similar phenomenon occurred with photos accompanying feature articles on women. The number of photos increased during the 1980's until 1996 when they declined considerably. The author concluded that similar to the original study, *Sports Illustrated* has yet, to reflect the growing popularity of women's sports (Bishop, 2003). However he was unable to explain the sharp decline of coverage in 1996.

Not only have women received minimal coverage in *Sports Illustrated*, but coverage has actually decreased over time. In their longitudinal study of *Sports*

Illustrated covers over four decades, Salwen and Wood (1994) found that women appeared on more covers in the 1950's then in the subsequent three decades. Females appeared on 14.3% of covers in the 1950's compared to 4.0% in the 1960's and 1970's, which were combined due to the small sample size, 6.8% in the 1980's and 6.6% in the 1990's (Salwen & Wood, 1994). The same statistically significant pattern occurred when the researchers focused only on female athletes. What has caused the inverse relationship between *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of female athletes and women's participation in sport? Like other media sources, *Sports Illustrated* is a money making enterprise; therefore it must cater to its male-dominated audience to remain the premier sports magazine. One very plausible reason for the decline could have been the rising popularity of men's professional sports (basketball, football) in the later half of the twentieth century (Salwen & Wood, 1994). The male audience would rather read about their favorite NFL or NBA teams than female athletes. In fact, *Sports Illustrated* has been recently accused of no longer portraying the diversity of all sports; rather most covers now portray the most popular and lucrative professional and collegiate sports—football, basketball, and baseball (Levin, 2007).

In general these studies reveal that throughout *Sports Illustrated's* history, women have received very limited coverage in *Sports Illustrated*. Their underrepresentation has not been limited to covers, but also to photos, the number of feature articles, and the length of these articles. The lack of coverage has not changed in spite of changes in society that have allowed for the growth of participation and popularity in women's sports. Moreover, many of the females portrayed on covers are not even athletes. For

example, at least 20% of females on the cover are swimsuit models representing the magazine's annual swimsuit edition. *Sport Illustrated* has remained a male-dominated sports magazine devoted to its male readership. Moreover, the growth of women's sports has been eclipsed by the rise in popularity of men's professional teams, which has led to even less coverage in *Sports Illustrated* over time. Unfortunately, there have not been recent studies conducted to see if women's coverage has changed in *Sports Illustrated* since 1996. Additionally some of these studies relied on a random sample of covers, so the exact percentages of women versus men on the covers may not be accurate. Since it is the most widely read sports magazine, it is important to know if *Sports Illustrated* reflects the reality of the sporting world, which now includes female athletes.

The second major finding relates to the influence of sport type on the coverage of female athletes. Research has shown that gender appropriate sports receive more coverage (Kane, 1996; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). In other words, female athletes who participate in "feminine" sports are more likely to grace the cover of *Sports Illustrated* or obtain feature articles within its pages. Kane (1988) explored the relationship between gender and sport type and whether the historical time frame—before, during, and after Title IX, influenced the coverage women received in *Sports Illustrated.* She found that regardless of the time period, women in gender appropriate sports like skiing, tennis, and golf received more coverage (Kane, 1988).

Similarly, the longitudinal study by Lumpkin and Williams (1991), found that women in golf, tennis and swimming had 90 articles compared to 21 for track and field and basketball players (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Women in the traditionally

feminine sports of gymnastics, cycling, and tennis also received more photographic coverage (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). The preferential treatment given to feminine sports also extends to the covers of the magazine. A study of covers from 1990 to 1999 revealed that tennis was the most frequently represented sport for women during that time frame (Lumpkin, 2007).

Overall, there is a direct correlation between the amount of coverage and the social acceptability of a sport for female athletes. Studies have shown that sports reflecting feminine qualities receive more coverage than those considered more "masculine" in *Sports Illustrated.* Women's underrepresentation in the magazine not only gives the impression that women do not participate in sport, but it also provides a false reality of what sports women play (Kane, 1996). These results contradict the fact that more women participate in basketball, track, and softball rather than in sex-appropriate sports like figure skating and tennis (Kane, 1996; Nelson, 1998). As mentioned earlier, society's notions of the appropriate sports for women are reflected in the media's coverage (Harris, 1991). The only other significant portrayal of women in *Sports Illustrated* is of the scantily-clothed swimsuit models. Essentially then, *Sports Illustrated* has limited women to the roles of sexualized objects or athletes constrained by patriarchal ideology of what is appropriate. However, an up-to-date study is needed to review the last eleven years of *Sports Illustrated* to see if the magazine still holds the same philosophy.

The third major finding is the differences between male and female coverage that reflects socially constructed ideology or sexual differences. As previously mentioned, the

notion of sexual differences refers to a culturally created separation of males and females (Duncan, 1990). This concept is most often detected in visual images; therefore studies have analyzed the covers and feature article photos of *Sports Illustrated.* Researchers have looked for differences in the way that males and females are dressed, the type of photo, and the setting.

Results of several studies have shown that female athletes are more likely to be depicted in posed rather than active photos (Boutiller & SanGiovanni, 1983; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1996; Salwen & Wood, 1994). Salwen and Wood (1994), found that men had significantly more action poses than women on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* during the four decades they analyzed. However the results were limited by the fact that the researchers only presented percentages based on the total number of covers per decade. The fact that men had 89.7% of the action shots compared to 10.3% for women in the 1950's is obvious because men appeared on the majority of covers. However those results are misleading because readers are not told whether posed photos comprise the majority of covers featuring women. They did not provide comparative percentages of posed versus actions shots just for women.

Despite the limitations of the previous study, other researchers have found similar results. Fink and Kensicki's (2002) analyzed photos from *Sports Illustrated* from 1997 to 2000. Action photos were defined as "persons actively engaged in a sport and dressed in athletic apparel" (Fink & Kensicki, 2002, p. 325). Results confirmed the hypothesis that male athletes would have more active poses than female athletes. Of the photographs of female athletes, 56 % were non-action in nature as compared to only 44% for male

athletes (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). One reason for the sexual differences in the poses was the fact that men and women were portrayed in different sports, with men depicted in more contact sports that lend themselves to action-type shots (Salwen & Wood, 1994) Whereas active shots of men increased over time, female athletes had more active poses on the cover in the 1950's then in subsequent decades (Salwen & Wood, 1994). This finding corresponds with the second major theme that women's coverage has actually declined. Therefore, not only are women seen less in *Sports Illustrated*, but the limited coverage they do receive does not reflect their athleticism.

The setting of the photo is another variable where sex differences are apparent. In conjunction with the type of shot, a photograph set in a sporting background can give more credence to authentic athleticism than one shot in a non-sport background with a posed athlete (Kane, 1996). Fink and Kensicki (2002) defined non-sport settings as those in which the individual is dressed in non-athletic clothing and photographed in a non-athletic setting. Their analysis of a random sampling of *Sports Illustrated* from 1997 to 2000, revealed that more than half (55%) of female athletes women were portrayed in non-sport settings compared to only one-quarter (25%) of male athletes (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Research has shown that sexual differences in the visual imagery of *Sports Illustrated* are obvious. Men are portrayed in uniform in a sport setting in active poses. In accordance to the concept of sexual differences, since men are the standard sport figure, then depictions of women must be contrary. Therefore, the majority of visual images of female athletes had the women in non-sporting settings and posed. The

portrayal of women in non-athletic poses, settings, and apparel, serves to perpetuate the trivialization of female athletes. When female are not portrayed in ways that accentuate their athletic accomplishments, it gives audiences reason not to take them seriously as athletes (Kane, 1996). Understanding the concept in the depiction of men and women in *Sports Illustrated* is crucial because images including the covers and photographs in articles construct sexual differences that readers may portray as natural or authentic. Moreover these depictions produce and reproduce ideology and stereotypes that can negatively affect the readers' perceptions of female athletes

To date there has been only two studies that not only included African-American women within their samples, but also provided specific results of the group. Lumpkin and Williams (1991) examined elements of feature articles for African-American men, African-American women, Caucasian men, and Caucasian women. Of the 3,723 feature articles between 1954 and 1987, only 16 featured African-American women as opposed to 125 for Caucasian women, 347 for African-American men, and 498 for Caucasian men (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). The 16 articles only represented four sports—basketball, track, tennis and ice skating. Moreover, African-American women had the smallest articles and the least number of photographs as compared to the other groups (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). An examination of *Sports Illustrated* covers from 1954 to 1989 revealed that African-American women accounted for only 6% of the 114 covers featuring women (Kane, 1996). Furthermore, three decades elapsed between the first African-American female on the cover, Althea Gibson, and the second, Jackie Joyner-

Kersee. Unfortunately, the major limitation of these studies is that neither provided any plausible explanations for the lack of coverage African-American women received.

African-American Femininity

Scholars agree that femininity within the African-American community has a different set of standards when compared to mainstream (Caucasian) society (Cahn, 1994; Collins, 2003; Harris, 1991; Lansbury, 2001; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). During slavery, the cult of true femininity emerged represented by the Caucasian plantation mistress. The characteristics of true femininity included virtuosity, purity, temperance, submission, and domesticity (Tribbett-Williams, 2003). These characteristics became the foundation of a woman's personal worth. If she followed them she was placed on a pedestal, pampered, and worshipped; if she did not she was considered immoral (Sanders & Bradley, 2005). In light of these attributes; African-American women could never measure up because of their work outside the home, their blackness, and their history of being demoralized and sexualized (Sanders & Bradley, 2005).

Within Caucasian society there existed a distinct split between the public and private spheres, and women presided over the latter (Collins, 2003). For African-Americans, the separation of work and family never existed. Through the legacy of slavery, African-American women not only bore the tasks of motherhood, but also partook in manual labor along with men. Furthermore, women's combined role also stemmed from traditions within some African cultures in which women did the same work as men (Collins, 2003). Consequently, the lives of African-American women encompassed both the private and public spheres.

Thinly veiled within the discourse of true femininity was the supremacy of whiteness. Similar to culturally constructed sexual differences, society contrasted whiteness and blackness, with the former being the standard and blackness being the "other" (Collins, 2003). Prevailing standards of beauty derogated African-American women who did not fit the facial features, hair textures, and skin color requirements. While the cult of true femininity has changed over time, it still exists. Females are compared to the contemporary version that includes thin body size, light-White skin, and angular facial features (Sanders & Bradley, 2005). As a result, the cultivation of African-American femininity stems from their exclusion from the Eurocentric and patriarchal version of femininity. After slavery, the African-American community attempted to create a standard of femininity that erased the racist stereotypes, but still corresponded with their experiences and circumstances (Captain, 1991). Specifically, African-American women "created an ideal of womanhood rooted in the positive qualities they cultivated under adverse conditions: struggles, strength, family commitment, community involvement, and moral integrity" (Cahn, 1994, p. 115).

This view of femininity carried over into their sports participation. In general, a strong muscular body did not reflect masculinity within the African-American community (Cahn, 1994). Therefore, female athleticism was not contrasted with beauty and femininity. While their Caucasian counterparts developed an apologetic posture "as a strategy for bridging the gap between cultural expectation of feminine and very un-feminine requisites for athletic excellence," historians argue that African-American female athletes never did, as they held a different standard of femininity (Messner, 1994,

p. 71). Their involvement in track and field evidences this idea. As previously mentioned, during the first half of the twentieth century track and field fell under attack for its masculine requirements. While track which was considered inappropriately unfeminine for many Caucasian women at the time, African-Americans females generally lacked the financial resources to participate in "feminine" sports like ice skating, swimming, and golf. Therefore, the mass exodus of Caucasian women from the sport allowed African-American women to excel.

The liberalness of the African-American construction of femininity has an empowering quality. However, it held a different meaning with White society. Due in large part to the legacy of slavery and racist ideologies that grew out of it, Caucasian society considered African-American women unfeminine, primitive, and sexually inferior. Their successes in inherently masculine sports like basketball and track and field served as a source of self-fulfilling prophecy in the eyes of many Caucasians. Therefore, the intertwining relationship between economics, dominant ideologies and the standards of beauty, race, and femininity stigmatized African-American female involvement in a wider variety of sport (Cahn, 1994).

Portrayal of African-American Females in the Media

Based on the literature already discussed, this study contends that American society is grounded in a binary system that affects both race and gender. This binary system favors men over woman. The binary system also makes Caucasians and their values the norm, which translates into an inferior social status for non-white groups. Ultimately, African-American women, who are neither Caucasian nor male, face double

stigmatization within the society. According to the hegemonic framing theory, the powerful use the media to reflect their values and norms. Additionally because of their privileged status in society, they have the power to control the images of other groups. Since these groups represent deviations from the norm (Caucasian male), they are frequently portrayed in ways that dehumanize, isolate, ignore, or misrepresent them (Littlefield, 2008). Research on the portrayal of African-American women in the media confirms these findings.

The function of stereotypes is "not to reflect or represent a reality, but to function as a disguise or mystification of objective social relations;" meaning that the images of racism and sexism are designed to appear normal, natural, and inevitable (Collins, 2003, p. 69). The majority of African-American female depictions in the mainstream media stem from stereotypes, especially those related to femininity (Collins, 2003; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Tribbett-Williams, 2003). As mentioned in the previous section, African-American women do not fit within the hegemonic standards of femininity in part because of the legacy of slavery. True womanhood included the virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. As a result, the portrayals of African-American women stand in contrast to these tenets of femininity; in fact there are stereotypes of African-American women that oppose each of these virtues (Collins, 2003). The two most common representations of African-American women in the media are Mammy and Jezebel.

The Mammy is characterized by her masculine physical features, asexuality, submissiveness to employers, but aggression to other African-Americans (Jewell, 1993).

Hattie McDowell's portrayal in *Gone with the Wind* epitomizes the image of the Mammy. McDaniel's physical attributes stood in contrast to the mainstream's conceptions of femininity and beauty. She was obese, dark-complexioned, had accentuated breasts and buttocks, and wore drab slave clothes (Jewell, 1993). The image of the happy Mammy helped Caucasians challenge beliefs that slavery was harsh and cruel (Jewell, 1993). Another permutation of this image is the Matriarch. Similar to Mammy, the Matriarch emasculates men and displays aggression and pushiness. Portrayed as a bad mother, the Matriarch also contrasts the tenet of domesticity (Collins, 2003). The Mammy representation also served as the basis for the image of Aunt Jemima, the symbol for Quaker Oats breakfast products.

The Jezebel is characterized by her promiscuous, tempting seduction, and her materialistic nature. The origins of this image stem from the Bible and the story of Queen Jezebel recounted in the book of I Kings (Tribbett-Williams, 2003). Her actions in the story came to symbolize lust, depraved sexuality and temptation. Since these characteristics contrasted those of tenets of purity and piety within the ideology of true femininity, they were relegated to African-American women. Moreover, slave owners used the image of the Jezebel as an excuse for their sexual abuse of slave women (Tribbett-Williams, 2003). The depiction of Robin Givens provides an example of the image of the Jezebel. During her marriage to boxer Mike Tyson, the media portrayed Givens as a gold-digger (despite a successful acting career) who used manipulation and sexuality to gain control over her husband and his money. Some suggest that this vilification in the media, invalidated her claims of physical abuse at the hands of her

husband (Jewell, 1993). The image of the Jezebel has made a resurgence through the growth of hip-hop (Tribbett-Williams, 2003). She is symbolically referred to in the lyrics of raps songs as a "bitch" or "ho" and symbolized in music videos wearing revealing clothes and dancing sexually.

Taken together these images represented the ways in which Caucasian men defined African-American sexuality and fertility and justified social practices like sexual abuse of slave women. The perpetuation of these images in the media creates an image of African-Americans that is the antithesis to hegemonic femininity and beauty. Furthermore, some scholars argue that by contrasting them with the femininity of Caucasian women, the media seeks to align African-American women with a form of masculinity (Jewell, 1993). In other words, the media assigns characteristics and behaviors to African-American women that are considered traditionally masculine. Critics of the dominant portrayal of African-American women argue that the media does not attempt to show different versions of femininity; instead producing "homogenous images that combine and erase differences" (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004, p. 317). The fact that very few positive images exist that show successful and confidant African-American women confirms that such images threaten the racial and sexual hierarchy in society (Douglas, 2003). Therefore, the portrayal of African-American women in the media remains simplistic, negative, stereotypic, and racially charged.

Coverage of African-American Female-Athletes in the Media

The lack of research examining the role of gender, race, and sport makes it difficult to analyze African-American sportswomen in the media. Studies of female coverage generally focus on Caucasian women. When studies do examine both race and gender, many do so mutually exclusively, with African-American women left out. In light of this, the literature review will use patterns found in the general studies of women's coverage to analyze specific examples of African-American portrayals.

Of the few studies published, the results overwhelmingly reveal that African-American female athletes receive far less coverage than their Caucasian counterparts. In their analysis of *Women's Sports and Fitness*, Leath and Lumpkin (1992), examined both gender and race. They found that only 12 of the 151 covers (8%) featured African-American female athletes, with Cheryl Miller appearing three times (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992). Moreover, the magazine only included 23 feature articles about African-American females from 1975 to 1989 (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992). Similarly, and as previously mentioned, African-American females had the fewest covers, the shortest articles and fewest pictures in *Sports Illustrated* from 1954 to 1987 (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Just as the lack of coverage of female athletes gives the impression that sports are for men; the absence of African-American women gives the perception that women's sports are solely for Caucasian woman (Schell, 1999).

Qualitative studies looking exclusively at the African-American sportswoman have been even harder to find. Coverage analysis of specific African-American female

athletes has taken place, but only in the larger context of identifying patterns within female athlete portrayals. In other words, these studies do not look specifically at African-American females and how their depictions agree or differ from Caucasian athletes. This type of research proves conflicting and complicated. In some instances, African-American females receive similar types of coverage compared with Caucasian female athletes. The athletes exude femininity and they are portrayed in trivialized and sexualized ways.

The depiction of the late-Florence Griffith Joyner exemplifies this type of coverage. Joyner, a five-time Olympic medalist and 100 and 200-meter world recorder holder, became known as much for her beauty as her superior athleticism. With her long nails, flowing hair, and sexy outfits, "Flo Jo" made running fashionable, and the media fixated on her. The dominant images of Flo Jo did not focus on her records, accomplishments, or gold medals. Instead the focus was on her nails, hair, outrageous outfits; things that emphasize her sexual difference and femininity (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). In spite of her race, she represented the femininity and beauty standards held in esteem in the dominant society. Consequently, she received more coverage than African-American female athletes including her equally talented sister-in-law, Jackie Joyner Kersee (Duncan, 1990). Because of her hyper-femininity, some of her photos exuded sexuality. One such example was the September 18, 1988 cover of *Newsweek*, which shows Joyner wearing a sports bra and bikini bottoms. She is bent over, exposing her naked hip and thigh, reminiscent of a soft-core porn pin-up (Duncan, 1990). The text that accompanied these photos frequently reinforced sexualization by commenting on

Joyner's beauty, glamour, and fashion choices (Duncan, 1990). In recent years, track star, Marion Jones, has received similar types of coverage (Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Explanations of these findings are also lacking in the research. The emphasis on femininity, similar to the coverage of Caucasian women, may have its roots in the African-American community. Historically, while the African-American community has been more accepting of sport participation for women, there remained an emphasis on femininity; albeit a distinct version (Cahn, 1994). One example would be the Tennessee State Tigerbelles. For four decades, starting in 1954, the Tennessee State Tigerbelles maintained a powerhouse of female track and field stars. In those forty years, under the direction of Coach Ed Temple, the Tigerbelles produced forty Olympian participants and twenty-three Olympic medalists. Coach Temple's philosophy emphasized femininity and not building muscles, as evidenced by his mottos ""young ladies first, track girls second" and "I want foxes not oxen" (Nelson, 1998, p. 145) The coach also opposed permitting photographs before the runners could fix their hair and apply lipstick (Davis, 1992). Unfortunately it is not known whether this trend in the African-American community influenced the coverage of African-American women in the mainstream media.

One of the most recognized response for African-American sportswomen's lack of coverage is their disproportionate participation in "unfeminine" sports. If the media reflects Eurocentric hegemonic standards of femininity than gender-inappropriate sports, like track and field and basketball would receive less coverage. On the other hand, since African-American women have an alternative version of femininity, combined with prevailing stereotypes of their unfeminine nature, it seems like their portrayal in gender

inappropriate sports would be more acceptable. Some consider this contradictory explanation as a sign of racial intolerance in relation to African-American female athletes (Schultz, 2005). Consequently, discrimination is another possible reason for their underrepresentation. Despite African-American women's clustered participation in basketball and track, Caucasian woman had longer articles and more photos in those sports in *Sports Illustrated;* thus reducing already limited coverage opportunities for African-American's women (Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). When African-American women participate in gender-appropriate sports, like tennis, the media frequently uses racial imagery that portrays the athletes in a negative light (Douglas, 2003). Early depictions of the Williams' sisters demonstrated this trend. As previously mentioned, society is threatened by successful and confident African-American females. The mainstream media pitted the Williams' sisters against the Caucasian tennis world, and portrayed them as too proud, arrogant, and masculine (Douglas, 2003).

One of the most compelling explanations comes from an examination of two successful, yet, marginalized African-American female athletes—Alice Coachman, the first African-American woman to win an Olympic gold medal, and Althea Gibson, the first African-American woman to break tennis' color barrier and win five Grand Slam titles. Lansbury (2001) contends that the Caucasian press marginalized the two athletes by focusing less on their accomplishments and more on either their race or gender. Coachman excelled in a sport considered gender-inappropriate by mainstream society. The Caucasian press, including *The New York Times* and *Boston Globe*, focused more on Coachman's gender than athletic prowess. This meant that like her Caucasian track

counterparts she received little coverage because the media chose not to focus on gender inappropriate sports. Instead, male track athletes, regardless of race, received more coverage (Lansbury, 2001). Therefore, instead of portraying her as a record breaking star, the papers only generically mentioned her wins (Lansbury, 2001). This is not to say that gender completely trumped race; at times she did receive less coverage; especially photo coverage than Caucasian female track athletes.

For Althea Gibson the problem was reversed. Her participation in a "feminine" sport allowed Gibson to receive more coverage in the Caucasian press. However, when compared to portrayal of the Caucasian tennis players, Gibson's description had racial undertones. The press frequently commented on her physicality and described her using animalistic references; "a lanky jumping jack of a girl" (Lansbury, 2001, p. 242). Historically, comparisons of African-American athletes to animals have been a means by which Caucasians justified African-Americans success in sports. Utilizing "science," Caucasians believed that African-Americans had a close ancestry with animals, which explained their greater abilities to jump and run (Miller, 1998; Spencer, 2004). Their racist comments served to discredit African-American achievements by basing them on biology rather than work habits. Additionally Gibson's aggressive style of play led to negative references regarding her "masculine" and "manlike power" within the mainstream media (Lansbury, 2001). Gibson's style of play falls outside the norm dictated by the Caucasian dominated tennis culture. If Caucasian and their style of play represented the standard of femininity, then the mainstream society had to juxtapose Gibson's style and consider it masculine. Lansbury (2001) believed that Gibson's

portrayal, similar to the depiction of Alice Coachmen focused on her gender. However, the ways in which the media framed Gibson's femininity, in opposition to hegemonic ideology, validates an argument that instead the focus was on race. Regardless, the mainstream media framed these two African-American women athletes in ways that did not represent their true femininity, which incorporated both their race and gender. Consequently, their marginalization almost led to their disappearance in history (Lansbury, 2001).

Current portrayals of African-American female athletes give credence to the aforementioned race versus gender coverage. In 1997, the WNBA began, and with it came a marketing campaign to drum up support and interest for the league. According to Banet-Weiser (1999), the league constructed its identity solely based on gender and not race. Therefore, "despite the overwhelming African-American presence in the league…the WNBA has been characterized more in terms of normative femininity…than according to dominant representations of Black women" (Banet-Weiser, 1999, p. 405). Consequently, race was rarely mentioned. Coverage of African-American players focused on feminine issues – Lisa Leslie's modeling contract and Sheryl Swoopes' impending pregnancy (Banet-Weiser, 1999). The fact the basketball is considered a "masculine" sport, the league's marketing strategy attempted to reassure critics that professional women's basketball players could (and would) fit into traditional feminine roles, including heterosexuality (Banet-Weiser, 1999). Unfortunately, this approached marginalized the more holistic femininity of the African-American players.

The way in which the mainstream media racialized the femininity of Althea Gibson remains a resilient depiction of African-American women in predominately Caucasian sports, like tennis. The portrayal of Venus and Serena Williams epitomizes this type of coverage. It is difficult to find an article about the Williams sisters that does reference or criticize their "otherness"—how their physicality, muscularity, ethnic hairstyles (i.e. beads), and clothing (i.e. cat suit) differs from the standard (Caucasian) tennis player. Their aggressive and powerful style of play frequently earns them comparisons to male players and comments from the mainstream media that include "huge, masculine, Amazon, heavyweight fighter, and predator" (Douglas, 2003; Miles, 2000). Researchers believe that these narratives of the Williams sisters reflect the racial ideology and racism of the mainstream society (Douglas, 2003; Schultz, 2005; Spencer, 2004). In other words, the Eurocentric patriarchal media relies on historically derived stereotypes of African-American women to characterize the Williams' sisters. These stereotypes positioned the Williams' sisters outside the dominant culture's definition of true womanhood (Douglas, 2003).

This was never more evident then when Serena wore her infamous catsuit at the 2002 U.S. Open. Comparing Serena's catsuit to a similar outfit worn by Caucasian tennis player, Schultz (2005) concluded that Caucasian player was admired for her outfit because of her conventional femininity. In 1985, Anne White wore a white lycra-spandex bodysuit. Whereas tennis officials considered the outfit unacceptable and eventually banned it, the media viewed it favorably; claiming it showed off her attractiveness, femininity, and "'not to mention some dynamite something elses'"

(Schultz, 2005, p. 344). In contrast, the media negatively portrayed Williams when she wore a tight fitting black catsuit that accentuated her muscularity and curves that "could be dreamed up only by the brains at Marvel Comics" (Schultz, 2005, p. 348). Williams did not have the standard tennis body type, as exemplified by Anna Kournikova; a body type that also represented the feminine ideal. Therefore, "the white bodysuit on a white body was read differently than the black catsuit on the black body" (Schultz, 2005, p. 344). Despite her accomplishments, Serena was marginalized in the media. The amount of research generated about the Williams' sisters and their portrayals has been encouraging to the field; despite the not so optimistic findings. Unfortunately, no other African-American female athletes have received equivalent amount of research. In order to have a fuller and wider perspective, it is important to examine all available African-American female athletes and their portrayals in the media.

In conclusion, this literature review has provided a glimpse into the portrayal of female athletes, especially African-American female athletes in the print media. It has demonstrated how Eurocentric patriarchal ideology has affected women's sports and coverage. Considered a male institution, men initially excluded women from sport participation. When women fought for the right to participate, society allowed them to participate only in sports that reflected the hegemonic femininity constructed by the Caucasian male society. The literature review employed a hegemonic framing perspective, to explain how media coverage of women's sports reflects the values of those in charge, in this case Caucasian men. Since men's sports were considered the standard and women's sports the "other," the coverage women received was minimal.

Sadly this pattern has not significantly changed; despite the increased popularity of women's sports. Therefore, this demonstrates the lack of value that the media and those in charge have for women's sports. Furthermore the types of coverage female athletes receive with an emphasis on heterosexual femininity indicate some of the sexist ideals held by mainstream society. The ambivalent methods used to depict female athletes serves to trivialize their athletic abilities. The coverage that African-American women receive also reflects the views of those in power; in these case racist stereotypes derived from slavery. African-American women have had to create their own femininity that reflected their experiences in the African-American community. Their constructed femininity allowed for their participation in sports, especially those considered inappropriate by Caucasian society. However, their femininity became contrasted with that of mainstream society, which may explain their lack of coverage in the sport media. The mainstream society has yet, to comprehend the entirety of African-American female athlete's femininity. The media has a hard time navigating through the "otherness" of African-American women, which includes their strength, beauty, muscles, and participation in "unfeminine" sports. This leads to lack of overall coverage and conflicting coverage for the African-American sportswomen.

Chapter 3
METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a content analysis research design. Content analysis is "the method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables" (Wimmer & Dominick, 1999, p. 112). It is frequently used in research that examines media images. Advantages of using content analysis include the ability to identify longitudinal trends and societal changes (Wimmer & Dominick, 1999). Therefore, it offers the most appropriate method to answer the hypotheses in this study and to examine the coverage and portrayal of African-American female athletes over five decades.

The content analysis for this study focused on the covers of *Sports Illustrated.* The magazine was chosen for several reasons. First, *Sports Illustrated* is the largest and most popular weekly sports magazine. The magazine boasts a readership of over 23 million people (*Sports Illustrated,* 2008). Second, *Sports Illustrated* contends that it is not a men's magazine; instead it "covers the people, passions and issues of numerous sports with the journalistic integrity that has made it the conscience of all sport" (Borhart, 2005, p. 8). Consequently, the magazine should offer a comprehensive image of all sports, including women's sports, in the last five decades. In light of its attributes, *Sports Illustrated* has been the most frequently analyzed sport magazine and is considered the litmus test of popular sports images (Borhart, 2005; Kane, 1996; Lumpkin & Williams,

1991). Therefore, its choice as the subject sample for this study also allows for some comparison of the results to other similar studies.

Sample

As mentioned in Chapter Two, previous studies have always chosen a sample that failed to analyze the entirety of *Sports Illustrated* magazines available at that time. This has limited the longitudinal analysis especially of women's coverage in the magazine. Since the percentage of covers that feature African-American women is small, the inclusion of all such covers became a necessity for this study. Therefore, a content analysis of all covers of *Sports Illustrated* from its inception in 1954 through September 2008 (n = 2,865) was conducted; and was the first of its kind.

Covers were analyzed using two methods—*Sports Illustrated's 50th Anniversary Book* (Fleder, 2006) and the SI vault (http://vault.sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/cover/home/index.htm, 2008), an online archival database of *Sports Illustrated* articles, photographs, and covers. The anniversary book contained all *Sports Illustrated* covers from 1954 to August 2004. Analysis of covers after August 2004 came from the online database. Additionally, the database was used to cross-reference covers from the book when a larger image of the cover was needed.

Coding

All covers of *Sports Illustrated* magazine represented the units of analysis for this study. The cover was defined as the central image on the front of the magazine. Therefore, inset images found on the cover were not coded. This study utilized the same

coding methods and descriptive statistics of several previous studies in order to have a comprehensive code and to be able to compare results to previous studies. Coding began with identifying the gender of the individual(s) on the covers. "Gender" was classified into four categories—animal/inanimate object/large innumerable crowd, male, female, and group, which represented covers with both males and females. These categories were chosen based on previous studies (Salwen & Wood, 1994). If a cover featured an animal, inanimate object or large innumerable crowd, no additional coding was needed.

The remainder of the covers was subsequently coded for race, type of person, type of shot, and pose. Table #1 describes each variable and the categories used for coding. Following previous studies, this study focused on covers with African-American and Caucasian individuals, particularly females. Therefore individuals of other races and ethnicities were classified as "other." When there was a group shot with individuals of multiple races or ethnicities on a cover it was coded as "mixed." The number of African-American and Caucasians on those covers was counted and recorded in the "GroupB" and GroupW" variables. Similarly, when a cover featured both males and females, it was coded as "group" in the gender category. The number of people from each gender was counted and recorded in "GroupM" and "GroupF" variables.

The "type" variable describes the person on the cover. An "athlete" was considered a person engaging in an athletic activity or competition at any level (e.g. interscholastic, amateur, intercollegiate, and professional). The "objectified female" category consisted of covers with women portrayed as swimsuit models, dancers, or non-competitive cheerleaders. According to research, women in these roles have been

objectified on the covers and reflect hegemonic ideology about the role of women (Kane, 1996).

The "shot" variable describes the type of shot represented on the cover. Covers considered "individual" shots met one of the following requirements: One person was on the cover, multiple people were on the cover but only one person was identifiable, or the title implied that the feature article was about one person.

Table 1: Coding Classifications and Categories for all Sports Illustrated Covers

CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORIES
GENDER	Gender on cover	• Animal/inanimate object/large innumerable crowd • Male • Female • Group (both males & females)
TYPE	Type of person on cover	• Non-athlete (spouse, actor) • Athlete • Leadership (coach, owner, commissioner) • Objectified female • Mixed (combination of above categories)
RACE	Race/Ethnicity on cover	• Caucasian • African-American • Other • Mixed (multiples races on cover)
SHOT	Type of image on cover	• Individual shot • Group/team shot
POSE	Pose of person on cover	• Action/non-posed • Inactive/posed • Sexually Suggestive
GROUPM	If mixed group, # of males	Number of males
GROUPF	If mixed group, # of females	Number of females
GROUPB	If mixed group, # of African-Americans	Number of African-American
GROUPW	If mixed group, # of Caucasians	Number of Caucasians

Covers considered "team or group" shots met one of the following requirements: More than one person was visible and identifiable on the cover, a shot of an entire team or group of people, or the title implied that the article was about the entire team or group.

Definitions for the "pose" variable came from past studies. "Active" poses consisted of images where individuals were "clearly in motion or if they were in postures that suggested they were about to take action" (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990, p. 104). Images considered "inactive" included those where the individual was posed, motionless, or only shown from the neck up (Duncan, 1990). "Sexually seductive" included sexually provocative images (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004).

When a cover featured a female, the image underwent additional coding. Table #2 describes each variable and the categories used for coding. The additional coding was also performed on covers that featured both males and females. For example, if the cover featured a female figure skater and a male basketball player, the "sport" variable would be coded for *figure skater*, and the "clothing" variable would be categorized by what the figure skating wore in the photo. Again, some of the descriptive statistics and categories used came from previous studies (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Duncan, 1990; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). Clothing was coded as either uniform, athletic, casual, or glamorous.

"Uniform" represented the official outfit that an athlete would wear for competition. "Athletic" constituted apparel that would be worn for physical activity, but not for official competition (e.g. t-shirt, jogging pants). "Casual" represented non-athletic street clothes. The "glamorous" category represents images where females were

heavily made-up and wearing apparel that is not worn on a daily basis or is totally inappropriate for physical activity (e.g. ball gown, high heels) (Duncan, 1990). In terms of setting, "sport" referred to images of individuals at the location of their sport (e.g. court, track, pool) or images that came from sport locations but were digitally processed. For example, this could be an image of a basketball player dribbling in a game, but the background was changed. "Non-sport" images were those where the location was not sport-related (e.g. studio, individual's home).

In order to address the issue of trivialization of female athletes, the titles of covers featuring women were also analyzed. Sexist titles reinforce hegemonic ideology about women and detract from their athletic talents (Bishop, 2003; Duncan, 1990; Kane, 1996).

Table 2: Coding Classifications and Categories for Sports Illustrated Female Covers

CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORIES
SPORT	Sport represented by female on cover	Sport categories (basketball, tennis, figure skating)
CLOTHING	Type of clothing worn	• Uniform • Athletic • Casual • Glamorous
ANGLE	Camera angle of photo	• Eye level • Up/aerial • Down/ground
SETTING	Location of cover photo	• Sport • Non sport
TITLE	How female described on cover	• Sexist • Gender neutral • Empowering • Title not applicable to female on cover • No title

Specifically, titles that mentioned roles outside of athletics (e.g. “wife”, “mother”) or classified women in adolescent feminine language (e.g. “sweetheart”, “baby”) were included in this category. Empowering titles were those that recognized the athletic talent or accomplishment of the athlete.

Since African-American female athletes were the main focus, the study took one step further to understand their portrayal in *Sports Illustrated.* Previous research has shown that feature articles and the corresponding photos of female athletes tend to portray women in feminizing ways that trivialize their athletic ability (Bishop, 2003; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1996; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Therefore, a sample (n=10) of feature articles and photos were analyzed when African-American females-athletes graced the cover to understand how they were depicted within the magazine. *Feature article* was defined as the article in the magazine that corresponded with the individual(s) on the cover. Articles that were not exclusive to the African-American female on the cover were not included (e.g., Olympic preview covers, team photo).

Based on the number of covers per decade, a sample of feature articles was chosen. If that decade only had one cover with an African-American female than the corresponding article was chosen. If African-American females appeared on more than one cover per decade, then several feature articles were chosen. The 1960’s and 1970’s had no covers with an African-American female. The number of photos included in the article and the themes discussed in the article were analyzed. Any topic that was discussed for a paragraph or more was considered a theme. Therefore, presumably there could be more than one theme per feature article. Fink & Kensicki’s (2002) study on

visual and textual construction of femininity in *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Women* served as the basis for the theme coding variables. Table #3 provides the themes used and their operational definitions. Results from the feature article analysis will be exploratory in nature, since no feature articles of Caucasian females were comparatively analyzed.

Table 3: Themes Used to Analyze Feature Articles of African-American Women

THEME	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION
Personal*	Content describing non-athlete portion of athlete's life (excluding romantic relationships & fashion)
Victim*	Content describing athlete's struggle against adversity
Sport-related*	Content describing ability/accomplishments as an athlete
System critique*	Content critiquing a sporting institution
Sport struggle*	Difficulties of a sport, mismanagement, bad behavior of athlete
Sport victory*	Triumphs of a sport achieving popularity, good behavior or an athlete, good management
Health-personal*	Describing activities/products that improve athletic health
Fashion	Content detailing the athletes fashion, makeup, shopping habits
Comparison to men	Content comparing female athlete to a male/male athlete
Romantic relationships	Content describing romantic or marriage relationship
Physical description	Content describing the physical attributes

*Themes and operational definitions from Fink, J. S., & Kensicki, L. J. (2002). An imperceptible difference: Visual and textual constructions of femininity in *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated* for women. *Mass Communication & Society, 5*(3), 326.

Chapter 4
RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the portrayal of African-American female athletes on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. The research question follows: How are African-American female athletes portrayed on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*? SPSS was used to generate the results from the content analysis. Simple percentages, frequencies, and chi-square statistics were generated to provide answers to the stated hypotheses. 2,865 *Sports Illustrated* covers were analyzed as a part of this study. Table #4 reveals the breakdown of covers by gender. The overwhelming majority of *Sports Illustrated* covers featured men at 83.2-percent. Only 171 or 6% of the covers featured females. This excluded covers where both men and women shared the cover, which represented another 2.1-percent.

Table #5 illustrates the breakdown by type of person on the covers. Further disaggregation revealed that 60.8% of females on the cover represented female athletes.

Table 4: Covers of Sports Illustrated disaggregated by gender

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Inanimate object, animal, or large crowd	251	8.8%
Male	2,384	83.2%
Female	171	6.0%
Group (both men & women)	59	2.1%
Total	2,865	100.0%

Table 5: Type of person featured on covers of Sports Illustrated by gender

Type of Person		Male	Female	Total
Non athlete	Count	53	17	70
	% within Type of person	75.7%	24.3%	100.0%
	% within Gender of person(s)	2.2%	9.9%	3.0%
Athlete	Count	2203	104	2307
	% within Type of person	95.5%	4.5%	100.0%
	% within Gender of person(s)	92.4%	60.8%	90.3%
Leadership	Count	72	3	76
	% within Type of person	96.1%	3.9%	100.0%
	% within Gender of person(s)	3.1%	1.7%	3.0%
Objectified Female	Count	0	47	47
	% within Type of person	0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within Gender of person(s)	0%	27.5%	2.1%
Mixed group	Count	54	0	54
	% within Type of person	100.0%	0%	100.0%
	% within Gender of person(s)	2.3%	0%	2.1%
Total	Count	2383	171	2554
	% within Type of person	93.3%	6.7%	100.0%

In the history of magazine, there have only been three instances when women in leadership roles have appeared individually on the cover; one was a coach (i.e., Pat Summit); one was an owner (i.e., Marge Schott of the Cincinnati Reds), and one was a referee (i.e., Pam Postema). This is most likely the reason why there were no female "mixed group" covers that had, for example, a female athlete and her coach.

Table #6 presents the racial composition of *Sports Illustrated* covers that featured females. Like males who comprised 83% of total *Sports Illustrated* covers, Caucasian females constituted the overwhelmingly majority of females on the cover with 83-percent. African-American females appeared on slightly less than 10% of *Sports*

Illustrated covers featuring women. However, this statistic is slightly misleading. In reality, there were 35 African-American females represented on 26 *Sports Illustrated* covers. Appendix A displays all 35 African-Americans females. Unfortunately, only 25 of those representations on 16 covers could be coded as African-American females. The remaining 11 representations could not be coded only for African-American females because they either shared the cover with women from a different race or with men. Nonetheless, covers with African-American females only represent 0.9% of all *Sports Illustrated* covers, a microscopic percentage at best.

Table 6: Females on the Sports Illustrated Covers Disaggregated by Race

Race		**Total**
Caucasian	Count	142
	% within Gender of person(s)	83.0%
African-American	Count	16
	% within Gender of person(s)	9.4%
Other	Count	9
	% within Gender of person(s)	5.3%
Multiple races on cover	Count	4
	% within Gender of person(s)	2.3%
Total	Count	171
	% within Gender of person(s)	100.0%

Hypothesis #1 Results

The first hypothesis predicted that African-American women would be more likely found in active poses as compared to Caucasian women, but less so than African-American and Caucasian males. Table #7 provides a comparison of the "pose" variable by gender and race. Of the 16 covers featuring African-American females, 8 or 50% portrayed them in active poses. For Caucasian women, only 30% of their covers had active poses. More than half of all covers featuring African-American and Caucasian men were in active poses, with African-American men having the highest number with 62.7-percent. In general, one out of every three covers featuring females (i.e., African-American or Caucasian) had an individual in an active pose. The greater proportion of African-American women in action poses as compared to Caucasian women was statistically significant, as was their smaller proportion compared to African-American and Caucasian men, $\chi^2(1, N=1278)=13.09$, $p=.00$. Therefore the first hypothesis was supported by the results.

Table 7: Action Poses on Covers of Sports Illustrated by Gender and Race

Gender		**Caucasian**	**African-American**	**Total**
Male	# of active pose covers	706	522	1228
	% of total covers with active pose	55.0%**	62.7%**	57.9%**
Female	# of active pose covers	42	8	50
	% of total covers with active pose	30.0%**	50.0%**	33.3%**
Total	# of active pose covers	748	530	1278

χ^2 (1, N=1278) =13.09, p=.00 , ** p < .01

Hypothesis #2 Results

The second hypothesis predicted that African-American women would appear on more covers during Olympic years. Both Summer and Winter Olympic Games were included in the Olympic year variable. Table #8 provides a comparison of the covers during Olympic and non-Olympic years for both African-American and Caucasian women. Surprisingly, the 16 covers featuring African-American women were split evenly between Olympic and non-Olympic years. They did have a higher portion of covers during Olympic years than Caucasian females. In general, there were more covers featuring females during non-Olympic years. Since the number of covers was equal for African-American females, this hypothesis was neither statistically significant nor supported

Table 8: Females on Sports Illustrated Covers during Olympic versus Non-Olympic Years by Race

Race		**Non-Olympic year**	**Olympic year**	**Total**
White	Count	92	50	142
	% within Race of person	64.8%	35.2%	100%
Black	Count	8	8	16
	% within Race of person	50.0%	50.0%	100%
Total	Count	100	58	158

χ^2 (1, N=159) =0.920, p=.425

Hypothesis #3 Results

The third hypothesis predicted that the majority of African-American females on the covers would represent the sports of track and field and basketball. As mentioned in Chapter 4, all covers that featured females were coded with the "sport" variable. Additionally, any cover that had both men and women on it was also coded for the sport of the respective female(s). In total, 221 covers were analyzed for sport. Tennis, skiing, and track and field comprised the top three sports represented as evidenced in Table 1-A found in Appendix B. The majority of "no sport" listings represented females on the covers of the annual swimsuit editions.

Table #9 shows the sport breakdown by race. A combined total of 10 covers featured African-American females either in track and field or basketball. These two sports constitute 62.6% of all covers featuring African-American females. The only other sports that African-American females were represented in were tennis (n=4), soccer (n=1), and softball (n=1); however, the latter two could not be analyzed as African-American female covers because they showed an entire team that was multi-racial. In comparison, Caucasian women were portrayed in 23 different sports, including covers that they shared with men. African-American and Caucasian women each appeared on seven covers as track and field athletes. However, for Caucasian women those seven covers only constituted 5% of their total covers. The difference in sport portrayals between African-American and Caucasian was significant, χ^2 (20, N=157) =52.95, p=.001. Additionally, the concentration of African-American track and basketball athletes on the covers supported the hypothesis.

Table 9: Sport Represented by Females on Covers of Sports Illustrated by Race

Sport		**Caucasian**	**African-American**	**Total**
Basketball	Count	1	3	4
	% within Sport played by athlete	25.0%**	75.0%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	0.7%**	18.8%**	2.5%
Track & Field	Count	7	7	14
	% within Sport played by athlete	50.0%**	50.0%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	5.0%**	43.8%**	8.9%
Tennis	Count	21	4	25
	% within Sport played by athlete	84.0%**	16.0%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	14.9%**	25.0%**	15.9%
No sport	Count	44	2	46
	% within Sport played by athlete	95.7%**	4.3%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	31.2%**	12.5%**	29.3%
Chess	Count	1	0	1
Equestrian	Count	7	0	7
Speed Skating	Count	3	0	3
Boxing	Count	1	0	1
Softball	Count	4	0	4
Ice Skating	Count	6	0	6
Golf	Count	5	0	5
Gymnastics	Count	6	0	6
Skiing	Count	14	0	14
Baseball	Count	2	0	2
Soccer	Count	2	0	2
Swimming	Count	7	0	7
Diving	Count	1	0	1
Total	Count	141	16	157

χ^2 (20, N=157) =52.95, p=.001**p<.01

Hypothesis # 4 Results

The fourth hypothesis predicted that a lower percentage of African-American women would be portrayed in glamorous clothing than their Caucasian female counterparts. Table #10 provides a comparison of the type of clothing worn by African-American and Caucasian females. Since the number of Caucasian women on *Sports Illustrated* covers is significantly higher, they have higher frequencies and percentages in all of the clothing variable categories.

Table 10: Clothing Worn by Females on Covers of Sports Illustrated by Race

Clothing		**Caucasian**	**African-American**	**Total**
Uniform	Count	63	13	75
	% within Type of clothing worn	84.0%	16.0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	45.3%	80.0%	48.7%
Athletic	Count	61	2	63
	% within Type of clothing worn	96.8%	3.2%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	43.9%	13.3%	40.9%
Casual	Count	12	1	13
	% within Type of clothing worn	92.3%	7.7%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	8.6%	6.7%	8.4%
Glamorous	Count	3	0	3
	% within Type of clothing worn	100.0%	0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	2.2%	0%	1.9%
Total	Count	139	16	154
	% within Type of clothing worn	90.3%	9.7%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (3, N=154) =6.81, p=.83

Therefore, in order to answer this hypothesis an examination of the percentages within race is necessary. The overwhelming majority (80%) of African-American women on the covers wore clothing that constituted an official athletic uniform. In contrast the clothing worn by Caucasian women was split fairly evenly between uniforms (45.3%) and athletic (43.9%). In terms of the glamorous category, only three covers were coded as such. However, all three represented Caucasian women. They included Chris Evert in a Victorian era dress and Monica Seles made-up and wearing what looks likes a very low cut dress or dressy blouse. The percentages within race do show that that African-American women are portrayed less in glamorous clothing. Unfortunately, the results were not statistically significant; therefore, the hypothesis is not supported.

Hypothesis # 5 Results

The fifth hypothesis predicted that a lower percentage of African-American women would be portrayed through a sexist cover title than their Caucasian female counterparts. Table #11 compares the titles of African-American and Caucasian women. Again an examination of the percentages within race is necessary to answer the question. Caucasian women were twice as likely to have covers considered sexist than African-American females at 12.8% and 6.2% respectively. These title included phrases like “the best girl golfer” to describe female golfer Judy Torluernke or “I'm going to be a full-time wife” to describe why tennis champion, Chris Evert decided to retire. Specifically these titles deemed women by referring to them as adolescents (when they were not) or by mentioning stereotypical female roles, like being a wife. On the other hand, African-American women were twice as likely to have a title considered empowering at 37.5%

than Caucasian women at 19.1-percent. Many of titles corresponded to African-American women who had just had a major victory or accomplishment. Therefore, the titles described them and their accomplishments in very positive terms like "Awesome" "Superwoman," or "Fastest Woman in the World." Again, while the percentages do show a lower percentage of sexist titles for African-American female athletes, the results were not statistically significant and therefore the hypothesis is not supported. These titles depicted the athletes as extraordinary or completing magnificent feats.

Table 11: Titles of Sports Illustrated Covers featuring Women Disaggregated by Race

Title		White	Black	Total
Sexist	Count	18	1	19
	% within How athlete described	94.7%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	12.8%	6.2%	12.1%
Gender Neutral	Count	69	6	75
	% within How athlete described	92.0%	8.0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	48.9%	37.5%	47.8%
Empowering	Count	27	6	33
	% within How athlete described	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	19.1%	37.5%	21.0%
Title not applicable to athlete	Count	19	3	22
	% within How athlete described	86.4%	13.6%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	13.5%	18.8%	14.0%
No title	Count	8	0	8
	% within How athlete described	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	5.7%	.0%	5.1%
Total	Count	141	16	157
	% within How athlete described	89.8%	10.2%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (4, N=157) =4.39, p=.34.

Themes

This study also examined a sample of feature articles when African-American female athletes appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. Table #12 shows the feature articles analyzed and the themes discussed in each article. Interestingly, all ten of the articles discussed both the athletes' personal lives and their athletic skills and accomplishments. If a main theme was chosen for each article the majority would have to do with the athletic abilities and accomplishments of the athletes.

Table 12: Themes from Feature Articles on African-American Female Athletes in Sports Illustrated

ATHLETE	**SPORT**	**YEAR**	**THEMES***									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11
Althea Gibson	Tennis	1957	X	X	X						X	
Cheryl Miller	Basketball	1985	X		X	X			X	X	X	X
Florence Griffith-Joyner	Track & Field	1988			X				X	X	X	X
Florence Griffith-Joyner & Jackie Joyner-Kersee	Track & Field	1988	X	X	X	X				X	X	
Gail Devers	Track & Field	1992	X	X	X		X					
Swoopes, Mcclain, Leslie, Bolton, Edwards	Olympic Basketball	1996	X		X		X	X		X		
Venus Williams	Tennis	1997	X		X	X	X					
Marion Jones	Track & Field	2000	X		X			X			X	
Serena Williams	Tennis	2003	X		X			X				
Candace Parker	Basketball	2007	X	X	X					X	X	

*1=Personal; 2=Victim; 3=Sports-related; 4=Critique; 5=Struggle; 6=Victory; 7=Health-personal (no articles had this theme, not included) 8=Fashion; 9=Comparison to men; 10=Romantic relationship; 11=Physical Description

However, at times picking one major theme was difficult because the non-athletic themes were seamlessly laced into the commentary on the athletes' athletic prowess. For example, the 1987 article on Florence Griffith-Joyner smashing the 100-meter world record at the Olympic Trials discussed her fashionable attire in the same sentence as her phenomenal accomplishments: "Florence Griffith-Joyner's dramatic garb made her a colorful blur as she smashed the world record in the 100 m at the Olympic trials" (Moore, 1988, p. 16). In total, there were 47 pictures within the feature articles or an average of 4.7 pictures per article. The majority of the photographs displayed the athletes in action or candid shots in a sport setting. Consequently, the majority of the photos had the athletes in their official uniforms or athletic clothing.

An interesting revelation was the coverage and discussion of men in these articles. At some point within nine of the ten articles, men were either discussed or mentioned in one of the following ways: (a) female athlete compared to male athletes, (b) mentioning of the female athlete's significant other, (c) mentioning of female athlete's male family members, (d) discussion of male athletes' accomplishments at similar events. Comparison to male athletes occurred in five of ten articles. The comparison generally occurred when describing the talent of the female athletes; for example, Cheryl Miller was compared with Larry Bird. Comparison based on race also abounded; Venus Williams was compared to Tiger Woods because of her dominance in a sport predominated by Caucasians. Six of the ten articles discussed the romantic relationships of the athletes, including their dating prospects or problems or mentioning their boyfriends, fiancés, or husbands. Oftentimes, the feature articles mentioned the male

relatives of female athletes, especially if they played a role in their success. The brothers of Candace Parker and Cheryl Miller were both mentioned because they play in the National Basketball League (NBA). Jackie Joyner-Kersee, Florence Griffith-Joyner, and Venus and Serena Williams all had male relatives (e.g., husband, brother-in-law, and father) as their coaches who were mentioned or pictured in their respective articles. Finally, four of the ten articles turned their attention to other athletes who competed at the same event; oftentimes, these were males. This was especially true of the track and field articles during the Olympics.

In conclusion, two of the five hypotheses were supported and statistically significant. African-American women were more likely to appear in active poses than Caucasian women, but less likely than men of both races. Additionally, the majority of representations of African-American female athletes occurred in the sports of basketball and track and field. Of the remaining three hypotheses, one was unconfirmed outright. African-American had the same number of covers during Olympic years as they did during non-Olympic years. The remaining two hypotheses were also not statistically supported, however the percentages did show that African-American women were less likely to be dressed glamorously on the covers or have sexist titles accompanying their cover pictures compared to their Caucasian counterparts. This leads the author to believe that the small sample size of African-American females on the cover caused the lack of statistical significance.

Chapter 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the portrayal of African-American female athletes on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*. The research question follows: How are African-American female athletes portrayed on the covers of *Sports Illustrated*? If the covers of *Sports Illustrated* provide any indication of whom and what are considered valuable and important, then sport still remains a male institution. Men overwhelmingly constitute the majority of individuals on the covers at 83.2-percent. In fact, women actually received less coverage than the aggregation of covers with inanimate objects, animals, and innumerable crowds. This fact remains even when the covers that have men and women appearing as a group are considered. These results are fairly consistent with studies that relied on a random sampling of covers (Salwen & Wood, 1994). Furthermore, if the numbers of covers indicate the amount of coverage received in *Sports Illustrated* feature articles, then the results also correspond with studies that focused on coverage within the magazine (Bishop, 2003; Kane, 1988; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Reid & Soley, 1979).

If sport as a male institution is not sufficiently symbolized by the overwhelming majority of male players on the covers, then the fact that men constitute the greater part of depicted coaches, managers, owners, and referees should reaffirm it. As previously

mentioned, only three covers could be coded for having women in leadership positions on them. African-American women in these positions did not have an individual cover that could be coded for their group. However, two African-American women appeared on the "101 Most Influential Minorities in Sports" edition—Anita DeFrantz, president of the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles and IOC member and Pam Wheeler, WNBA Director of Operations. While research has shown that women still remain underrepresented in sport careers and leadership roles, if you combined their roles in amateur, intercollegiate, and professional leagues, they still comprise a higher majority than what appears on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* (Carpenter & Acosta, 2008; Coakley, 2004). If the goal of *Sports Illustrated* is not to be considered a male-sport magazine, then based on its covers it has failed. Instead, the magazine's covers convincingly represent the demographics and interests of its audience which is approximate 83% male with a median age of 36 years (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; "Sports Illustrated," 2008). Therefore, results of this study suggest that despite the seeming progress of women's sports, *Sports Illustrated* still reflects sports through the lenses of a Eurocentric patriarchal society.

In terms of the amount of coverage, previous studies showed that the women's coverage in *Sports Illustrated* had actually decreased over time (Bishop, 2003; Reid & Soley, 1979; Salwen & Wood, 1994). Specifically, women appeared on the most covers in the 1950's followed by a dramatic decrease in the 1960's and 1970's and then a gradual increase from the 1980's to the present (Bishop, 2003; Salwen & Wood, 1994). Results from this study revealed the same finding (see Appendix B, Table A-11).

Women had 12.9% of all covers in the 1950's plus an additional 7.4% of covers that they shared with men. No other decade since has had that many women. As mentioned in previous research, one explanation for the decrease in coverage may be the increased popularity of men's professional leagues that now dominate the covers (Salwen & Wood, 1994). Another reason could be the decreased diversity of sports that *Sports Illustrated* depicts on its covers. In the 1950's female skiers, skin divers, physical fitness instructors, and recreationists appeared on the covers. Most of these sports no longer receive coverage or appearances on the covers. Since the decline in the 1960's and 1970's, coverage for women has increased. Hopefully, this increase will continue through the 2000's. A closer look at the type of women on the covers reveals that a significant majority are not female athletes; in fact, 37% are non-athletes. Moreover, the majority of the non-athlete women presented on the cover were swimsuit models who appear annually on the swimsuit edition since the 1960's. The perception from this type of coverage is that women's roles in sports are not as participants but rather as sexual objects or cheerleaders for men. Of the female athletes who appear on the cover, results confirm previous studies' findings that "gender-appropriate" sports receive more coverage (Bernstein, 2002; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). "Gender-appropriate" sports like tennis, skiing, gymnastics, figure skating, and golf comprised 47% of covers compared with 17% for gender inappropriate sports like basketball, track and field, softball, and soccer. This paints an unrealistic picture of female participation rates. In fact, "gender-inappropriate" sports like basketball, soccer, and track have the highest participation rates (Carpenter & Acosta, 2008; Kane, 1996).

Interestingly, while tennis lead with 25 covers, skiing and track and field followed with 14 covers each. This is due in large part to the fact that seven covers represented African-American female track athletes. In general, the quantitative coverage maintains a very patriarchal perspective of female athletes and women in general as either sex symbols or athletes participating in feminine sports.

The type of coverage found on the covers was more complex. Similar to previous research, women on the covers were more likely to be posed than pictured in action shots (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Salwen & Wood, 1994). Active shots of women comprised 30.4% of the total covers featuring women, as compared to 57.8% for men (see Appendix B, Table A-5). These passive shots, especially of female athletes, trivialize their athletic abilities. However, unlike previous studies, results revealed that women in sport settings outnumbered those in non-sport setting (See Appendix B, Table A-12) (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1996). Female athletes were more likely pictured in uniform or athletic apparel (see Table #10). Additionally, the camera angle used and the title of the majority of covers demonstrated a lack of trivialization of female athletes (see Tables #11 and Appendix B, Table A-7). Moreover, excluding the swimsuit edition covers, this study found very few covers depicting woman in sexualized poses or near nudity; in contrast to some previous studies (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990) While certain sexual differences are still being reflected, the results reveal that when *Sports Illustrated* decides to portray female athletes they do so in ways that are surprisingly progressive.

Several of the hypotheses compared aspects of the covers between Caucasian and African-American women. The fact that a comparison was necessary speaks to the lack

of research on African-American female athletes. Results confirmed hypothesis #1 that African-American women had more active covers than Caucasian women, but less than men. The difference in pose may reflect the way in which the magazine (and the mainstream media) views the femininity of Caucasian and African-American women. Creedon (1994a) examined the role of the mythologies of Artemis and the Amazons and the female athlete. She posits that through their strength and refusal to be defined by feminine roles, some female athletes embody the myths. However, their denial of the patriarchal society means they do not fit within contemporary society (Creedon, 1994a). She goes on to list female athletes throughout history who would fit within this archetypal. They include Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King, and Jackie Joyner Kersee. Inclusion of the Williams' sisters, who have been referred to as "Amazons" in this list could assumed if the article had been written later (Spencer, 2004). Interestingly, the majority of women chosen for this list were either self-proclaimed lesbians or African-American women; groups that do not fit the accepted standards of femininity and have frequently been labeled as masculine (Creedon, 1994a; Jewell, 1993).

Perhaps this demarcation is no more evident then in the covers of female tennis players, a sport considered feminine. The three covers featuring the Williams' sisters exude action, power, strength, and physicality; almost to a point of grotesqueness as shown in the first two covers (see Appendix A, Figures # 15, 16, & 22). Their faces are twisted up in exertion, and their bulging muscles are prominent. Comparing these covers to those of Caucasian tennis players, they are for the most part strikingly different except for several covers featuring Martina Navratilova, a self-proclaimed lesbian. The images

of Navratilova portray her in similar ways—action-oriented, physical, strong, and powerful. In other words, the dominant Eurocentric patriarchal culture seems to draw a direct correspondence between stereotyped depictions of African-American women and the "manly" and physically gifted female athlete (Cahn, 1994, p. 127). In this context, action shots may represent a departure from femininity. If this is true, it gives credence to fact that male athletes had more action shots than female athletes, confirming the rationale behind the first hypothesis. Interestingly, Venus Williams' cover is entitled "Party Crasher;" as if she as a African-American female is disrupting the feminine sport that is women's tennis These depictions stem from racialized notions of African-American women and occur in a gender appropriate sport, giving further credence to the explanation offered by Lansbury (2001).

The confirmation of hypothesis #2 (although not statistically significant), also revealed that African-American women were less likely to be treated in an objectified manner on the covers than Caucasian women. Excluding swimsuit covers, very few covers depicted African-American women in non-athletic clothing or associated with a sexist title. These differences have been held up as examples of progressive change and female empowerment, especially since they occur mainly in "sex-inappropriate" sports, which was confirmed by Hypothesis #3 (Duncan, 1990). However, is this portrayal simply progress or the way in which the media views African-American femininity? *Sports Illustrated* may portray them as serious athletes because they do not fit standard notions of femininity; again evidencing the complexity of the African-American female portrayal.

Overall, the attempt to understand the results from this study and the complex portrayal of African-American female athletes can best be summed up through the Afrocentric feminist epistemology. Epistemology is defined as "the study of the philosophical problems in concepts of knowledge and truth" (Collins, 2003, p. 48). Therefore, this epistemology examines knowledge about African-American women through elements of the Afrocentric and feministic viewpoint. Scholars recognize that African-Americans share common experiences of oppression due to results of colonialism and slavery. Additionally all women have oppressive experiences due to sex and gender hierarchy that transcend race and class (Collins, 2003). Therefore, Afrocentric feminist epistemology holds that the experiences of African-American females sometimes correspond more closely with those of Caucasian women, and other times more closely with African-American men. In terms of sport, both women and African-American men were "once discriminated against and barred from play;" thus this epistemology has the potential to explain the results (Lumpkin, 2007, p. 29).

Some results showed how the portrayals of African-American women were comparative to the portrayal of African-American men. The exclusion of African-American women on the covers during the 1960's and 1970's may have been due to the discrimination that many African-Americans faced during the same time period (Condor & Anderson, 1984). While African-American men were not completely absent from the covers, their coverage was minimal until the late 1970's; thus, the perception of African-Americans at the time seemed to affect the amount of coverage they received (see Appendix B, Table A-9). It was not until the 1980's that African-American women again

appeared on covers and the number of African-American men on the covers surpassed Caucasian men. Additionally, both African-American men and women had more action-style covers than their Caucasian counterparts (see Table #7). These actions shots frequently accentuated the musculature and physique of the athletes—Flo-Jo's thigh in mid-stride; Serena's forearms as she returns a serve; Marion Jones shoulder as she crouches in the blocks. Perhaps the abundance of action shots focusing on the musculature of African-Americans reflects the long-standing obsession and scrutiny of Black bodies in Caucasian society (Edwards, 1999; Spencer, 2004). While society celebrates the physicality and racially-contrived innate athleticism of African-American male athletes, this celebration does not fit with societal views of femininity (Douglas, 2003). In relation to hegemonic framing, the focus on the body and raw athleticism of the African-American athlete reflects the racial stereotypes of Caucasian society. However, the portrayal of African-American women in such a way may prevent them from receiving more coverage.

The results indicated that at other times African-American females were portrayed similarly to Caucasian women. Most obvious was the overall lack of coverage both groups received. While African-American women had more covers depicting them in action shots and in uniform; subtle feminine elements were evident— smiling posed Althea Gibson; lipstick adorned Jackie Joyner Kersee; wedding ring wearing Florence Griffith Joyner. Additionally, while there were no overtly sexual pictures of African-American female athletes, some of the cover choices were questionable. Florence Griffith Joyner appeared on the 1988 "Year in Pictures" cover. Instead of a picture of her

breaking the World record or winning a gold medal at the Olympics; the cover offered the audience a close-up of the runner (see Figure #8). It may be taken after a race because she appears to be wiping sweat from her brow; however, the photo can be construed as sensual and feminine—her eyes are barely open and her mouth is slightly open offering a satisfied smile. The reader is also drawn to her brightly painted nails and wedding ring. Another example is the 1985 picture featuring Cheryl Miller and two members of the Georgia Tech men's basketball team (see Figure #2). The title of the cover declares that Cheryl Miller is the best college basketball player, but adds the word "surprise," as if readers would have a hard time believing that a woman could be the best. Hence, the accolade comes in the form of backhanded comment. The three covers with African-American women as swimsuit models also looked similar to other swimsuit covers featuring Caucasian models. Therefore, despite objectification, the portrayal did not change because of race. Overall, these examples mirror the type of sexualization and trivialization that is frequently found in the coverage of Caucasian female athletes (Kane, 1996).

Similarities were also evident in the analysis of feature articles. "Ambivalence," as discussed in the literature review, refers to the type of coverage that simultaneously empowers and trivializes female athletes (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). An analysis of newspaper coverage of the 1999 World Cup women's soccer team, exemplified this type of contradictory coverage. The researches found that articles describing the team often used contradictions, sometimes in the same sentence, to explain the team's success and popularity. For example, the women were considered strong and muscular, but also

attractive; they were determined soccer players, but also wives (Christopherson, Janning, & McConnell, 2002). Similar examples were found amongst the sampled feature articles. Cheryl Miller was described in both masculine and feminine terms. She was a fashion-plate whose hairstyle little girls mimicked, but she also exuded the "sweaty grunginess" of a ballplayer (Kirkpatrick, 1985, p. 126). Commentary on how Candace Parker rivals Cheryl Miller as the best female basketball player were tempered by pictures of her doing her hair in the mirror. Gail Devers, the 1992 gold medalist in the 100 meters, had to overcome Graves disease; an illness that made her have "three menstrual cycles in a month" and required her to wear "two super plus tampons" (Moore, 1992, p. 27). These non-athletic elements are unnecessary; however, they are the norm in the coverage of female athletes.

The majority of the analyzed feature articles did focus on the athletic skills and sport accomplishments of the athletes. Additionally, the majority of the accompanying photographs were athletic in nature. Nonetheless, at some point in every article, the personal lives of athletes were discussed. Moreover, the discussion of their personal lives frequently accentuated their heterosexuality when possible and mentioned the athletes in feminine roles as wives, mothers, and models. Therefore, the results reveal that trivialization of the female athlete occurs no matter the race of the person.

The results further confirm that the portrayal of African-American sportswomen frequently downplays race, especially if they participate in gender inappropriate sports (Lansbury, 2001). Rarely, was race mentioned; in fact only one article covering Venus Williams, mentioned race. The researcher of this study is not sure if the exclusion of race

is a positive or negative sign in the portrayal of African-American sportswomen. However, if race is excluded, then the portrayal of African-American women lacks a completeness that encompasses both their race and gender. The exclusion of race made it difficult to determine whether the coverage African-American sportswomen received mirrored the overall portrayal of African-American women in the media.

The portrayal of the African-American female athlete in *Sports Illustrated* is a complicated affair. In some ways the coverage mirrors that of African-American men. In other ways the coverage closely resembles that of Caucasian women. When African-American women participate in gender inappropriate sports, gender seems to trump race in coverage, and their femininity is accentuated. Participation in gender appropriate sports frequently leads to a portrayal that focuses on race instead of gender. The "otherness" of African-American female's femininity is emphasized. While the Afrocentric feminist epistemology does look at similarities of the two sides, it also realizes the uniqueness of African-American women comes from the combination of experiences. In other words, the act of being simultaneously a member of each group and yet, standing apart from it" (Collins, 2000b, p. 190). Therefore, the uniqueness of the portrayal of African-American sportswomen comes from the similarities it shares with both African-American men and Caucasian women. One criticism of the Afrocentric feminist epistemology is that it only focuses on the oppression of African-American men and Caucasian women, and how the African-American women experience the combined oppression. Therefore, while the epistemology does provide an understanding to the coverage of African-American sportswomen, it does so with a negative lens. In other

words, the focus is on how does their portrayal compare with the negative elements of the portrayal of African-American men and Caucasian women; instead of viewing African-American women's portrayal in a positive light. Unfortunately, African-American women's experiences have been distorted because they have been viewed, told, and interpreted through a Eurocentric frame (Collins, 2000b). In this case, the media's reflection of Eurocentric patriarchal values hinders the portrayal of African-American sportswomen as both women and African-Americans; therefore, leaving the audience to see and know only in part.

Conclusion

The results of this study clearly show that the media reflects Eurocentric patriarchal hegemony in regards to the portrayal of female athletes in print media. The results of this hegemonic framing are three-fold as it pertains to this study. First, the fact that the overwhelming majority of *Sports Illustrated* covers featured men, demonstrate that the media and those in charge view sport as a male institution. That being said, female athletes and African-American female athletes in particular, receive a lack of coverage in *Sports Illustrated.* Based on the previous research reviewed in this study, this lack of coverage is not exclusive to *Sports Illustrated*; rather it is a common trend throughout media sources. Despite the media's views, the minimal coverage female athletes receive is in direct opposition to their growing rates of sport participation.

Second, the hegemonic framing affect the type of coverage female athletes receive. Results revealed that male and female athletes were treated differently on the covers of *Sports Illustrated.* Male were seen as simply athletes, whereby females

frequently had their athleticism marginalized by inactive poses, non-athletic clothing, and sexist titles. Moreover, sports that emphasize society's standards of femininity and gender appropriateness received more coverage. When non-athletic women appeared on the covers they were frequently portrayed as sexualized objects or as a cheerleader (both literally and figuratively) to men. This type of coverage extended into the feature articles of African-American female athletes as well. Every article referred to the athlete's personal lives and without fail, every article mentioned men. These results correspond with previous research and the trivialization, sexualization, and ambivalent treatment of female athletes. These portrayals demonstrate that the media reflects a Eurocentric patriarchal ideology of femininity as well as sexist stereotypes of women.

Third, the portrayal of African-American sportswomen reflects gender and racial stereotypes of the powerful media elite. In general this study found that the portrayal of African-American female athletes either focused on their race or gender. Sometimes they were "femininized" and trivialized like Caucasian female athletes. Other times, when their femininity was contrasted with the mainstream (Caucasian) standards, were masculinized" based on racial stereotypes. Regardless of the depiction, results again demonstrate that the Eurocentric patriarchal media does not portray a holistic and authentic depiction of the African-American sportswomen whose race and gender cannot be separated.

Recommendations

Based on previous literature and the results of the content analysis, this study offers the following recommendations to increase and enhance the coverage of female athletes, with a particular focus on African-American female athletes.

For sport managers—this study has shown that the media does not do a sufficient job in portraying minorities; instead the media relies on Eurocentric patriarchal ideology and stereotypes. In regards to sport coverage, journalists are consciously or unconsciously constructing differences between male and female athletes and Caucasian and African-American athletes. In an increasingly global world, where diversity is vital, this type of media coverage must cease and new paradigms must be used. There needs to be a conscious effort to expand the depiction of minorities outside of long-held stereotypes. In order for this to happen, sport managers need to train their employees, in this case journalists, to be conscious of their biases towards others. Equally important is making it a priority to hire diverse staff whose experiences extend outside of the Eurocentric patriarchal paradigm. Sport managers also need to investigate new ways to promote women's sports. One consideration would be to promote marketing strategies that are similar to men's sport marketing. Men's coverage does not seek to trivialize them or distract from their athleticism by mentioning their personal lives. Therefore, female athletes should receive the same type of athletically-focused coverage. Another way would involve not comparing women's sports to men's sports. This only reinforces a belief that men's sports are the standard and women's are the "other. The "lack of

promotion in combination with inferior production values, virtually guarantees less audience interest in women's competitions" (Bishop, 2003, p. 187).

Without a change in the way women's sports are marketed and portrayed, the lack of coverage and type of coverage will continue. This creates a vicious cycle whereby women's sports will never grow. The current lack of coverage prevents women's sports from increasing their fan base. Without a fan base that could demand more coverage, media executives can continue to use the excuse that people are not interested in women's sports as an explanation for not covering them.

For print media sources, such as *Sports Illustrated*, which does not consider itself to be simply a men's magazine, it needs to do a better job of covering women's sports. Early in the magazine's history, it covered a variety of sports and sporting events, including more women. The magazine should return to its roots and find a way to effectively cover a variety of sports without sacrificing their cash cow—intercollegiate revenue generating sports and men's professional leagues. This may require still having football on the cover, but providing more coverage about the WNBA within the magazine. By doing this, the magazine may see an increase in readership. Currently, over 5 million women read Sports Illustrated ("Sports Illustrated," 2008). That number could increase if the magazine provided more coverage to women's sports.

For female athlete advocates—there needs to be more of an emphasis on transforming women's coverage rather than just reforming it. Reformers simply advocate increasing the amount of coverage that female athletes receive without examining the type of coverage they receive. However, as shown in previous research and in this study,

the type of coverage is frequently steeped in sexist and racist ideology. Therefore, a transformist approach should be taken. Not only should coverage increase, but the type of coverage should reflect female athleticism. Moreover, this type of coverage should push society to broaden their definition of femininity and not exclude minority women. Equality comes with eradicating stereotypes, dispelling myth, and supplanting ideology which serve as the basis for patriarchy and other systems of dominations" (Jewell, 1993, p. 3)

For researchers—more research needs to be done on the African-American sportswoman. In general, the voices of African-American women have been oppressed by Eurocentric theories and ideologies. They need to be given the chance to express their reality and be their own experts. One way for this to happen is to utilize theoretical frameworks that incorporate different paradigms, including critical race theory and intersectionality. Critical race theories believe that race is the most important social construct to consider in analysis of social, educational, and political problems. Consequently, using epistemologies that are racially biased affect research designs, research questions, and methodologies that distorts experiences of minorities (Singer, 2005). The theory advocates a non-existential approach to issues of race that focuses on experiences outside of the Eurocentric perspective and provides more in-depth analysis of minorities. Another possible paradigm is intersectionality. Intersectionality is a type of feminism that explores how different aspects of identity combine or intersect (Lotz, 2003). Recent research in counseling and developmental issues has posited that the development of African-American females should be looked at through a

multidimensional lens that includes race, gender, ethnicity and social class (Sandars & Bradley, 2005). Intersectionality has already found its way into media, as some television shows are trying to deepen their portrayals, especially of minority women (Lotz, 2003). Hopefully this trend will continue and lead to better representations for African-American female athletes.

Future research should do an in-depth content analysis of feature articles of female athletes in *Sports Illustrated.* The study could examine feature articles of both African-American and Caucasian female athletes and observe how their coverage differs or remains the same. Another study could compare the portrayal of African-American sportswomen in *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Women*.

Overall, the most important aspect of this study is the affect the media has on its audiences. According to framing theory, media has the ability to affect, change, and influence the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of audiences. The general lack of coverage for women's sports results in the creation of perception that women's sports do not matter and have no value in society. For African-American sportswomen, who receive even less coverage, their accomplishments are non-existent to audiences. Furthermore, the media has an affect on the next generation of athletes. What does the media's depiction say to future female athletes? Currently, it relays the message that women's sports are inferior compared to men's; therefore, they receive less coverage. Young girls also receive the message that it is okay to be an athlete, but only if they maintain their femininity. If they seek role models in gender inappropriate sports they may not easily find them in the media. For African-American girls, the message is even

harsher. The fact that African-American sportswomen receive coverage in only a few sports affects the available role models for future generations. Therefore African-American girls may believe that they can't be athletes, or only athletes in certain sports. Changes in the portrayal of all female athletes are necessary to ensure the best possible future for next generation of female athletes.

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Appendices

Appendix A

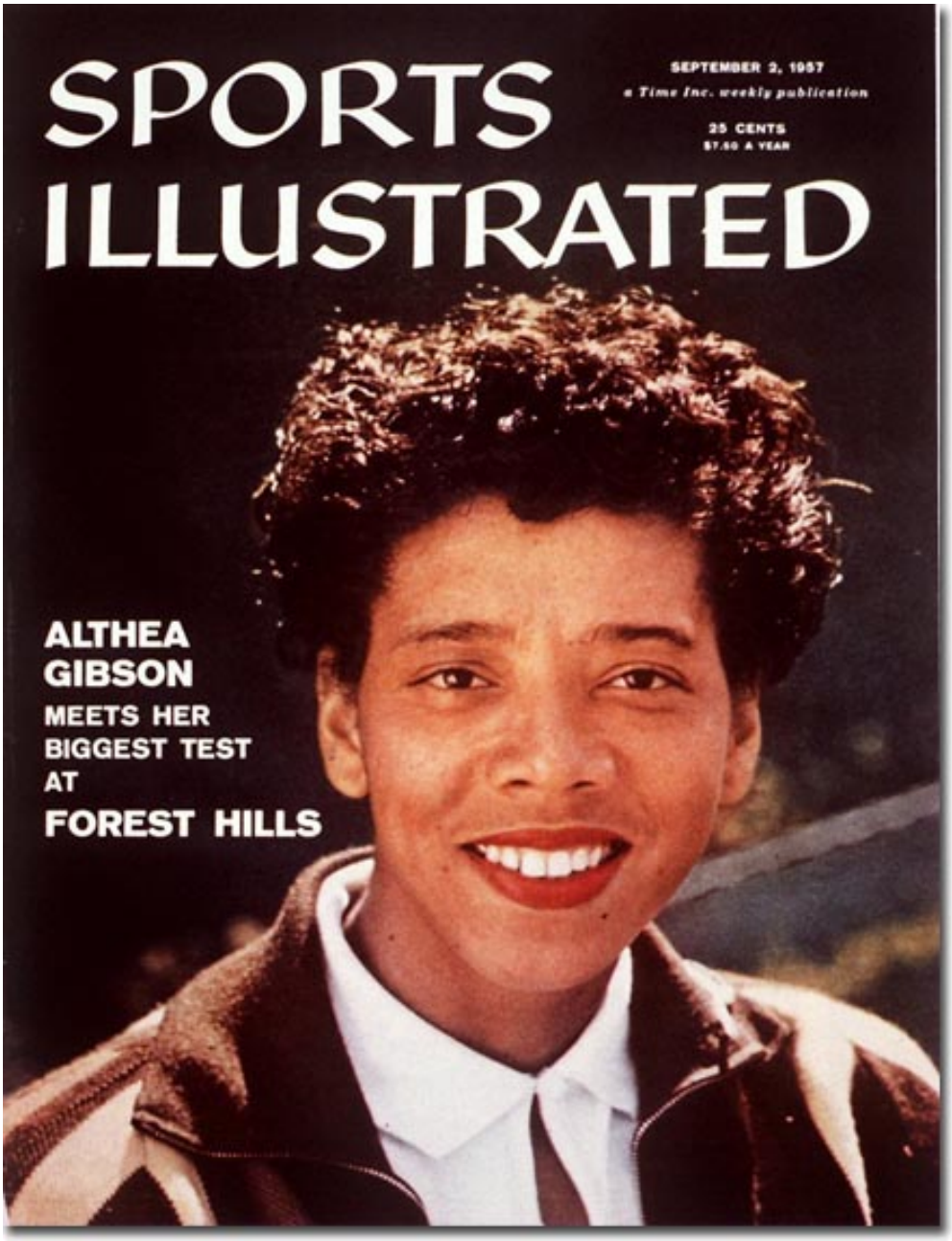

Figure 1. Althea Gibson: Tennis

(1957, September 2). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

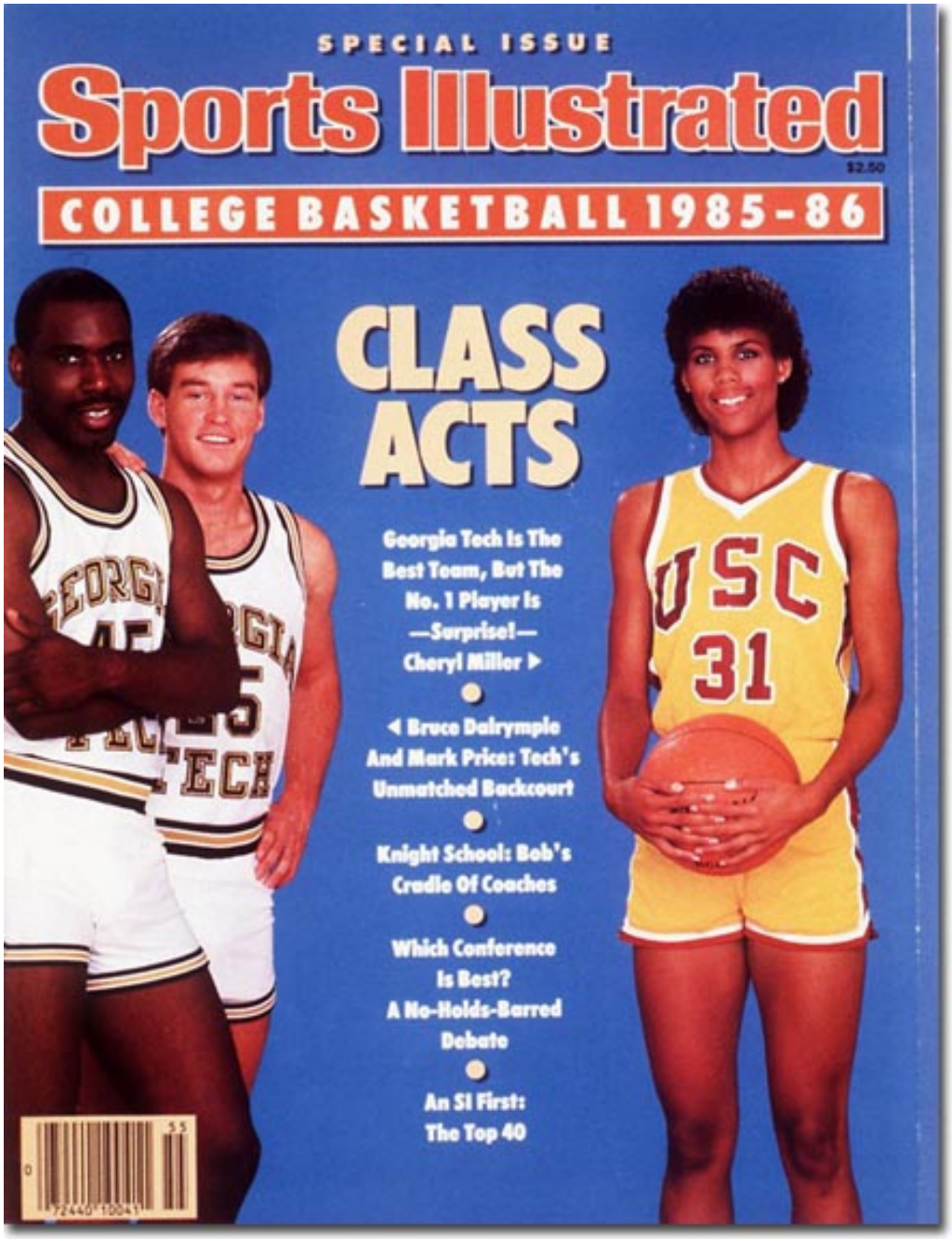

Figure 2. Cheryl Miller: Basketball

(1985, November 20). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 3. Jackie Joyner-Kersee: Track & Field

(1987, September 14). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

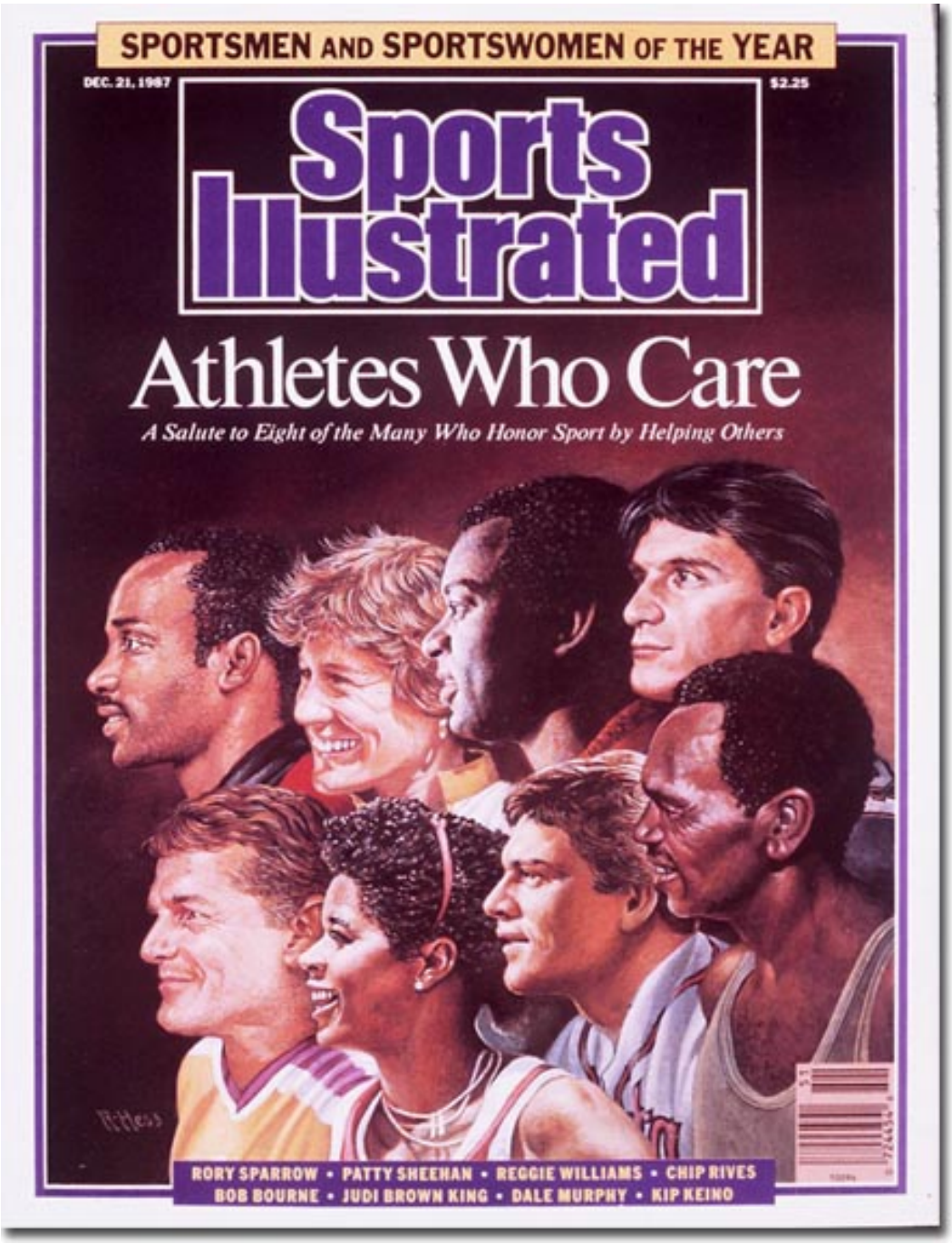

Figure 4. Judi Brown King: Track & Field

(1987, December 21). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

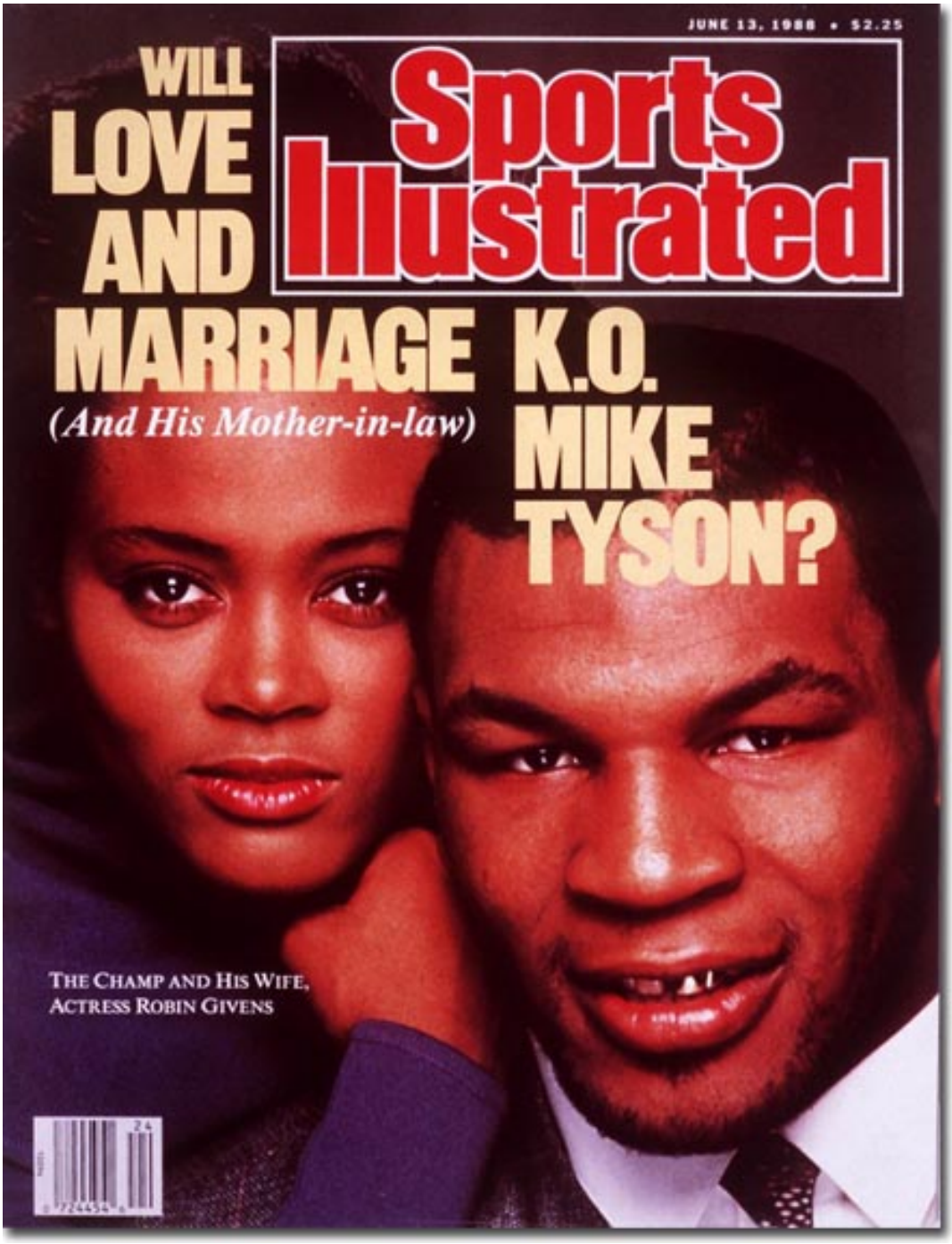

Figure 5. Robin Givens: Wife/Actress

(1988, June 13). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 6. Florence Griffith-Joyner: Track & Field

(1988, July 25). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 7. Florence Griffith-Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersee: Track & Field

(1988, October 10). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

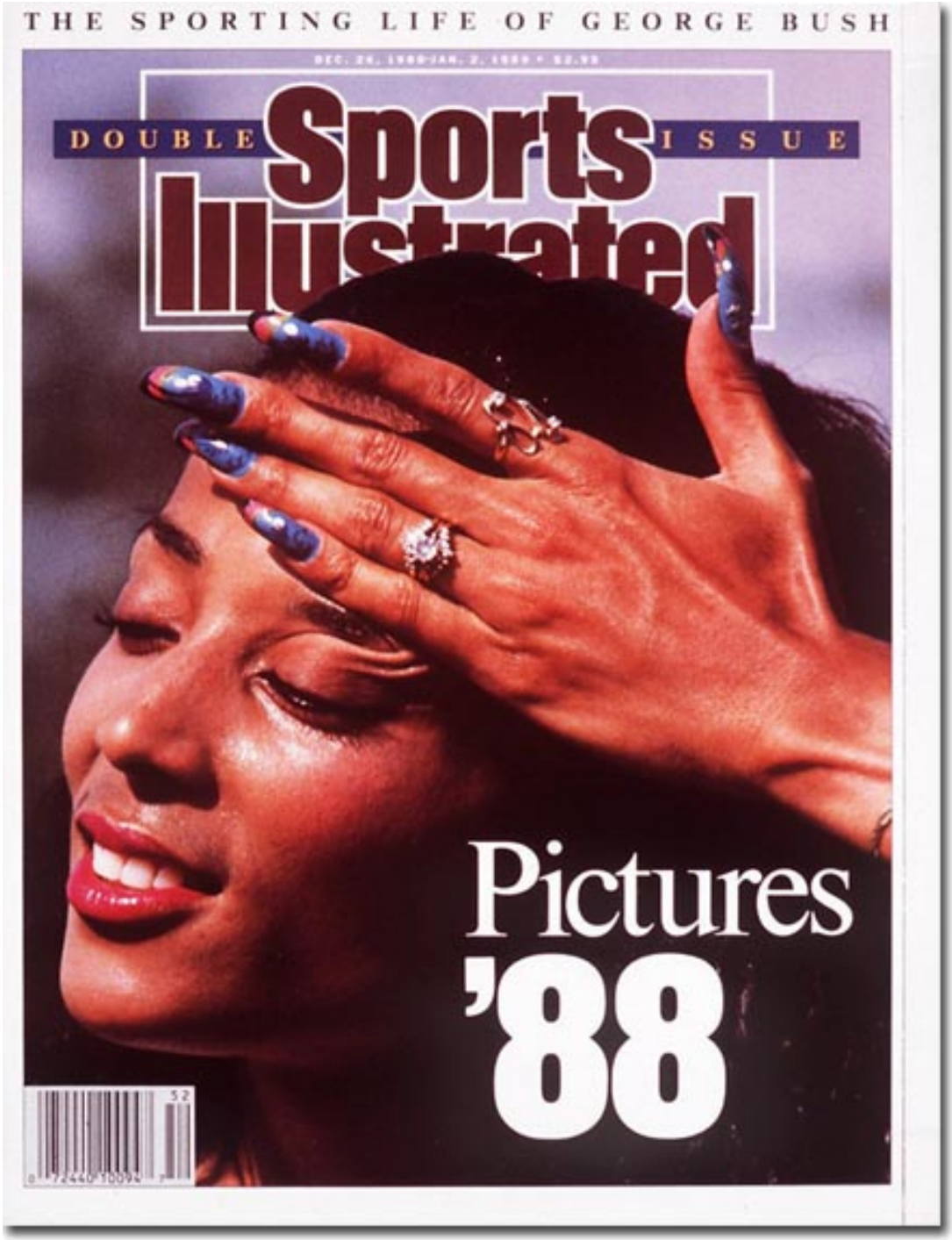

Figure 8. Florence Griffith-Joyner: Track & Field

(1988, December 26). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

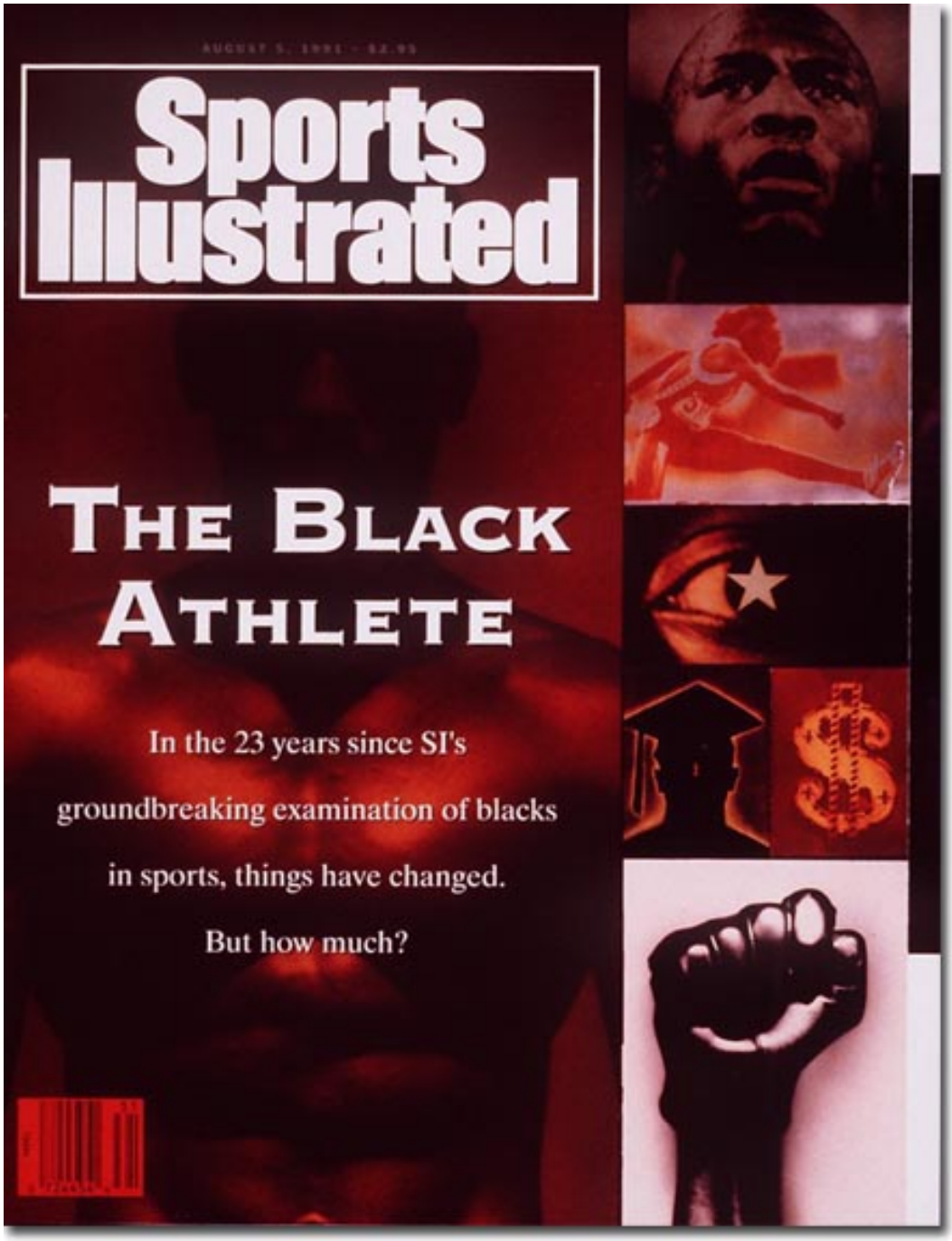

Figure 9. Jackie Joyner-Kersee: Track & Field

(1991, August 5). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

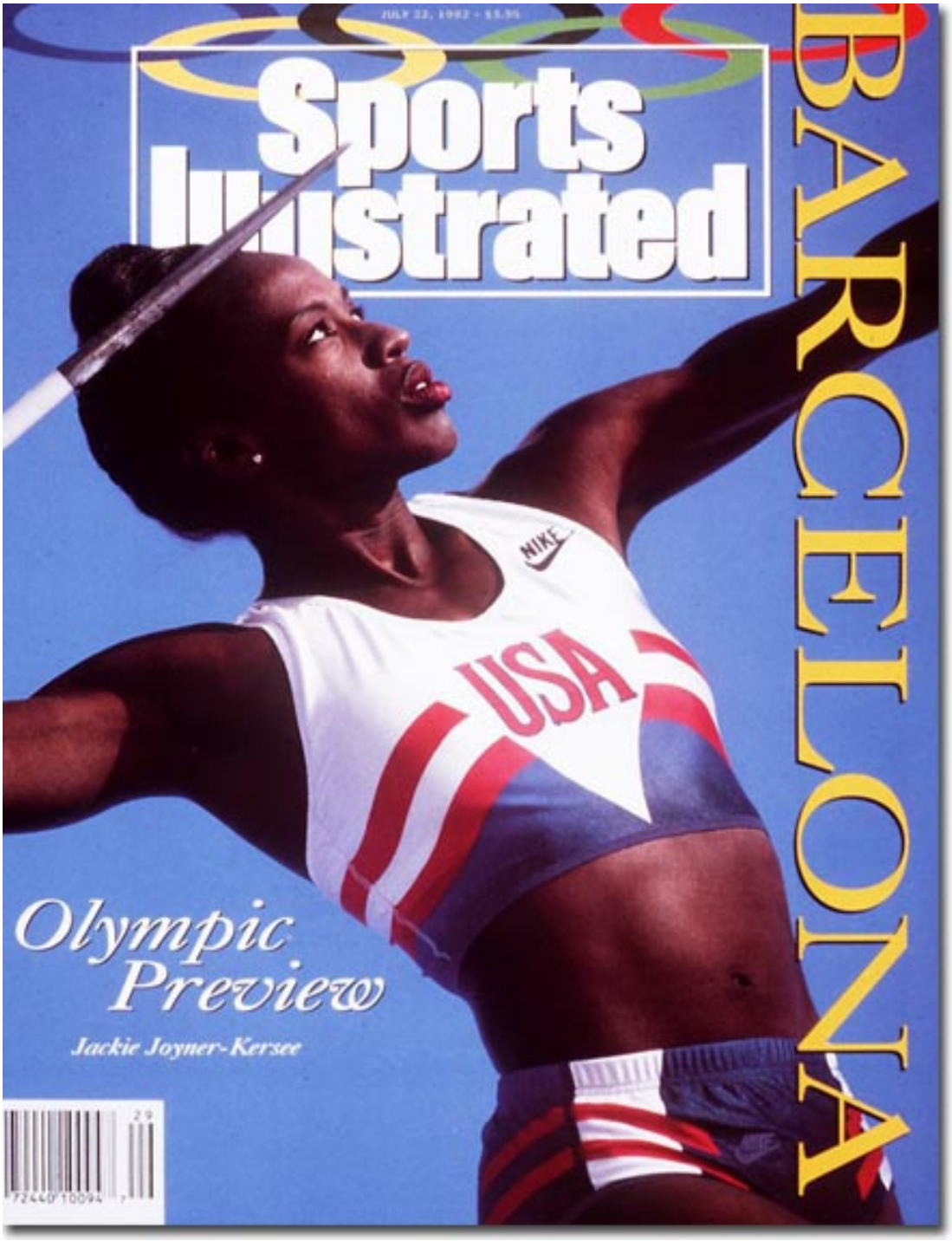

Figure 10. Jackie Joyner-Kersee: Track & Field

(1992, July 20). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 11. Gail Devers: Track & Field.

(1992, August 10). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 12. Tyra Banks: Model (Swimsuit Edition)

(1996, January 29). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

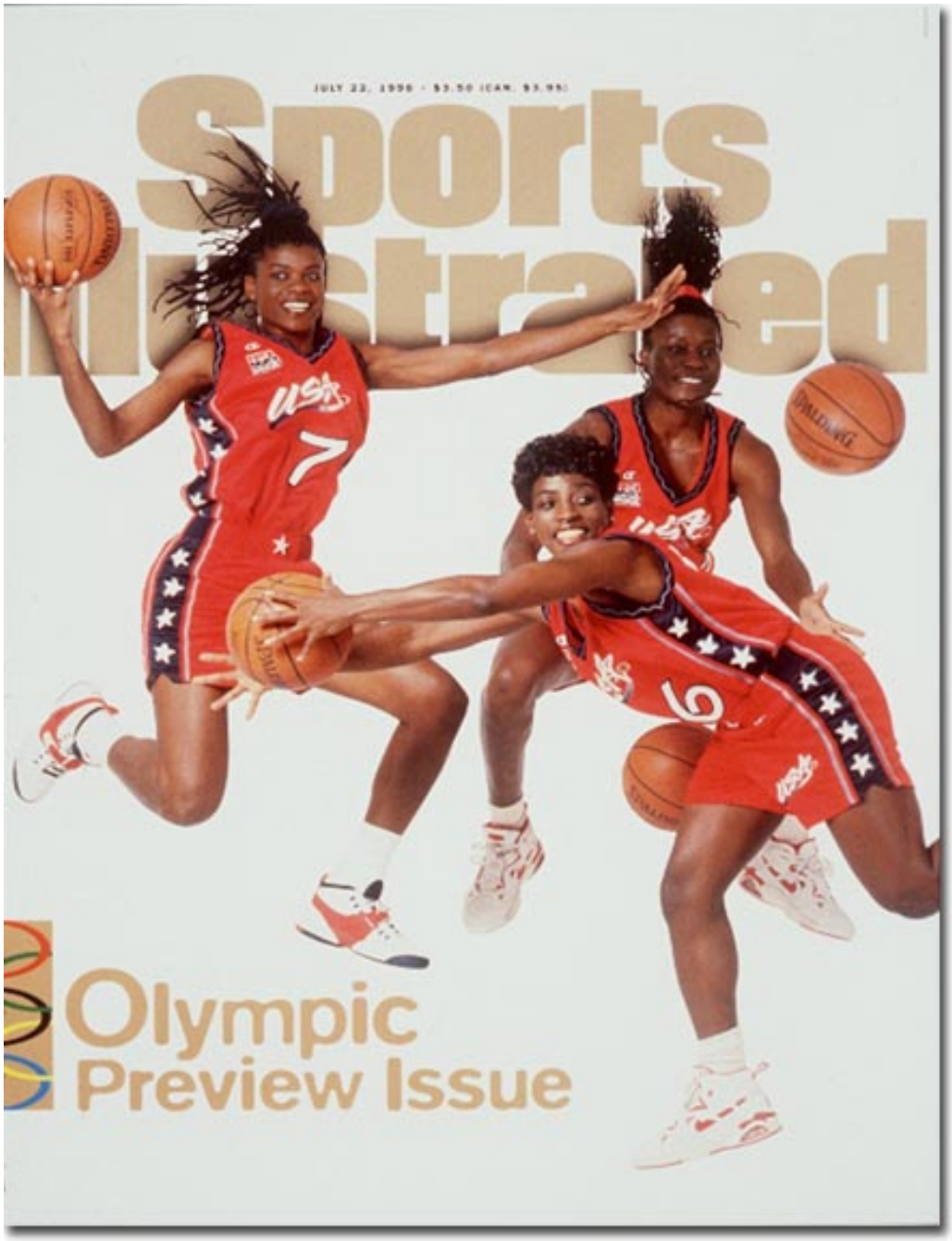

Figure 13. Sheryl Swoopes, Katrina McClain, Ruthie Bolton, Lisa Leslie (picture in foldout cover), & Teresa Edwards (picture in foldout cover): Basketball

(1996, July 22). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

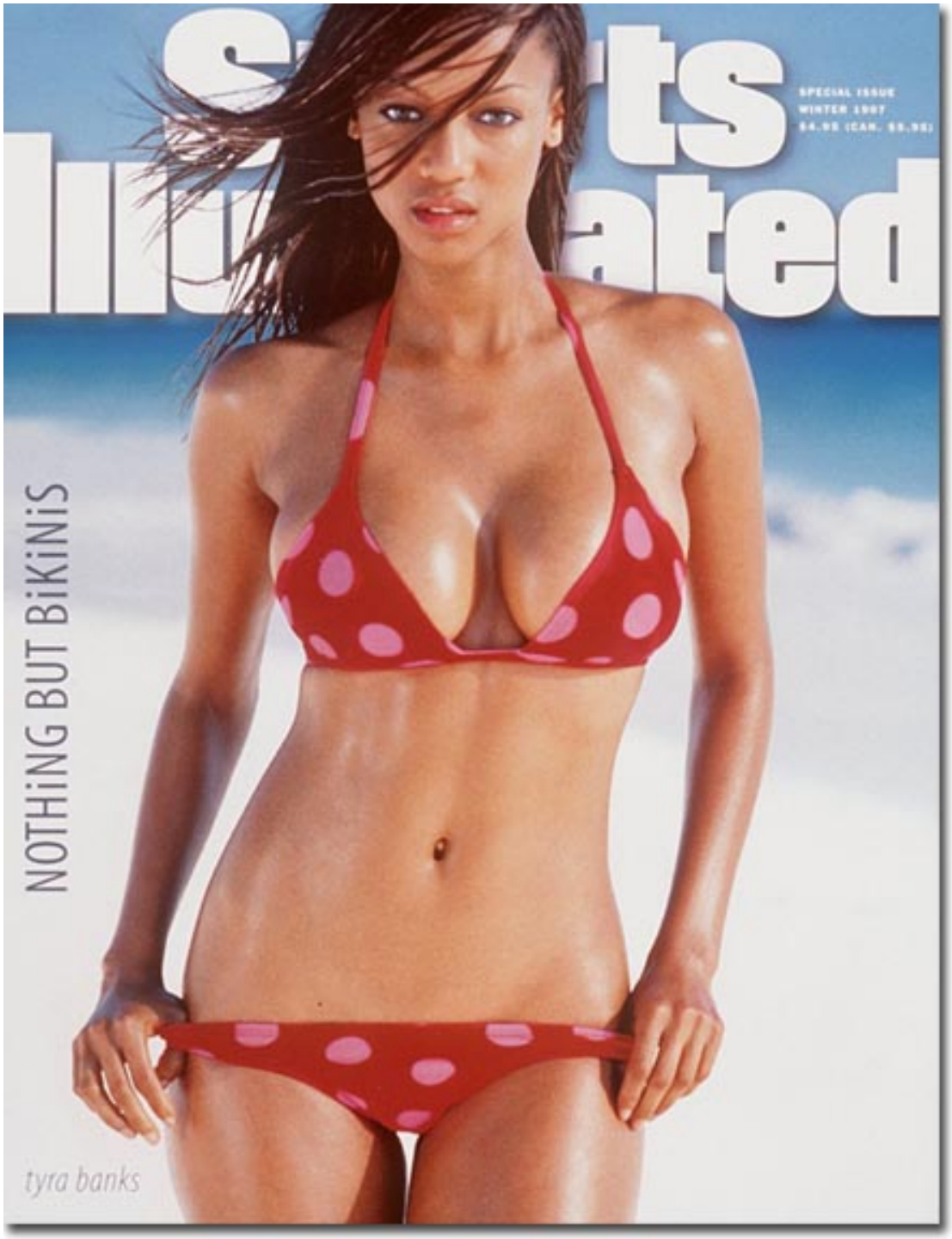

Figure 14. Tyra Banks: Model (Swimsuit Edition)

(1997, February 24). “SI Covers Search.” SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

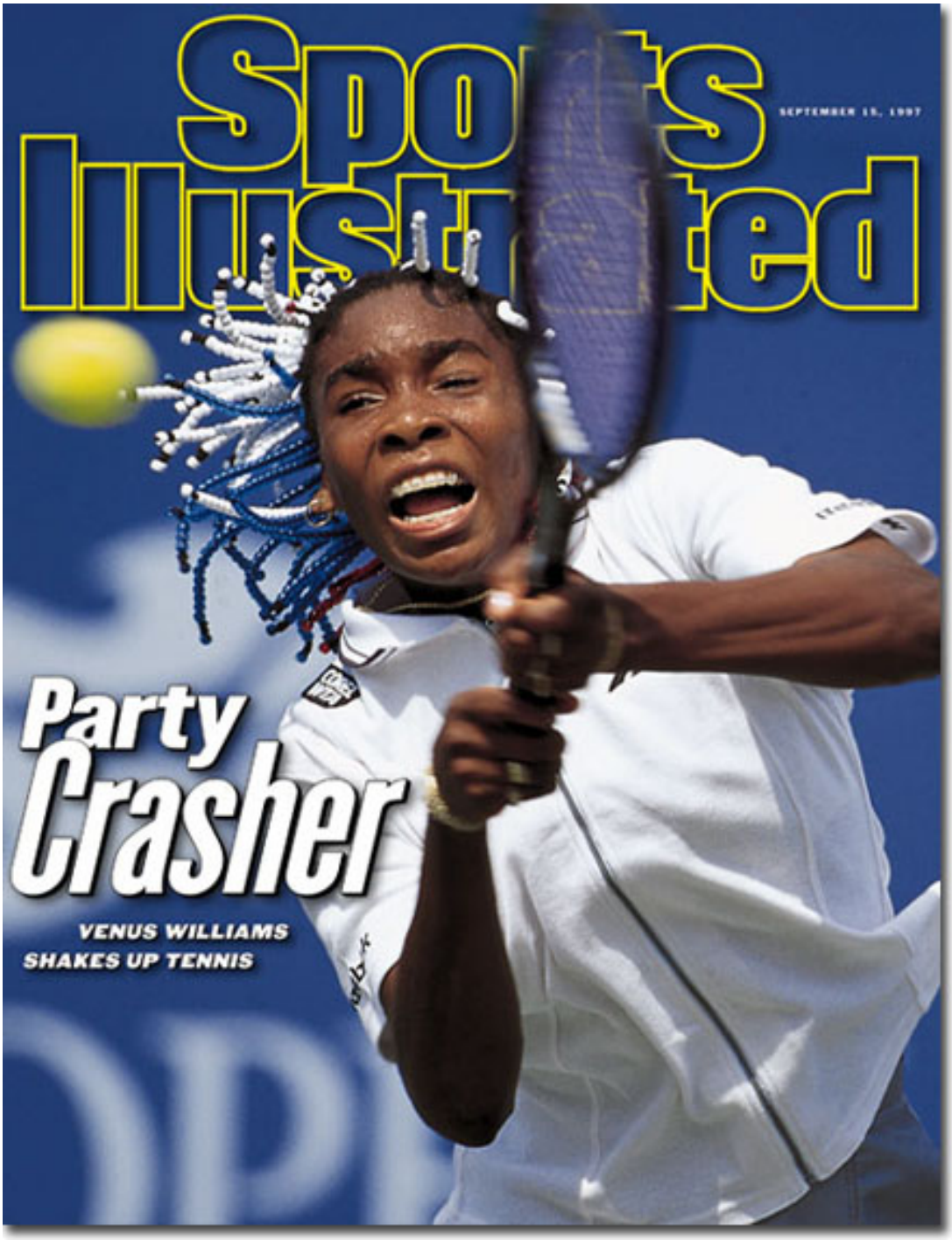

Figure 15. Venus Williams: Tennis

(1997, September 15). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 16. Serena Williams: Tennis

(1999, September 20). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 17. Briana Scurry: Soccer

(1999, December 20). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 18. Marion Jones: Track & Field

(2000, October 2). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 19. Vonciel Baker: Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader

(2001, July 2). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 20. Moushaumi Robinson: Track & Field

(2002, October 7). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

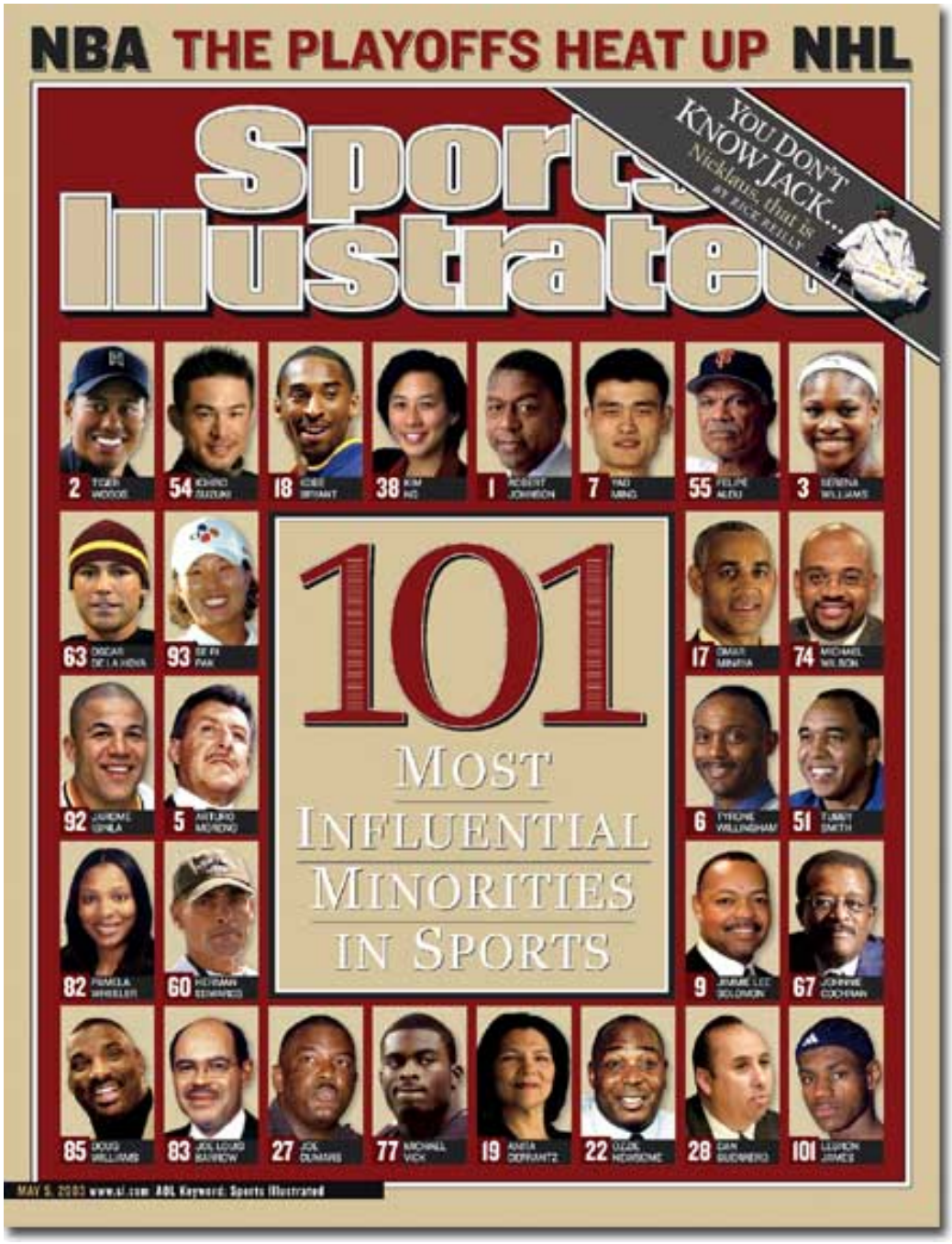

Figure 21. Anita DeFrantz (crew/IOC member); Pam Wheeler (WNBA Director of Operations); Serena Williams (tennis)

(2003, May 5). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 22. Serena Williams: Tennis

(2003, May 26). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 23. Natasha Watley: Softball

(2004, August 30). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 24. Beyonce Knowles: Singer/Actress (Swimsuit Edition)

(2007, February 15). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 `from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Figure 25. Candace Parker: Basketball (Collector's Edition)

(2007, April 4). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

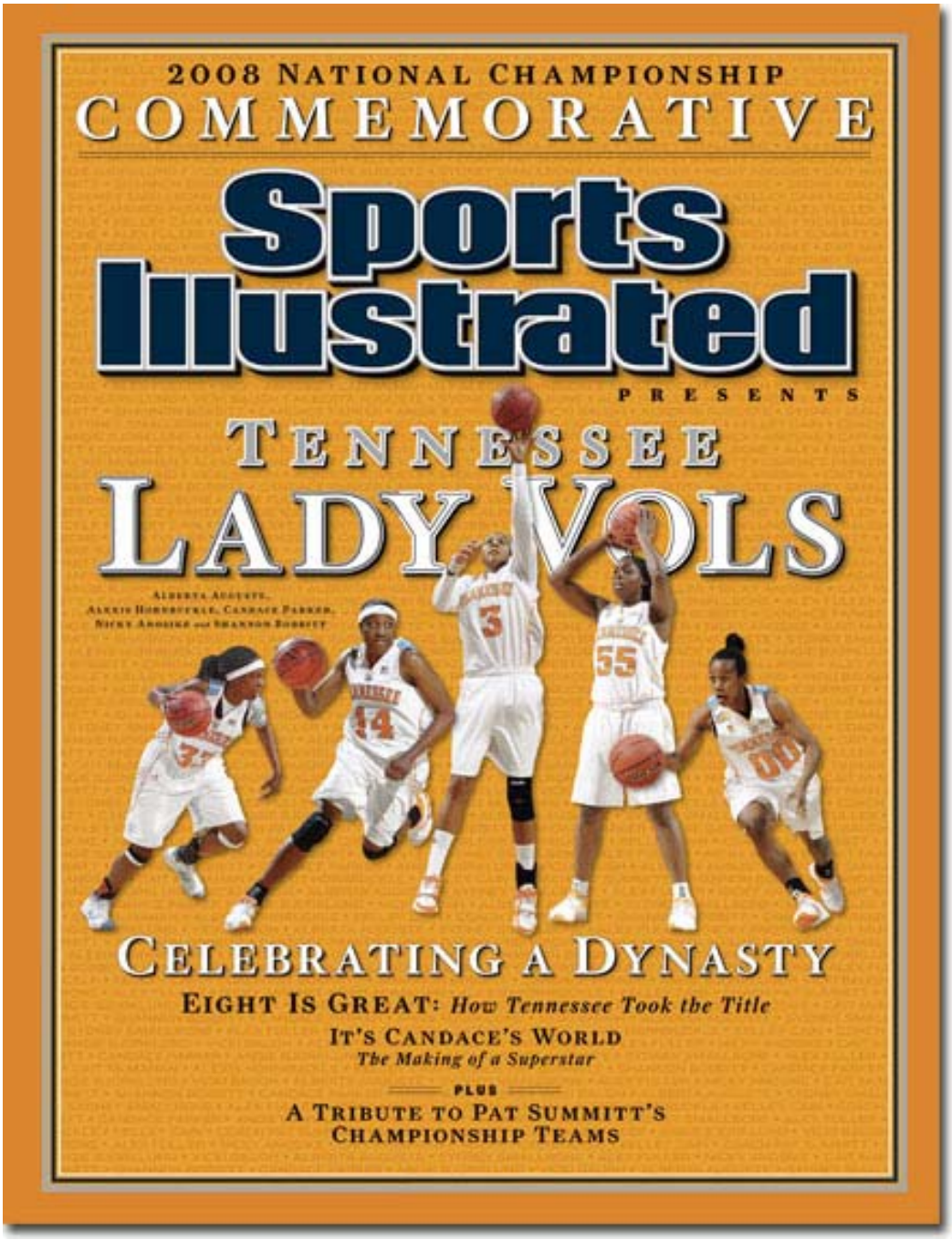

Figure 26. Alberta Auguste, Alexis Hornbuckle, Candace Parker, Nicky Anosike, & Shannon Bobbitt: Basketball (Collector's Edition)

(2008, April 19). "SI Covers Search." SI.com. Retrieved September 28, 2008 from http://www.cnnsi.com/si_online/covers/.

Appendix B

Table A-1: Sports Represented in Female Sports Illustrated Covers

Sport	Frequency	Valid Percent
Basketball	6	2.7%
Track & Field	14	6.3%
Diving	1	0.5%
Archery	2	0.9%
Fencing	1	0.5%
Baseball	2	0.9%
Racing	2	0.9%
Bowling	1	0.5%
Cheerleading (athletic)	3	1.4%
Chess	1	0.5%
Equestrian	9	4.1%
Speed Skating	5	2.3%
Boxing	3	1.4%
Softball	6	2.7%
Snowboard	1	0.5%
Multisport	11	5.0%
Ice Skating	11	5.0%
Golf	7	3.2%
Gymnastics	6	2.7%
Skiing	20	9.0%
No sport	66	29.9%
Soccer	3	1.4%
Swimming	10	4.5%
Tennis	30	13.6%
Total	221	100.0%
Missing	2644	
Total	2865	

Table A-2: Race of Individuals on Covers of Sports Illustrated

	Race	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Valid	Caucasian	1462	55.9%
	African-American	865	33.1%
	Other	64	2.4%
	Multiple races on cover	225	8.6%
	Total	2616	100.0%
Missing	99	249	
Total		2865	

Table A-3: Type of Person Represented on Covers of Sports Illustrated

	Type	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**
Valid	Non athlete	85	3.2%
	Athlete	2336	89.3%
	Leadership	77	2.9%
	Objectified Female	54	2.1%
	Mixed group	64	2.4%
	Total	2616	100.0%
Missing	99	249	
Total		2865	

Table A-4: Type of Females on Sports Illustrated Covers Disaggregated by Race

Type of person		**Caucasian**	**African-American**	**Total**
Non athlete	Count	16	1	17
	% within Type of person	94.1%	5.9%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	11.3%	6.2%	10.8%
Athlete	Count	84	14	98
	% within Type of person	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	59.2%	87.5%	62.0%
Leadership	Count	3	0	3
	% within Type of person	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	2.1%	.0%	1.9%
Objectified Female	Count	39	1	40
	% within Type of person	97.5%	2.5%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	27.5%	6.2%	25.3%
Total	Count	142	16	158
	% within Type of person	89.9%	10.1%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (3, N=158) =5.09, p=.136

Table A-5: Pose of Individuals on Covers of Sports Illustrated by Gender

Pose		Male	Female	Total
Action/In Motion	Count	1363**	52**	1415**
	% within Gender of person(s)	57.8%	30.4%	56.0%
Posed/Inactive	Count	994**	92**	1086**
	% within Gender of person(s)	42.2%	53.8%	42.9%
Seductive/Sexually Suggestive	Count	1**	27**	28**
	% within Gender of person(s)	.0%	15.8%	1.1%
Total	Count	2358**	171**	2529**
	% within Gender of person(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (2, N=2529) =3.83E2, p=.00
**p<.01

Table A-6: Number of Males on the Covers of Sports Illustrated by Race

Race	Frequency	Valid Percent
Caucasian	1273	53.4%
African-American	847	35.5%
Other	54	2.3%
Multiple races on cover	209	8.8%
Total	2383	100.0%

Table A-7: Type of Clothing Worn by Females on Sports Illustrated Covers

Type of Clothing		**Female**	**Group (both men & women)**	**Total**
Uniform (official clothes for competition)	Count	81	20	101
	% within Gender of person(s)	48.8%	40.8%	47.0%
Athletic (clothes used for sport/exercise)	Count	69	7	76
	% within Gender of person(s)	41.6%	14.3%	35.3%
Casual	Count	13	19	32
	% within Gender of person(s)	7.8%	38.8%	14.9%
Glamorous (not appropriate for sports)	Count	3	3	6
	% within Gender of person(s)	1.8%	6.1%	2.8%
Total	Count	166	49	215
	% within Gender of person(s)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A-8: Camera Angle of Female Sports Illustrated Covers Disaggregated by Race

Camera angle		Caucasian	African-American	Total
Eye level	Count	117	13	130
	% within Camera angle used in shot	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	83.0%	81.2%	82.8%
Up/Aerial	Count	10	1	11
	% within Camera angle used in shot	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	7.1%	6.2%	7.0%
Down/Ground	Count	14	2	16
	% within Camera angle used in shot	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	9.9%	12.5%	10.2%
Total	Count	141	16	157
	% within Camera angle used in shot	89.8%	10.2%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (2, N=157) =0.11, p=1.0

Table A-9: Number of Sports Illustrated Covers by Decade Disaggregated by Race and Gender

	Caucasian Men	African-American Men	Caucasian Women	African-American Women
1950-1959	143	7	25	1
1960-1969	299	56	36	0
1970-1979	272**	138**	20**	0**
1980-1989	205**	208**	25**	5**
1990-1999	184*	230*	21*	6*
2000-2008	170	208	15	5

*p<.05
**p<.01

Table A-10: Type of Male on Covers of Sports Illustrated by Race

Type of Person		Caucasian	African-American	Total
Non athlete (spouse, actor)	Count	48	3	50
	% within Type of person	96.0%**	4.0%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	3.7%**	0.4%**	2.3%
Athlete	Count	1148	838	1985
	% within Type of person	57.8%**	42.2%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	88.9%**	98.9%**	92.9%
Coach, owner, referee	Count	66	4	69
	% within Type of person	95.6%**	4.4%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	5.1%**	0.5%**	3.2%
model, dancer, non-athlete cheerleader	Count	0	0	3
	% within Type of person	100.0%**	0%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	0%**	0%**	0.1%
Mixed group	Count	28	2	30
	% within Type of person	93.3%**	6.7%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	2.2%**	0.2%**	1.4%
Total	Count	1290	847	2137
	% within Type of person	60.4%**	39.6%**	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%**	100.0%**	100.0%

χ^2 (4, N=2137) =77.79, p=.00
**p<.01

Table A-11: Percentage of Sports Illustrated Covers by Decade Disaggregated by Gender

Decade	Men	Women	Group (men & women)
1950-1959	79.7%	12.9%	7.4%
1960-1969	89.3%	8.7%	2.1%
1970-1979	93.0%	4.8%	2.3%
1980-1989	92.4%	6.0%	1.6%
1990-1999	91.7%	6.5%	1.8 %
2000-2008	94.1%	4.6%	1.2%

Table A-12: Location of cover photographs on Sports Illustrated by Race and Gender

Location		White	Black	Total
Sport setting	Count	101	12	113
	% within Location of picture	89.4%	10.6%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	56.1%	66.7%	57.1%
Non-sport setting	Count	79	6	85
	% within Location of picture	92.9%	7.1%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	43.9%	33.3%	42.9%
Total	Count	180	18	198
	% within Location of picture	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
	% within Race of person	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

χ^2 (1, N=198) =.744, p=.273

Vita

Chanel Leisa Lattimer is originally from Severn, Maryland, where her parents still reside. She attended Princeton University where she graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a certificate in African-American studies. At Princeton, Chanel was a four-year Varsity letter winner and captain of the Women's track and field team. She also served as the President of the Varsity Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Currently, Chanel is a Master's student in the Department of Exercise, Sport, and Leisure Studies where she is pursuing a degree in Sport Studies with a concentration in Sport Management.

Chanel's research interest is African-American women and sport. She wrote her undergraduate thesis on racial disparity in the participation rates of women's intercollegiate athletics. She had a similar paper published as a student editorial in the *NCAA News* in 2001. She plans to pursue a law degree and attend law school in 2010.