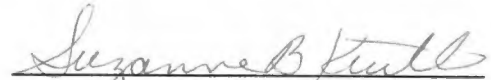
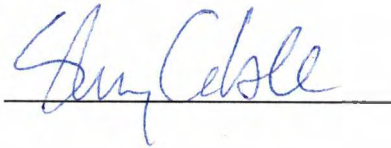


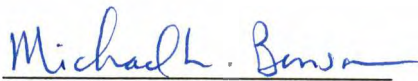
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Gerald D. Harrison entitled "Following Women's Sports: The Behavior of Fans". I have examined the final 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 Arts, with a major in Sociology.


Suzanne B. Kurth, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

FOLLOWING WOMEN'S SPORTS: THE BEHAVIOR OF FANS

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

Gerald D. Harrison
May 1999

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

Ethan Mathews for his reminder of the joys of life and what it has to behold, when seen
through a child's perceptive.

I also dedicate this thesis to the memory of Adam Harrison whose life, love of family,
hard work, and views were a constant reminder, while growing up, of obstacle and
experience that exist in a full life, and also "not to monkey with things".

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ABSTRACT

The sociology of sport literature provides limited information about ordinary sports audiences, too often focusing on the extremes--hooligans or rowdies who engage in violent behavior and television viewers who are not direct participants. This paper investigates the behavior and characteristics of fans attending 21 women's competitive events at a large southeastern university. Using qualitative research techniques, fans' characteristics (gender, age, dress) and behaviors (vocalizations, body movements) were recorded. Observations were made at home game/matches for two intercollegiate women's sports (soccer and volleyball). Typically, more men than women attended these events. Fans at these women's events may be less likely to adorn themselves or carry with them school or team paraphernalia, than fans at events which draw more attention (men's football, women's basketball). Fans at women's events may be less likely to engage in the aggressive behavior expressed by a subset of fans at men's sporting events. These women's sports fans refer to players by their first names, and treat them like knowable others rather than unknowable stars, and these fans' perceived relationship with competitors appears to be different than those at men's events. By studying the increasing numbers of fans of collegiate women's sports, our limited knowledge of sports fans at all types of events can be expanded and of the ways in which audience behavior parallels and diverges from other forms of collective behavior.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As sports become a major industry in American society, drawing more fans and more money, sports audiences deserve more attention. Audiences of American sporting events receive much less attention from sociologists than the players and the sports themselves. The sociology of sport literature presents some demographic information about those who attend certain sports events but limited information about their behavior. Much of the limited literature on sports' audiences' behavior focuses on behavior similar to that which occurs in extremely ambiguous emotional situations (e.g., riots). The collective behavior literature gives limited attention to audiences perhaps because audiences do not strongly display the characteristics which are used to distinguish collective behavior from other types of behavior.

Statement of the Problem

Collective behavior researchers have neglected sports audiences, as they have neglected audience behavior in general. While people are part of many audience sometimes even commodified as market audiences, sociologists have had difficulty categorizing audiences and consequently neglected their study. Audiences have the potential to engage in behavior associated with crowds, but such behavior does not always occur. Audiences require separate attention.

Women's sports events have increased rapidly as women have attained more nearly equal opportunity to participate in them. The audiences for many women's intercollegiate sports (other than basketball) are emerging or in transition as their size

grows. Examination of women's sports' audiences provides an opportunity to explore the commonalities audiences may have with other forms of collective behavior and whether gender expectations and beliefs may play a role in women's athletic events.

Significance of the Problem

Few studies focus on sports audiences and those that do concentrate on audiences of men's sports events. Literature on women's athletics is limited and provides little information about audience behaviors and composition. This literature tends to address the physical effects of the sports on the female athlete or the difficulty these athletes experience maintaining their femininity within society. The paucity of literature on audiences at women's sporting events reflects the dearth of literature in the area of audience studies. Women's athletics have not had the same level of fan support as men's athletics, even among women. A woman who attends a sporting event is more likely to watch male athletes than a man is to watch female athletes (Harper 1992). Because women's sports, particularly less visible teams, do not have well developed audiences they provide an opportunity to observe how fan behavior may evolve. This study provides baseline information about women's sports' audiences, specifically at intercollegiate events, and provides a foundation for future research and theory building.

A case study of the audiences at selected intercollegiate women's athletic events provides an opportunity to examine audiences and fan behavior. This study addresses the general question of "Are audiences of women's sports like crowds, in that norms emerge?" Specific questions directing data collection are: (1) Who attends women's sporting events? (2) In what behavior do fans engage? Do these behaviors appear to be those in which audiences generally engage in our society (e.g., applauding good

performances), audiences at other sporting events (men's) engage, or are they emergent? These questions are answered by looking at audiences at two types of women's sporting events at a large southeastern university (The University of Tennessee). A case study approach permits "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin 1989: 23). Relatively unobtrusive observation procedures allow the researcher to have minimal impact on the activity being studied.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR LITERATURE

When a number of people gather together in situations which are not clearly defined, their actions may constitute collective behavior. The boundaries separating different types of collective behaviors are not clearly defined. Exploring how crowds and audiences are similar and different is important to gain greater understanding of the focal point of this research, which is the audiences of women's athletics. A typical crowd is a gathering that is less structured and in which people may engage in a variety of behaviors. An audience is characterized by normative behavior of people gathered for a similar purpose, to witness a focal event. Researchers have experienced difficulty conceptualizing people who gather for a sporting event. Not everyone in an audience does the same thing nor is there for the same reason, but normative behavior is apparent whether it is scripted or emergent. This project explores audience characteristics and behaviors at women's intercollegiate sporting events, attempting to discover if audiences exhibit emergent norms.

Crowds

A crowd is a form of collective behavior characterized by an ambiguous or unstructured nature; a lack of clearly defined, shared expectations of how to behave; and an uncertain outcome (Turner and Killian 1972). When people are immersed in a crowd, they lose their sense of being unique persons, experience deindividuation, and their sense of responsibility may be lessened through diffusion of responsibility. A person's self-consciousness is lowered, which may result in weaker social controls; guilt, shame, fear,

and commitment may disappear. Normal everyday behaviors may be replaced with aggression, risk taking, self-enhancement, stealing, vandalism, or swearing (Turner 1964).

Theories of crowd behavior in part address how people come to be a part of a crowd and in part why they behave as they do. For example, the early theorist Gustav Le Bon, influenced by the events surrounding the French Revolution, focused on how much people were influenced by one another's copresence and the lack of normative restraints on behavior (1879). What came to be called the contagion view emphasized how people got caught up in crowd behavior.

The 20th century symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer (1951) differentiated four types of crowds: the casual crowd, the acting crowd, the expressive crowd, and the conventionalized crowd. A gathering on the sidewalk formed to watch something interesting, for example, a spontaneous fist fight or a street preacher, constitutes a casual crowd. Lynch mobs and riots are representative forms of acting crowds; members become caught up in the emotional excitement of what they are doing. High emotions and physical uproar or a rhythmical movement of the body characterizes another type of crowd, the expressive crowd. Those partaking of a rock concert exemplify an expressive crowd. The last type of crowd is the conventionalized crowd. In the conventionalized crowd, individual excitement is expressed in an established, regularized pattern of behavior (Perry and Pugh 1978).

J. Browne (1972) took Blumer's concepts further by proposing a continuum for spectator behavior. One end of the continuum is a mob, which is characterized by aggression and hostility, and includes riots and sport fan violence. Next on the continuum

is an expressive crowd which is unrestrained, but does not exhibit violence. Browne (1972) described a conventionalized crowd as characterized by established patterns of behavior and certain expectations of its members. Being a part of any crowd allows individuals to behave in ways that they normally would not. The atmosphere of a crowd allows individuals to explain and justify their actions because normal inhibitions are reduced; therefore, individuals may express attitudes and behave in ways that violate cultural norms. While this part of Browne's continuum refers to different types of crowds, the remainder of his continuum specifically describes sports audiences and will be revisited in the discussion of audiences.

Sociologists Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian strongly influenced contemporary views of crowds. They argue that crowd members are self-selected people who gather together because they share certain predispositions and latent tendencies (Turner and Killian 1972). Thus, people who differ by income, education, and other social characteristics may come together for a common reason. When people converge, the crowd generates and is governed by normative control; people communicate to each other what they believe are appropriate lines of action (Turner 1964). People begin to think and feel similarly and have a sense that everyone should share the same feelings and definitions, and this belief functions as a constraint on individuals (Turner and Killian 1972). Norms emerge on a group level; thus conceptions of appropriate behavior are established by the crowd (Turner and Killian 1972).

Emergent norm theory describes how norms may be established and guide behavior within a crowd (Turner 1964; Turner and Killian 1972). Behavior in a crowd is different from behavior outside of the crowd; thus, norms that guide collective behavior

are specific to the situation, in reaction to a given event (Turner 1964). When a situation is unclear, people look to others for signs of appropriate and acceptable behaviors. The behavior of a few conspicuous, active crowd members becomes perceived as the dominant course of action, which is the onset of a norm emerging (Turner and Killian 1972). Once a norm has been formulated, crowd members enforce it, convert others to it, and suppress incongruous behavior (Turner 1964; Turner and Killian 1972).

Clark McPhail (1991) raised questions about the conceptualization of crowd and proposed usage of the term gathering. A gathering involves two or more people in the same place at the same time with the potential to behave collectively. Such gatherings have a three phase life cycle, which includes the assembling or formation process, the assembled gathering of people, and the dispersing process. These three phases are exhibited at sporting events, such as those McPhail studied. McPhail's critique points to some of the difficulties of fitting audiences into definitions of crowds, which emphasize ambiguity and activity. The term audience may also refer to a collection of people who may have the potential for collective behavior.

Audiences

Audience is another term used to describe an assemblage of people who may act in concert. Audience members often seem to be acting in the same manner, but they are not necessarily engaging in what is typically thought of as collective behavior (Turner and Killian 1972). They may be adhering to long-standing norms associated with a situation. For example, it is traditionally appropriate to applaud at the end of a theatrical performance or a public lecture. Most everyone does so regardless of the actions of others or even the quality of the performance; however, the intensity and the duration of

their applause may be affected by others' behavior. In any audience some members do not respond to the intensity or duration of the behavior of others; they do not engage in collective behavior. They may become focused on just one aspect of the performance and concentrate entirely on that aspect, not attending to other aspects of the performance and the behavior of other audience members. Of course, during episodes of collective behavior not all people behave the same.

Browne defines an audience as a number of persons subject to a common source of communication, but with minimal or no communication with each other (1972: 5). He expanded this definition when he developed his aforementioned continuum for spectator behavior. The other part of this continuum describes two types of sporting audiences. The first is a diffuse audience, in which members do not have physical contact with each other. The second type is a concrete audience, in which members are in close proximity but they have no interaction with each other. Out of all of the categories of crowd and audience mentioned, Blumer's concept of a conventionalized crowd, as modified by Browne, is most appropriate for the sports' audiences, which are the focus of this research. This is because a sports audience, like a conventionalized crowd, usually consists of a large number of people who are gathered in a specific area for the same purpose or reason (Turner and Killian 1972). The people in the audience have congregated for the same ultimate reason (to take in an event), although their motivations for doing so may differ. Thus, an audience typically may be gathered to listen to a speaker, hear a musical performance, or watch an athletic competition. Those attending a sports event belong in this category, as their behavior may be relatively predictable and may not differ much from game to game (Browne 1972).

All audiences play a part in the performance they are watching (Turner and Killian 1972). This participation can be singing along at a concert or cheering for the home team. Some audiences' participation is more active than others. For example, applauding politely at the end of a symphony is participation, although it may not be as obvious as the rituals and responses of a charismatic religious congregation. In a variety of ways, audiences engage in overt responses to what is happening on stage or on the field of play, responses which represent ways to "interact" with the players or performers. Thus, audience behaviors may be correlated with events on the field of play to determine audience participation.

The behavior of the audience at an athletic competition is influenced by widely shared norms, although those norms may not be as well defined as those at theatrical or operatic performances. Standing up when your team appears on the court or field, booing when the officials make an apparently unfair call, or applauding when an injured player is able to walk off the field all are examples of audience norms observed at men's sports events in the United States. At a sporting event the norms do not as narrowly restrict behavior as the norms operative at a symphony. Declining to applaud, chatting with a friend, or paying more attention to the people in the stands than those playing the game are not only acceptable behaviors, but often go unremarked by other audience members. Erving Goffman refers to these last types of behaviors as side involvements (1963). A side involvement is an activity that an individual can carry on without threatening or confusing the maintenance of the individual's main line of action (Goffman 1963). In contrast, a main involvement is one that absorbs the majority of an individual's attention and interest (like the action on a basketball court), and drives most of that person's

actions (Goffman 1963). At a sporting event, watching the game is usually the main involvement. Both types of involvement are considered in the analysis of spectator behaviors.

The setting may influence audience behavior, as well as the properties of that setting. Specifically, variables that may influence spectator behavior: geographical location, time and duration, population, occupancy time, and functional position of inhabitants (Browne 1972). Using functional position as an example, in an audience, people are physically close to each other, and sense that others can observe their actions. As an indicator of population, the size of the audience was recorded. Attendance figures were available from the Lady Vols athletic department, and were compared for each game. A smaller audience may be more susceptible to collective behavior, as an individual has a greater chance of affecting other audience members. In addition, a smaller audience, located within a smaller physical area, may result in audience members having more influence on each other (Browne 1972). Browne (1972) also indicates that the audience population may be characterized in terms of gender, age, race, or social class. Therefore, these characteristics of audience members deserve attention.

Finally, each individual's emotions may contribute to a common mood. Three elements of emotional contagion are heightened suggestibility (people are more likely to take cues from others), heightened stimulation (stimulation takes on a circular response), and homogeneity of experience (people share dispositions and backgrounds) (Browne 1972). The members of the group share a common mood, creating an emotional atmosphere (Browne 1972). The stronger the emotional atmosphere, the more likely the audience is to become expressive.

Audiences participate in activities in settings which lack the ambiguity of the situations in which crowds seem to form. Members of audiences are aware of norms governing spectator behavior. These norms may offer more latitude in behavior than norms governing everyday behavior but they provide more structure than exists for many crowds. Audiences have the potential for actions that crowds may more commonly exhibit, e.g., the formation of emergent norms.

Sports Audiences

The people gathered at a sporting event are a type of audience. When people assemble to view a sporting event they adhere to the norms generally prevailing for these activities and ones that may prevail in specific venues. People sit in the stands and watch the game, having little or no communication with each other, and are somewhat subdued. The operation of norms governing sports audiences in general and ones associated with particular sports (e.g., bowling, golf) may produce behaviors consistent from game to game. Components of the athletic events, such as spectacular plays or poor officiating, may stimulate particular responses.

Two foci of sports audience research are armchair spectators and rowdy or violent audience behavior. Armchair spectators seem to share few characteristics with participants in lynch mobs and other extreme forms of collective behavior. On the other hand, the rioting behavior which occurs sometimes after teams win national championship games best fits traditional conceptions of collective behavior with the general lack of structure and emotional intensity.

Armchair Spectators

The contemporary literature on sport spectators has a limited number of foci. One focus is the armchair spectator, whose experience of an event is mediated through an electronic implement such as a television or radio. Electronic or armchair audiences are amassed for certain events by continual advertising of the upcoming events and the review of those events by news programs (Messner, Duncan, and Wachs 1996). People may view games through electronic media for several reasons. Spectators may watch or listen to an event because the location of the event is too distant or inaccessible, tickets may be scarce, and/or the whole experience may be too costly. Others emphasize the rewards of radio and television viewing, e.g., better coverage of the event than can be had at a stadium or arena. Another set of rewards is associated with the comfort of staying some place familiar, like one's home, car, or local tavern. Spectators who prefer their home territory also may have specific rituals associated with their viewing, such as gathering with friends every weekend to watch their favorite team (Gantz and Wenner 1995). The use of television or radio does not enable the spectators to directly see or experience the events of the sporting arena in addition to the game or the events that may occur after the sporting event has concluded. Whatever their reasons, sports lovers who take in the sport at home are an active, participatory audience (Gantz and Wenner 1995), but a more difficult audience to study than those assembled at an event.

Rowdy/Violent Behavior

The second focus of research literature on audience conduct at sports events is violent or rowdy behavior, and the social origins of this behavior. Violence occurs frequently at certain sports events and as a consequence the typical spectator may be

stereotyped negatively as a “slack jawed bloodthirsty, or unruly cretin” (Beisser 1979: 78).

Separated from the field of play, deprived of one’s community involvement, and jaded about the great play, the sports fan is still excited by unexpected violence. The beast in the stadium becomes the insatiable crowd (Beisser 1979: 78).

Audience or fan characteristics vary by sport, i.e., sports attract fans inclined to engage in different types of behaviors. Armstrong and Harris (1991) suggest that a significant factor in British hooligan behavior is the generation of violence in a particular sub-cultural environment. The violent fan or hooligan typically comes from a background in which violence is tolerated, and some fans’ hooligan behavior stems from problems of poverty and unemployment (Armstrong and Harris 1991). Complex chains of events first produce violence and then spread it among other European soccer fans. Rioting after a game, especially by the losing team’s fans, also occurs. Fans view the visiting team as invasive and alien, people who need to be repelled (Goldstein 1979). If the home team loses, the fans may release their anger at the visitors, who already are negatively conceptualized. Or, they may perceive that since the players were not able to defeat the other team, they will find a way to do so themselves (Goldstein 1979). The people who behave violently or who are classified as hooligans do not gather solely with the intent to be violent, but instead are people who gather to enjoy a game who share a tendency to turn symbolic opposition into physical encounter (Armstrong and Harris 1991).

Fans

Within an audience, some enthusiastic individuals may be classified as fans. “The word fan is a derivative of the word fanatic, which comes from the Latin word *fanum*” (Smith, Patterson, Williams, and Hogg 1981: 27). The term fanatic was used in Latin

literature to refer to “being put into an intensely enthusiastic state by a deity” (Smith, Patterson, Williams, and Hogg 1981: 27). In 18th century Germanic language, the term fan was used to describe “one who is moved by excessive enthusiasm or zeal” (Smith, Patterson, Williams, and Hogg 1981: 27).

In attempting to explain fans’ enthusiasm, theorists propose that fans believe that they can enhance their own prestige and self-worth by associating with successful sports teams or athletes. For example, Browne (1972) argues that one of the main reasons people watch sporting events is for a sense of identity. People gain a sense of belonging, both to the team and the other spectators. When spectators identify with their favorite teams and particular players (heroes), they feel proud when their team wins and dejected when it loses (Browne 1972). Another reason people are sports fans is to escape mundane chores and duties. Watching sports gives people a break from their routines and a chance to enjoy their leisure time. In addition, being a sports fan also provides an acceptable release for violent tension. When spectators whistle, applaud, and shout, they are releasing aggressive feelings in a safe environment (Browne 1972).

Smith, Patterson, Williams, and Hogg (1981) offer a typology of fans ranging from being a moderate sports fan, to a devoted sports fan, and at the most extreme, an addicted sports fan. These categorizations are based on a fan's degree of passion and engrossment. The categories were developed based on a person's ranking on certain dimensions. One dimension was that a person would invest varying amounts of time and money in various forms of direct and indirect sports involvement. Another was that the person would have varying degrees of knowledge concerning sports performers, sports statistics, and sports strategies. A third dimension focused on level of emotional

involvement with individuals or groups in the sport system. A fourth involved the person's experience of feelings and mood states while taking in a sporting event. A fifth dimension was that the person would include sport as a major topic of conversation with both acquaintances and strangers. The final dimension was the likelihood that the person would arrange leisure time around professional and amateur sports events. These dimensions or continua measure involvement.

Janet Lever (1983) developed a typology of soccer fans. Her classification includes three categories: weak, average, and strong. The weak fan had not attended a soccer game in the past month, did not usually listen to games on the radio, recognized photographs of only famous stars (e.g., Pele), and was not able to place the name of a soccer team with its city of origin. Average fans made sport a routine part of their lives. They had attended at least one game in the past month, listened to the radio for major games, frequently read the sports page before other news, recognized World Cup players but not lesser-known players, and were able to place two soccer teams with their cities of origin. Strong fans made sport a central focus in their lives. They attend two or more games each month, listened to every radio program of their favorite teams as well as broadcasts of other teams, turned to the sports page first, and knew almost every player and team name in the league (Lever 1983). Although these categories were developed to apply specifically to soccer fans, similar fan categories may be generalized to the fans of other sports.

People who enjoy following their favorite teams may take their status as fans for granted. They may have never experienced a time when they were not able, for whatever reason, to be fans of a particular sport. For example, no men were allowed to attend the

first intercollegiate women's basketball game (Beezley and Hobbs 1983). More frequently, however, women were the group who experienced restriction. Women have had to struggle both to participate in sports and to become fans of various athletic events.

The Growth of Women's Sports

A continuing trend in America is the ever-increasing number of female organized sports participants. Part of the phenomenal growth of high school and collegiate female sports since 1970 is due to the implementation of Title IX, passed in 1972 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1980). Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in federally assisted educational programs; it states, "No person in the United States 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" (U.S. Commission on Civil Right 1980, Coakley 1994: 210). As this educational amendment has been interpreted by the courts, it mandated equity in school athletic programs. In many cases, schools had to be prodded to make changes, increasing spending for women's sports, decreasing spending for men's sports, or doing some of both. In recent years, for example, to comply with Title IX, an increasing number of colleges and universities have added women's sports teams to balance their investments in men's sports. Also, men's minor sports (e.g. wrestling) have been dropped. Changes continue to occur in the availability of opportunities for women to participate in sports.

Historically, women's participation in sports was constrained in various ways. Some sports were seen as unsuitable for women for physiological or psychological reasons, as well as their presumed nature (Beezley and Hobbs 1983). Women's participation was restricted by special rules in some sports and even barred in others (e.g.,

football). When participation was permitted, the parameters and rules of the particular game were often altered (number of tennis sets) and more lenient (length of golf holes). For example, the first court for women's basketball was divided into three sections. Subsequently, women played half court basketball (half the team played on each side). Not until the passage of Title IX and law suits under its aegis were high school and college women throughout the United States given the opportunity to play full court basketball. In Oak Ridge, Tennessee a young woman and her parents pursued a lawsuit arguing that half court high school basketball denied her the opportunity to be competitive at the collegiate level, where women played full court basketball.

Even when allowed to participate, women athletes have been subject to language that reflects and helps maintain the secondary status of women. Language can be used to place women and men within a system of differentiation and stratification with social consequences. The naming of many women's and men's athletic teams reinforces a basic element of gender division. Contemporary team names reflect both the emphasis on gender division (e.g., tigers for male teams and lady tigers for female teams), and the inequality in society, for example, giving males adult status (cats) and females child status (kittens). Traditionally, athletic qualities deemed to be most desirable (e.g. competitive, aggressive, strong) fit the masculine stereotype better than the feminine one. Reflecting these patterns, team or school images, symbols, and mascots tend to be male. Women are "others" when they do participate (Eitzen and Zinn 1989). In sum, women's team names and logos may perpetuate and strengthen the image of female inferiority by either trivializing the women or making them non-athletic (Eitzen and Zinn 1989). For example, the Notre Dame University men's athletic team name and mascot is the

Fighting Irish, but the women are referred to as the Lady Irish. The name Lady Irish is void of the competitive reference to fighting.

Still today, women's participation in sports is perceived as requiring explanation because of gender stereotypes and structural barriers. Increased sports participation among females reflects five changes identified by Coakley (1994). The first change is structural, new opportunities. Simply, increased opportunities to play increase the likelihood that more females, especially younger ones, will participate. A second reason is the previously mentioned government legislation (e.g., Title IX) that mandates equitable treatment for women in federally supported schools. A third more diffuse explanation is how the women's movement has challenged gender stereotypes. Feminists have asserted that females are stronger and more self-confident when they have the opportunity to show competence and demonstrate their equality, both intellectually and physically. Coakley's fourth reason is the health and fitness movement. Increased health awareness and the general public's interest in fitness have combined to encourage women's as well as men's involvement in physical activities, including team sports. Finally, the increased media coverage of women in sports has influenced more women to participate. When girls and women see and read about the achievements of women athletes, and are exposed to such role models, they may be motivated to participate in sports themselves.

At all levels of competition (high school, collegiate, professional), women's sports generally receive less media attention than men's sports, as a quick glance at either newspaper sports sections or television evening news sports will reveal. In the past, media gatekeepers may have perceived there was limited interest in reading or hearing

about women's sports, reflecting the impact of gender stereotypes in our society. Of equal or greater importance perhaps was the limited corporate investment in women's sports (media coverage, corporate sponsorship and fan interest intertwined). Athletic tournaments need sponsors to foot the bill. When women's sports were perceived to have a limited audience, they could not attract sponsors. With the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the efforts of sports activists such as tennis player Billie Jean King, women's sports began to gain more publicity, larger audiences and professional women athletes more income. According to Parade Magazine, "Women may be the new superstars of tennis — drawing crowds equal to those for the men" (1998: 29). Despite their star status, these women still do not make as much money as men. Although the U.S. Open gives a \$700,000 prize to both men and women tennis players, Wimbledon and the French and Australian grand slams do not (Parade Magazine 1998). Thus, changes have occurred, but inequities remain. Whatever the attitudes were in the 1970s, in the 1990s, the vast majority of people in the United States and many other countries agree that women should have the same opportunity for participation as men (Coakley 1994).

Statistics clearly indicate the changes which have occurred. High school athletic programs for females grew immensely during the 1970s, and in the 1980s and 1990s, programs for college women grew dramatically (Coakley 1994). Girls' participation in high school sports rose from about 300,000 in 1971 to 2.4 million in 1996 (Marcus 1997: 88). At the college level, the number of female athletes increased from 80,040 in 1982 to 123,832 in 1996 (Marcus 1997: 88). Because of such growth, more people have the chance to experience women's athletics, directly or indirectly. Beginning in the 1970s, as

the number of participants in high school and collegiate programs grew due to Title IX, a larger pool of qualified adult women athletes developed. At the same time, familiarity with women athletes and female competition increased, encouraging new efforts to create professional women's sports teams.

Women's Audiences Development

A number of reasons may be responsible for the increase in interest in women's sports over the past three decades. Some people have contact with women's athletics because they enjoy sports regardless of the player's gender. In addition, personal acquaintance with players exerts a strong influence: an NCAA survey on basketball, conducted by Taylor Research Consulting Group, suggests that knowing a player is a big factor for many of the audience members' attendance (NCAA 1998). People may be exposed to women's athletics through being related to a female athlete; for example, a daughter, a sister, or significant other.

Whether a person follows a sport may be linked to whether the person has personal ties to the sport. A personal tie could be direct, present or past participation in the sport, or indirect, through the involvement of a child. One study found that if people played basketball at any level, either currently (at every chance or in an organized program) or at a young age, their interest in the sport was higher (NCAA 1998). Also, if people have a child who plays basketball, whether intramural, junior high school, high school, or college basketball, they are more likely to attend college or professional women's sports (NCAA 1998). As more women become involved in sports, the number of people with personal ties should increase dramatically. Therefore, the potential exists for the number of female spectators to increase.

Women compete in some of the previously established “men’s” sports, which means the sport itself is already well known by most people, which may make attendance more probable. Women's sports (e.g., basketball, softball, tennis, swimming, golf, and volleyball) use rules and equipment similar to those employed in men's sports. Therefore, fans have a better understanding of the sport and feel more comfortable participating as an audience member. Also, for some, interest in a sport may be transferable from men’s teams to women’s teams.

Gender and Fans

Gender refers to the sociocultural characteristics associated with the biological categories of male and female (Six and Eckes 1991). Gender norms and stereotypes influence our thoughts and behaviors. Gender is one of the most important social statuses shaping how people act and how others perceive their actions. What is considered appropriate behavior for men and women reflects gender stereotypes. Margaret Mead (1935) established, there is a variation between societies and cultures, and within them over time. As the norms within a society change, some groups or individuals in the society may cling to the previously established expectations for behavior, to what they perceive are traditional, if not “natural” ways of behaving. Gender norms direct women to various behaviors and activities, which commonly have less status and power than those of men (Glick and Fiske 1997). Traditionally, involvement in and interest in sports better fit masculine than feminine gender stereotypes; however, this is changing as more women participate in sports.

Taylor Research Consulting Group, Inc. studied NCAA college basketball with an equal focus on both men's and women's. One of the goals of the research was to

understand what leads fans to the sport and their underlying reasons for being fans. The audiences were divided into three categories: not interested, casual or slight, and Big Fan. A majority of the respondents (men's college basketball fans) were classified as "Big Fans". The typical Big Fan was an unmarried college graduate male around the age of 32 with a reported income of about \$41,000 (NCAA 1998). Big fans of men's college basketball have a tendency to attend live events and watch them on television, own clothing with the college logo, and rely on the media for news about college basketball.

Interest in men's college basketball is associated with positive perceptions of the sport across six key areas: competition, character, connection, camaraderie, community, and catharsis (NCAA 1998). A majority of these men's basketball fans believed that for a sport to hold their interest, it should involve a high level of competitive intensity and a good chance of an upset. The character of the people involved (players, coaches) in a sport and of the sport itself was also very important. People were most interested in and became fans of sports that had well-disciplined teams and players that played for the "love" of the game. If the team and sport both have character, the fans become much more involved.

Also, the study discussed the way fans identify with the sport, or their connection to the sport. In most college settings the connection is to the team or school instead of the players or the league. Respondents reported that games made them feel more connected to the college (NCAA 1998). The majority agreed that a college basketball game is a good event to attend with their family and friends; indicating that camaraderie is a critical stimulant of interest. Another interest of Big Fans was the exciting, energetic atmosphere they experience at the game, and discussing the game with other people.

This sense of community gave people the feeling of being part of something larger than themselves. Finally, men's college basketball games promoted a strong degree of emotional release, a feeling of catharsis. Respondents reported that "The men's game is exciting, intense, but relaxing at the same time" (NCAA 1998). These six key areas may be used to understand fans' attachment to other sports.

The report mentions that women's college basketball is gaining popularity. The NCAA study found that of the 44.4 million women's basketball fans nationwide, only five percent identified themselves as a Big Fan of women's basketball. This is in contrast to the fifteen percent of the 68.8 million men's basketball fans who call themselves Big Fans. A majority of the fans say they are slightly interested in women's college basketball. A revealing statement from a corporate partner of a women's college basketball team was included: "Women's sports will continue to grow. There are tremendous opportunities for NCAA women's basketball" (NCAA 1998). Women's sports may be seen as a market.

In the midst of this optimistic outlook for women's sports, knowledge about fans of women's sports is limited. Some may perceive that women's college basketball appeals only to women. The NCAA study found the female/male breakdown to be fairly consistent across the three categories of fans. Overall, men were more interested in women's college basketball than women, with 32% of men and 27% of women claiming to be fans (Fleser 1998).

The study indicated that the issue of character influenced people to watch women's sports. Fans often cited the character of both players and coaches as an important factor when they decide to watch women's basketball. People also perceived

that players made good role models because they are well-disciplined, are loyal to their school, and play for the love of the game. Competition may be an issue for women's sports. Fans may perceive women's versions of sports such as basketball as less competitive. Camaraderie was also important, with a majority of people agreeing that women's games are good events to attend with friends or family (NCAA 1998).

Studies of Sports Audiences

The limited set of studies of sports audiences have used various types of samples, research strategies, and analytic techniques to study them. Clark McPhail (1991) studied the physical movement of gatherings and developed a basic methodology of how to study or categorize different sorts of collective behavior. He identified forty forms of "collective behavior-in-common," behavior in which at least two or more people overtly engage, which are frequently observed in a variety of temporary gatherings; for example, applauding or whistling (McPhail 1991: 63). If individuals engage in different behaviors at the same time or different times, he refers to it as "collective behavior-in-concert" (McPhail 1991: 72). An example of this type of collective behavior includes a two-party chant in which one party chants a phrase such as "What do we want?" and the second party replies with a phrase such as "Peace." Another contribution from McPhail is the suggested categorization of the gathering into varied and alternating basic forms of collective behavior to facilitate scaling the complexity of collective behavior.

Smith, Peterson, Williams, and Hogg (1981) used snowball sampling to locate deeply committed male sports fans. The respondents were asked questions about the frequency and degree to which they followed sports. If responses to these questions were very high on selected criteria, the individual was included in the sample. Using personal

interviews, they created a profile of such fans. They then used this profile to assess various theories of spectator involvement, which included areas such as how one becomes socialized into the sports fan role, the extent to which team sport loyalties emerge, the extent to which attachments to sports heroes develop, and the degree to which a person's quality of life is affected (Smith, Patterson, Williams, and Hogg 1981). They justified the use of a snowball sample to study sports spectators by citing the exploratory nature of their project.

Wann and Branscombe (1992) used a different approach to study sports fans by developing a scale measuring degree of identification with a team. They examined how respondents identified with media presentations of sporting events. They selected undergraduate students from the University of Kansas, depending on their degree of identification with their college's basketball team. Individuals with extreme scores (high or low) were included in the study, which involved eight different conditions. The treatment was reading an article reporting on the performance of the team. Each treatment group received a different article, which described a basketball game between the University of Kansas and the University of Oklahoma. The outcome of the games varied, as did the sports writer's attitude toward the team. After reading the article, the students completed a survey that asked them to rate their current mood state (Wann and Branscombe 1992).

Another approach to studying sports audiences was to look at audiences gathered at locations other than where the athletic event was occurring. Some researchers recognized that sports bars provide a popular environment for sports viewing because in addition to access to sports television, they also provide food, drink, and the company of

other fans. Susan Eastman and Arthur Land (1997) conducted a participant observation study of sport bars. They trained 34 pairs of undergraduate students to visit sports bars and observe the patrons. Student observers were instructed to look for the commonalities of setting and viewer behavior, and to listen for comments revealing of fans' motivations and needs (Eastman and Land 1997). In addition to their observations, the students also asked patrons and staff open-ended questions about sports viewing. The interviews provided additional information on control of the television, sales and attendance figures, policies regarding patron behavior, and staff accommodation of fan requests (Eastman and Land 1997). The observations and interview data were transformed into narrative reports and then analyzed by the researchers. The researchers compared incidents and stories, and focused on the anomalies of audience behavior.

Over the years, researchers have designed various methods to study audiences. In addition, researchers have attempted to explain why some people become fans of sports. The influence of gender provides fodder for ways to study and explore the audiences of women's sporting events. This research focuses on who attends women's sporting events, and whether the behaviors in which they engage appear to reflecting prevailing norms for sports audiences or emerge at the events.

Summary

Crowds are one form of collective behavior that have been explained in terms of contagion, convergence, and emergence. Audiences are gatherings which have the potential to be collective behavior. Audience behavior is guided by norms, and the presence of other members may influence individuals. Within an audience, some members may be classified as fans. Researchers have developed typologies of fans

typically when focused on a particular sport. Audience behavior is the main emphasis of this project.

Changes in public sentiment as well as legal developments have aided the growth of women's athletics. More females are participating in sports, due to greater opportunity and legal advances. As the number of female athletes and athletic events increases, the size of their audiences increase. An NCAA study reported that women's college basketball is becoming more popular, and that it contains characteristics that people claim are important to watching sports. People may watch women's sports because someone they know participates, because they once participated in a sport, or because they enjoy sports in general. Literature on sports audiences is limited, focusing on anomalies such as armchair spectators (those who do not attend games but watch them on television) or on rowdy or violent audience behavior. Although women's athletics and their audiences are expanding, little research has focused on the personal characteristics of those who compose women's sports audiences, on the behavior of attendees, or on how people's interest in women's sports develops and continues.

Researchers have tried different techniques to study sports audiences. These techniques include observing physical movement, studying audiences gathered at locations other than at the athletic events, and developing categories of sports fans. The current project takes a step away from these techniques and uses participant observation to examine the attendees and behaviors of audience members at women's athletic events.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Of the many different research approaches available, the case study approach was deemed most appropriate for this exploratory study of women's sports audiences. A case study is a research strategy that is applicable to many social settings. A case study provides a basis for exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory research (Yin 1989). Case studies may be used to explain how and why phenomena occur. They do not require control over behavioral events and they allow focus on contemporary incidents (Yin 1989). Observational data were collected for this case study of audiences by participating in the audiences at athletic events. Participant observation presents a many-sided view of human behavior in its natural setting (Lofland and Lofland 1984).

Participant observation has both advantages and disadvantages; however, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages for this project. One advantage of participant observation is that contemporary, everyday life situations may be the focus of research. Another advantage is the opportunity to study human behavior and interaction in a natural setting, which provides the researcher with a greater and deeper understanding of the subject. A third advantage is that the method is open-ended and flexible (Jorgensen 1989). A disadvantage of participant observation is that only overt behavior may be studied. The thoughts and attitudes guiding those behaviors cannot be observed. Another disadvantage is that observations rely on the researcher's memory and interpretation of events (Jorgensen 1989).

Studying large audiences poses logistical problems for the researcher. McPhail and Schweingruber (1995) used various techniques to direct the observers' attention to behaviors that the investigators considered important. They employed sampling procedures that required multiple observers in randomly selected locations, technology for systematically observing and recording different places at the same time, and a detailed strategy for collating and analyzing the observations recorded (McPhail and Schweingruber 1995; McPhail 1997). The labor intensive research technique used by McPhail and Schweingruber, although thorough, was not an option available to this researcher, due to time, technology, and funding constraints. The audiences at the events observed for this project were much smaller than those studied by McPhail, permitting use of fewer observers. Also, the focus of this research is on more gross behavior.

Sample

Audiences at women's intercollegiate athletic events at The University of Tennessee were selected for this study. The University of Tennessee sponsors ten women's sports, not including cheerleading and club teams (University of Tennessee 1998). The sporting events chosen were scheduled intercollegiate women's home soccer games and volleyball matches. The women's soccer team is relatively new at the university (added in 1996), while the women's volleyball team has been around much longer (established in 1973 under the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, AIAW) (University of Tennessee 1998). Time constraints and costs prohibited study of all women's sports events. The women's basketball audience was deliberately omitted; due to the team's extreme success and popularity, its unusually large following makes this audience an anomaly.

Twenty-one of the 22 volleyball and soccer games were attended (see List of Scheduled Home Games in Appendix). Attending the volleyball match against Kentucky on October 30 was impossible. The Southeastern Conference (SEC) determined the conference dates and times these sporting events took place and the head coaches of the teams determined non-conference games (see List of Scheduled Games in Appendix). The head coaches contact the teams that they would like to play against and then work out dates and times with the other teams' coaches. The dates and times were made widely available. Free schedules are available at the sporting events, local businesses, and the women's athletic office.

The research settings were the university's soccer complex (see Soccer Complex in Appendix) and the athletic center (see Sports Arena in Appendix) in which the sporting events took place. Three researchers attended all of the games observed. During the first part of both the soccer and volleyball seasons (through September 25), the researcher and the other two observers sat together to coordinate data gathering. During these games, the observers moved, as a group, to various sections of the audience. At volleyball matches, the observers would sit in a different section of bleachers for each game of the match (see Sports Arena in Appendix). A volleyball match consists of the best of five games (the first team to win three games wins the match). During the first game, the observers sat in the right section of bleachers, moved to the middle bleachers for the second game, and sat in the left bleachers during the third game. If the match included more than three games, the observers remained in the left section. At alternate matches, the researchers sat in the permanent bleachers, using the same seating movement pattern. At soccer games, the observers sat in the left section of bleachers during the first half,

walked around near concession stands and behind announcers' booth during halftime, and moved to the center section for the second half (see Soccer Complex in Appendix). At alternate games, the observers began in the right section of bleachers and moved to the center.

After the initial period during which the researchers sat together, each researcher would sit in different sections of the audience, so that all three audience sections at each sport venue could be observed throughout the entire game. The researchers also traded sections after a volleyball game or soccer half to ensure that the observers maintained a fresh perspective and that observations about behavior in a section could be compared.

The audiences were defined as all those people who entered the event venue with the exception of the people at the front gate (ticket sellers, ticket takers, and police), food and merchandise vendors, players, coaches, coaching staff, referees, cheerleaders, mascot, marketing staff, announcers, scorekeepers, ball persons, and, on special occasions, clowns. Entrance to the event was free if you were a University of Tennessee, Knoxville student or had a special pass; everyone else paid admission. Students had to show their college identification and be given a ticket, which was torn when entering the sports facility. Special passes were given out at certain events as well as other locations (for example, local fast food restaurants) and for special promotional days. This pass was a small paper that stated that the bearer of that pass gained free admission.

Data Collection

The researcher and two research assistants (graduate students in sociology) made observations at home games of the women's soccer and volleyball teams. The observers played the role of audience members.

The demographic characteristics of audience members (gender, age, and race) and other visible audience characteristics (wearing school colors, dress, etc.) were recorded to establish basic information about who attends. We recorded when audiences and parts of audiences engaged in selected behaviors (e.g., cheering/yelling, sitting/standing, object waving, arm gestures, walking around), listened to conversations around us to identify fans' interest, engaged in conversations, and asked casual questions. In our field notes we identified environmental influences (cheerleaders, mascots, announcers, music, team members, other spectators, weather conditions, seat placement). Attendance figures and ticket sale information were obtained by talking to staff members, so that size of audience effects can be considered.

The audience members were not aware of our roles as observers. The researchers blended in with the audience. All three observers are college students, two are in the college age group, and one in the older (30+) group. The observers' ages did not separate them from the other audience members. In addition, observers conformed to what appeared to be the norms of the audience by joining in the cheering, participating in the volleyball traditions, and wearing clothing similar to that of other audience members. Observations were made covertly, and field notes were composed immediately after the games, rather than during, to avoid attracting attention. We did not pose a risk to the subjects, as we were observing overt public behavior and only engaged in casual conversations. We did not learn the names of audience members and audience members are not identified in this report. The people working at the event who were asked for attendance figures were informed about the project. These people were the people who

sold tickets, the ticket takers, and the “marketing staff,” all of whom are graduate student assistants.

To ensure reliability, the researcher and two research assistants devised strategies to collect the audience composition data. The observers focused on physical behavior, such as clapping or standing, and social behavior, such as engaging in greetings and overheard conversations. In addition to overt behaviors, researchers observed whether behaviors previously observed at men’s sports events occurred; for example, people making negative comments. During the first phase of the research, observers compared observations of the same audience sections to establish the reliability of the observations. Observers met to read each others’ observations and discuss similarities and variations in them. These comparisons were made to see if researchers were focused on the same types of behaviors. Also, the discussions prompted observers to recall events, which were then added to the original observations. In addition, anomalies in reported observations were discussed. If only one researcher noticed a particular occurrence, or if researchers’ observations conflicted, the researchers attended to those specific aspects during the next event. This process resulted in a high level of agreement about how to make observations, so that similar data were obtained at subsequent events with multiple researchers. Thereafter researchers focused on different sections of the audience so that all sections of the audiences could be observed simultaneously.

Preliminary observations were conducted at several intercollegiate women’s softball games in the spring of 1998. These preliminary observations were done to gain a better conception of how to observe an audience, what things to look for, and how to take and write field notes. Through this preliminary period, many different categories on

which to focus surfaced. I developed an idea of the characteristics and behaviors of people attending women's intercollegiate sports events. From these preliminary observations, I established the demographic characteristics and behaviors to look for at the events studied for this project.

Audience Characteristics

The crowd literature suggests that people in close proximity to one another may stimulate one another to engage in behaviors they might not engage in otherwise and to experience emotional arousal. A sparse audience might exhibit fewer characteristics of collective behavior than one in which a large number of people are gathered in close proximity. Thus audience size was deemed an important characteristic to study.

Size

During spring 1998 various strategies were used to develop estimates of the sizes of audiences at women's sports events. These procedures were not used for this report because public information about attendance was found to be available. For each sport, the number of people reported to be attending each event, based on the number of tickets collected and passes used, was collected. Possible sources of variation in audience size were recorded (e.g., special promotions, quality of opposing team, competing events on campus, and heat). Variation in audience size over the course of the season aids identification of the relative size of any committed followers' group, those who give the highest priority to attending events. When attending games is less attractive or feasible, presumably a higher percentage of those who do attend are loyal or committed followers

The number of people who paid to attend are reported, as well as those who received free admission. Those who paid to attend may be more committed than those who enter free, with some exceptions.

Ages

Associated with variation in audience size may be variations in the ages of audience members and this in turn may alter the types of behaviors in which audience members engage. Special promotions aimed at attracting youth soccer players and Girl and Boy Scouts could increase the size of the audience and increase both the proportion of young audience members and older audience members as parents or other older adults would escort them.

Based on preliminary observations, four categories for age were established: children, adolescents, college age, and older. The observers reached agreement on placing people in these categories. Audience members placed in the children category were those who appeared to be of elementary school age or younger (approximately 10 years old and under). Adolescents were those whose appearance indicated they were junior high or high school age, approximately 11 to 17 years old. The other two age categories are those who were of traditional college age, e.g., university students (ages approximately 18 to 27); and those from an older generation (ages approximately 30 and up), e.g., players' family members, parents of children, or members of the local community. For both sports, family members of players have a special seating area that makes them distinguishable.

Gender

The literature suggests males are more likely than females to attend sports events, so gender was observed. The gender of audience members, male or female, was inferred by observing physical characteristics. Hair color, style, and length; style and type of clothing; and facial features (e.g., facial hair would indicate a male) were indicators of gender. A hand-held grocery counter was used to count audience members of one gender, females. Gender was counted after the starting line-ups were announced, at which time most audience members had arrived. This number was subtracted from the total number of audience members to estimate the males. Gender distribution was estimated at almost every game. After patterns of audience gender composition clearly were established for both sports, the researchers focused on other aspects of the research.

Race

At men's athletic events at the University, audiences are predominately white even when non-whites are well-represented on the athletic teams. The literature on sports fans does not address this social characteristic, but the researcher believed it was important to record information about audience racial composition. Visible skin color was used to establish the race of attendees. Only two categories, white and non-white, are used because I am dealing with large numbers of people and simple observations. The category of non-white was mostly made up of Black and Hispanic audience members. The community in which the university is situated is overwhelmingly white, as is the university. Also, a majority of the athletes performing on both teams are white. Thus only the two broad categories of white and non-white were used.

Dress

Costuming or masquerading may be an important component of an athletic event (Kutcher 1983). At a sporting event, people dress in ways that would be ridiculed in other settings. People's costumes may include hats or tee shirts with the team name, full uniforms with the colors and symbols of the team, or colors or insignia painted on or adhered to the skin (Kutcher 1983). Based on preliminary observations, two category schemes were established. One category based on wearing school colors and school paraphernalia is called displaying colors. People were classified as "school colors" if they were wearing a shirt, pants, hats, socks, or shoes in orange or orange and white, or if they had some type of school logo on their clothes. The people whose style of dress shows no indication of school color or logo were classified as "no color." The other category of dress focused on general apparel. General apparel norms encompass the style and physical condition of clothing not included in the dimension of displaying colors. General apparel norms were established by recording in the various styles, colors, and brands of apparel (shirts, pants, shorts, skirts, shoes, and hats).

Behaviors

Observers focused on physical behaviors (standing, clapping, yelling) and social behaviors (engaging in greetings, conversations). The initial goals were to link audience activities to the action of the athletic teams, to ascertain variation in the activities of different components of the audience, and to observe whether audience members' behaviors appear to be shaped by others in the audience. Due to the lack of resources, observation of all the behaviors necessary to achieve these goals was not possible. That is, the observers could not simultaneously observe all parts of the audience and the

athletic performance. The observers were most successful at observing variation in different components of the audience. The strategy used was to focus on different areas of the venue, moving from one area to another during the course of the events. Matching what was happening in the audience to what was happening on the field of play was difficult without cameras. Observers noted what overt audience behaviors occurred in relation to what was happening on the field of play or within the audience area. For example, they observed in what, if any, side involvements people engaged and when they would center their attention on the athletic performance. Also, they continually were alert to whether the athletic performance stimulated any negative behaviors, such as throwing objects or booing. The most difficult goal to reach was to ascertain how audience members affected each other due to the need to subjectively establish influence. The observers would look to see if any audience members, cheerleaders, or others seemed to induce people to model their behavior.

Conversations

The researchers took note of overheard conversations that related to the game or event. Of particular interest were comments which appeared to reflect the person's degree of knowledge of the game and of the players. As with audience behavior, systematic recording was impossible because of the vast number of conversations overheard. Sometimes, comments overheard from audience members sitting near the observer led to questions about their attendance of sporting events. When the observer inquired, those people asked were told about the project. Often, information was volunteered about why they attended and why they enjoyed the sport or sport in general.

In sum, observers worked together to establish reliable categories to use when observing behavior. Strategies were developed to observe different sections of the audiences. Field notes were written and compared. From the analysis of the field notes, findings on the audiences' characteristics and behaviors were developed. The findings were organized on the basis of these research questions: What are the personal characteristics of those in the audiences at women's sports events? In what behaviors do they engage? Are there different types of fans? Do audience members engage in behaviors (e.g., the development of emergent norms) associated with gatherings which have more of the characteristics seen as the hallmark of collective behavior?

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study focuses on the audiences of women's intercollegiate athletic events, particularly their personal characteristics and behaviors. The findings are presented by sport, then the findings by sport are compared. The analysis takes into account external influences (e.g., competing university events) and special promotions (e.g., special ticket prices) which may have affected audience size, composition, and behavior.

Size of Attendance

If people are in close proximity to one another, they may behave differently than when they are not. Thus the relative size of an audience may be important. The attendance figures for soccer and volleyball games were obtained from the University of Tennessee Lady Vols ticket office. During both the soccer and volleyball seasons, special promotional days were held, such as Scout days (girl and boy), Junior ROTC day, free hair cut day (by the Tennessee School of Beauty), and Country Music day (at which tee-shirts and Shania Twain concert tickets were given away). In Table 1 and Table 2 the category "Paid" includes those people who paid for a ticket to enter that game. The "Free" category includes people who got in with special passes; e.g., university students, coupons for free tickets available at local stores, and those who qualified for special promotions. "Total Audience" is the total number of audience members (paid + free). The total attendance figures shown in Table 1 and Table 2 include everyone who was in the arena for that game. This number includes all audience members, workers, players,

Table 1. Type of Attendance Per Soccer Event.

Game	Win / Loss	Paid*	Free	Total Audience	Total Attendance
UT- Chattanooga	W	250	481	731	809
Xavier	W	123	292	415	494
Arkansas	W	208	271	479	561
LSU	W	222	851	1073	1158
Day 1 of Tourament 10/2/98	L	318	681	999	1121
Day 2 of Tourment 10/4/98	L	439	1515	1954	2091
Vanderbilt	L	272	465	737	815
Kentucky	L	223	379	602	674
$\bar{X}$		257	617	874	965
Percentage of Total Audience		29%	71%	100%	
S		92	412	493	514
Variance		8551	169834	243076	263719
Range		316	1244	1539	1597

* Does not include the less than 20 Season Tickets sold to individuals

Table 2: Type of Attendance Per Volleyball Event.

Game	Win / Loss	Paid*	Free	Total Audience	Total Attendance
Day 1 of Tournament 9/4/98	W	249	457	706	737
Day 2 of Tournament 9/5/98	W	199	223	422	542
UNC-Ash	W	54	100	154	212
Univ of Miss.	W	63	174	237	312
Miss. St.	W	61	236	297	372
App. St.	W	44	95	139	214
ETSU	W	46	44	90	165
Georgia	W	44	135	179	219
USC	L	50	129	179	219
Western	W	36	208	244	320
Kentucky	W	111	170	281	351
Florida	L	86	205	291	361
$\bar{X}$		87	181	268	335
Percentage of Total Audience		32%	68%	100%	
S		68	104	164	163
Variance		4641	10908	26891	26644
Range		213	413	616	572

*Does not include the less than 10 Season Tickets sold to individuals

referees, and coaches. For these tables the games are denoted by the name of the opposing university, except for soccer, the October second and fourth dates, which were part of a Lady Vol Soccer Classic (a weekend tournament), and for volleyball, the September fourth and fifth dates, which were part of The Toyota Volleyball Classic (also a weekend tournament).

Table 1 shows that the average attendance for soccer games was 874 people. The attendance range (1539) was quite wide because certain events affected the number of audience members. For example, on October fourth, two soccer games were played and the attendance figure reflects attendance for both games. Also, the figure was high because one of the teams that played that day was the University of North Carolina, which has been ranked number one in women's soccer for the past few years. Further, one of North Carolina's assistant coaches, Mia Hamm, is a well-known soccer figure as a former member of the United States Olympic Women's Soccer Team and the United State National Women's Team.

One game date (October 25, University of Georgia) is not included in the table. This game was excluded from the attendance analysis because the University of Tennessee did not charge admission for that game, as it was televised on a local cable sports channel.

Table 2 shows the average attendance for a volleyball game was 268 people. The first two dates were part of the Toyota Lady Vols Classic. More than one match was played each day of the tournament, so the total attendance for these dates is higher than for the other single match dates. Audience attendance declined towards the middle of the season, but increased again towards the end of the season.

The volleyball audience attendance figures were much lower than the soccer audience attendance figures, despite the volleyball arena having the capacity to accommodate many more people than the soccer complex, and the team having a longer history at the university. For both soccer and volleyball, more people gained free admission (soccer 71%, volleyball 68%) to the games than who paid for admission (soccer 29%, volleyball 32%). A higher proportion of people apparently were willing to pay for admission to volleyball games than to soccer games.

Audience size varied over the course of the season for both soccer (variance 243,076) and volleyball (variance 26,891). The volleyball audience showed fluctuation in attendance – decline in the middle of the season, with a rise again at the end. One possible cause of this temporary dip was the extreme heat inside the athletic center. The gym does not have a central air conditioning system, and the two large electric fans were not sufficient to cool everyone. Paper fans were available at every game, and most people fanned themselves with them.

The audience size at soccer games exhibited a greater variation over the course of the season. As noted above, one tournament game generated an unusually large audience, as discussed earlier. Attendance was lower at the second and third games of the season. The second game was a non-conference game, which may have affected attendance. The heat was ruled out as a deterring condition for these two games because the game time temperature was high until the last game of the season.

Less than thirty season tickets for University of Tennessee women's athletic events were sold all together, and season ticket holders were not included as paid

attendees. The season tickets are combination tickets, and may be used for women's volleyball, soccer, and softball home games.

With the exception of one volleyball game, most of the audience members stayed for the entire game for both soccer and volleyball. At one volleyball game (against ETSU), audience members were observed leaving before the match had ended. A group of 20 to 25 people apparently from an assisted living facility attended this match, and were among those who left early. The entire group arrived and left together. The performance of the team did not seem to be the reason the group left, as the Lady Vols won that match. Instead, the group may have left because it was time for them to leave, not because the team was playing poorly.

Personal Characteristics

Shifts in the relative size of the audience at a sporting event were examined so that the effects on behavior of having denser or sparser audiences could be noted. Also, effects of audiences size on behavior are reported later. Other studies of sports audiences have proposed personal characteristics with which to distinguish those who attend different men's sports. Gender, race, and age are the three characteristics that were observed. Each of these could reasonably be established through observations.

Gender

Gender distribution was estimated at almost every game. The number of females and males who attended volleyball games were, on average, about even. For example, at the volleyball match versus the University of North Carolina, Asheville, 154 people attended, 73 women were counted, which indicates that 81 men were present. The soccer games consistently had a few more men than women at most of the games. For example,

when the Lady Vols soccer team played Arkansas, 479 people attended, 210 women were counted, which means 269 men were in the audience. When specific promotions were offered, the number of one gender was skewed. For example, the soccer team offered Tanasi Girl Scout Day, during which all Girl Scouts and adults affiliated with the Girl Scouts received free admission to the game. On this particular day, the females outnumbered the males; however, the pattern of a slightly higher level of average male attendance was otherwise clear.

Race

A second characteristic observed was race; specifically, the proportion of white and non-white persons. At both soccer and volleyball the proportion of non-whites to whites was very low. The soccer games had a few non-whites, between one and fifteen per game, most of whom were adults of both genders. At the volleyball games most of the non-whites were children with after school programs or university athletes, both male and female, who would stop by to watch the game for a few minutes. (The university athletic training facilities are housed in the same building as the volleyball arena.) Both sports' audience members were predominantly white, as were a majority of the players of both sports. Thus, the family members of the players were generally white also.

Age

The approximate ages of audience members were estimated. Age was estimated by physical characteristics, such as height, clothing, hair style and/or color, the group with whom the person attended, and approximate age compared to the researchers' ages (between 24 and 30 years old). The relative number of attendees in each age category was compared. With the exception of a few games, the older category (30+) was the

largest group. Based on seating patterns and overheard conversations, some of the people in this category were parents of players or parents who had brought their children to the games. For many soccer games, children seemed to be the next largest group, composing a little less than half of the audience. There were always many children, often in soccer uniforms themselves, running around at the games. On child related special promotion days, the children outnumbered the other age groups, even the older group. College age students were the next most represented. Although admission was free for all University of Tennessee students, relatively few traditional college aged persons attended the games. Adolescents consistently constituted a small segment of the audience. Several groups of five to eight teenagers, often girls, would attend the games together. Based on remarks overheard, typically these girls were soccer players for their high school teams.

The representation of age categories was similar at volleyball games. There were more older (30+) people at the volleyball games than there were people of other ages. Again, there were many children. A limited number of adolescents attended games with their parents. When the adolescents came without their parents, they seemed to be volleyball players or on some sort of volleyball team (based on conversations that took place between games while they were hitting a volleyball around in front of the center bleachers, see Sports Arena in Appendix). As with soccer, the traditional college age group was far outnumbered by the others. The college age attendees at the volleyball games were mostly university athletes (evident because the researchers recognized them) who were at the athletic center for another purpose, and stopped to watch part of the match.

A larger proportion of children attended soccer games than volleyball games. At the majority of the sports events carnival games were available to entertain children and to presumably encourage their repeat attendance. These games were located in a grassy area behind the bleachers at soccer games, and in the lobby at volleyball games. More soccer games than volleyball games seemed to have had accompanying promotions that targeted children. These promotions included Tanasi Girl Scout Day, D.A.R.E. day, and a day during which all honor roll students were admitted free. In addition, entire children's soccer teams often attended soccer games, chaperoned by two or three adults. The low proportion of traditional college age people in attendance at soccer games was higher than volleyball games. The proportion of older adults seemed to be similar at both soccer and volleyball games.

Overall, these soccer and volleyball games apparently were designed to be and served as family events. This finding is consistent with findings of the NCAA study, which indicates that people believe that women's games are good family events. The behavior of adults at family-oriented events with numerous children present differs from their behavior at events intended for and primarily attended by adults. The presence of children, whether one's own or someone else's children, may inhibit some types of behavior and encourage other types of behavior. Parents may model polite behavior for their children, such as positive, encouraging comments to the players. The presence of children may discourage adults from engaging in negative behaviors. Such negative or disruptive behavior would include drinking alcohol, swearing, or throwing objects, such as paper airplanes or trash, onto the field of play. None of these behaviors were ever observed at any of the soccer or volleyball games. On the other hand, disruptive

behaviors of all three types had been observed in audiences that consist of more adults, such as those at major men's and women's sports events.

Dress Characteristics

Dress was characterized in two ways: displaying color and apparel norms. The displaying color categories refer to the visible team support provided through costuming. People were categorized as color and no color.

The people at the soccer and volleyball games did show their support through dress by wearing school colors and/or logos. At neither soccer nor volleyball events did anyone show extreme support (wearing orange or orange and white from head to toe) through their choice of clothing, such as can be seen at men's football and women's basketball games at the university. When people displayed color, they would wear at least one item that was orange or orange and white or had the Lady Vols' logo. Shirts were the most frequently worn item that had the logo or was orange and/or white. For example, one man who engaged in as much display of color as was typically seen wore an orange and white Lady Vols' hat and a white shirt with the Lady Vols' logo on the chest. Another example is a man at every volleyball game, who always wore an orange and khaki hat with the Lady Vols' logo, an orange polo-like shirt with the Lady Vols' logo, khaki shorts, and hiking boots with blue wool socks. (He was noticeable because he would always sit with his feet on the arena floor and sit on the floor of the first set of seats of the middle bleachers).

The soccer games had a higher proportion of people in the category of color than the volleyball matches. Most members of the soccer audiences wore one item of University of Tennessee or Lady Vol clothing. Sometimes the people displaying color at

soccer games were seen in the identical casual attire at volleyball matches. In addition to basic orange and white, some people's clothing would include the color baby blue. It should be noted that this color was added to the women's sports uniforms, and dark blue was added to the apparel for sale to men's sports supporters. The use of baby blue may reflect Eitzen and Zinn's (1989) argument that women's team logos may accord women's athletics lesser status.

People in the category of no color wore clothing that was not orange or orange and white or did not have a Lady Vol logo. Some of the people in this category did wear clothing indicative of the particular sport, such as Adidas or Puma soccer shoes, volleyball or soccer jerseys, Adidas or Umbro soccer shorts, or tee-shirts with slogans about volleyball or soccer on them. The other people in this category wore neither colors nor clothing associated with that sport. These people were dressed in casual, everyday work or school clothes. A description of these types of clothing is included in the following dimension of apparel norms.

Two types of apparel norms were observed: style and physical condition. The style of clothing was similar at both soccer and volleyball events, even though soccer took place outside and volleyball inside. Most of the women in the audience were dressed in moderately priced clothing, based on the visible labels (e.g., the Gap, the Limited, Polo, or Liz Claiborne). Moderately priced clothing included colored or khaki pants or shorts, blouses, sweater vests, plain colored tops, dangly earrings, heeled shoes, loafers, or sandals, and occasionally a skirt or dress. Some women wore jeans and tee-shirts, but they were the minority. Most of the men in the audience also dressed in moderately priced clothing. Their dress included khaki pants or shorts, slacks, polo

shirts, collared button-down shirts, nice tee-shirts (with logos), and dress shoes, tennis shoes, hiking boots, or sandals.

The physical condition of clothing was generally decent to new or nearly new. Most people's clothing was clean without any holes or tears. Clothing was not faded or had a worn out look. Shoes were also in decent condition, seeming nearly new, and not scuffed or coming apart. A few people wore tank tops and shorts. The people seen wearing tank tops had clothing that was stained and worn out, and looked old.

The style of dress observed at the events may reflect economic position as well as norms. Armstrong and Harris (1991) suggest that violent or hooligan fan behavior may be fueled by problems of poverty and unemployment. The types of clothing observed indicate that audience members were not experiencing poverty. Also, audience members were dressed casually; they were not dressed sloppily. People's style of dressing may both reflect and shape behaviors, i.e., they may feel and act in less controlled ways if dressed sloppily than when dressed in neater, more expensive costumes.

When Engaged in Selected Behaviors

Selected behaviors of the audience such as standing, cheering, conversing, and walking around occurred in relation to events in the game. Events in the game during which the relation of audience behavior to events was closely observed included scoring or coming near to scoring a goal in soccer; half time or intermission; instances of poor officiating; a point, kill, or side out in volleyball; and clearly identifiable good plays. In addition, observers looked to see if audience members with certain characteristics behaved differently. For example, analysis of field notes revealed that audience members

who displayed color were more likely to cheer for the team and less likely to engage in the side involvement of social conversation than those who did not display color.

Audience behavior varied by age category. Children were less likely to focus intently on the game the entire time and moved around more frequently than the other age groups; they also displayed more excitement in response to what was occurring, such as scoring. People in the older (30+) age category focused more attention on the athletic event than other age groups. Also, people in this age group were more likely to shout coaching remarks, seemingly so involved in the action that they did not restrain themselves from trying to direct players where to go or what to do. Adolescents were the most likely to engage in social conversations. On the other hand, adolescents frequently seemed to identify with the sport to some extent because they participated in that sport themselves. So, while they often engaged in side involvements, they were more likely than the children and some older audience members to be aware of the rules of the game and thus make remarks indicative of such knowledge. The college age audience members' behavior was closest to the older audience members' behavior. The college age group displayed more excitement through physical actions than the older group, but gave fewer coaching comments. The college age people knew and used players' first names more frequently than adolescents or children, and almost as often as the older group.

At the soccer games, most of the time the audiences were relatively quiet, with their attention focused on the game. When the Lady Vols would get close to scoring a goal, audience activity would increase. Cheering became louder and more generalized, and often people would stand for a better view of the goal, apparently causing other

people around them to stand. When a goal was scored, the audience members reacted with activity indicative of excitement -- much applause, cheering, and whistling. If a player attempted a goal but missed, her attempt usually received applause and many audience members shouted comments such as "Nice try." If the other team got close to scoring a goal, excitement again was exhibited. If the goalie prevented the opponent from scoring, the audience reacted with applause, but not as much activity (applause) as if the home team had scored. If the opposing team did score a goal, the audience remained polite (did not make negative remarks or display anger), and most people lightly applauded the defensive efforts. In fact, throughout the course of each game, audience members remained positive, and did not make negative comments about the home team, the opposing team or the officiating.

At the volleyball games, an official effort was made to start a new fan tradition this year. A letter signed by the head coach was placed on every seat at one of the early games. This letter asked audience members for help in attempting to start two new traditions. The first was to yell "Point Lady Vols!" every time the Lady Vols scored a point. The second was to stand and clap when the Lady Vols reached fourteen points (game point), and remain standing until the point was earned or a side out (a switch of ball possession) occurred. The second "tradition" was already practiced by most audience members, based on observations at games during the previous season. People would stand and clap but not all at the same time indicating that some did so when they realized others were doing so. The Point Lady Vols "tradition" evolved over the season. At the beginning of the season, the cheerleaders would start the phrase, and the audience

would join in; however, by the end of the season, audience members were starting the cheer before the cheerleaders did.

At soccer games scoring is infrequent, so usually the majority of the audience was not cheering at the same time. Indeed, only a few people (usually the same individuals) engaged in sporadic cheering throughout the games. Their cheering took the form of coaching types of comments (such as "Run faster!" or "Go after the ball!") or encouraging comments ("Good kick!" "Excellent pass!") However, when the home team came close to scoring a goal, virtually everyone would become engaged in cheering, stopping the small conversations, side involvements in which they were engaged. Also, when an official missed a call (e.g., an opposing player slide-tackled a UT player, and the referees did not penalize the player), people would make a comment such as, "Oh, come on!" or boo, but they did not persist in making comments or booing.

At the volleyball games, a low level of cheering seemed to be a continuous activity, perhaps because scoring is more frequent in volleyball games. Although not all of the audience was engaged in cheering the entire game, many people (slightly more than half) were cheering throughout the entire game. On the other hand, in volleyball, points are scored more often than in soccer, so when a point was scored in a volleyball game, the audience did not react with as much momentary activity and display as much excitement as if a soccer player scored a goal. During volleyball games, there were two times at which nearly everyone would become involved in cheering. Those individuals who were not involved at these times were fans of the opposing team or the few elderly present. The one concerted cheering time was at game point, when everyone would engage in the "tradition" of standing and clapping described above. The other was when

the team would display skill or excitement. If the Lady Vols scored many points (at least three) in a row, or if the players appeared to get excited about a play (that is, players started to smile, high-five each other, or jump up and down), most of the audience began to cheer louder and get more excited.

For both soccer and volleyball, comments toward the players were very encouraging and friendly. Examples of these remarks are statements such as, "All right, Lady Vols!" "Good spike, Ariana!" "Great pass, Heather!" or "Good teamwork! Way to work together!" Audience members did not shout comments more negative than "Oh, come on!" and even when they disagreed with an official's call would make positive assessments (e.g., responding "That's O.K." to a questionable penalty in soccer). Audience members also engaged in behaviors toward the visiting team which could be labeled "good sportsmanship." At every game, when the visitor's roster was called, the majority of people applauded. When the opposing team made a nice play, and sometimes even when they scored a point, a small proportion of the home team audience applauded and a few even made encouraging comments such as "Nice play" or "Good job." Although the observers actively listened for negative remarks about players or officiating behaviors, which are often witnessed at various major men's athletic events, these types of remarks were rarely overheard, much less the subject of loud vocalizations.

Environmental Influences

At each event, various influences within the environment of these particular sports arenas affected audiences' behavior. These factors included cheerleaders, mascots, announcers, music, team members, other spectators, weather conditions, and seat placement.

One environmental influence is cheerleaders. Cheerleaders were present at every volleyball game, but they only attended the first three soccer games. At the soccer games, they were dressed in shorts and UT polo shirts, rather than their cheerleading uniforms, and did not perform any stunts. On the other hand, six uniformed cheerleaders, three male and three female, performed at each volleyball game. They tried to engage the crowd in various ways. One was to lead the "Point Lady Vols" cheer. Others included leading cheers, performing dance routines, throwing free shirts into the audience, or executing stunts. The cheerleaders influenced the audience, because people would stand, yell, clap, or shout, "Point Lady Vols!" when the cheerleaders directed them to do so. The cheerleaders' activities in part may be related to the higher level of cheering at volleyball matches compared to soccer games.

A second environmental influence was the presence of the mascot. The university mascot is a figure in a hound dog costume called Smokey. Someone dressed up as Lady Smokey for every volleyball and soccer game. Wearing an orange and sky blue bow on each of her ears denotes Lady Smokey's femaleness. Lady Smokey interacted with the crowd, hugging children and giving people high fives. Also, Lady Smokey would dance when music was played and use arm gestures to try to get people to stand up and cheer. People usually responded to the mascot's actions, standing when she indicated they should stand, or laughing at her behavior. Children responded most often and most directly, asking Lady Smokey for hugs, autographs, and high fives.

Another environmental influence was the announcers. The same announcer was present at every volleyball game. When a point was scored, he would announce "Point Lady Vols!" This was not the cheer chant but the cue for the audience members to do the

cheer. Also, he announced Lady Vols' actions more enthusiastically than the opponents'. The announcers varied at the soccer games, which may have decreased any impact they may have had on how the audiences behaved over the course of the season. At both soccer and volleyball, the announcers' main functions were to inform the crowd of plays on the field (e.g., who scored the previous goal), entice people to visit the concession stand, announce special game time events (games, halftime contests), upcoming special promotional events, and to report special promotions during the game (e.g., pizza giveaways). The audience listened to the announcer, because they would respond to announcements by yelling to get attention (prizes were usually given to the loudest section of the audience) or hurrying to a designated area to answer a trivia question.

Music was played at different times during both soccer and volleyball games. For example, when a time out was called at volleyball matches, a song (often "Rocky Top") was played over the loud speakers. During these songs children were often seen dancing and gyrating in a child like manner. Children engaged in this behavior in the bleachers, and parents rarely stopped them from doing so. Also, music was played before the volleyball players' starting line up was announced. Various songs were also played during halftime to entertain people while no play action was occurring. The use of music contributed to the festive atmosphere for the fans.

Team members' behaviors had the potential to influence audience behaviors and may have at volleyball matches, but they did not appear to stimulate others to model their actions at soccer games. The volleyball players cheered loudly for their team from the bench. They were the first to cheer when a good play occurred or a point was scored, and they also participated in saying, "Point Lady Vols!" The soccer players also cheered for

their teammates; however, the soccer bench faced away from the crowd (rather than toward it, as the volleyball players' bench did), thus lessening their ability to influence the audience.

Another environmental influence stressed in the collective behavior literature is the other spectators present. One group of spectators was the visiting team's fans. The visitors had an effect on the home team's spectators, because when they would cheer for their team, it apparently would stimulate the home audience to cheer more for their own team. For example, when the soccer team played the University of Kentucky, many Kentucky fans (identified by their blue and white clothing and by sitting in the visitors' section located in the left bleachers, see Soccer Complex in Appendix) attended the game. This group of fans shouted positive and negative (more negative than positive) suggestions and coaching comments to the officials and to the players and coaches of both teams. The Lady Vol fans responded by increasing their own cheering, which became louder and occurred more frequently, yet remained positive.

In addition to visiting teams' fans, other Lady Vol fans in the audience affected people's behavior by modeling enthusiastic fan behavior. Athletes of other teams at the University of Tennessee would cheer in the stands amidst other fans, most of the time not being recognized as school athletes. An exception was when one of the women's basketball players would stand on the sidewalk between the bleachers and the half fence that surrounded the soccer field (see Soccer Complex in Appendix) and would jump and cheer for her roommate who played on the soccer team. Some of the younger fans and adults who recognized her took notice and jumped or cheered in the place where they were sitting or standing at the time.

This athlete was not the only audience member to obviously influence others' behavior. One man, who attended every home soccer game, would continuously yell for the Lady Vols. This man was the father of one of the University of Tennessee soccer players. He usually came with the same group of people, and they would join in his comments. The comments these people made were coaching types of remarks, such as "Get that ball!" "Run hard!" or "Go after her!" They did influence other people seated near them, who would join in and make similar comments, although the player's father would appear to get angry when this occurred, glaring at the people making remarks. More generally, once an audience member stood up, others around them would stand.

Weather conditions present another environmental influence. This was not anticipated to be as much of an influence for volleyball matches as it potentially was for soccer, as the volleyball matches were held indoors. Yet, the gym did not have air conditioning, and was often very hot, so weather may have adversely affected attendance mid-season, although some of the highest attendance figures were recorded at the first games of the season, when the outside temperature and the gym were the hottest. After the first volleyball game, paper fans with Lady Vol logos and the volleyball schedule printed on them were handed out in recognition of the heat problem. The weather could have influenced audiences' size and activity at soccer games, because they took place outside; however, it did not rain at any of the games, nor was it cold. The only extreme weather condition was the heat, which again did not seem to prevent people from attending, although it did lengthen the line at the concession stand.

A final environmental influence was seat placement. Certain sections of the bleachers for both soccer and volleyball were reserved for different people. Visiting team

fans (left bleacher, see Soccer Complex in Appendix) and players' families (center bleacher and the left side of the right bleacher, see Soccer Complex in Appendix) each had distinct sections. Also, at the volleyball games, specific seats were reserved for corporate sponsors of the team (front rows of the left and right bleachers, see Sports Arena in Appendix). Reserved seating sections formed a set of people who associated with each other at every game, which may have helped to develop a sense of camaraderie among them. The people in assigned sections usually seemed to be familiar with each other, holding conversations in which they greeted friends and related recent events. The researchers observed in all sections of the audience. The section in which people sat did not appear to affect behavior. People in the family members' area did behave more enthusiastically, but their behaviors did not influence people in other areas.

Listening To Conversations

During both soccer and volleyball games, the conversations of audience members were overheard and noted. The conversations overheard are classified into five different types that are not mutually exclusive. The first type is a greeting and catching up conversation. This type of conversation involved people who were familiar with each other and ran into each other at the game. Conversations typically included greetings (such as "Hello. How are you?") as well as a summary of previous or upcoming events. For example, one woman described her daughter's soccer practices that week. At another game, a couple explained an upcoming trip they were planning. Side involvements did not usually distract people from watching the game, as they would stop talking or interrupt someone to praise a play on the field.

A second type of conversation was discussion of the sport event taking place. People would ask questions about the particulars of the sports, such as rules or calls, or about the current game, such as "What just happened?" The person or persons that accompanied the questioner usually answered these questions, but occasionally another audience member would chime in with an answer. For example, at soccer games, a commonly asked question pertained to the off sides rule. Typically, the person's companion would try to answer the question, but frequently another audience member would contribute to the conversation. Two types of questions were common. The first type includes questions asking for specific information. Examples of this type of question are, "Who just scored that goal?" or "Why did they [the referees] just make that call?" A second type includes questions that show little knowledge of the rules of the game. Some examples are, "Each half is forty-five minutes, right?" or "How long does this game or half last?" Questions referring to the game at hand were common at soccer games, but not asked as often at volleyball games.

The conversations overheard at volleyball games usually constituted a third type of conversation: social conversations. This type of conversation includes dialogue that goes beyond greeting and catching up, and does not refer to the present game. Younger audience members, such as adolescents, usually engaged in this type of discussion. Some comments overheard referred to parents or children, shopping, school, or other events. For example, at one soccer game two teenage girls spent most of the time discussing their school schedules for the current year. A couple that would fall within the older age category spent one whole game talking to another couple, of the same age, about their daughter's soccer team and what the coach put their daughter through at practice and the

games, and the different experiences that they had attending her games. They did not pay much attention to the game, but would join in if most of the audience began to cheer or clap. At a volleyball match, a group of six or seven teenage girls talked about everything but the first game: boys, parents, school, and whether they should buy Skittles or Reese's Pieces at the concession stand. By the second game of the match, though, they were paying more attention to the game. Some of the girls had decided to support the University of Georgia (the visiting team), and others were cheering for the Lady Vols. They began to compete with each other, trying to prove who could yell the loudest.

A fourth type of conversation includes parenting comments, and was employed by parents or those attending with young children. This category includes comments made by parents or other adults directed to the children of whom they were in charge; for example, "Come here" "Sit down" "Don't go over there" "Would you like a Coke?" "Go play over there" "Go find your sister" or "Stay still and watch the game."

The fifth category of conversation is conversation that indicates an association or familiarity with the team. These conversations include any comments that someone made to show they knew someone on the team or were somehow familiar with that team. Occasionally, these comments would seem as if the people were bragging about their association with a particular team member. For example, at one soccer game, a woman stated that she was the sister of an opposing team's player, and went on to name every Lady Vol player that she had either gone to high school with or played soccer against in high school. Familiarity with the team usually took the form of using the players' first names, or even going so far as using players' nicknames. For example, at the soccer games, a man would yell, "Pass it, Booger" (or something else to "Booger") at every

opportunity. In addition, most audience members used players' first names, rather than last names or numbers, when referring to the players. For example, when a player on the volleyball team would score a point, the audience would respond with, "Way to go, Ariana" or when the Lady Vols were about to serve the ball, "Come on, ace serve, Stephanie!" Name association could be obtained by looking up the players' jersey number on the roster for that game.

Overhearing conversations occasionally led to casual conversations; one to two were conducted per event. These conversations usually included the questions such as, "Do you come to these games often?" "What made you come today?" "What sports do you attend?" and "Why do you attend these sports?" Often, other questions arose during these conversations. Reasons for attending varied. People gave reasons which indicated they had personal ties, liked other women's athletic events, and held the values expressed in the NCAA basketball study discussed earlier. For example, one older man at a soccer game mentioned that he was attending the game because he brought his daughters to the Girl Scout Promotional Day. He also said that he had been to a women's basketball game the previous season, and enjoyed it so much that he decided to try going to other women's athletics. In addition, he had two daughters, and both of them played soccer. Part of the reason he was at the soccer game was for his daughters to experience a college soccer game. Finally, he informed us that one of the soccer players attends his church, and she had spoken at a service. He and his family were impressed by this player, and admired both the player and the team, and looked to them as role models. He believed that the players provided good role models for his daughters, and that University of Tennessee women's sporting events were good family-oriented activities to attend.

Another time, a college age woman was asked her reasons for attending soccer games. She stated that she had played various sports at both the high school and collegiate level, and enjoyed watching sports. Also, she knew personally some of the soccer players, from playing on teams either with them or on teams opposing them. In addition, she knew soccer players from other schools for the same reasons.

Several college women athletes, who play for other University of Tennessee sports teams, were asked why they attended these games. Some were chosen to talk to because the researchers are personally acquainted with some of the players. Others were chosen because they were recognized and were seated alone, close to the researchers, at an event. None of their coaches required them to attend, although one stated that her coach did mention when another team had a game. All of the conversations with athletes indicated that they attended to show their support for the other women's athletes teams at their school. Also, some of them noted that they knew a player on the team. For example, the previously mentioned basketball player's roommate was a soccer player. In addition, general enjoyment of sports influenced their attendance. One athlete had played volleyball in high school, and enjoyed attending volleyball games because she had played the sport growing up.

In the next chapter the findings about audience members' characteristics and behavior are discussed. Various conclusions may be drawn from the analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As participation in women's sports has increased, women's athletics have gained popularity. Although women's sports and female athletes have received increased attention, their audiences have not. A limited number of studies of sport audiences have been published, and most of them do not focus on women's sports audiences. The theoretical literature that relates most closely to audiences is that on collective behavior, specifically crowds. Audiences have similarities to and differences from crowds.

This case study addressed questions about the characteristics and behavior of those attending women's intercollegiate volleyball and soccer games, using participant observation. In general, the project attempted to discover if audiences of women's sports behave like crowds, developing emergent norms. Audience behaviors may be those in which audiences generally engage or those which are emergent.

One specific research question was: What are the personal characteristics of people who attend these events? Audience characteristics of gender, age, and race were observed. Based on these observations, the typical women's sports fan is an older (30+ years old) white individual, either female or male, dressed in moderately priced clothing. This profile is similar to one developed by Louis Kutcher to describe American soccer fans. Kutcher (1983) indicates that soccer spectators are predominantly upper middle class, college educated, between the ages of 19 and 34, with nearly equal likelihood of being male or female. However, these may not be generalizable to those attending other

women's sports, as some profiles of fans suggest demographic characteristics vary from sport to sport (e.g., from stock car racing to tennis). The data do indicate that college students are not the primary source of fans, for that age group was poorly represented. The somewhat greater likelihood that fans will be male suggests that traditional gender socialization may still impede females. The low percentage of non-whites in the community and on the teams makes it impossible to draw any conclusions about race.

Three levels of fans were developed to synthesize the findings on audience characteristics and behaviors: high, low, and potential. Other schemes for classifying fans did not fit these data.

High level fans shared several characteristics. One of these characteristics is their personal ties to the specific sport or team. Someone who had strong ties to the players or to the sport, such as a player's parent or former or current participant, would fit in the high level fan category. Another characteristic for inclusion in the high level fan category was the displaying of support through clothing, wearing two or more items of clothing in orange, orange and white, or with the Lady Vols logo. In addition, a high level fan might wear clothing indicative of the specific sport. For example, someone might wear Adidas or Puma soccer shoes, a soccer or volleyball jersey, Umbro or Adidas soccer shorts, or a tee-shirt with a volleyball or soccer picture, slogan, or company on it. A final characteristic used to place a person in the high level fan category was the individual's overheard conversations and observed behavior. Conversations of a high level fan would reveal understanding of the game, knowledge of the Lady Vols athletic organization, and familiarity with the players. For example, a high level fan would regularly use the players' first names when cheering for the team. Also, the person

would cheer often, even constantly, and would participate in team supportive behaviors (cheering, clapping) on his or her own initiative. The category of high level fan was the second largest observed.

Audience members classified as low level fans displayed less of the characteristics which defined high level fans. A low level fan had weaker ties to the sport than a high level fan. As with the high level fans, these fans showed support through dress, but wore only one item in school colors or with the school logo. A low level fan's behavior and conversations would reflect interest and some knowledge of the game, but not the same level of familiarity as a high level fan. These fans might be familiar with the players' names and know most of the rules and concepts of the sport. A low level fan would watch the game closely, would ask questions about the game and the players (indicating interest in the game) and limit side involvement, such as social conversation, and would engage in supportive behaviors without prompting from other audience members. The category of low level sports fans contained most of the people in the women's sports audiences observed.

The third category was the potential fan. The potential fan has very weak or no ties to the sport. The potential fan may have a general idea of how the sport is played and how a game is won, but has no personal interest. The potential fan showed no support through dress (the no color category). Conversations of a potential fan would be social in nature, although occasionally questions related to the game might be asked. Also, the potential fan would not devote full attention to watching the game. The potential fan would not engage in supportive behaviors unless prompted by other audience members' behaviors. For example, at volleyball games, when everyone would stand and clap at

game point, a potential fan would be one of the last people to stand and join in, and would do so only after realizing that almost everyone else was engaged in this behavior. The fewest number of audience members fit in this category, which is inherently transitional. Those who do not enjoy the experience presumably do not keep coming and those who do become socialized into the role of fan.

A second research question focused on the behavior of the attendees of soccer and volleyball games in another way. The general behaviors in which audience members engaged include standing, clapping, and cheering. These behaviors consistent with those reported for other sports audiences. Such behaviors may be guided by norms of American sports audiences in general, rather than norms specific to these sports, although the timing, intensity, and duration of the behaviors varies by sport. Some of the behaviors observed could not be characterized as general sports norms. We attempted to observe whether behaviors were consistent with prevailing norms or appeared to emerge and become adopted over the course of the research.

If young people are brought in groups, they may be attending for the first or only time and thus be less familiar with norms which may have evolved for repeat attendees. Behaviors consistent with behavior at other sports events were observed at both soccer and volleyball games. For example, at both soccer and volleyball games, it was custom to stand and cheer before the game started when the starting line ups were announced. Standing and clapping at game point is a prevailing norm and a tradition at volleyball games. This practice was observed at the first game of the season, and continued throughout the season. Most of the audience members participated in this practice

Although a volleyball norm developed over the course of the season, it does not qualify as an emergent norm as Turner and Killian (1972) define them. Instead of the norm evolving due to behavior of selected members of the audience, the athletic department and coaching staff deliberately initiated the behavior which the fans adopted. At the third match of the season, a letter was placed on the seats in the arena. The letter, which was signed by the volleyball head coach, asked for help in starting a new tradition. When the Lady Vols scored a point, everyone would yell, "Point Lady Vols!" Although the announcer, cheerleaders, and team members shouted this phrase after every point, the audience members did not join in at first. As the season progressed, this phrase did catch on, and shouting it after every point became a norm at the volleyball games. Chanting the phrase is an example of what McPhail (1991) would call "collective behavior-in-concert." The behavior, which became normative, was controlled and directed by individuals who were not part of the audience, such as the coach, cheerleaders and announcer. This hybrid type of norm will be designated a direct emergent norm, as marketers increasingly promote leisure activities such as sports audience behaviors.

Environmental influences are an important aspect of Browne's (1972) conceptualization of audience behavior. Two influences he stressed that were addressed in this project were other audience members (population) and seat placement (position of inhabitants) (Browne 1972). Audience size did not affect normative behaviors of these particular audiences. Seat location, where people sat during the game, affected the likelihood they would come in contact with high level fan behavior. If people sat in a section with more high level fans (for example, if they sat near the players' families), they would receive more direct contact with prevailing normative behaviors, and were

observed to catch on to them more quickly, i.e., earlier in the game than those who received more indirect exposure in other seating areas. If a number of potential fans were seated in an area, normative sports fan behaviors would not be observed as frequently, and engaging in fan behavior would be less likely to occur and take longer to happen if it did occur.

Environmental influences alone do not explain fan behavior. Repeated exposure to environmental influences may lead people to become more involved if their beliefs and attitudes about women's sports are positive. Someone who frequently attended games potentially would learn the norms of the events more quickly because of exposure and the presumed receptivity (positive attitude) signified by repeat attendance.

At an athletic event, the main involvement is the game or match; side involvements may include conversing, watching children, or eating (Goffman 1963). Most of the side involvements observed at soccer and volleyball events were conversations. Audience members' conversations, which were overheard at the sporting events, were classified into the five categories described in Chapter IV. Virtually every conversation overheard included a greeting and catching up portion; thus, this was the most common type of conversation, and was engaged in by all levels of fans. The second type of conversation involved the sport taking place. Low level fans most often used this type of conversation. The third type of conversation is the social conversation. Although most audience members engaged in social conversations from time to time, potential fans were the most likely to have a social conversation. The fourth type of conversation involves parenting comments, which were directed toward children. Any level of fan might employ this type of commentary, as it is not indicative of interest or lack of interest

in the event. The final type of conversation is dialogue that indicates familiarity with the team. Although both low and high level fans may engage in this type of conversation, high level fans are more likely to demonstrate familiarity by displaying information not generally known.

Increasingly, collegiate athletic programs are trying to attract corporate sponsors who will increase revenue. Marketing activities are becoming more and more visible at athletic events. The announcers regularly would indicate that special prizes were going to be offered at that event and suggested what behaviors were required to win the special prizes. These promotional prizes included free pizza, tee-shirts, and small orange rubber volleyballs or soccer balls. People would stand, yell, and jump up and down to attract attention and try to win a prize. Announcers, cheerleaders, and other audience members all contributed to others' behavior by modeling or suggesting how people should or could behave. Similar attempts were observed at the volleyball games. People who attended the games frequently began to exhibit the behaviors immediately when they heard the announcement. Thus, a symbiotic relationship may exist between athletic programs and organizations interested in selling products. If successful, athletic programs gain sponsors and more high level fans, or at least people engaging in visible activities associated with high level fans. Through association with collegiate sports, which are believed to build character, organizations increase sales of products and gain a positive image.

At the same time they are directing audience members to engage in certain behavior, marketing staff members are trying to create an audience for women's sports. Special promotions or coupons that allow free admission, prizes such as tee-shirts or free

food, and game schedules that were widely available were intended to enlarge the audiences at the women's intercollegiate events. Marketing staff members from the athletic program were present and visible at every game (both soccer and volleyball), and frequently stood behind a table on which various items (mostly free) were displayed. These items included posters, schedules, and game day rosters, and the marketing staff encouraged attendees to take as many of these items as they would like. Again, the symbiotic relationship between athletic programs and organizations selling products is apparent. Items promoting other women's sports also were available (e.g., basketball and volleyball schedules were available at the soccer games). In sum, the marketing staff promoted at least two types of products, the women's athletic program and corporate sponsors' products, in their efforts to increase the popularity of and enlarge audiences.

Limitations

The limited relevant literature on audiences in general, and especially on women's sports audiences or corresponding men's sports audiences, provided the opportunity for exploration but at the same time limited this research.

One limitation of this research was the lack of a broader sample. The women's sports audiences studied were at one university and only two of ten sports were observed. The findings from this exploratory study cannot be generalized to professional sports audiences, other types of university women's athletic events, or to men's sporting events. Due to the lack of funding it was not possible to observe the away games of each of the sports. One visiting team's fans exhibited behavior which diverged from that of the home team crowd. Whether people behave differently at away games or selected people attend away games remains a question to be explored. Lack of funds prohibited not only a more

representative study, but also a more systematic study of audience behaviors because of the cost of hiring more research assistants to do the vast number of observations required.

Only three researchers attended the games and made observations, which prevented more systematic recording of audience behavior. Only certain sections of the audience could be observed at one time, and all audience members' behavior could not be watched throughout the entire game.

Finally, the research methods, while very useful for obtaining some types of information, limited obtaining other types of information. Observation of public behavior in a crowd did not allow for much exploration of why people behaved the way they did. Also, there was no means to learn whether the fan categories coincided with how people saw themselves. For example, some people may be committed fans but not wear school colors or engage in other displays which were the basis for categorizing people as high level fans. A procedure such as in-depth interviewing would allow exploration of people's motivations.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research should be conducted on the audiences of women's intercollegiate sports, for as they grow, they provide the opportunity to explore how audiences evolve. More than one university's sports program should be observed so findings could be compared and more readily generalized to other women's collegiate sports audiences. In addition, more sports could be observed. Sports such as basketball, softball, or swimming, which were not included in this study, could be observed to find differences and similarities in audiences across sports. When making cross college and cross sport

comparisons, the characteristics of teams could be compared (length of participation in intercollegiate competition, size of budget, win-loss records, national prominence).

Another suggestion for future research would be to compare men's and women's audiences at the same sports. That is, men's soccer and volleyball teams' audiences could be studied and the findings compared to those from this study. This approach would provide a basis for discussing how the gender of the teams may affect audience behavior. Another comparison would be to observe different but comparable men's sports, such as baseball. The behaviors of attendees of women's sports could be compared to that at men's sports, ruling out similarities due to the sport itself.

A final suggestion would be to supplement qualitative data collection with a more quantitative approach to studying audience behaviors. For example, surveys of season ticket holders (of sports that have a number of them) or of those learning an event would produce different types of information. Use of quantitative methods would produce information which would provide a different perspective on audience behaviors. Formal interviews of coaches, athletic directors and athletes would provide another view of audiences and their behavior.

Conclusions

Broadly, this research explored whether audience behavior is more similar to everyday social behavior or collective behavior. This case study of audiences at women's sporting events focused on the personal characteristics of those who attend and on what behavioral norms exist at these events. This research contributed to the literature by differentiating audience members potential, low, and high level fans. Although the specific criteria for inclusion in each level might vary for different sports, the types of

criteria (e.g., wearing colors) should be useful in differentiating audience participants at other sporting events. The predominant sports fans were those who were classified as low level sports fans. Other research also has demonstrated that the high level fans frequently portrayed in the media constitute a minority of fans.

The similarities and differences between audiences and other forms of collective behavior were explored. Specifically, observers looked for patterns of behavior which appeared to represent the operation of norms. Most of the norms found seemed to be similar to those at other audience events. A norm which emerged was directed by the staff of the women's athletic department, such as cheerleaders, marketing staff, announcers, and coaches and players. A new category of directed emergent norm is proposed.

This study provides a basis for future research on women's sports audiences, as the existing literature in the area is limited. Current literature focuses on extreme audience behavior and/or on men's sports. The women's athletic audiences observed behave differently from audiences at men's major sports events; their differences and their roots should be explored further. Despite its limitations, this research offers useful information about the behavior of women's sports fans and those marketing athletics, as well as providing a foundation for future research and theory building.

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APPENDIX

Lady Vol's Volleyball Schedule

September

4	Volleyball	Toyota Classic Florida Atlantic	7:30pm
5	Volleyball	Toyota Classic Radford	10:00am
5	Volleyball	Toyota Classic Cleveland St.	7:30pm
22	Volleyball	UNC-Asheville	7pm

October

2	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Mississippi	6:30pm
4	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Mississippi St.	2pm
5	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Appalachian St.	7pm
13	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. East Tenn. St.	7pm
16	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Georgia	6:30pm
18	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. South Carolina	3pm
27	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. W. Carolina	7pm
30	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Kentucky	7pm

November

12	Volleyball	Lady Vols. Vs. Florida	7pm
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Lady Vol's Soccer Schedule

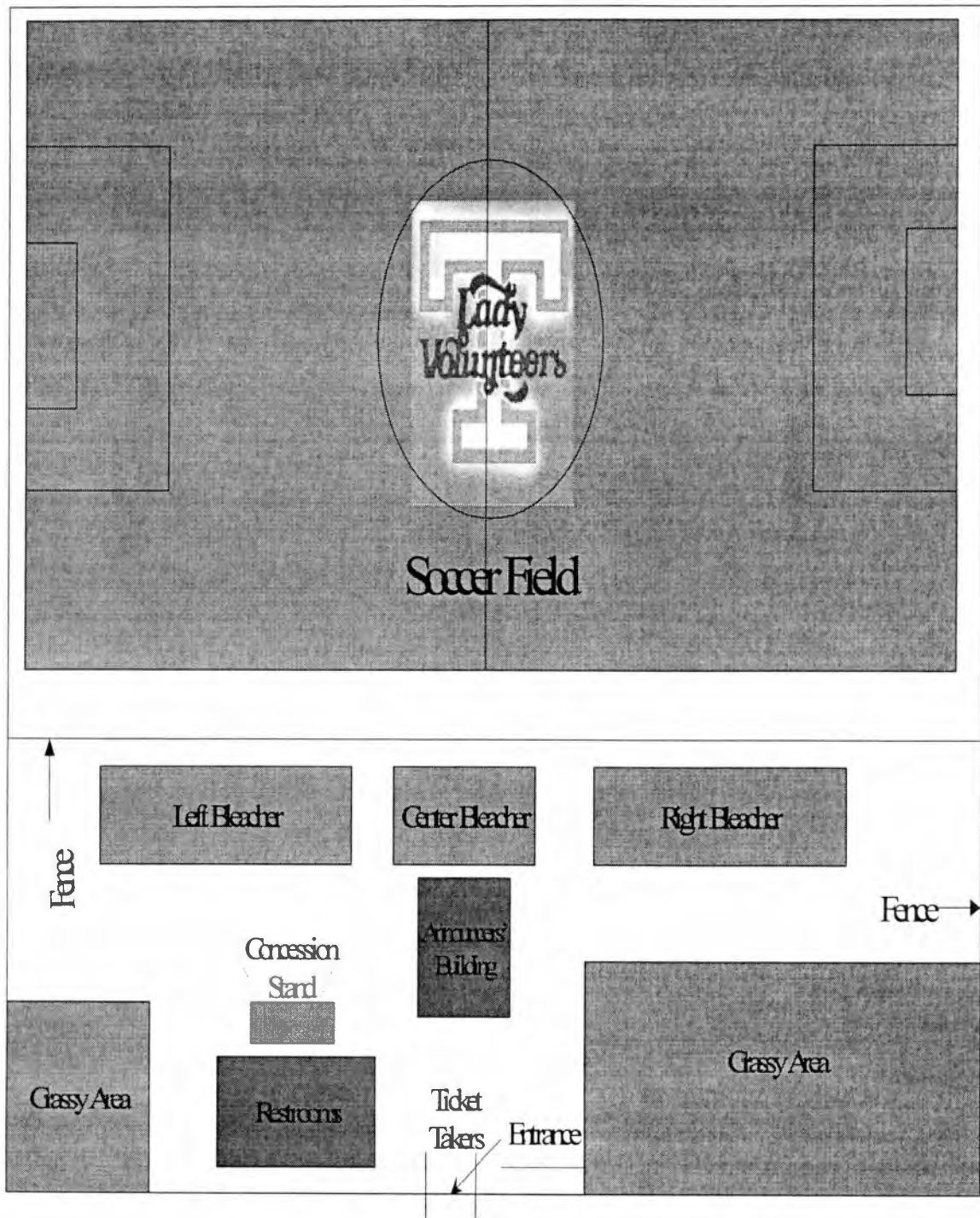
September

1	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Chattanooga	7pm
20	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Xavier	2pm
25	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Arkansas	7pm
27	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. LSU	2pm

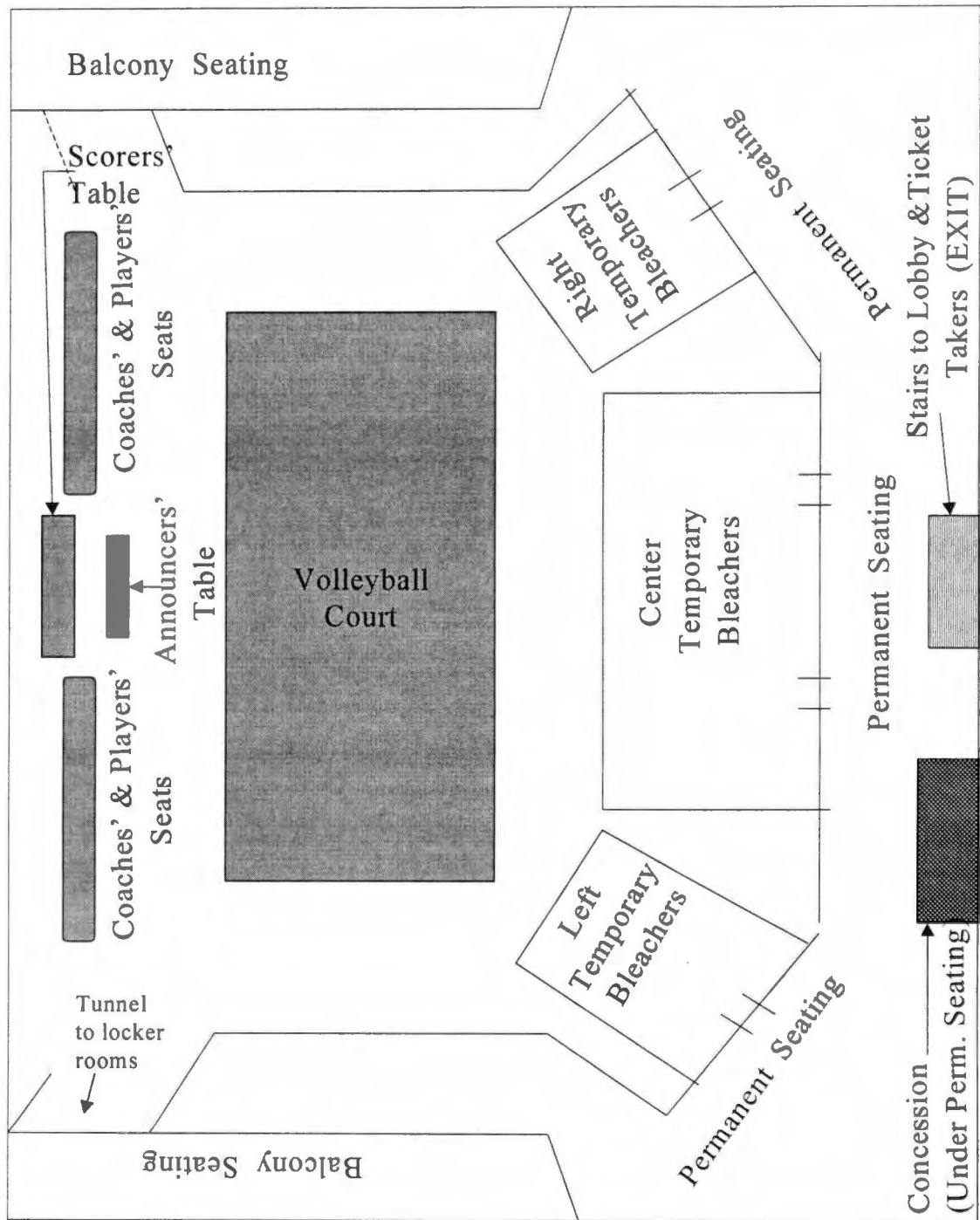
October

2	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Virginia	8pm
4	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. North Carolina	4pm
16	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Vanderbilt	8pm
18	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Kentucky	1:30pm
25	Soccer	Lady Vols. Vs. Georgia	2pm

List of Scheduled Home Games



Soccer Complex



Sports Arena

VITA

Gerald D. Harrison was born on March 28, 1973 in Columbus, Ohio. He attended elementary school in Babanhausen, Germany; Pirmasens, Germany; Norfolk, Virginia; Leavenworth, Kansas; and returned to Pirmasens for middle school. He attended his sophomore year of high school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and graduated from high school in Heidelberg, Germany. He entered the University of Arkansas, Little Rock in the fall of 1991. He attended Central Texas College for one semester in 1993. In the spring of 1994, he returned to UALR, where he finished his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology, with a minor in Marketing. He entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in August 1996, and earned his Master's Degree in Sociology in May 1999.

His fields of interest include social psychology, gender studies, sociology of sport, and marketing behaviors. He has participated in several annual professional meetings, including a presentation at the North American Society for Sociology of Sport (NASSS). He plans to earn a Ph.D. and pursue a career in teaching, but in the meantime is seeking a professional career related to his degree.