Minority report: Experiences of female high-school head coaches in a large, South-eastern school district

**Problem**
underrepresentation of women at all levels of coaching
(LaVoi & Dutove, 2012)
lack of research (high-school)

**Purpose**
explore the experiences of female high school head coaches

**Framework**
ecological model of barriers and supports for female coaches
(LaVoi & Dutove, 2012)

**Methods**
three in-depth, semi-structured interviews (60-75 min.)
audio-recorded, transcribed
analyzed for common themes and outliers

**Participants**
2 teachers, 1 pastor;
all married (one with child);
10+ years coaching experience

**Having to prove yourself**

[parents challenged] my authority over the team, questioning every tiny incident that happened, ... it was because I was who I am.... I was a girl and they didn’t think I was handling it right.

(Victoria)

**Feeling isolated**

there is a tight-knit of male coaches ... as a female coach I will never be part of that. And because you’re not part of that you lose some respect, you lose power, ... no matter what I do, it doesn’t matter how good a coaching job I do, how many wins I have, I will never be part of the group.

(Amy)

**Fighting gender norms**

if you go by traditional gender roles, and mom is expected to take care of the kids, it’s a big commitment to try and coach a team and take care of your own kids, especially if they’re young.

(Lucy)

**Conclusions**
confirms LaVoi and Dutove’s (2012) findings for coaches at other levels (e.g., gender norms, isolation, lack of support)

**Recommendations** (from participants)
Don’t be intimidated
Stand your ground; don’t back down
Establish support networks with female coaches
Build supportive relationships