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## **Collegiate Coaches' Experiences With Stress - 'Problem-Solvers' Have Problems, Too**

Melinda Ann Frey  
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Melinda Ann Frey entitled "Collegiate Coaches' Experiences With Stress - 'Problem-Solvers' Have Problems, Too." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Craig A. Wrisberg, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Leslee A. Fisher, Charles L. Thompson, Ronald E. Taylor

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Charles L. Thompson

Ronald E. Taylor

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew  
Vice Chancellor and Dean  
of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**COLLEGIATE COACHES' EXPERIENCES WITH STRESS –  
“PROBLEM-SOLVERS” HAVE PROBLEMS, TOO**

A Dissertation

Presented for the Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Melinda Ann Frey

May, 2004

**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father,  
who generated my initial desire to pursue athletics,  
which has developed into a lifelong passion.  
Your constant encouragement has led me to where I am today.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous research has demonstrated that coaches experience stress due to the nature of their job and that it may affect their physical and mental well-being (e.g., Richman, 1992; Wang & Ramsey, 1998). The purpose of this study was to achieve a greater understanding of coaches' experiences with stress, the perceived effects of stress on their coaching performance, and their coping strategies. A semi-structured interview approach was utilized with 10 NCAA Division I male and female head coaches. The five major themes identified in the data were: contextual/conditional factors, sources of stress, responses and effects of stress, managing stress, and sources of enjoyment. The results are discussed in relation to Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of stress. Implications for practitioners and opportunities for future research are suggested with the objective of helping coaches more effectively manage the stress of their profession.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Definition of Stress.....	2
Athletes' Experiences With Stress.....	3
Is Coaching Stressful?.....	3
Burnout Among Coaches.....	6
Significance/Statement of the Problem.....	9
Purpose.....	9
II. METHOD.....	10
Participants.....	11
Procedure.....	11
Bracketing Interview.....	12
Pilot Interviews.....	13
Interview.....	13
Data Analysis.....	13
III. RESULTS.....	15
Contextual/Conditional Factors.....	16
Sources of Stress.....	20
Responses and Effects of Stress.....	27
Managing Stress.....	29
Sources of Enjoyment.....	34

IV. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS.....	37
Contextual/Conditional Factors.....	39
Sources of Stress, Managing Stress, and Perceptions.....	42
Negative Responses to Stress.....	45
The Effects of Stress on Coaching Performance.....	46
Sources of Stress Related to Coaches Quitting and Sources of Enjoyment.....	47
Future Research Recommendations.....	48
Practical Implications.....	50
Conclusions.....	51
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	52
APPENDICES.....	62
Appendix A: Expanded Review of Literature.....	63
Appendix B: Informed Consent.....	80
Appendix C: Interview Guide.....	82
Appendix D: Expanded Results.....	84
Appendix E: Tables and Figures.....	114
VITA.....	124

## Part I: Introduction

In this introductory section, a brief review of the literature regarding coaching stress is provided. The major topics include: (1) the conceptualization of stress, (2) existing knowledge of athletes' and coaches' stress, and (3) burnout among coaches. Further, the significance of examining collegiate head coaches' experiences with stress is presented as well as the purpose of the present study. An expanded review of literature may be found in Appendix A.

### *Definition of Stress*

Stress is often thought of as “the equal opportunity destroyer,” as it has the ability to impact all aspects of one's life, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, nationality, or socioeconomic class (Seaward, 2002, p. 14). Selye (1956), one of the pioneers of stress management, initially defined stress as “the rate of wear and tear in the body” (p. 311). Recently, many researchers have taken a more holistic approach to studying the stress phenomenon, and have broadened the definition to “the inability to cope with a perceived threat to one's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, which results in a series of physiological and psychological responses and adaptations” (Seaward, p. 4). The deleterious effects of stress have been repeatedly demonstrated. These include physiological, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms as well as a decrease in the efficiency of the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to disease and illness (Greenberg, 2002; Manning, Curtis, & McMillen, 1999).

Athletics is a domain that is highly conducive to feelings of stress and anxiety. Competitive athletes and coaches encounter constant physical and mental demands, their performance is often publicly evaluated, and they spend countless hours with each other. The pressures arising from these experiences have the ability to overwhelm the athlete or

coach, possibly to the point of deciding to leave a sport that previously brought them tremendous joy and satisfaction.

### *Athletes' Experiences With Stress*

Research has indicated that coaches are often a major source of athletes' stress. In one recent study, Norwegian Olympic athletes were asked to answer questionnaires designed to assess the stressful experiences they faced during the 1994 Winter Games (Pensgaard & Ursin, 1998). Stressors related to the coach included unrealistic expectations, personal conflict, and lack of information. Similarly, female soccer players participating in the World Cup Finals felt that their coaches were one of their main sources of stress (Holt & Hogg, 2002). More specifically, these athletes indicated that a lack of effective communication on the part of the coaching staff as well as feedback that was too negative was particularly stressful. Anxiety over coaches' expectations has been expressed by youth sport athletes (Gould, Horn, & Spreeman, 1983; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Pierce & Stratton, 1981; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991), collegiate wrestlers (Gould & Weinberg, 1985), varsity athletes from a variety of sports (Baker, Cote, & Hawes, 2000), and elite international athletes (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Woodman & Hardy, 2001). These athletes noted that negative evaluations by their coach and the pressure to perform at the standard their coach had set for them was stressful.

### *Is Coaching Stressful?*

Although a significant amount of research has examined the stress experienced by athletes, there is a dearth of empirical investigation on coaching stress. Sources of occupational stress have been uncovered for other professions, especially those in which

human interaction is prevalent. For example, high levels of stress have been found among police officers (Maslach & Jackson, 1979; Violanti & Aron, 1994), nurses (Bennett, Lowe, Matthews, Dourali, & Tattersall, 2001; Florio, Donnelly & Zevon, 1998), public agency employees (Ganster, Mayes, Sime, & Tharp, 1982), and teachers (Gorrell, Bregman, McAllister, & Lipscomb, 1985; Harris, Halpin, & Halpin, 1985; Payne & Furnham, 1987; Shaw, Keiper, & Flaherty, 1985). Thus, it might be presumed that coaches who must constantly interact with a variety of people, including athletes, parents of athletes, other coaches, athletic directors, or game officials experience high levels of occupational stress as well. Multiple demands and expectations of others can put coaches in the uncomfortable position of having to satisfy various and possibly conflicting requests of other people in addition to fulfilling their coaching duties.

Many notable coaches have left their profession because of the negative effects of stress. For example, former Notre Dame head football coach Ara Parseghian openly admitted that coaching stress had defeated him and that he had reached a point of emotional exhaustion (Kolbenschlag, 1976). George Ireland, former head basketball coach at Loyola University in Chicago, also retired early because of the physical demands that stress had placed on his body. He stated, “One day my doctor sat me down and asked if I wanted to keep on coaching or die in two weeks” (as cited in Kolbenschlag, p. 97). Pete Newell, another college basketball coach, said he would become so anxious and tense that he would not be able to eat anything during tournaments and almost had a complete physical breakdown. Newell believed that he had no way to release his emotions, that he had to deal with fans and officials, and that a coach was under more stress than athletes (Kolbenschlag).

To date, there have been a few studies that have examined sources of stress within the coaching profession. High school coaches have listed relationships with athletes (Kroll & Gundersheim, 1982) and inadequate salaries and lack of free time (Malone, 1984) as major stressors associated with their profession. Richman (1992) sought to determine the relationship between hassles in collegiate coaching and coaches' well-being. The results demonstrated that stressors involved with interpersonal relations were significantly related to higher levels of anxiety and depression, and lower levels of positive well-being and general health. External demands such as the media, alumni groups, and NCAA rules were related to higher anxiety and lower general health, while lack of administrative support was related to higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Wang and Ramsey (1998) developed the Inventory for New Coaches' Challenges and Barriers (INCCB) to determine whether specific stressors existed for individuals who were in the early stages of their coaching career. The most significant challenge for the variety of coaches sampled in this study was the adequacy of communication skills necessary to establish a positive relationship with athletes. Other stressors included establishing a positive team atmosphere, keeping non-starting players motivated, recruiting, and lack of financial resources.

Sullivan and Nashman (1993) developed a survey designed to examine the stress-related experiences of 10 U.S. head coaches who were part of the 1992 Winter or Summer Olympic Games. The coaches were asked closed-ended questions regarding sources of satisfaction in their job, sources of occupational stress, and their use of specific coping strategies. Overall, the coaches expressed that they were satisfied and confident with their position, and categorized their primary stressors as role, task, or interpersonal

demands such as selecting players, representing their country, having insufficient preparation time, the media, and being away from family. Most of the coaches stated that they used physical exercise and positive mental preparation as primary coping strategies.

Drake and Hebert (2002) utilized a case study approach to examine the sources and perceptions of stress, as well as the coping strategies, of two high school teacher-coaches. Interviews conducted twice a month for a four-month period revealed that the nature of the dual teacher-coach role led to a significant portion of stress for these two individuals. Other factors that represented sources of stress were parental expectations, time of year, years of experience, and personal life. Specifically, the participants experienced higher levels of stress during the season than in the off-season, during the first few years of employment, and, for the coach who was married with children, when trying to balance a career with family life. Both coaches indicated they had thought about quitting during their initial years of teaching/coaching and that their primary coping strategies were personal releases such as exercising or spending time with family, learning to be organized, and learning from mentors.

Taken together, the available research suggests that coaches can experience a variety of sources of occupational stress and that they use a number of strategies to cope with it. However, in some cases, when individuals cannot effectively cope with a stressful situation, burnout may be the result.

### *Burnout Among Coaches*

Freudenberger (1980) originally coined the term burnout as “a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” (p. 13). Maslach and Jackson (1981) proposed a



multidimensional conceptualization of burnout that includes the components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. In order to examine this construct, they developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which has been the most widely used measure of burnout in the sport domain (Dale & Weinberg, 1990; Fender, 1989). Most significantly, researchers who have used the MBI have found that coaches report higher levels of burnout than individuals in other helping professions (Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992).

The theory that has been advanced most often to explain the complex phenomenon of burnout is Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of stress. According to Smith, individuals consider the rewards and costs of sport participation and compare them to their expectations about the activity and the attractiveness of alternative activities. Stress is predicted to occur if an individual experiences an imbalance between the demands of the activity and their coping resources, and also perceives the demands as threatening. If stress is experienced frequently, burnout may result.

Although Smith's (1986) model was developed to examine burnout in athletes, it has also been used to examine burnout in coaches. For example, Vealey et al. (1992) used Smith's theoretical framework to investigate predictors of high school and college coaches' burnout. Factors found to be related to burnout included trait anxiety and several perceptions associated with the coaching role, such as rewards, amount of control/autonomy, overload of commitments, and level of social support. Cognitive evaluation has also been shown to mediate stress and burnout among collegiate basketball coaches (Kelley & Gill, 1993) as well as baseball and softball coaches (Kelley, 1994), in

that higher levels of perceived stress were related to higher levels of burnout.

Some have suggested that burnout is a primary explanation for the dramatic decrease in female coaches at several levels of competition. Specifically, studies have revealed that burnout levels are higher for female coaches compared to male coaches at the collegiate (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley & Gill, 1993), high school (Vealey et al., 1992), and junior college (Pastore & Judd, 1993) levels. In all of these studies, female coaches were found to have less coaching experience than their male counterparts, and had less time and fewer opportunities to learn how to cope with the stress of their job (Caccese & Mayerberg). Kelley, Eklund, and Ritter-Taylor (1999) found a tendency in female collegiate tennis coaches to perceive coaching issues such as negative media coverage, being a helping source for their athletes, and not having enough time for coaching responsibilities as stressful. They explained their findings by suggesting that female coaches were more likely than males to face pay inequities, be unable to change their program, and experience excessive time demands. Additional causes of high burnout among female coaches have been posited by Caccese and Mayerberg and Weiss and Sisley (1984) who claimed that there were far more men than women in the coaching profession, and thus, that women had fewer role models and mentors who could provide social support and advice. In summary, the limited available research suggests that both male and female coaches can experience burnout, but that the incidence of burnout may be higher in females and that the coping resources and strategies of male and female coaches may be different.

### *Significance/Statement of the Problem*

There is a significant amount of research that has examined athletes' experiences with stress (e.g., Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Holt & Hogg, 2002; Pensgaard & Ursin, 1998; Woodman & Hardy, 2001), however, relatively little attention has been given to identifying the stressful situations coaches may face. To date, the available research conducted on collegiate coaching stress has been quantitative in nature and has provided some insight into the incidence of burnout and possible predictors of burnout (e.g., Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Kelley et al., 1999; Vealey et al., 1992), the possible sources of stress for collegiate coaches who have newly entered the profession (Wang & Ramsey, 1998), and the relationship between stress levels and health (Richman, 1992). Research has also indicated that coaches are often a significant source of athletes' stress (e.g., Fletcher & Hanton; Holt & Hogg; Udry, Gould, Bridges, & Tuffey, 1997), suggesting that coaches' stress levels may also be affecting the quality of athletes' sport experience. In order to assist coaches in managing the stress of their profession, researchers must go beyond defining "what" the possible influential factors of stress and burnout are and examine the "how" and "why" of coaches' stress.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of NCAA Division I male and female head coaches' experiences with stress, the perceived effects of stress on their coaching performance, and their coping strategies. Utilizing a semi-structured interview approach, questions designed to uncover coaches' perceptions of their experiences with stress were developed using Smith's (1986) model of stress and burnout.

## Part II: Method

### *Participants*

The participant sample consisted of male ( $n = 6$ ) and female ( $n = 4$ ) NCAA Division I head coaches from the sports of baseball, basketball, diving, softball, swimming, tennis, and volleyball. The majority of participants were Caucasian ( $n = 9$ ), and one was Asian-American. Their ages ranged from 36 to 55 years ( $M = 45.70$ ). Total years of coaching experience ranged from 14 to 30 years, while time spent as a head or co-head coach ranged from 5 to 30 years. Seven coaches were currently married and four coaches had children. All of the participants had a sport psychology consultant working with their team. Coaches were selected from three large universities in different areas of the U.S.

### *Procedure*

Coaches were contacted in person or through the telephone by the investigator to inquire about their willingness to participate in the study. The participants chose a location and time for the interview. Nine of the interviews were face-to-face and one was conducted over the telephone. Most of the in-person interviews took place in the coaches' office, one interview was conducted in the lobby outside the coach's office, and one coach asked to do the interview outside. The interviews ranged in length from 35 to 75 minutes, with the average interview taking 45 minutes.

Before the interview was conducted, the purpose of the study was explained, coaches were informed that the interview would be audiotaped, and were assured that confidentiality would be preserved by deleting all identifiers, such as the coach's name and the name of the university, from any resulting transcripts. All participants agreed to these conditions and signed a consent form (Appendix B) prior to the interview.

*Bracketing Interview*

Prior to interviewing the participants, the investigator engaged in a bracketing interview conducted by a sport psychology graduate student familiar with semi-structured interview techniques.

Bracketing requires that [researchers] work to become aware of our own assumptions, feeling, and preconceptions, and then, that we strive to put them aside – to bracket them – in order to be open and receptive to what we are attempting to understand. (Ely, 1991, p. 50)

The bracketing interview helped the researcher gain insight on her personal biases regarding coaching stress so that she could refrain from transferring these biases to her interpretations of the participants' interviews.

Since the researcher had very little coaching experience, many of her responses during the bracketing interview were based on assumptions as well as findings from the existing literature. Regarding sources of stress, the investigator had expected the participants to discuss recruiting, media, working with athletes, time demands, and trying to balance their personal life. She had also speculated that the female coaches might bring up their gender as a stressor. The researcher presumed stress would affect the coaches' performances by impeding their communication and thought processes. She believed that the coaches would have experienced a decrease in stress over the years due to establishing credibility, having more knowledge, and being more equipped to handle stress. Social support, exercise, and having a balanced lifestyle were coping strategies that the researcher expected the coaches to discuss, and that sources of enjoyment would include developing relationships with athletes, competition, and teaching skills and

strategy. She thought that potential reasons for leaving the profession would include feeling worn down, interference with personal life, spending too much time on office duties, and battling with the administration.

### *Pilot Interviews*

Also prior to interviewing participants, the investigator conducted two pilot interviews with NCAA Division I coaches. The purpose of these interviews was to provide the investigator with experience with the interview process and detect potential problems with the structure or content of the interview guide. After the initial pilot interview, the order of the questions was changed to promote a better flow throughout the interview, and the wording of one question was altered for clarity.

### *Interview*

A semi-structured interview format was utilized in this study. The investigator began by asking coaches to provide specific background information. Then, coaches were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit information about their perceptions and experiences with stress (see Appendix C for the complete interview guide).

Probes were used throughout the interviews for clarification and additional detail (Patton, 2002). Elaboration probes included: “Could you say more about that?” or “Is there anything else?” Clarification probes included: “What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?” (Patton, p. 373-374).

### *Data Analysis*

Memos were written immediately after each interview to record nonverbal behaviors of the participant, details on the environment of the interview setting, potential

emerging themes, and any other reflections. These notes regarding the quality of the information provided by the participant were helpful during the interpretation process (Ely, 1991; Patton, 2002).

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The written transcript was then mailed to participants to give them an opportunity to review their interview and alter responses or offer new ideas or experiences (Ely, 1991; Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002). None of the participants suggested any changes to be made in their transcript.

Based on the procedures outlined by Scanlan, Ravizza, and Stein (1989), an inductive analysis was used that included the steps of identifying common themes in the raw data and then placing those themes into categories of greater generality, labeled “first order themes.” The final step involved creating the highest level themes, labeled “dimensions.” This inductive approach was derived from the clustering technique that involves comparing and contrasting quotes and uniting quotes that possess a similar meaning in order to create broader categories (Patton, 2002).

Transcripts were examined independently by another researcher familiar with qualitative data analysis to further establish trustworthiness of the data (Ely, 1991; Patton, 2002). The investigator and this researcher met to compare results and discuss issues related to theme development. An additional major theme (dimension) was suggested by this researcher, and various subthemes (first and second order themes) were rearranged. Data were then reanalyzed using the input and interpretation of the co-analyst in order to render the most accurate representation of the coaches’ experiences with stress.



## Part III: Results

The themes that were derived from a collective analysis of the participants' responses are presented in this section (see Appendix D for an expanded results section). The findings are classified into five major dimensions: (a) contextual/ conditional factors, (b) sources of stress, (c) responses and effects of stress, (d) managing stress, and (e) sources of enjoyment. These dimensions are further divided into first order themes, second order themes, and raw data themes. The dimensions, first order themes, and second order themes are outlined in Table 1. A more specific categorization that includes raw data themes is illustrated in Figure 1. All tables and figures are located in Appendix E.

#### *Contextual/Conditional Factors*

The themes within this category represent factors related to the structure of the coaches' environment as well as demographic characteristics that play a role in the coaches' experiences with stress.

*Level of competition.* Many of the participants in this study had coached in less competitive settings prior to their current positions at the Division I level, so they mentioned the level of competition when discussing stress. One participant stated,

There's more stress here, simply because you've increased your level of competition. I have to recruit and get better players here at \_\_\_\_\_ to reach the level of success that we want to reach than I did at [former university]. ...Here you have to work harder to reach that level of success.

According to one coach, the increased level of competition decreased the amount of stress he felt in relation to financial support.

When I started off, I coached at the NAIA level, and we had no money, and there was stress. Here the girls have six pairs of shoes and at [previous university] we had to hold bake sales to get them one pair of shoes.

*Success of the program.* In addition to the high level of competition, the history of the coaches' specific program had an impact on their stress levels. Several coaches felt that certain expectations existed due to the programs' past success, whether the expectations were self or other-imposed.

You really have to produce, especially in this environment where the expectations are so high there's always that pressure of feeling like you have to succeed and supercede what you did the year before. Regardless of if you have a younger team, or less experienced, or have injuries, you feel still like you constantly have to do better and better and better.

Another coach stated, "Because our history is pretty good here, [the university] expects results."

Stress may also arise from lack of success, as demonstrated by one participant who described the challenging experience of having to rebuild a program. She said,

There's an increased workload simply for the fact that we inherited a program that was at the bottom of the [conference]. It's a little different when you inherit a program that's in good shape. So we've had to do a lot to change the image of [present university].

Conversely, the success of a program can lead to the reduction of stress for some coaches. One participant indicated, "The people here are so supportive...but I think I'm honest to know the reason for that is because we're successful. They like winners and

they have some other sports that aren't so they really need us..."

*Characteristics of the sport.* Two participants discussed stressful factors that were specific to the particular sport they coached. One coach indicated,

We don't have guys that last four years, it's only three and then they get drafted and they go. My guy says, "well, I'll be eligible but I could give a damn about a degree because I'm gonna be on TV and make a million dollars." It works against us sometimes, whereas other sports, they don't have that.

*Time of year.* The majority of coaches did not indicate that they felt more stress during a particular time of the year. However, one coach experienced higher stress in the off-season because he felt more pressure to check up on the academic progress of the athletes. He said,

I probably have stress more in the fall than in the spring because I think they have so much time available in the fall, so when they disappoint and don't go to a class or get a bad grade, when they're only out here for 30 minutes a day, I don't get it.

*Age and years of experience.* Considering the experience level of these participants (14 years minimum) it is not surprising that this characteristic had an impact on their experience with stress. Four coaches indicated that their age and/or years of coaching experience had helped them to decrease the amount of stress they felt whereas four coaches expressed the opposite opinion. Two coaches did not feel that there was a significant change in the stress they had experienced over the years. One coach discussed how a lack of knowledge can affect one's experience and said,

Early in my career I just got too stressed and too upset with my team, as opposed to being able to help them. At times, I think probably my actions or reactions

might have been detrimental to them. I was young, and you learn. I had never even run a practice when I started coaching, it was my first coaching job, so I just walked in, inexperienced, it was trial and error, learning as I go along. If I had only known then what I know now, we would have won a championship earlier.

Several participants noted the confidence that comes with gaining experience and establishing credibility. Two coaches stated, “I’m just more self-assured.” Having experience has also aided some of the coaches in feeling more prepared, and thus, experiencing less stress. This was expressed by one coach who said,

Over the years it’s just been easier to deal with the stress today because of probably how poorly I did deal with it before, or just the experience of what stress did to me at a younger time of my career where I wasn’t prepared. I deal with it much different now. It isn’t the end of the world to lose a game.

Simply being older also helped some of the coaches to feel less stress. Specifically, a participant explained,

I started coaching at 22 and had four players who were 21, and I felt, they’ll always say you gotta start out tough, you can always let up, but it’s hard if you don’t go in and establish who’s the boss, who’s in control, and that was my approach to coaching, so therefore, it was my way or the highway. There was no flexibility in what I was doing and that was a bad thing, but now, with the age gap, it’s a lot easier for me.

Other coaches in the study expressed a contrasting view regarding the effects of age and experience on stress. One coach stated, “When I was a younger coach...I really didn’t worry about things very much. I always had the outlook that things would figure

themselves out...I'm probably more stressed now about things that I never used to stress about so much." Some of the coaches also considered the physical effects of age to be a deterrent to handling stress. As one participant suggested,

Your body can take a lot more at one time...the older that I get I find that I just can't do that, I don't have the emotional energy, I don't have the physical energy...When I first started, it was always, "I'm strong enough, I can deal with everything," and as I get older I realize I can't do that.

*Marriage to co-head coach.* Four of the participants in this study shared the role of head coach with their spouse, and they discussed the impact of this situation on their experience with stress. One coach stated,

...We respond differently in situations and games and I think sometimes I get stressed if I don't agree with his response...It may be easier to ignore what's going on with one of the other coaches if you aren't married...you know, you say things more freely to the people you're closest to.

These coaches had the additional stress of "taking their work home with them," and thus, described how this situation affected not only their professional environment, but their personal lives as well. One coach stated, "Our work never leaves us, we go home and it's still there." Another participant explained, "It's easy to find that your whole life is consumed with the program and your sport when both of you are doing it full time."

### *Sources of Stress*

Throughout the coaches' discussion about their experience with stress, they revealed several sources of stress in addition to responding to the investigator's direct questions regarding specific stressors suggested in the literature. These sources are

separated into interpersonal or personal causes, task-related causes, and causes of stress that might convince the participant to leave the coaching profession.

*Interpersonal/personal sources.* Sources of stress placed in this category include factors related to other people such as athletes, administration, and lack of social support, and defining stress as self-imposed. Stress related to others was one of the most prominently discussed factors among this group of coaches. Some of the coaches explained their concern over the athletes' personal activities. One coach stated,

I think where the stress comes from is the fact that you're relying on 18 to 22 year olds to make the right decisions and do the right things that prepare them to be successful both on the field and inside the classroom and they don't always do that...I feel like we do a good job of teaching them what to do in certain situations on the field, but what kind of frame of mind, what kind of an emotional state, what kind of a physical state they come to the field in is a whole other issue...I often tell my team that "the best compliment I can give any one of you individually is that I don't have to worry about you."

Other participants also mentioned the challenge of working with this population, as illustrated by one coach who said, "There's no other job in the world where your livelihood depends upon the whims of 18 to 22 year olds." Further, some coaches more specifically discussed the stress of communicating with athletes. One participant claimed that his greatest stress fell in this category and he said, "...having to communicate with them over issues that I don't feel comfortable...whether it be any personal issue, whether it be an eating disorder, or drinking issues...Those type of things stress me out." Two coaches claimed that having to communicate with such a large number of people on a

daily basis is demanding. One participant said, “Some of my biggest stress is dealing with too many people. Because everyone has some sort of agenda of why they want a part of me.”

When asked if the administration was a source of stress for the coaches, only two responded that it was, and even then, it was not viewed as a major challenge. One participant stated, “I’m on a yearly basis, so knowing where I’m at in their eyes isn’t always there.” Another coach offered, “There’s always a little friction between coaches and administrators, because coaches want to do it their way and administrators want to do it their way.”

One participant felt that a lack of social support was related to the stress in her life.

You work so hard it’s like your life becomes this program and this team so I guess I might feel stress in the sense that I don’t have a big social network outside of my job and the people I work with...(laughing) I mean, we’re supposed to be problem-solvers, not people with problems.

Many of the coaches defined their stress or expectations as self-imposed. Coaches stated, “I put more demands on myself than like an outside stress coming in,” and “I put more stress on myself than anybody else does. My expectations of myself are higher than anybody else’s.” Another coach described self-imposed stress in relation to getting athletes to see their potential.

My greatest stress is what I put on myself every year in terms of my expectations for every player and every team. I always see more in people than they do in themselves. That’s why I’m never quite satisfied, because I always know they



have more to give...That is something that stresses me out, when I can't get them to see it, and to recognize how talented they are and to really make the commitment.

*Task-related sources of stress.* Numerous stressors these coaches experienced were related to the tasks involved with coaching. Stressors placed in this category included tasks specific to being the head coach, the time involved in coaching, recruiting, facilities, and competition outcome. Six of the coaches had formerly been assistants, so many of them discussed the stress involved with shifting roles from assistant coach to head coach. They mentioned factors such as increased responsibility and being the primary decision-maker. One coach explained, "There's a difference between telling the coach that I think we should do this in a given situation and actually being the one to make the decision. It's a huge difference." When describing the most stressful part of coaching, one participant said,

It's just sometimes being "the guy." Everything is on me...I get questions asked by the office or coaches and it's like, can't you take care of that?...Being the head guy with the boosters and the tickets, or what are we doing with travel, everything...Sometimes it's, "Oh my God."

One participant referred to coaching as a "24-7 job," thus, the time involved in this profession was noted often in the descriptions of their experiences with stress. Another participant said, "It does consume my life...it's just the fact that this is definitely not a normal profession. It's something that, it's basically a lifestyle." Two coaches suggested that the time involved in coaching was the most stressful part of their job. One coach stated,

[The most stressful part is] just juggling all the balls, all the responsibilities.

Trying to be a coach, an administrator, as a coach sometimes a counselor, sometimes a teacher, watching film, trying to be aware of what I can do to promote our program, what I can do to promote the game, the time demands here in the office alone, the media relations part of it. I think it's just a combination of all of that.

Eight of the coaches discussed some aspect of recruiting as a negative source of stress, even though some of them claimed that overall it was something they enjoyed. The competitiveness involved in the recruiting process was mentioned by several of the participants.

You go to three or four of the national tournaments and there's 250 coaches there and they're all, it's kind of like a meat market. And you always try to find a different pitch... "well how can I present this differently?" It's basically selling ice to Eskimos, is what you're trying to do.

An additional source of stress related to recruiting was the long process involved, in that the coaches have to "start the process earlier and earlier." One participant suggested, "If you're not thinking about recruiting 12 months a year, then you're not gonna get them... It never stops."

The majority of coaches in this sample did not experience stress related to inadequate facilities or equipment, but two coaches felt unsatisfied with what was currently available to them. One coach stated,

I get frustrated because I know that university x, y, or z has this in place and has this available to them. We should have the same thing and we don't right

now...as much as the NCAA would love to say that the playing field is level out there, it's probably the Himalayas as far as the playing field...a lot of our competitors have advantages that we don't have.

The pressures of wanting to win or feeling they had to win were felt by four of the coaches. One coach suggested, "There's the stress of just being successful. We get graded every week, 'Did you win or lose?' Not 'Did you play well?'" Another participant described the pressure she felt to win by saying, "The reality is what gets you hired or fired is your ability to win or lose." Another coach stated,

I guess you could say when we're at competitions and there's concern whether we're well enough prepared for the event that we're in and the stress of will we win or not, that type of thing, because I'm very much motivated by winning...I would have a difficult time coaching [athletes] who were not succeeding. I enjoy that satisfaction of success. A lot.

*Sources of stress that would lead coaches to quitting.* All of the coaches were asked to describe any factors that would increase their likelihood of leaving the profession. Many of these coaches discussed the passion they felt toward coaching, and that if they ever lost that deep enjoyment, that would be a sign to retire. In response to the investigator's question, one coach said, "If I didn't look forward to coming in [to school] then I would be cheating everyone, the student-athletes, the staff, the fans, the program, the administration, I mean, I couldn't do that." Another coach concurred with this feeling and indicated,

If I get to the point when I don't enjoy what I'm doing...once I'm up I really want to get here. That feeling, if it leaves or it's gone, there have been times where

I've been frustrated or things haven't been quite so smooth, but it's been one or two days. But if it gets to the point where that's extended over a great period of time that's when I'll get out. If I feel like it's completely affecting what I'm doing. When I lose the enjoyment.

Another participant also mentioned wanting to quit if unhappiness became consistent and said, "There's a point in time every season when I think, 'Don't let me do this another year...' and when the day comes when I'm having those thoughts more often...(laughing)." Another coach described a few different factors that would make her leave the profession.

If I wasn't happy doing it anymore, if I didn't feel like I could make an impact on the girls, you know when they leave school. I mean, that's the main reason I started coaching...and if I feel like I can't, I'm more detrimental to them or can't help them, I think that's kind of my cue to leave. Or physically if I felt like I just couldn't do anything anymore.

Other reasons given for wanting to quit included wanting more free time, losing consistently, and if the job started to interfere with family life. One coach who is married and has young children stated,

As much as I love this, if it ever got to the point where I was missing out on my kids growing up and being there for them, not just my kids, my wife, then at that point I think I would do some self-evaluation as to whether or not this is really worth it.

Finally, one participant said she would leave coaching if something else called to her.

I will never get out because of stress...There are things out there that I want to

take on and when that time's right, boom, I'm gone, thanks for the run, it was a blast, now I'm going to go take on something else. I'll never get tired at [present university].

### *Responses and Effects of Stress*

This category represented some of the participants' perceptions regarding stress, and how they viewed it both positively and negatively. Therefore, this dimension was divided into the first order themes of positive responses to stress, negative responses to stress, and the effect of stress on others.

*Positive responses.* All of the coaches were asked if they had ever viewed stress in a positive way, and nine of them provided examples that indicated they had. Some of the coaches discussed how stress can enhance one's focus and motivation. One coach in particular claimed, "I think stress, where it really helps you to be stressful sometimes it keeps you energized, it keeps you on line to where you want to go...I think you need stress." Two coaches explained how learning from stress can help in preparation for the future. One coach indicated, "There's going to be a time when you're going to have stress, if you haven't experienced it, you're just going to fall apart, and I think for us and for me, I welcome stress." This coach later offered an example that illustrated how stress can be seen as an opportunity. He said,

We went to [another university] in '95 I think and we got swept in three games and I remember our head coach...he says, 'we had a good weekend, this will really help us.' And I'm thinking, what a smart thing to say because he could have lost the whole team that weekend, but what he did is he united the whole team and he said, "we had some tough games, we lost three, that's not

important...we're gonna build from this because we love adversity...". I think you need stress to get you righted sometimes, get the ship righted and move in a positive direction.

Some coaches felt that stress could be viewed positively because it can increase one's awareness. One participant said, "If I'm stressed I look at why...So I use it just to see where I'm at with that situation." Another coach suggested,

When something is stressing you out or creating some type of negative tension, A– you realize it's a problem, and B – you've got to do something about it...So if it pushes you to realize something that needs to be dealt with and move on quicker, then it's positive.

*Negative responses.* Many of the coaches in this study felt that stress could have a negative effect on one's physiology, behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. One coach described her physical reaction to stress when she said, "My stomach starts, I've had an off and on ulcer so I can tell when I start getting the burning sensation." A change in body language or tone of voice is displayed by some coaches when they're experiencing stress, and they stated that they can become "tense," "fidgety," "agitated on the bench," "louder," or "quieter." Some coaches suggested that they become "more emotional" or "moody" if they are stressed. Many of the coaches felt that stress was most detrimental to their ability to focus. One participant indicated,

We have an expression on our team called "being in the mirror room," where you get to a point where all you're thinking about is yourself and what's going on with you to the point where it's as if you're in a room and the walls are all mirrors, where everywhere you look all you see is yourself. And when I get stressed I

think that's where I get.

*Effect of stress on others.* Four of the coaches felt that their stress had an impact on the athletes. One participant felt that his stress level could influence the athletes' performances, stating, "If you show stress, the team's not going to play as well because they're not going to be as relaxed." Another coach described how her stress may in turn cause her athletes to experience stress.

[The athletes] pick up on [my stress], they're very astute, they can tell when things aren't going well, I try to hide it, but they can tell...sometimes they may find me a little bit unapproachable or they don't want to approach me in the sense of "gosh, I don't want to bother her." And then it starts to stress them because the things they need to discuss or get out or communicate they can't.

### *Managing Stress*

Part of an individual's experience with stress involves the ways in which s/he chooses to contend with sources of stress. This dimension consisted of the various coping strategies the coaches used to manage their stress. The techniques are separated into three categories: cognitive strategies, emotional control strategies, and behavioral strategies.

*Cognitive strategies.* "Cognitive strategies" refers to methods that participants used to alter their thought process, such as where they direct their focus or how they attempt to keep things in perspective. Six coaches indicated that they used some type of cognitive strategy to manage their stress. Specifically, some discussed how focusing on factors they could control helped to reduce their feelings of stress. One coach stated,

I think when you are stressed I think it's usually because you're focusing on

something that you really can't control. I think when I'm stressed it's because I'm too focused on the outcome rather than the process...I mean, you have to focus on the process and then the outcome is going to take care of itself.

Another coach agreed with this outlook and stated, "I'm never going to get out of coaching because I burn out. I'll never burn out because I don't base my enjoyment on winning, I never have." Shifting focus from the negative to the positive helped some participants manage stress. One coach said, "I get back to the things that I love [about the sport]. And because I'm dwelling on those...I'm not letting the other stuff consume me...I guess it's a kind of self-talk in not allowing certain things to bother me."

Three of the coaches discussed how keeping things in perspective helped them manage stress. In regards to the media, one coach stated,

I was taught by [my former coach] to keep [the media] in perspective. She always used to say, "There are only two people in your bubble – your team and your family and friends." Nobody knows our world. Nobody can understand it. So I don't have resentment or frustration with the media because I understand they're not in the bubble.

A coach who is married and has children felt that it was critical for him to maintain a proper perspective on his profession and what was important to him. He indicated,

My wife is due soon and I bet you 10 years ago I probably would have gone to senior nationals...And now I realize that's ridiculous. I mean, my place is here, [my assistant] can take care of the athletes, and as much as I would love to be there, I think that bringing a child into this world is a whole lot more important than anything that's going to happen at those five days at nationals.



*Emotional control strategies.* Eight coaches indicated that they tried to manage their stress by utilizing techniques to regulate their emotions. “Emotional control strategies” included maintaining a balanced lifestyle, separating their personal and professional life, sticking with their philosophy, having social support, and using sport psychology. One coach indicated,

I feel very strongly about staying balanced, so almost everyday I surf before my day starts...so I kind of have two lives which gives me equilibrium...The outlook that it provides for me is really to keep me emotionally and physically level, and what it does is it gets me outside of this intense, competitive world that I live in to this very laid back, very, very slow world of just surfing, and I don't have to be competitive. There are days where I'll sit out there for an hour and not hear the phone, not hear from anybody about a top recruit, so it's a wonderful balance for me.

Some of the coaches discussed how not allowing their professional life to seep into their personal life helped them handle stress. One participant described how he used to work while he was on vacation with his wife or family and indicated, “Now when I go away, which isn't very often, but when I do, I really, really try to just leave it here and separate myself from it, which I think is real helpful.” Another coach said, “I make sure when I get home I don't take the game with me.” Another participant managed stress by preventing his personal life from entering his coaching. He indicated, “I realized that I was allowing myself to allow outside factors to be drawn into a whole workout session when I need to be able to separate myself from that.”

Some of the participants claimed that keeping their coaching philosophy in mind

played a role in their stress management. One coach stated, “ I think that if I stick with my philosophy I’m probably going to be more successful in the long run, and definitely not have the stress that I’ve put on myself over the years.”

Seven of the coaches described how grateful they were for the social support they had, whether it was from friends, family, other coaches, their coaching staff, or the administration. One coach explained how staying connected to her family and friends helped her to maintain enthusiasm in her life. She stated, “Socially, the friends that I keep are non-athletically-related people, which gives me another outlet to just be myself.” Another coach felt support from friends who were also coaches. She explained,

Socially, I surround myself with people that I feel, you know, other coaching friends so we can all relate and we can all support each other...The people that I’m around and talk to I feel are very supportive and also understand where I’m coming from because a lot of them are coaches or administrative people who are involved in athletics.

Having a “loyal staff” or “a staff they felt they could turn to” helps some of the coaches manage their emotions. One coach stated, “I’ve worked with my assistants and they help me during the match to be less stressed, they’ll keep me more calm and those types of things.”

Three of the coaches mentioned the influence of sport psychology in helping them manage stress. One coach indicated,

If I didn’t have the sport psych part...I think the stress would make me much more negative, and I think I would be more combative, and I would be more confrontational...I think I’m much more tolerant, so the stress doesn’t seep in as

great and as ugly as it did earlier.

This coach also suggested, “The sport psych stuff has been a plus for me, both in my coaching and just anywhere. I find myself before a speech or a game just taking a breath...I go to my breath. I get under control.” Another coach referred to his use of visualization to help him remain calm when having to make decisions. He stated, “I have coached way more games in my head than I’ve ever actually coached.”

*Behavioral strategies.* “Behavioral strategies” refers to behaviorally-based activities that the participants used to manage their stress such as preparation, getting away from the coaching environment, exercise, and reading. Preparation aided many of the participants in managing their stress. One coach stated that he “tries to prepare [himself] just to expect the unexpected.” Another participant claimed, “I think we minimize stress a lot because we’re pretty organized...and I think we practice the right things.” This coach also developed backup plans to help him prepare for possible stressors that could occur during competitions. He indicated, “I will go through before every match and say, ‘what if this player gets injured...’ so I have written down, literally, 10 or 11 different lineups that I keep in a folder that I can turn to.”

Some participants also felt that it was necessary for them to get away from the coaching environment to help them cope with stress. One coach stated, “We try to just totally take Monday off, stay away from the office, stay away from it period.” Another coach indicated, “There’s days where I’m beat up with coaches meetings or phone calls or whatever...I always know that I can walk out of [my office] to this practice field in five minutes and that’s my time to release it.”

Six coaches mentioned that they exercise, read, and/or get a massage in order to

manage stress. One participant indicated, “I like to do things physically, so a lot of times I’ll try to ride the bike or lift weights or something. I find that I ride the bike a lot faster when I’m stressed (laughing).”

### *Sources of Enjoyment*

All of the participants were asked to describe the things that they loved about coaching. This dimension is separated into interpersonal/personal sources of enjoyment and task-related sources of enjoyment.

*Interpersonal/personal sources of enjoyment.* This category included sources of enjoyment related to the athletes or team, and personal reasons such as learning or giving back to the sport. Eight of the coaches discussed sources of enjoyment that fell into this category. Several coaches mentioned the opportunity they had to watch the development of the athletes. One stated,

I love seeing a freshman come in and as a senior they’re a young woman. Here, we take some kids that, they could have a pretty bad life, and all of a sudden they get their degree here and they turn it around a little bit, and I feel good about that. They might have never got their college degree if it weren’t for [the sport]. [The enjoyment] is the kids and how much you can affect their lives in a positive manner.

Many coaches also expressed their love of the athletes and how gratifying it is for them to see the athletes succeed. They mentioned “watching people improve,” and “seeing the upside of progress.” One participant stated, “I really like the interaction with the girls, I really care about all my players deeply.” Another said, “I love relationships with players, when afterwards they come back [to the school] to workout, and just talking

about how the program was five years ago.” One coach remarked,

I like molding a team and year after year, that’s the nicest part of this job, is that every year a coach gets a new group of people and getting to mold them, and what’s the personality of the team going to be, I like that part of it.

One coach mentioned that she sees coaching as a learning experience. She stated, “I love being a student of the game. The longer I’m in it, the longer I realize I have so much to learn.”

Another said she enjoyed coaching because she felt it gave her an opportunity to give back to the sport.

[This] is a sport that was and still is very, has just been great for my life, has taught me so many things, taught me how to deal with stress and pressures and I feel like I have a lot to give back.

*Task-related sources of enjoyment.* Eight coaches also mentioned sources of enjoyment that related to tasks specific to the act of coaching, such as employing strategy, recruiting, winning, teaching, and factors associated with the sport itself. Three coaches said that they enjoyed winning, whereas others discussed preparation and teaching. One individual stated, “[After a loss] I like figuring out how to put this thing back together, that’s the fun part, too. It’s crazy, it’s fun to have failure, it’s like, ‘okay, this is fun, how are we going to fix this?’” Another participant said, “I like the strategy involved. I like preparing for the opponent. It’s not only the preparation, but during the course of the game, game management. The challenges, like a chess match, I enjoy that.” One coach said, “I love teaching the game to people who are just getting into the sport or are just getting a program established so when I do camps and clinics for coaches across

the country, I *love* doing that.” Another coach stated, “I like teaching. I like the one-on-one teaching somebody a skill, how to be better at something.”

Four of the coaches indicated that they enjoyed certain things about recruiting. When asked to describe her feelings about recruiting, one coach indicated,

I love it! I love it! Oh my gosh, I love it. I love being able to go and say, this is what we're about. I have so much to brag about, and get excited about, I love it.

The home visit is my most enjoyable time because I can share with them my passion.

Two coaches described sources of enjoyment that related directly to the sport itself. In her description of why she loved her sport, one coach stated,

It's a very good sport that teaches you a lot about yourself individually. It really makes you drive deep inside and sometimes it's scary because you have to really be accountable for a lot of things yourself, but it's something you learn a lot about I think, as a person.

## Part IV: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of coaches' experiences with stress, the perceived effects of stress on their coaching performance, and their coping strategies. Ten NCAA Division I male and female head coaches participated in a semi-structured interview, and their responses were analyzed and categorized into five primary dimensions. These dimensions included: (a) contextual/conditional factors, (b) sources of stress, (c) responses and effects of stress, (d) managing stress, and (e) sources of enjoyment.

In this section, the participants' responses are discussed relative to the stages in Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of stress and burnout. According to Smith, individuals' environmental and personal characteristics must be initially considered because of the impact they can have on the overall stress process. The first stage of Smith's model involves the balance between the demands of the activity and one's coping resources. In the second stage, the individual's cognitive appraisal takes place. Coaches' sources of stress, their strategies for managing stress, and their perceptions of stress are described relative to these preliminary stages. The third stage involves the individual's responses to stress so coaches' symptoms when they experience stress are examined here. In the next stage, behaviors that result from experiencing stress are assumed to occur, therefore, the coaches' views on how stress affects their performance are discussed in this context. Finally, one's decision to continue participating in an activity depends on his or her rewards, thus the coaches' sources of enjoyment and the sources that would increase their likelihood of quitting the profession are described here.

A model of coaching stress based on the present findings and Smith's (1986) theory is presented in Figure 2. The balance between the coaches' demands (sources of



stress) and resources (coping strategies) was mediated by their perceptions of these factors. If the coaches perceived that their demands outweighed their resources, this would lead to distress and negative responses, which may have a detrimental effect on their coaching performance. If this occurs consistently over an extended period of time, withdrawal from coaching may be the eventual consequence. However, if coaches perceived that they have effective resources to meet their demands, eustress (i.e., positive stress) may result in which case the coaches would positively respond to situational demands and be less likely to leave the coaching profession due to stress. These coaches' overall experiences with stress were affected by their environment and their personal characteristics.

#### *Contextual/Conditional Factors*

The structure of the coaching environment and various demographic factors had an influence on many of the participants' experiences with stress. Four participants had previously coached in less competitive settings, so an increase in the level of competition had an effect on their stress level. Richman (1992) found higher levels of anxiety among Division I coaches compared to those working at Division II or III institutions, thus, it is reasonable that the highly competitive Division I atmosphere was seen as more stressful by the present group of coaches. However, it is important to consider specific sources of stress when examining the overall stress level. For example, none of the coaches felt stress due to financial concerns, which they explained by noting that their university athletic department provided abundant funding.

The participants in this sample were involved with athletic programs that were very successful. Most of the coaches currently had teams or athletes that were national

champions or ranked in the top 10 nationally for their respective sports. Although no published data exist regarding the stress of success in the coaching population, Gould, Jackson, and Finch (1993) found that national champion figure skaters experienced more stress after winning their title than they did beforehand. These athletes cited self- and other-imposed expectations as the reason for their increased stress levels. Coaches in the present study discussed the expectations that came with being consistently successful and the feeling that they must always supercede or maintain previous performances. However, success was also seen as a positive factor, as it resulted in increased support from administrators and facilitated the recruiting process.

Most of the coaches felt that their stress levels remained fairly consistent throughout the year because their profession was “non-stop.” Drake and Hebert (2002) found that coaches experienced greater stress levels during the season than during the off-season. However, the coaches in their study were at the high school level where responsibilities and time demands are significantly different than those at the university level. In fact, many of the coaches in the present study expressed frustration toward “outsiders” who were not familiar with collegiate coaching and assumed that they had an abundance of free time in the off-season.

Since the participants were head coaches at high-level Division I programs, it is not surprising that all had an extensive amount of coaching experience. Interestingly, four of the participants felt that their stress level had increased over the years whereas four of them experienced a decrease in stress. The coaches who indicated a decreased stress level from when they first began coaching cited various explanations for this change, such as establishing credibility, having greater knowledge, and having a larger

age gap between themselves and their athletes. However, some of the coaches noted that being older made it physically harder for them to fulfill their responsibilities and contributed to their increased stress level. In general, research has suggested that higher stress levels exist among coaches who are young and have less experience (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Pastore & Judd, 1993), however, these studies measured stress according to the participants' level of emotional exhaustion. Thus, it seems that both emotional and physical exhaustion should be considered when assessing coaches' experiences with stress.

Previous research has also found that stress and burnout is higher for female coaches than for male coaches (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Vealey et al. 1992). Potential explanations for this finding were that, compared to males, the female coaches had less experience and fewer role models in the profession. The current findings did not support this trend, which could be a promising result for female coaches. The average years of experience for the female coaches in this study ( $M = 21.25$ ) was almost exactly the same as that of the male coaches ( $M = 22.50$ ). Further, the coach who had the greatest amount of experience (30 years) was a woman. Two of the female coaches specifically discussed having a mentor who was a role model for them, and one, who seemed to have the best handle on stress in the whole sample, listed the highest number of enjoyable factors of coaching, the least number of stressors, and claimed that she would "never burnout" or "leave coaching because of stress." Three of the female participants mentioned the supportive environment in which they coached and this may have also played a role in their experience with stress.

*Sources of Stress, Managing Stress, and Perceptions*

Multiple sources of stress were mentioned by the coaches in this study. Among those considered to be the most stressful were communicating with athletes, lack of control over athletes, recruiting, and the pressure of having so many roles and responsibilities. Many of the participants stated that they experienced stress in relation to their interactions with other people, whether it be athletes, officials, the administration, or just having to “deal with so many people.” This finding is consistent with other literature showing that professions involving a high amount of human interaction are very stressful (e.g., Maslach & Jackson, 1979; Bennett et al., 2001; Gorrell et al., 1985). Quantitative research conducted with coaches has also indicated that interpersonal relations with athletes is a common source of coaches’ stress (Kroll & Gundersheim, 1982; Richman, 1992; Wang & Ramsey, 1998).

While a number of the findings from the present study are consistent with previous research, this was not the case for many of the sources of coaching stress. When coaches were asked to describe their experience with specific sources of stress reported in previous literature (Kelley, 1994; Kelly & Gill, 1993; Richman, 1992; Wang & Ramsey, 1998), recruiting was the only source that the majority ( $n = 8$ ) found to be stressful, and four of these coaches stated that overall, they enjoyed the recruiting process. Two coaches expressed minimal dissatisfaction with the administration, one coach experienced a minimal stress related to traveling, one coach felt that she had a lack of social support, and none of the coaches viewed the media or financial issues as sources of stress.

This sample of coaches described an array of coping strategies that they used to

manage stress, and also offered insight on their perceptions of specific sources of stress as well as the broader concept of stress as a whole. Taking into consideration Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of stress and burnout, an individual's perceptions and resources play a critical role in his or her experience with stress. Specifically, the coaches' experiences with stress in this study were mediated by how they perceived their situation and the coping strategies they used to meet the demands of the situation. For example, media presence was a regular experience for several of the coaches, yet they chose to direct their focus elsewhere, or simply "keep them in perspective." Coaches frequently talked about recognizing and focusing on the factors over which they had control. Therefore, rather than viewing demands such as the media, travel, or the outcome of a competition as stressful, they redirected their focus to factors within their control. Ironically, the coach who had the highest winning percentage in the sample (.851) had the strongest sentiments toward focusing on the process instead of worrying about winning. She believed that her lack of concern over winning facilitated her team's ability to perform well and eased the stress she felt. In contrast, the four coaches who cited the outcome of competition as a source of stress did not indicate that they focused on factors within their control as a way of managing stress.

Half of the participants in this study experienced stress due to the time demands of the job. There have been equivocal findings in the literature regarding this source of stress, as Vealey et al. (1992) failed to find a relationship between time spent on coaching duties and burnout whereas Kelly et al. (1999) found that the female coaches in their study did experience time pressure. All of the coaches in the present investigation who experienced stress due to time demands were married and some had children as well.

Thus, the additional time and personal requirements of having a family may have exacerbated this source of stress.

Many of the coaches did not experience high levels of stress due to the demands of the job which may have been due to the extensive amount of coping resources they utilized and the fact that nine of them provided examples of how they viewed stress positively. Most of the coaches ( $n = 8$ ) claimed to use some type of behavioral coping strategy, such as exercising, getting away from the environment, creating backup plans, or organizational preparation. Eight of the coaches utilized techniques to control their emotions and six employed cognitive strategies. Sullivan and Nashman (1993) found that U.S. Olympic head coaches listed exercise and mental preparation as primary coping strategies, while in another study, high school coaches cited exercise, organizational preparation, and support from mentors as coping resources (Drake & Hebert, 2002). Social support has been shown to play a significant role in stress management (e.g., Cohen & Wills, 1985; Greenberg, 2002; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990; Seaward, 2002), so it was not surprising that seven of these coaches turned to others as a coping resource. In a review of the literature on the role of social support on athletic performance, Iso-Ahola (1995) stated that athletes who have low social support perceive events to be more threatening than those who receive strong support.

Caccese and Mayerberg (1984) claim that one of the reasons female coaches experience higher levels of burnout than males may be a relative lack of coping strategies. This did not, however, appear to be the case for the coaches in the present study. Both female and male coaches listed numerous resources they used to cope with stress. Four women employed cognitive strategies compared to two men, while five male

coaches used behavioral techniques compared to three women. There were an equal number of female and male coaches who used emotional control strategies ( $n = 4$ ). Interestingly, the average number of strategies reported by the female coaches was higher ( $M = 5.50$ ) than those by the male coaches ( $M = 3.50$ ). Therefore, it does not seem that the women in this study lacked coping resources, however it is unclear as to why this difference exists. It may indicate that the women feel a greater need for coping strategies whereas it could also be a sign that they simply are more adept at managing their stress.

Nine of the coaches indicated that they viewed stress in a positive way, whether as a motivational tool, a way to become aware of issues that needed attention, or as an opportunity to prepare better for the future. The other coach claimed that her whole outlook on coaching was positive. This positive perception of stress is commonly referred to as “eustress,” and has been shown to facilitate an individual’s productivity and feelings of accomplishment (Selye, 1956). Taken together, the positive perceptions of stress portrayed by the coaches in this study along with the coping resources they used could explain their relatively positive experiences with stress, and offer support for Smith’s (1986) contention that perception acts as a mediator between sources of stress and actual stress levels.

#### *Negative Responses to Stress*

Stress can manifest itself in many ways, and this was illustrated by the coaches in this study. Symptoms may be physiological, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral in nature (Greenberg, 2002; Manning, Curtis, & McMillen, 1999), all of which were represented in the current sample of participants.

Four of the coaches felt that their negative reactions to stress may have an effect

on their athletes. The fact that a coach's experience with stress may influence an athlete's experience with stress has been illustrated in other literature as well (Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001; McCann, 1997; Woodman & Hardy, 2001). Specifically, McCann suggested that it is very easy for athletes to recognize when their coach is under stress, and that a coach who is visibly anxious may produce a diminished confidence for the athlete. One Olympic athlete stated, "We all know that coach doesn't handle pressure well. Basically she freaks out! She starts pointing out problems and trying to change things at the last minute, so we try and avoid her the last week before Nationals" (McCann, p. 12). One coach in the present study suggested that when she was experiencing stress, her unapproachable demeanor may cause her athletes to avoid her and perhaps hold in issues because "they don't want to bother her." A similar occurrence was described by Udry et al. (1997) who found that the coach was seen as a negative influence by 70% of the burned-out athletes they surveyed. These authors suggested that "resource bankruptcy" may be a factor mediating coach behavior, in that the coaches may themselves be under stress and thus, not be able to meet the needs of their athletes. Consistent behavior and effective stress management are not only helpful for the coach's confidence and anxiety control, but may also help his or her athletes feel more confident and under control in high pressure situations.

### *The Effects of Stress on Coaching Performance*

Despite the extensive list of coping strategies, coaches in the present study indicated that stress could have a negative effect on their performance. If they were not able to effectively manage stress, their level and direction of focus was impeded, it became more difficult to make decisions, and emotional outbursts were more likely.



These perceptions are in line with the final stage in Smith's (1986) model of stress which posits that a decrease in performance may occur if one has a negative response to stress. Kellman and Kallus (1994) claim that stress often results in the inability to perform necessary coaching behaviors, such as analyzing situations and preparing athletes during competitions.

*Sources of Stress Related to Coaches Quitting and Sources of Enjoyment*

An additional consequence of ineffective stress management is withdrawal from the activity (Smith, 1986). Dissatisfaction with the activity or attractiveness of other activities may cause a coach to leave, whereas if an individual enjoys the activity s/he will be more likely to continue (Smith; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Numerous sources of enjoyment were described by the participants in this study. Coaches claimed to enjoy factors related to working with athletes, teaching, learning, strategizing, being successful, recruiting, and simply an overall love of the sport.

According to these coaches, sources of stress that would increase their likelihood of leaving the profession included physical hardship, wanting more free time, attraction to an alternative activity, interference with family life, losing the passion for coaching, losing consistently, and consistently feeling frustrated or unhappy. A specific component of the stress process involves the individual considering the rewards of the activity and comparing them to the costs. If there is a significant imbalance, withdrawal may result (Smith, 1986; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thus, it makes sense that many of these coaches felt that they would leave the profession if costs (sources of stress) outweighed the rewards (sources of enjoyment). However, they stated that experiencing occasional instances of frustration would not deter them from coaching. Many of the reasons they

gave for potentially leaving the profession are consistent with the results of previous studies. Pastore (1991) found that the most commonly cited reason NCAA Division I coaches gave for leaving the profession was a lack of time with family and friends. In a subsequent study, two-year college coaches claimed that time demands and the resulting interference with personal time was the most likely reason for quitting the profession (Pastore, 1992). It is also important to consider the experiences of coaches who have actually left the profession to determine whether the actual reasons they left are similar to the reasons given by coaches for why they *would* leave. Although this question has not been empirically examined with collegiate coaches, former NCAA Division I coaches have stated that the physical demands of stress and emotional exhaustion resulted in their retirement (Kolbenschlag, 1976). Only two of the participants in the present study directly referred to their physical condition as a reason they would quit coaching, although several mentioned that their physical abilities had been decreasing over the years, and four cited the emotional costs of coaching as a potential reason to consider retiring.

#### *Future Research Recommendations*

Considering the qualitative nature of this examination and the demographic characteristics of the participants, these findings cannot be generalized to all coaches. Many of the coaches in this study discussed the different levels and sources of stress they experienced as assistant coaches and head coaches, thus, it would be useful to interview collegiate assistant coaches to determine how their experiences and perceptions of stress may differ from those of the head coaches in this study. According to previous research (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Drake & Hebert, 2002; Kelly & Gill, 1993; Pastore &

Judd, 1993; Vealey et al., 1992) and the results of the present study, it remains unclear whether having more years of experience increases or decreases the amount of stress coaches perceive. It would be of value to interview coaches who were in the early stages of their career in order to gain a better idea of the impact of this personal characteristic on stress. It is also possible that the stress experienced among coaches of individual and team sports may be different, thus, practitioners could benefit from being aware of the factors that are unique to each situation. Further, it would be useful to re-examine burnout and stress among coaches to determine if the gender differences are not as prominent, as this study would suggest.

Four of the participants in the present study represented the unique situation of being married to their co-head coach. All of these individuals described sources of stress related to this situation, and it would be interesting to expand on this knowledge by conducting a focus group in which these participants shared their experience with each other. It is unclear as to whether this situation enhances one's ability to manage stress by acting as a form of social support (e.g., Koustelios, Kellis, & Bagiatis, 1997), or if it acts primarily as a debilitating source of stress due to "taking their work home with them."

As previously mentioned, no research exists that has addressed the stress related to being a successful coach. While being involved in a losing program or simply losing a competition is understandably stressful, the coaches in this study offered insight as to several sources of stress that are unique to leading a consistently successful team, such as the heightened expectations of others and their own self-imposed expectations to continue improving.

*Practical Implications*

Five coaches in this study claimed that communicating with athletes was a source of stress. Perhaps not surprisingly, research with athletes has indicated that communicating with coaches is a significant stressor for them (e.g., Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Holt & Hogg, 2002; Pensgaard & Ursin, 1998). Thus, it appears evident that the coach-athlete relationship may be impacted by this source of stress, and both parties would benefit from communication skills training.

Although the coaches in the present study seemed to manage their stress well, it is likely that there are coaches who could benefit from stress management training. In such cases, Taylor's (1992) stress management model for coaches represents a useful framework for individuals to consider. Taylor based his model primarily on research conducted with professionals who were not in a sport setting such as public agency employees, secondary school teachers, social workers, and individuals in the mental health field. The present findings suggest support for many of the components of the model, such as the importance of understanding coaches' perceptions and their sources of enjoyment, considering coaches' previous experiences and environmental conditions, ensuring that the coaches understand their personal symptoms of stress, and emphasizing the value of social support. Taylor's model could be enhanced for coaches by including some of the coping strategies offered by the coaches in the present study. For example, many of these coaches found it helpful to be aware of and focus on factors within their control, keep situations in perspective, have a balanced lifestyle, and be able to separate their personal and professional life. Promoting techniques that coaches use to manage stress may be more influential when implementing a program for coaches who are trying

to cope with stress.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are offered: (1) Smith's (1986) framework regarding athletes' experiences of stress and burnout can also be applied to coaches. Specifically, these coaches' perceptions of their sources of stress were critical to their overall experience. Simply having demands did not necessarily result in a negative experience with stress, rather, these coaches responded both negatively and positively to sources of stress. (2) Coaches cited several sources of stress as well as factors they enjoyed about their profession, however, they discussed the relationship with their athletes relative to both of these categories, indicating the importance of this particular aspect of coaching. (3) Many coaches indicated that their negative reactions to stress could influence their athletes' performances and experiences with stress. (4) The coaches discussed numerous coping strategies they used to manage their stress, which may be helpful to inexperienced coaches or those who feel overwhelmed with the demands of this profession. Techniques utilized most often included focusing on factors within their control, having social support, and exercise.

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## Appendices



## Appendix A

### Expanded Review of Literature

In this section, an overview of existing literature regarding stress within the sporting domain is presented. In order to demonstrate the rationale behind examining collegiate head coaches' experiences with stress, the following topics are addressed: (1) the conceptualization of stress, (2) extant knowledge regarding athletes' and coaches' stress, (3) burnout among coaches, (4) stress management in athletics, and (5) gaps in the literature on coaching stress.

### *Definition of Stress*

Stress is often thought of as “the equal opportunity destroyer,” as it has the ability to impact all aspects of one's life, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, nationality, or socioeconomic class (Seaward, 2002). Selye (1956), one of the pioneers of stress management, initially defined stress as “the rate of wear and tear in the body” (p. 311). He later added more detail and Seaward summarized the definition as the “nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it to adapt, whether that demand produces pleasure or pain” (p. 4). Recently, many researchers have taken a more holistic approach to studying the stress phenomenon, and have broadened the definition to “the inability to cope with a perceived threat to one's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, which results in a series of physiological and psychological responses and adaptations” (Seaward, p. 4). The deleterious effects of stress have been repeatedly demonstrated. These include physiological, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms as well as a decrease in the efficiency of the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to disease and illness (Greenberg, 2002; Manning, Curtis, & McMillen, 1999).

Athletics is a domain that is highly conducive to feelings of stress and anxiety. Competitive athletes and coaches encounter constant physical and mental demands, their performance is often publicly evaluated, and they spend countless hours with each other. The pressures arising from these experiences have the capacity to overwhelm the athlete or coach, possibly to the point of leaving a sport that had previously brought them tremendous joy and satisfaction.

#### *Athletes' Experiences With Stress*

Numerous studies have been conducted on issues surrounding athlete stress. Dunn and Nielsen (1996) identified anxiety-inducing competitive situations in team sports, and derived categories such as officiating, teammates, flow during the game, and situations in which the score or time was critical. Athletes' coping mechanisms have also been assessed along with the strategies they use depending on the type of stressor (e.g., Anshel, Jamieson, & Raviv, 2001; Gould, Finch, & Jackson, 1993). Further, sources of stress have been uncovered for professional soccer players (Noblet & Gifford, 2002), national champion figure skaters (Gould, Jackson, & Finch, 1993; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1991), high school golfers (Cohn, 1990), collegiate wrestlers (Gould & Weinberg, 1985), and injured elite skiers (Gould, Udry, Bridges, & Beck, 1997).

Research has indicated that coaches are often a major source of athletes' stress. In one recent study, Norwegian Olympic athletes were asked to answer questionnaires designed to assess the stressful experiences they faced during the 1994 Winter Games (Pensgaard & Ursin, 1998). Stressors related to the coach included unrealistic expectations, personal conflict, and lack of information. Similarly, female soccer players participating in the World Cup Finals felt that their coaches were one of their main

sources of stress (Holt & Hogg, 2002). More specifically, these athletes indicated that a lack of effective communication on the part of the coaching staff as well as feedback that was too negative was particularly stressful. Anxiety over coaches' expectations has been expressed by youth sport athletes (Gould, Horn, & Spreeman, 1983; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989; Pierce & Stratton, 1981; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1984; Scanlan et al., 1991), collegiate wrestlers (Gould & Weinberg, 1985), varsity athletes from a variety of sports (Baker, Cote, & Hawes, 2000), and elite international athletes (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Woodman & Hardy, 2001). These athletes noted that negative evaluations by their coach and the pressure to perform at the standard their coach had set for them was stressful.

### *Is Coaching Stressful?*

Although a significant amount of research exists examining the stress experienced by athletes, there is a dearth of empirical investigation on coaching stress. Sources of occupational stress have been uncovered for other professions, especially those in which human interaction is prevalent. For example, high levels of stress have been found among police officers (Maslach & Jackson, 1979; Violanti & Aron, 1994), nurses (Bennett, Lowe, Matthews, Dourali, & Tattersall, 2001; Florio, Donnelly & Zevon, 1998), public agency employees (Ganster, Mayes, Sime, & Tharp, 1982), and teachers (Gorrell, Bregman, McAllister, & Lipscomb, 1985; Harris, Halpin, & Halpin, 1985; Payne & Furnham, 1987; Shaw, Keiper, & Flaherty, 1985). Thus, it might be presumed that coaches who must constantly interact with a variety of people, including athletes, parents of athletes, other coaches, athletic directors, and game officials, experience high levels of occupational stress as well. Multiple demands and expectations of others can

put coaches in the uncomfortable position of having to satisfy various, possibly conflicting, requests of other people in addition to fulfilling their coaching duties.

Many notable coaches have left their profession because of the negative effects of stress. For example, former Notre Dame head football coach Ara Parseghian openly admitted that coaching stress had defeated him and that he had reached a point of emotional exhaustion (Kolbenschlag, 1976). George Ireland, former head basketball coach at Loyola University in Chicago, also retired early because of the physical demands that stress had placed on his body. He stated, "One day my doctor sat me down and asked if I wanted to keep on coaching or die in two weeks" (as cited in Kolbenschlag, p. 97). Pete Newell, another college basketball coach, said he would become so anxious and tense that he would not be able to eat anything during tournaments and almost had a complete physical breakdown. Newell believed that he had no way to release his emotions, that he had to deal with fans and officials, and that a coach was under more stress than athletes (Kolbenschlag). For Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka, stress manifested itself in the form of a heart attack during the 1988 football season. A year later, when Ditka was overcome by a stressful situation caused by a severe loss, "his face was reddish-purple, his features were contorted, his eyes were bulging, and sweat was pouring from his brow" (Pacelli, 1990, p. 127).

To date, there have been a few studies that have examined sources of stress within the coaching profession. Kroll and Gundersheim (1982) surveyed male high school coaches about the stressors associated with the daily rigors of their profession. Their most frequently cited stress involved their relationship with the athletes on their team. Specifically, stress was often experienced in situations where a coach and athlete differed

in their philosophies on the purpose of competing and participating in sport, and how each of them viewed success.

In a subsequent study, Malone (1984) administered a questionnaire to a group of male and female head high school coaches in order to investigate situations (both job and non-job-related) that contributed to their occupational stress. The major stressors found for this group of coaches were inadequate teaching and coaching salaries, and not having enough free time. The coaches also reported that the amount of pressure they felt was most significantly related to win-loss record.

Richman (1992) sought to determine the relationship between hassles in collegiate coaching and coaches' well-being. The Athletic Coaching Minor Stress Survey (Nelson, Richman, & Tremble, 1992) was used to measure coaches' perceptions of stress, including those dealing with various dimensions of external demands, administrative support, work overload, negative outcomes, and interpersonal relations. The results demonstrated that stressors involved with interpersonal relations were significantly related to higher levels of anxiety and depression, and lower levels of positive well-being and general health. External demands such as the media, alumni groups, and NCAA rules were related to higher anxiety and lower general health, while lack of administrative support was related to higher levels of anxiety and depression. This study also revealed higher levels of anxiety experienced by Division I coaches compared to those working at Division II or III institutions. It was therefore presumed that stressors such as high visibility, media attention, and public interest were greater for Division I coaches than for those working in Divisions II or III.

Wang and Ramsey (1998) developed the Inventory for New Coaches' Challenges and Barriers (INCCB) to determine whether specific stressors existed for individuals who were in the early stages of their coaching career. The most significant challenge for the variety of coaches sampled in this study was the adequacy of communication skills necessary to establish a positive relationship with athletes. Other stressors included establishing a positive team atmosphere, keeping non-starting players motivated, recruiting, and lack of financial resources.

In the initial qualitative study designed to examine coaches' stress, Sullivan and Nashman (1993) interviewed 10 U.S. head coaches who were part of the 1992 winter or summer Olympic Games. The coaches were asked closed-ended questions regarding sources of satisfaction in their job, sources of occupational stress, and their use of specific coping strategies. Overall, the coaches stated that they were satisfied and confident with their position, and categorized their primary stressors as role, task, or interpersonal demands, such as selecting players, representing their country, having insufficient preparation time, the media, and being away from family. Most of the coaches stated that they exercised and used positive mental preparation as primary coping strategies.

In the only other qualitative study to date, Drake and Hebert (2002) examined the sources and perceptions of stress, as well as the coping strategies, of two high school teacher-coaches. Interviews conducted twice a month for a four-month period revealed that the nature of the dual teacher-coach role led to a significant portion of stress for these individuals. Both participants discussed conflicts due to teaching and coaching, especially since their respective administrations placed greater emphasis on one aspect (academic for one participant, and athletic for the other participant). Both participants

coached two sports which resulted in an additional source of stress. Other factors that represented sources of stress were parental expectations, time of year, years of experience, and personal life. Specifically, higher levels of stress were experienced during the season than in the off-season, during the first few years of employment, and, for the coach who was married with children, when trying to balance a career with family life. Both coaches indicated they had thought about quitting during their initial years of teaching/coaching and that their primary coping strategies were personal releases such as exercising or spending time with family, learning to be organized, and learning from mentors.

Taken together, the available research suggests that coaches can experience a variety of sources of occupational stress and use a number of strategies to cope with it. However, in some cases, coaching stress can lead to career termination.

### *Burnout Among Coaches*

When an individual cannot effectively cope with a stressful situation, burnout may be the result. Freudenberger (1980) originally coined the term burnout as “a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” (p. 13). Maslach and Jackson (1981) proposed a multidimensional conceptualization of burnout that includes the components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. In order to examine this construct, they developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which has been the most widely used measure of burnout in the sport domain (Dale & Weinberg, 1990; Fender, 1989). Most significantly, researchers who have used the MBI have found that coaches report higher levels of burnout than



individuals in other helping professions (Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992).

The most commonly used theory that has been advanced to explain the complex phenomenon of burnout is Smith's (1986) cognitive-affective model of stress. This model draws upon Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) social exchange theory which is based upon the assumption that individuals act with the goal of maximizing positive experiences while minimizing negative ones. Rewards and costs of an activity are considered and compared against one's expectations about the activity and the attractiveness of alternative activities. If an individual enjoys the activity, s/he will be more likely to continue, while dissatisfaction may cause one to leave. Thibaut and Kelley also point out that a satisfied individual may discontinue an activity if his or her alternatives outweigh the reward-to-cost ratio (outcome), while a dissatisfied individual may stay if there is no attraction to other activities. According to Smith's four-stage model, an individual may experience an imbalance between demands and resources, such as time expectations, intense practice settings, or an unrealistic pressure to win. Stress may also occur when resources exceed one's demands, as when an individual is not appropriately challenged and experiences boredom. One then examines the situation by appraising the environmental demands and his or her personal resources. If the individual perceives the demand as threatening, physiological arousal may result, which then leads to the final stage of ineffective coping behaviors, including decreased performance, withdrawal from the activity, or interpersonal difficulty. It is important to note that these stages can be affected by personality and motivational factors, such as self-esteem, locus of control, and trait anxiety. Smith's model also contains a temporal

component that defines burnout as a result of chronic stress, as opposed to a single bout of acute stress. This long-term stress may be brought about by situational factors, such as conflict with coaches or teammates, high competitive demands, and time and energy requirements.

The major premise of Smith's (1986) model is that stress is based on personal appraisal. Stress does not simply occur because a stressor exists, rather it is due to one's perceptions (Dewe, 1989; Kerr, 1989; Lazarus, 1966; 1975; 1990; Pacelli, 1990; Rotella & Lerner, 1993), lack of coping strategies, or personal and environmental factors that are present (Taylor, 1992). Thus, two coaches may be facing the same situation but experience varying amounts of stress based on how they perceive it.

Although Smith's model was developed to examine burnout in athletes, it has also been used to examine burnout in coaches. For example, Vealey et al. (1992) used Smith's theoretical framework to investigate predictors of high school and college coaches' burnout. Factors found to be related to burnout included high trait anxiety and several perceptions associated with the coaching role, such as rewards, amount of control/autonomy, overload of commitments, and level of social support. Interestingly, actual time spent on coaching duties was not found to be related to burnout. Cognitive evaluation was also shown to mediate stress and burnout among collegiate basketball coaches (Kelley & Gill, 1993) and baseball and softball coaches (Kelley, 1994), in that higher levels of perceived stress were related to higher levels of burnout.

Some have suggested that burnout is a primary explanation for the dramatic decrease in female coaches at several levels of competition. Pastore (1992) pointed out that the number of female coaches is on a steady decline, despite the greater number of

female athletes who are joining sport teams. While female collegiate athletes have increased in number from 90,000 in 1981-1982 to 163,000 in 1998-1999 (National Association of College Women Athletic Administrators, 2002), 75% of all coaching positions are held by men (National Women's Sports Foundation, 1997). According to Felder and Wishnietsky (1990), the percentage of females coaching high school teams has dropped as much as 50% between the mid-1970's and early 1980's. Interestingly, these researchers noted that prior to the enactment of Title IX, over 90% of female high school teams had a female head coach.

Studies have revealed that burnout levels are higher for female coaches compared to male coaches at the collegiate (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley & Gill, 1993), high school (Vealey et al., 1992), and junior college (Pastore & Judd, 1993) levels. In all of these studies, female coaches were found to have less experience than their male counterparts, and had less time and fewer opportunities to learn how to cope with the stress of their job (Caccese & Mayerberg). Kelley and Gill found that the early years of coaching tended to be the most stressful, as coaches were presented with unfamiliar challenges and may not have been accustomed to having so many people depend on them. Kelley, Eklund, and Ritter-Taylor (1999) found a tendency in female collegiate tennis coaches to perceive coaching issues as stressful, such as negative media coverage, being a helping source for their athletes, and not having enough time for coaching responsibilities. They explained their findings by suggesting that female coaches were more likely than males to face pay inequities, to be unable to change their program, and to experience excessive time demands. Additional causes of high burnout among female coaches have been posited by Caccese and Mayerberg and Weiss and Sisley (1984) who

claimed that there were far more men than women in the coaching profession, and that women had fewer role models and mentors who could provide social support and advice. In summary, the limited available research suggests that both male and female coaches can experience burnout, but that the incidence of burnout may be higher in females and that the coping resources and strategies of male and female coaches may be different.

### *Effects of Coaching Stress on Others*

Athletes may also experience the negative consequences of coaches' stress. An Olympic athlete with multiple national championships stated, "We all know that coach doesn't handle pressure well. Basically, she freaks out! She starts pointing out problems and trying to change things at the last minute, so we try and avoid her the last week before Nationals" (McCann, 1997, p. 12). An Olympic athlete from the 1996 Games commented on the impact that coaches' stress had on the team by saying, "There was an atmosphere of stress and tension among the coaching staff, and it kind of permeated the whole atmosphere where all the athletes were living" (Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001, p. 174). In another study, British Olympic athletes were able to recognize stress experienced by their coaches and felt that it had an impact on their training and preparation (Woodman & Hardy, 2001). A female athlete in this study stated, "As much as you try not to let it affect you, you see the coaches arguing, what's to stop the girls from arguing too?...It's just, it's there in the atmosphere" (p. 223). Another athlete noticed similar friction among his coaching staff and said,

We were thinking, "well, they're telling us that we shouldn't be doing this and that...and they're doing the same." ... It came up in a meeting, Jack [an athlete] said it to Roger [a national coach], he said, "why are you lecturing us...that we

must stick together as a team, and you lot in the office can't agree on anything, and you're always arguing?" And they couldn't answer it. They couldn't say, "well, we don't," because it was obvious...I mean, we were looking at them and they weren't getting on, so why should we get on? (Woodman & Hardy, p. 223).

McCann (1997) noted that it is very easy for an athlete to recognize when a coach is under stress, and that a coach who is visibly anxious may contribute to a lack of confidence for the athlete. Consistent behavior is not only helpful for the coach's confidence and anxiety control, but also helps his or her athletes feel more confident and under control in high pressure situations.

Communication between coaches and athletes may also be affected by coaching stress. Conflict may occur if stress hinders the coach's ability to deliver effective feedback to athletes (McCann, 1997; Pacelli, 1990; Wang & Ramsey, 1997). A coach's frustration may be inappropriately displayed and could lead to hurt feelings and a poor overall relationship with an athlete. In a study by Holt and Hogg (2002), professional female soccer players stated, "The only people who can bring you down are the coaches" and "It doesn't help your confidence at all when you have a bad session, and all you hear is the coach yelling at you" (p. 260). The delivery of critical or negative feedback by coaches affected many of these athletes' concentration levels and performances. Murphy (1986) indicated that a coach who solely provides negative feedback and criticism is likely to place a high amount of stress on athletes.

Kellman and Kallus (1994) claim that stress often results in an inability to perform necessary coaching behaviors, such as analyzing situations and preparing athletes during competitions, which in turn affects the athletes' performance. Udry,

Gould, Bridges, and Tuffey (1997) found that the coach was seen as a negative influence by 70% of the burned out athletes they surveyed. These authors suggested that “resource bankruptcy” may be a factor mediating coach behavior, in that if the coaches may themselves be burned out they may not be able to meet the needs of their athletes.

These findings demonstrate that the stress of coaches has repercussions that can negatively impact not only the individuals experiencing it but the athletes as well. Thus, a greater understanding of coaches’ experiences of stress and ways to reduce stress may not only help coaches but may also improve the coach-athlete relationship.

Research is also beginning to reveal the impact that coaching stress can have on significant others. In one study, high school football coaches answered questionnaires to measure their amount of job involvement and job related stress, and the results were compared to their wives’ responses in regards to marital satisfaction, companionship, and communication (Matejkovic, 1983). High job stress was shown to have a negative impact on marital satisfaction, according to the wives, demonstrating that coaching stress may not only be affecting the coach, but family members as well.

### *Stress Management for Athletes*

The high stress levels found among many coaches indicates the need for implementation of stress management programs. Stress management programs have been successful for various groups of athletes. Kerr and Leith (1993) utilized stress inoculation training (SIT; Meichenbaum, 1977), a cognitive technique with three stages: (1) self-awareness, (2) training and rehearsal of coping skills, and (3) practice of coping skills in low-stress situations, progressing to high-stress situations. Elite gymnasts participated in 16 sessions over an 8 month period, and the effectiveness of the program

was determined by competition scores and questionnaires measuring attentional focus, mental rehearsal skills, and competitive anxiety. Athletes who experienced the training showed greater improvement in performance, mental rehearsal, and attentional focus than gymnasts in a control group.

A stress management program designed to reduce the effects of acute stress was tested with a group of collegiate baseball and softball players (Anshel, Gregory, & Kaczmarek, 1990). The COPE model focuses on the control of emotions, organizing and filtering feedback, planning responses, and executing cognitive strategies. Results demonstrated the effectiveness of the model, as athletes felt a greater sense of control, were more likely to attribute their performance to internal factors, and had less fear of appearing incompetent. The authors indicated that the training was especially helpful in improving the athletes' reactions to negative feedback from coaches.

#### *A Stress Management Program for Coaches*

After reviewing sources of stress in various occupations and stress management programs, Taylor (1992) proposed a stress management model for coaches. Taylor's model consists of five steps: (1) perceptions of coaching, (2) identification of primary stressors, (3) identification of how stress is manifested, (4) development of coping skills, and (5) building social support systems. The purpose in the first stage is to aid coaches in understanding their personal values, individual and career goals, and their motivation for coaching, in order to shed light on how they might perceive the benefits and challenges of their job. Coaches then indicate their stressors, which may be personal, social, or organizational and vary depending on factors such as personality characteristics, previous experience, and level of coaching. Coaches may display different symptoms of stress,

thus it is important to identify their specific physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses. Coping skills are then introduced, and include relaxation, cognitive restructuring, exercise, and/or time management, and address the unique stressors and symptoms of each coach. Finally, the coach's level of social support is assessed to determine if relationships could be enhanced with management, family, friends, the rest of the coaching staff, and a sport psychologist.

At the time Taylor developed this model, there had been no empirical investigation of stress among elite-amateur or professional coaches, and minimal research on coaching stress in general. In fact, the model was highly based on the research conducted with other professionals such as public agency employees, secondary school teachers, social workers, and individuals in the mental health field. Although selected issues were derived from sport-related research, many of the sources of stress Taylor listed were based on the assumption that similarities exist among these different professions

#### *Gaps in the Coaching Stress Literature*

To date, surveys have been employed in all of the studies investigating burnout and stress at the collegiate level of coaching. This research has provided some insight into the incidence of burnout and possible predictors of burnout (e.g., Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Kelley et al., 1999; Vealey et al., 1992), the possible sources of stress for collegiate coaches who have newly entered the profession (Wang & Ramsey, 1998), and the relationship between stress levels and health (Richman, 1992). While a survey approach might be useful when trying to understand “what” is happening, it is



difficult for the researcher to answer the “how” and “why” questions about participants’ stress levels with this method. With an interview approach, the researcher does not have to guess why participants answered a question in a certain way because s/he has the opportunity to directly ask them. Another benefit of the interview approach in examining the issue of coaching stress is that it allows the researcher to observe non-verbal behavior and affective responses that may be helpful in interpreting the data (Carlson & Dutton, 2003). Further, coaches are able to describe stress in their own words. Qualitative data from interviews with coaches are also likely to enhance applied practitioners’ work with this population, as this approach focuses on what is happening at the individual level (Strean, 1998).

Researchers have uncovered the high stress and burnout levels among coaches as well as the potential for coaches’ stress levels to affect athletes and the coaches’ significant others. In order to assist coaches in managing the stress of their profession, researchers must go beyond defining possible influential factors of stress and burnout. Thus it would be beneficial to fill the gaps that exist in the literature on coaching stress by interviewing coaches about their perceptions of the requirements of their job, the stress emanating from these perceptions, and the coping procedures coaches use (or fail to use) to manage their stress levels.

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent

### Participant Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study examining your experiences with stress as a collegiate coach. I will be conducting an interview with you that will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and that will be audio taped. The tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I have access, and will be erased after the tapes are transcribed.

The information you provide will be confidential and used only for research purposes. Only members of my research team, who will sign a confidentiality agreement, will have access to the transcribed interviews. Any mention of your name, names of other people, and other features that could be used to identify you will be removed in the written transcripts of the interviews. This consent form will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the University of Tennessee for three years past completion of this study.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact Melinda Frey at (865) -----, [mfrey@utk.edu](mailto:mfrey@utk.edu). Questions may also be directed to my advisor, Craig Wrisberg, (865) 974-1283, [caw@utk.edu](mailto:caw@utk.edu), or the University of Tennessee's Office of Research Compliance, (865) 974-3466.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of this form, I have read the above information, and I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix C

## Interview Guide

Background questions:

Current position	Marital status, number of children
Amount of time at current position	Age
Total years as a coach	

- 1) What's a typical week like for you?
- 2) Have you ever experienced stress as a coach? Tell me about it.
- 3) Have you ever experienced stress related to: the media; travel; lack of administrative support; communication with athletes; recruiting; lack of financial support; lack of social support? Tell me about it.
- 4) Have you ever viewed stress in a positive way? If so, how?
- 5) What stands out as the most stressful part of your job?
- 6) In what ways has your experience with stress changed from when you first started coaching?
- 7) How does stress affect your performance as a coach?
- 8) If I was an athlete on your team, how would I be able to tell that you're experiencing stress?
- 9) Is there anything that you do to hide your stress when you're coaching? Tell me about it.
- 10) How do you try to manage your stress?
- 11) What if anything, would make you leave the coaching profession?
- 12) What is it that you love about coaching?
- 13) Are there any other stressors you would like to talk about that have not been mentioned? If so, tell me about them.

## Appendix D

### Expanded Results

The themes that were derived from a collective analysis of the participants' responses are presented in this section. The findings are classified into five major dimensions: (a) contextual/conditional factors, (b) sources of stress, (c) responses and effects of stress, (d) managing stress, and (e) sources of enjoyment. These dimensions are further divided into first order themes, second order themes, and raw data themes.

#### *Contextual/Conditional Factors*

The themes within this category represent factors related to the structure of the coaches' environment as well as demographic characteristics that play a role in the coaches' experiences with stress.

*Level of competition.* Many of the participants in this study had coached in less competitive settings prior to their current positions at the Division I level, so they mentioned the level of competition when discussing stress. One participant stated,

There's more stress here, simply because you've increased your level of competition. I have to recruit and get better players here at \_\_\_\_\_ to reach the level of success that we want to reach than I did at [former university]. ...Here you have to work harder to reach that level of success.

Another participant discussed his experience with stress in relation to his previous coaching position and said,

It's a higher level, I mean, I came from a junior college, I came from a club situation so to be at a Division I program, especially [the present university], is more stressful. I've also selected to work at an institution that is in one of the, if not *the* most competitive conferences in the country, so that's more stressful.

According to one coach, the increased level of competition decreased the amount of

stress he felt in relation to financial support.

When I started off, I coached at the NAIA level, and we had no money, and there was stress. Here the girls have six pairs of shoes and at [previous university] we had to hold bake sales to get them one pair of shoes.

*Success of the program.* In addition to the high level of competition, the history of the coaches' specific program had an impact on their stress levels. Several coaches felt that certain expectations existed due to the programs' past success, whether the expectations were self or other-imposed.

You really have to produce, especially in this environment where the expectations are so high there's always that pressure of feeling like you have to succeed and supercede what you did the year before. Regardless of if you have a younger team, or less experienced, or have injuries, you feel still like you constantly have to do better and better and better.

A similar opinion was expressed by another participant who claimed,

We've competed at the top...we've had the best player in the country...and our expectations are higher...so when you've been there and done that I think you want to continue to do it. I think that kind of puts some stress on you.

Another coach stated, "Because our history is pretty good here, [the university] expects results."

Stress may also arise from lack of success, as demonstrated by one participant who described the challenging experience of having to rebuild a program. She said,

There's an increased workload simply for the fact that we inherited a program that was at the bottom of the [conference]. It's a little different when you inherit a



program that's in good shape. So we've had to do a lot to change the image of [present university].

Conversely, the success of a program can lead to the reduction of stress for some coaches. One participant indicated,

The people here are so supportive and are so behind us, but I think I'm honest to know there's a reason for that is because we're successful. They like winners and they have some other sports that aren't so they really need us...

*Characteristics of the sport.* Two participants discussed stressful factors that were specific to the particular sport they coached. One of the coaches was involved in a sport that does not have an off-season. This coach stated,

For us in our particular sport because we're year-round the way we are, I know that all sports, all coaches have stress and work very hard, but also I do think that a lot of teams do have some downtime...one of our coaches for the month of June, she doesn't even want to see her athletes. Well, I wish sometimes I could do that but I can't...It's a 12 month commitment.

Although several coaches mentioned their concern over athletes maintaining eligibility, one coach offered a unique perspective on this factor due to the nature of his sport. He indicated,

We don't have guys that last four years, it's only three and then they get drafted and they go. My guy says, "well, I'll be eligible but I could give a damn about a degree because I'm gonna be on TV and make a million dollars." It works against us sometimes, whereas other sports, they don't have that.

*Time of year.* The majority of coaches did not indicate that they felt more stress

during a particular time during the year. However, one coach experienced higher stress in the off-season because he felt more pressure to check up on the academic progress of the athletes. He said,

I probably have stress more in the fall than in the spring because I think they have so much time available in the fall, so when they disappoint and don't go to a class or get a bad grade, when they're only out here for 30 minutes a day, I don't get it.

*Age and years of experience.* Considering the experience level of these participants (14 years minimum) it is not surprising that this characteristic had an impact on their experience with stress. Four coaches indicated that their age and/or years of coaching experience had helped them to decrease the amount of stress they felt whereas four coaches expressed the opposite opinion. Two coaches did not feel that there was a significant change in the stress they had experienced over the years. As one coach described,

Because I was younger and I didn't have any other skills to coach with other than just wins and losses really, my stress and my anxiety and my outbursts and my anger was much higher [at the previous university] than it is here, where there are more expectations. It should be more stress, I don't feel as stressed.

Another coach discussed how a lack of knowledge can affect one's experience and said,

Early in my career I just got too stressed and too upset with my team, as opposed to being able to help them. At times, I think probably my actions or reactions might have been detrimental to them. I was young, and you learn. I had never even run a practice when I started coaching, it was my first coaching job, so I just walked in, inexperienced, it was trial and error, learning as I go along. If I had

only known then what I know now, we would have won a championship earlier.

Several participants noted the confidence that comes with gaining experience and establishing credibility. Two coaches stated, “I’m just more self-assured.” Having experience has also aided some of the coaches in feeling more prepared, and thus experiencing less stress. This was expressed by one coach who said,

Over the years it’s just been easier to deal with the stress today because of probably how poorly I did deal with it before, or just the experience of what stress did to me at a younger time of my career where I wasn’t prepared. I deal with it much different now. It isn’t the end of the world to lose a game.

Simply being older also helped some of the coaches to feel less stress. Specifically, a participant explained,

I started coaching at 22 and had four players who were 21, and I felt, they’ll always say you gotta start out tough, you can always let up, but it’s hard if you don’t go in and establish who’s the boss, who’s in control, and that was my approach to coaching, so therefore, it was my way or the highway. There was no flexibility in what I was doing and that was a bad thing, but now, with the age gap, it’s a lot easier for me.

Other coaches in the study expressed a contrasting view regarding the effects of age and experience on stress. One coach stated, “When I was a younger coach...I really didn’t worry about things very much. I always had the outlook that things would figure themselves out...I’m probably more stressed now about things that I never used to stress about so much.” Some of the coaches also considered the physical effects of age to be a deterrent to handling stress. As one participant suggested,

Your body can take a lot more at one time...the older that I get I find that I just can't do that, I don't have the emotional energy, I don't have the physical energy...When I first started, it was always, "I'm strong enough, I can deal with everything," and as I get older I realize I can't do that.

*Marriage to co-head coach.* Four of the participants in this study shared the role of head coach with their spouse, and they discussed the impact of this situation on their experience with stress. One coach stated,

...We respond differently in situations and games and I think sometimes I get stressed if I don't agree with his response...It may be easier to ignore what's going on with one of the other coaches if you aren't married...you know, you say things more freely to the people you're closest to.

These coaches had the additional stress of "taking their work home with them," and thus, described how this situation affected not only their professional environment, but their personal lives as well. One coach stated, "Our work never leaves us, we go home and it's still there." Another participant explained, "It's easy to find that your whole life is consumed with the program and your sport when both of you are doing it full time."

### *Sources of Stress*

Throughout the coaches' discussion about their experience with stress, they revealed several sources of stress in addition to responding to the investigator's direct questions regarding specific stressors suggested in the literature. These sources are separated into interpersonal or personal causes, task-related causes, and causes of stress that might convince the participant to leave the coaching profession.

*Interpersonal/personal sources.* Sources of stress placed in this category include

factors related to other people, such as athletes, administration, and lack of social support, and defining stress as self-imposed.

Stress related to other people was one of the most prominently discussed factors among this group of coaches. Some of the coaches explained their concern over the athletes' personal activities. One coach stated,

Sometimes there's stress as to whether the athletes are doing what they need to be doing in general overall, not in training, but in school and their outside life...If they're partying too hard, or not attending class, things of that nature, we can see that they're screwing up but they can't seem to figure that out for some reason.

Another coach elaborated on this source of stress and explained,

I think where the stress comes from is the fact that you're relying on 18 to 22 year olds to make the right decisions and do the right things that prepare them to be successful both on the field and inside the classroom and they don't always do that...I feel like we do a good job of teaching them what to do in certain situations on the field, but what kind of frame of mind, what kind of an emotional state, what kind of a physical state they come to the field in is a whole other issue...I often tell my team that "the best compliment I can give any one of you individually is that I don't have to worry about you."

Other participants also mentioned the challenge of working with this population, as illustrated by one coach who said, "A lot of the stresses I feel in my life have to do with a lack of communication...because I realize that my job has to do with the decision making and the livelihood of 18 to 21 year old women." Another coach suggested, "There's no other job in the world where your livelihood depends upon the whims of 18 to 22 year

olds.” Further, some coaches more specifically discussed the stress of communicating with athletes. One participant claimed that his greatest stress fell in this category and he said, “...having to communicate with them over issues that I don’t feel comfortable...whether it be any personal issue, whether it be an eating disorder, or drinking issues...Those type of things stress me out.” Another coach indicated, “It’s very stressful when you have players that you don’t feel you can really, they don’t understand where you’re coming from.” Another coach pointed out how personal differences can impede the communication process between him and the athletes.

I’m 42 and they’re 17, I’m male, they’re female, I came from a pretty conservative, little, Midwest background, I’ve got players from inner cities, I’ve got players from farms, I’ve got players from all over the place that are different, not only my generation but myself in general, so trying to communicate with them is tough.

Two coaches claimed that having to communicate with such a large number of people on a daily basis is demanding. One participant said, “Some of my biggest stress is dealing with too many people. Because everyone has some sort of agenda of why they want a part of me.” Another coach elaborated by explaining how this factor has also affected his personal life.

You’re dealing with people on a daily basis, there’s probably going to be something emotional everyday that you’re dealing with, so that when you get home you’re pretty drained, and all of a sudden in my situation I have a wife who just spent the last 8 or 10 hours with a 20 month-old, and there’s days when she has no communication with another adult all day long, so there are times when I’d

kind of like to disappear for a few hours, but I can't do that.

When asked if the administration was a source of stress for the coaches, only two responded positively, and even then, it was not viewed as a major challenge. One participant stated, "I'm on a yearly basis, so knowing where I'm at in their eyes isn't always there." Another coach offered, "There's always a little friction between coaches and administrators, because coaches want to do it their way and administrators want to do it their way."

One participant felt that a lack of social support was related to the stress in her life.

You work so hard it's like your life becomes this program and this team so I guess I might feel stress in the sense that I don't have a big social network outside of my job and the people I work with...(laughing) I mean, we're supposed to be problem-solvers, not people with problems.

Many of the coaches defined their stress or expectations as self-imposed. Coaches stated, "I put more demands on myself than like an outside stress coming in," and "I put more stress on myself than anybody else does. My expectations of myself are higher than anybody else's." Another coach described self-imposed stress in relation to getting athletes to see their potential.

My greatest stress is what I put on myself every year in terms of my expectations for every player and every team. I always see more in people than they do in themselves. That's why I'm never quite satisfied, because I always know they have more to give...That is something that stresses me out, when I can't get them to see it, and to recognize how talented they are and to really make the

commitment.

*Task-related sources of stress.* Numerous stressors these coaches experienced were related to the tasks involved with coaching. Stressors placed in this category included tasks specific to being the head coach, the time involved in coaching, recruiting, facilities, and competition outcome.

Six of the coaches had formerly been assistants, so many of them discussed the stress involved with shifting roles from assistant coach to head coach. They mentioned factors such as increased responsibility and being the primary decision-maker. One coach explained, “There’s a difference between telling the coach that I think we should do this in a given situation and actually being the one to make the decision. It’s a huge difference.” Another coach indicated,

I’m open to suggestions and ideas...I’m definitely not all-knowing and I need [my assistant] as a sounding board and I need her ideas, but at the same time, when it’s time to make a final decision, I’m the one making it.

When describing the most stressful part of coaching, one participant said,

It’s just sometimes being the guy. Everything is on me. It’s kind of like, I get questions asked by the office or coaches and it’s like, can’t you take care of that?...Being the head guy with the boosters and the tickets, or what are we doing with travel, everything, what kind of pitching machine, what’s the, whatever. Sometimes it’s, “Oh my God.”

One participant referred to coaching as a “24-7 job,” thus, the time involved in this profession was noted often in the descriptions of their experiences with stress. One participant indicated, “If you’re not sleeping, you’re doing something involved with the



job. I think we had four days off this summer total, all summer long.” Another participant said,

It does consume my life...I'm on the road probably, if you combine all the time I'm on the road three or four months out of the year. And I don't mind the travel,...it's just the fact that this is definitely not a normal profession. It's something that, it's basically a lifestyle.

Two coaches suggested that the time involved in coaching was the most stressful part of their job. One coach stated,

[The most stressful part is] just juggling all the balls, all the responsibilities. Trying to be a coach, an administrator, as a coach sometimes a counselor, sometimes a teacher, watching film, trying to be aware of what I can do to promote our program, what I can do to promote the game, the time demands here in the office alone, the media relations part of it. I think it's just a combination of all of that.

Another coach expressed a similar sentiment.

I don't know if there's one part that would be a more stressful thing for me, I guess it's a combination of everything...it's just the culmination of a lot of things, it builds up on me after a long period of time and kind of wears you down. It's not like one thing...It's the constant little drip, too many drips, you finally go crazy, but one drip here and one drip there, that doesn't bother me. The constant drip gets me.

Eight of the coaches discussed some aspect of recruiting as a negative source of stress, even though some of them claimed that overall it was something they enjoyed.

The competitiveness involved in the recruiting process was mentioned by several of the participants.

You go to three or four of the national tournaments and there's 250 coaches there and they're all, it's kind of like a meat market. And you always try to find a different pitch... "well how can I present this differently." It's basically selling ice to Eskimos, is what you're trying to do.

Two coaches explained how negative recruiting has impacted the process. One of these coaches said,

Right now in recruiting there's more negative recruiting, coaches are putting a lot more pressure, they're talking about other programs, you know, "they won't play here, they can't play their game, it's like a prison here, I check curfew." They're 16, 17 years old, so they're influenced by it. I mean, we've lost kids because of negative recruiting, and I just want them to come and see for themselves, but even then they've been so brainwashed at times that it's sad.

An additional source of stress related to recruiting was the long process involved, in that the coaches have to "start the process earlier and earlier." One participant suggested,

If you're not thinking about recruiting 12 months a year, then you're not gonna get them...Now you better be recruiting the juniors pretty hard, because by the time when you're allowed to finally contact the seniors, if you haven't been in touch with them, by that point it's too late...And it's actually gone beyond just the juniors. I mean what we used to do with the juniors, you need to be doing with the sophomores now...It never stops.

One coach felt that recruiting was one of the most stressful parts of the job because it can

impact the team for an extended period of time. He stated,

There's immediate stress and there's lingering stress, and that's why I say recruiting is so tough, I mean, even two years down the line, you can say it came down to us and them and they got her and now she's beating us and that ticks me off.

Another coach indicated,

You could be the best coach in the world but if you don't have the horses, it doesn't matter how good a coach you are, and so you know, that's stressful, being on all the time when recruits are in. You always have to be on.

The majority of coaches in this sample did not experience stress related to inadequate facilities or equipment, but two coaches felt unsatisfied with what was currently available to them. One coach stated,

I get frustrated because I know that university x, y, or z has this in place and has this available to them. We should have the same thing and we don't right now...as much as the NCAA would love to say that the playing field is level out there, it's probably the Himalayas as far as the playing field...a lot of our competitors have advantages that we don't have.

A similar frustration was expressed by another coach who stated,

We probably have the worst facility in the [conference], or pretty close to it. And it's been stressful trying to get that going as quick as we believe it needs to happen...Because in recruiting, facilities are number one. It's the first thing that kids see and it's the first thing that tells them, right or wrong, what kind of commitment that university has to that program.

The pressures of wanting to win or feeling they had to win were felt by four of the coaches. One coach suggested, “There’s the stress of just being successful. We get graded every week, ‘did you win or lose.’ Not ‘did you play well.’” Another participant described the pressure she felt to win by saying, “The reality is what gets you hired or fired is your ability to win or lose.” Another coach stated,

I guess you could say when we’re at competitions and there’s concern whether we’re well enough prepared for the event that we’re in and the stress of will we win or not, that type of thing, because I’m very much motivated by winning...I would have a difficult time coaching [athletes] who were not succeeding. I enjoy that satisfaction of success. A lot.

*Sources of stress that would lead coaches to quitting.* All of the coaches were asked to describe any factors that would increase their likelihood of leaving the profession. Many of these coaches discussed the passion they felt toward coaching, and that if they ever lost that deep enjoyment that would be a sign to retire. In response to the investigator’s question, one coach said, “If I didn’t look forward to coming in [to school] then I would be cheating everyone, the student-athletes, the staff, the fans, the program, the administration, I mean, I couldn’t do that.” Another coach concurred with this feeling and indicated,

If I get to the point when I don’t enjoy what I’m doing...once I’m up I really want to get here. That feeling, if it leaves or it’s gone, there have been times where I’ve been frustrated or things haven’t been quite so smooth, but it’s been one or two days. But if it gets to the point where that’s extended over a great period of time that’s when I’ll get out. If I feel like it’s completely affecting what I’m

doing. When I lose the enjoyment.

Another participant also mentioned wanting to quit if unhappiness became consistent and said, “There’s a point in time every season when I think, ‘don’t let me do this another year...’ and when the day comes when I’m having those thoughts more often...(laughing).” Another coach described a few different factors that would make her leave the profession.

If I wasn’t happy doing it anymore, if I didn’t feel like I could make an impact on the girls, you know when they leave school. I mean, that’s the main reason I started coaching...and if I feel like I can’t, I’m more detrimental to them or can’t help them, I think that’s kind of my cue to leave. Or physically if I felt like I just couldn’t do anything anymore.

Other reasons given for wanting to quit included wanting more free time, losing consistently, and if the job started to interfere with family life. One coach who is married and has young children stated,

As much as I love this, if it ever got to the point where I was missing out on my kids growing up and being there for them, not just my kids, my wife, then at that point I think I would do some self-evaluation as to whether or not this is really worth it.

Finally, one participant said she would leave coaching if something else called to her.

I will never get out because of stress...There are things out there that I want to take on and when that time’s right, boom, I’m gone, thanks for the run, it was a blast, now I’m going to go take on something else. I’ll never get tired at [present university].

### *Responses and Effects of Stress*

This category represented some of the participants' perceptions regarding stress, and how they viewed it both positively and negatively. Therefore, this dimension was divided into the higher-order themes of positive responses to stress, negative responses to stress, and the effect of stress on others.

*Positive responses.* All of the coaches were asked if they had ever viewed stress in a positive way, and nine of them provided examples that indicated they had. Some of the coaches discussed how stress can enhance one's focus and motivation. One coach in particular claimed, "I think stress, where it really helps you to be stressful sometimes it keeps you energized, it keeps you on line to where you want to go...I think you need stress." Two coaches explained how learning from stress can help in preparation for the future. One coach indicated,

If you don't ever face stress how do you ever deal with different experiences that come out of having stress? Because there's going to be a time when you're going to have stress, if you haven't experienced it, you're just going to fall apart, and I think for us and for me, I welcome stress.

This coach later offered an example that illustrated how stress can be seen as an opportunity. He said,

We went to [another university] in '95 I think and we got swept in three games and I remember our head coach, and we're in the airport and everybody was down, and he brought everybody up in the boarding area and I thought, "here he goes, he's gonna go off," and he says, 'we had a good weekend, this will really help us.' And I'm thinking, what a smart thing to say because he could have lost

the whole team that weekend, but what he did is he united the whole team and he said, “we had some tough games, we lost three, that’s not important...we’re gonna build from this because we love adversity...” I think you need stress to get you righted sometimes, get the ship righted and move in a positive direction.

Some coaches felt that stress could be viewed positively because it can increase one’s awareness. One participant said, “If I’m stressed I look at why...So I use it just to see where I’m at with that situation.” Another coach suggested,

When something is stressing you out or creating some type of negative tension, A – you realize it’s a problem, and B – you’ve got to do something about it...So if it pushes you to realize something that needs to be dealt with and move on quicker, then it’s positive.

Another participant offered a unique way of viewing stress as he stated, “Failure is positive feedback. You have to fail sometimes to get perked back up to say, ‘What have I been doing wrong, what do I need to go back and revisit.’”

*Negative responses.* Many of the coaches in this study felt that stress could have a negative effect on one’s physiology, behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. One coach described her physical reaction to stress when she said, “My stomach starts, I’ve had an off and on ulcer so I can tell when I start getting the burning sensation.” A change in body language or tone of voice is displayed by some coaches when they’re experiencing stress, and they stated that they can become “tense,” “fidgety,” “agitated on the bench,” “louder,” or “quieter.” Further, some coaches suggested that they become “more emotional,” or “moody” if they are stressed. Many of the coaches felt that stress was most detrimental to their ability to focus. One participant indicated,

When you start focusing on your stress and the stuff that gets to you, I find for me, I don't concentrate on the stuff I need to get taken care of right now, or when I'm coaching, the information I have to get to my players immediately. Like if I start worrying about all this stuff that's going wrong or needs to get done or I start concentrating too much on the negative, I don't concentrate on being positive with my players, reinforcing stuff that they are doing right at the time.

Another participant stated,

We have an expression on our team called "being in the mirror room," where you get to a point where all you're thinking about is yourself and what's going on with you to the point where it's as if you're in a room and the walls are all mirrors, where everywhere you look all you see is yourself. And when I get stressed I think that's where I get.

*Effect of stress on others.* Four of the coaches felt that their stress had an impact on the athletes. One participant stated, "I don't think me being stressed sends a good vibe or message to my players either. Especially girls, I think it might work better with guys, but girls don't want to sense that anything's rocking the apple cart." Another participant felt that his stress level could influence the athletes' performances, stating, "If you show stress the team's not going to play as well because they're not going to be as relaxed." Another coach described how her stress may in turn cause her athletes to experience stress.

[The athletes] pick up on [my stress], they're very astute, they can tell when things aren't going well, I try to hide it, but they can tell...sometimes they may find me a little bit unapproachable or they don't want to approach me in the sense



of “gosh, I don’t want to bother her.” And then it starts to stress them because the things they need to discuss or get out or communicate they can’t.

### *Managing Stress*

Part of an individual’s experience with stress involves the ways in which s/he chooses to contend with sources of stress. This dimension consisted of the various coping strategies the coaches used to manage their stress. The techniques are separated into three categories: cognitive strategies, emotional control strategies, and behavioral strategies.

*Cognitive strategies.* “Cognitive strategies” refers to methods that participants used to alter their thought process, such as where they direct their focus or how they attempt to keep things in perspective. Six coaches indicated that they used some type of cognitive strategy to manage their stress. Specifically, some discussed how focusing on factors they could control helped to reduce their feelings of stress. One coach stated, “I have to be able to focus and not stress over the things that I can’t control.” Another coach elaborated,

I think when you are stressed I think it’s usually because you’re focusing on something that you really can’t control. I think when I’m stressed it’s because I’m too focused on the outcome rather than the process...I mean, you have to focus on the process and then the outcome is going to take care of itself.

Another coach agreed with this outlook and stated, “I’m never going to get out of coaching because I burn out. I’ll never burn out because I don’t base my enjoyment on winning, I never have.” One participant described how when she recognizes she is letting stress affect her she turns her focus from herself to her team.

I think you have to have the ability to refocus. I just have to say, “Don’t go there (laughs), just don’t go there and forget that. Alright, now how can I help this team?” Always go back to them... What do they need from me?

Shifting focus from the negative to the positive helped some participants manage stress.

One coach said,

I get back to the things that I really love [about the sport]. And because I’m dwelling on those...I’m not letting the other stuff consume me...I guess it’s more a kind of self-talk in not allowing certain things to bother me.

Another coach described how it helps her to redefine her outlook on “problem athletes.”

She explained how she separates athletes into three categories – the top third that works hard and is always striving to improve, the middle third that “blows in the wind,” and the bottom third that “feels like the world is on their shoulders and everybody’s out to get them.” She suggested,

What happens is coaches and teachers and leaders, we get in the car on the way home, and who do we bring home with us? We bring home the bottom third kid...Once you recognize what category these people fit in, it’s so easy to manage. And if you’re aware, just being patient with them can be a treat.

Another coach stated, “You have to remember to focus on the kids on your team who are doing the right thing.” Finally, one participant said she managed her stress by focusing on the present. She stated, “I think most stress occurs when you’re thinking about something in the past or future and I think if you just focus on what can I do right now, then it takes away most of your stress.”

Three of the coaches discussed how keeping things in perspective helped them

manage stress. In regards to the media, one coach stated,

I was taught by [my former coach] to keep [the media] in perspective. She always used to say, “There are only two people in your bubble – your team and your family and friends.” Nobody knows our world. Nobody can understand it. So I don’t have resentment or frustration with the media because I understand they’re not in the bubble.

A coach who is married and has children felt that it was critical for him to maintain a proper perspective on his profession and what was important to him. He indicated,

My wife is due soon and I bet you 10 years ago I probably would have gone to senior nationals. Five years ago I probably would have gone to senior nationals and said I can be home on a plane in a few hours, just call me. And now I realize that’s ridiculous. I mean, my place is here, [my assistant] can take care of the athletes, and as much as I would love to be there, I think that bringing a child into this world is a whole lot more important than anything that’s going to happen at those five days at nationals.

This coach later explained, “The world’s not going to stop if you take a day and, you know, if you don’t just think about [the sport].”

*Emotional control strategies.* Eight coaches indicated that they tried to manage their stress by utilizing techniques to regulate their emotions. “Emotional control strategies” included maintaining a balanced lifestyle, separating their personal and professional life, sticking with their philosophy, having social support, and using sport psychology. One coach indicated,

I feel very strongly about staying balanced, so almost everyday I surf before my

day starts. I have a completely different set of friends...so I kind of have two lives which gives me equilibrium...The outlook that it provides for me is really to keep me emotionally and physically level, and what it does is it gets me outside of this intense, competitive world that I live in to this very laid back, very, very slow world of just surfing, and I don't have to be competitive. There are days where I'll sit out there for an hour and not hear the phone, not hear from anybody about a top recruit, so it's a wonderful balance for me.

Another participant also felt it was important to have a balanced lifestyle. He said that one of his mentors told him,

"I just have a few words of wisdom for you if you're going to stay in this for the long haul, you've got to make sure that you have balance in your life. If you let [the sport] consume your life, you're not going to stay in this for very long."

Some of the coaches discussed how not allowing their professional life to seep into their personal life helped them handle stress. One participant described how he used to work while he was on vacation with his wife or family and indicated, "Now when I go away, which isn't very often, but when I do, I really, really try to just leave it here and separate myself from it, which I think is real helpful." Another coach said, "I make sure when I get home I don't take the game with me." Another participant managed stress by preventing his personal life from entering his coaching. He indicated, "I realized that I was allowing myself to allow outside factors to be drawn into a whole workout session when I need to be able to separate myself from that."

Some of the participants claimed that keeping their coaching philosophy in mind played a role in their stress management. One coach stated, "I think that if I stick with

my philosophy I'm probably going to be more successful in the long run, and definitely not have the stress that I've put on myself over the years."

Seven of the coaches described how grateful they were for the social support they had, whether it was from friends, family, other coaches, their coaching staff, or the administration. One coach explained how staying connected to her family and friends helped her to maintain enthusiasm in her life. She stated, "Socially, the friends that I keep are non-athletically related people, which gives me another outlet to just be myself." Another coach felt support from friends who were also coaches. She explained,

Socially, I surround myself with people that I feel, you know, other coaching friends so we can all relate and we can all support each other...The people that I'm around and talk to I feel are very supportive and also understand where I'm coming from because a lot of them are coaches or administrative people who are involved in athletics.

Another coach said, "A lot of times I'll just talk to our administrative person about things...and she's always good because it's nice to hear a different point of view that's not involved in [our sport], not right in your circle." Having a "loyal staff" or "a staff they felt they could turn to" helps some of the coaches manage their emotions. One coach stated, "I've worked with my assistants and they help me during the match to be less stressed, they'll keep me more calm and those types of things."

Three of the coaches mentioned the influence of sport psychology in helping them manage stress. One coach indicated,

If I didn't have the sport psych part, like I didn't before I got here, I think the stress would make me much more negative, and I think I would be more

combative, and I would be more confrontational...I think I'm much more tolerant, so the stress doesn't seep in as great and as ugly as it did earlier.

This coach also suggested, "The sport psych stuff has been a plus for me, both in my coaching and just anywhere. I find myself before a speech or a game just taking a breath...I go to my breath. I get under control." One coach stated that before games she needs "some quiet time to just think of the what-if's...It's just like preparing for a big speech, I think you can relax yourself beforehand or you can get yourself in knots." Another coach referred to his use of visualization to help him remain calm when having to make decisions. He stated, "I have coached way more games in my head than I've ever actually coached." Further, another participant recognized the importance of self-awareness in managing her emotions and stress. She explained,

You have to see your own stress to influence how you deal with it. You have to recognize it. And if I recognize that I'm overanxious and uptight, then I have to deal with it and I have to know how to deal with it...I can calm myself down. I mean, you're in control of you, but you have to take that control. And I think just that awareness alone has helped.

*Behavioral strategies.* "Behavioral strategies" refers to behaviorally-based activities that the participants used to manage their stress, such as preparation, getting away from the coaching environment, exercise, and reading. Preparation aided many of the participants in managing their stress. One coach stated that he "tries to prepare [himself] just to expect the unexpected." Another participant claimed, "I think we minimize stress a lot because we're pretty organized...and I think we practice the right things." This coach also developed backup plans to help him prepare for possible

stressors that could occur during competitions. He indicated,

I will go through before every match and say, “what if this player gets injured, what if this player’s injured,” so I have written down, literally, 10 or 11 different lineups that I keep in a folder that I can turn to.

Another coach explained that he does not experience a lot of stress when the team travels because he has spent so much time establishing a level of mutual respect between the coaching staff and the athletes. He indicated,

I don’t really have a lot of problems in the hotel, not a lot of problems with curfews or drinking problems. We don’t have that because I think we talk so much about respect and trust and responsibility and accountability.

One participant referred to a strategy he uses to reduce his stress if he’s at practice and the athletes are performing poorly. He stated,

I’ll completely change the workout, or I’ll even let them get out and just take the day off. But there’s times when I can walk around and I can tell the team’s not in the right frame of mind and I’ll just give them what I call a “devise your own workout,” and that’s typically a real good reliever of stress.

Some participants also felt that it was necessary for them to get away from the coaching environment to help them cope with stress. One coach stated, “We try to just totally take Monday off, stay away from the office, stay away from it period.” Another coach indicated,

There’s days where I’m beat up with coaches meetings or phone calls or whatever. My office is over there in that building, I always know that I can walk out of that building to this practice field in five minutes and that’s my time to

release it.

Six coaches mentioned that they exercise, read, and/or get a massage in order to manage stress. One participant indicated, “I like to do things physically, so a lot of times I’ll try to ride the bike or lift weights or something. I find that I ride the bike a lot faster when I’m stressed (laughing).”

### *Sources of Enjoyment*

All of the participants were asked to describe the things that they loved about coaching. This dimension is separated into interpersonal/personal sources of enjoyment and task-related sources of enjoyment.

*Interpersonal/personal sources of enjoyment.* This category included sources of enjoyment related to interpersonal aspects of coaching such as factors related to the athletes or team, and personal reasons such as learning or giving back to the sport. Eight of the coaches discussed sources of enjoyment that fell into this category. Several coaches mentioned the opportunity they had to watch the development of the athletes. One stated,

I love seeing a freshman come in and as a senior they’re a young woman. Here, we take some kids that, they could have a pretty bad life, and all of a sudden they get their degree here and they turn it around a little bit, and I feel good about that. They might have never got their college degree if it weren’t for [the sport]. [The enjoyment] is the kids and how much you can affect their lives in a positive manner.

Another participant indicated,

I’ve been blessed to be at a place where the kids are so incredible and so dynamic



in their quest to be better, and then to be able to work with them and stretch them and have them say, “oh my gosh, I’m so ready to take on the world,” it’s so addicting.

Many coaches also expressed their love of the athletes and how gratifying it is for them to see the athletes succeed. They mentioned “watching people improve,” and “seeing the upside of progress.” One participant stated, “I really like the interaction with the girls, I really care about all my players deeply.” Another said, “I love relationships with players, when afterwards they come back [to the school] to workout, and just talking about how the program was five years ago.” One coach remarked,

I like molding a team and year after year, that’s the nicest part of this job, is that every year a coach gets a new group of people and getting to mold them, and what’s the personality of the team going to be, I like that part of it.

One coach mentioned that she sees coaching as a learning experience. She stated, “I love being a student of the game. The longer I’m in it, the longer I realize I have so much to learn.”

Another said she enjoyed coaching because she felt it gave her an opportunity to give back to the sport.

[This] is a sport that was and still is very, has just been great for my life, has taught me so many things, taught me how to deal with stress and pressures and I feel like I have a lot to give back.

*Task-related sources of enjoyment.* Eight coaches also mentioned sources of enjoyment that related to tasks specific to the act of coaching, such as employing strategy, recruiting, winning, teaching, and factors associated with the sport itself. Three

coaches said that they enjoyed winning, whereas others discussed preparation and teaching. One individual stated, “[After a loss] I like figuring out how to put this thing back together, that’s the fun part too. It’s crazy, it’s fun to have failure, it’s like, ‘okay, this is fun, how are we going to fix this.’” Another participant said, “I like the strategy involved. I like preparing for the opponent. It’s not only the preparation, but during the course of the game, game management. The challenges, like a chess match, I enjoy that.” One coach said, “I love teaching the game to people who are just getting into the sport or are just getting a program established so when I do camps and clinics for coaches across the country, I *love* doing that.” Another coach stated, “I like teaching. I like the one-on-one teaching somebody a skill, how to be better at something.”

Four of the coaches indicated that they enjoyed certain things about recruiting. One coach said, “I like going out to the games and watching the guys and evaluating. I like to put my eyes on the athlete before they show up.” Another coach was very passionate about her love of recruiting. When asked to describe her feelings about recruiting, she indicated,

I love it! I love it! Oh my gosh, I love it. I love being able to go and say, this is what we’re about. I have so much to brag about, and get excited about, I love it. The home visit is my most enjoyable time because I can share with them my passion.

Two coaches described sources of enjoyment that related directly to the sport itself. One coach said, “I love the sport...I’m renowned for going to meets and when the team wants to get out I want to stay behind and watch other people work out, just watch the people performing.” In her description of why she loved her sport, another coach

stated,

It's a very good sport that teaches you a lot about yourself individually. It really makes you drive deep inside and sometimes it's scary because you have to really be accountable for a lot of things yourself, but it's something you learn a lot about I think, as a person.

# Appendix E

## Table and Figures

Table 1

*Dimensions and Higher Order Themes*

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>First and Second Order Themes</i>
Contextual/conditional factors	Level of competition Success of the program Characteristics of the sport Time of year Age/years of experience Marriage to co-head coach
Sources of stress	Interpersonal/personal sources Other people Self-imposed stress Task-related sources Being the head coach Time demands Recruiting Facilities Outcome of competition
Responses and effects of stress	Positive responses Motivation Preparation Awareness Negative responses Physiological Behavioral Emotional Focus Effects on others
Managing stress	Cognitive strategies Focus Perspective Emotional control strategies Balance Separating personal/professional life Philosophy Social support Sport psychology

Table 1. Continued.

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>First and Second Order Themes</i>
	Behavioral strategies
	Preparation
	Getting away from the environment
	Activities
Sources of enjoyment	Interpersonal/personal sources
	Task-related sources

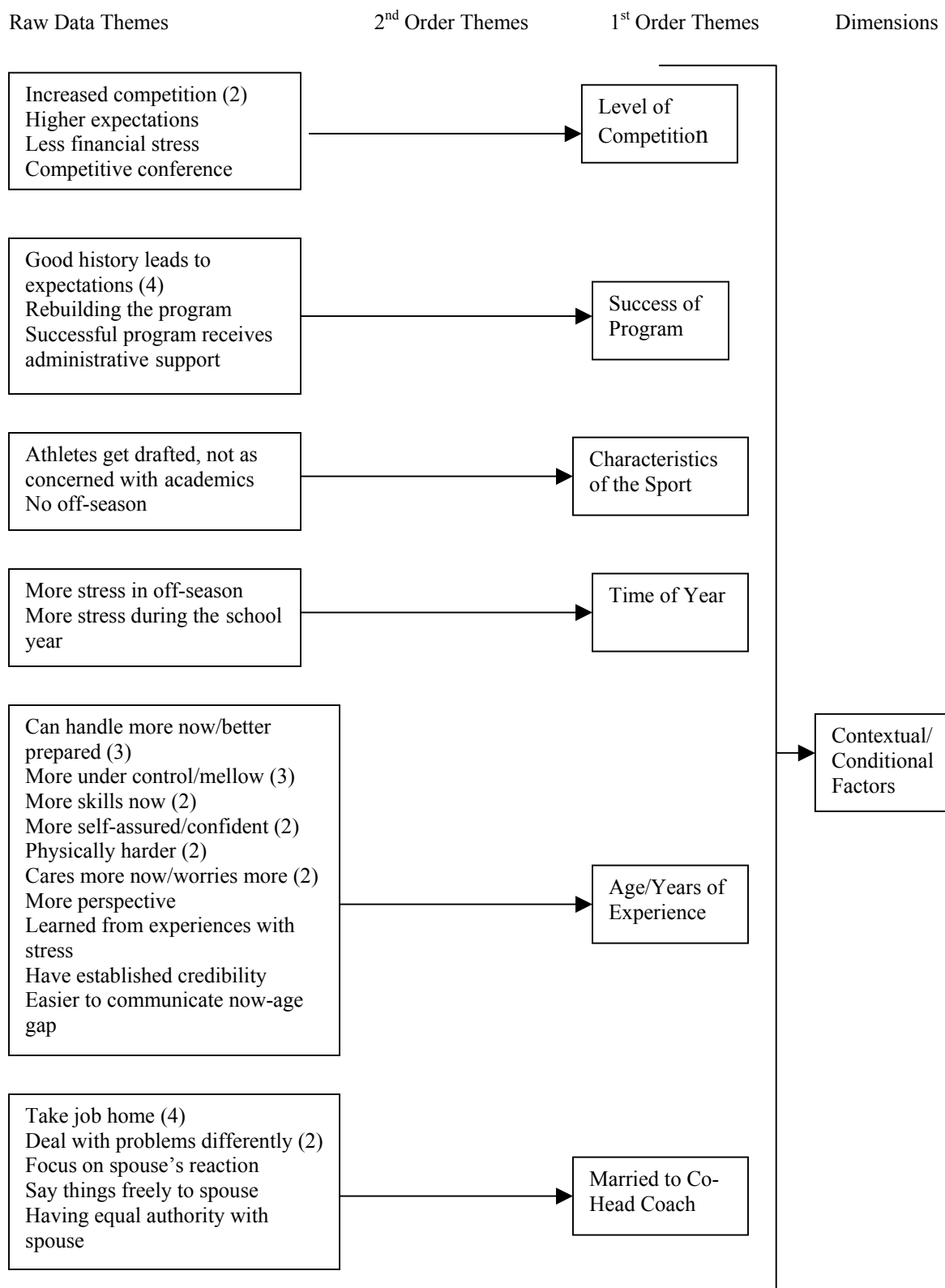


Figure 1. Dimensions, first and second order themes, and raw data themes. Frequencies are indicated in parentheses.

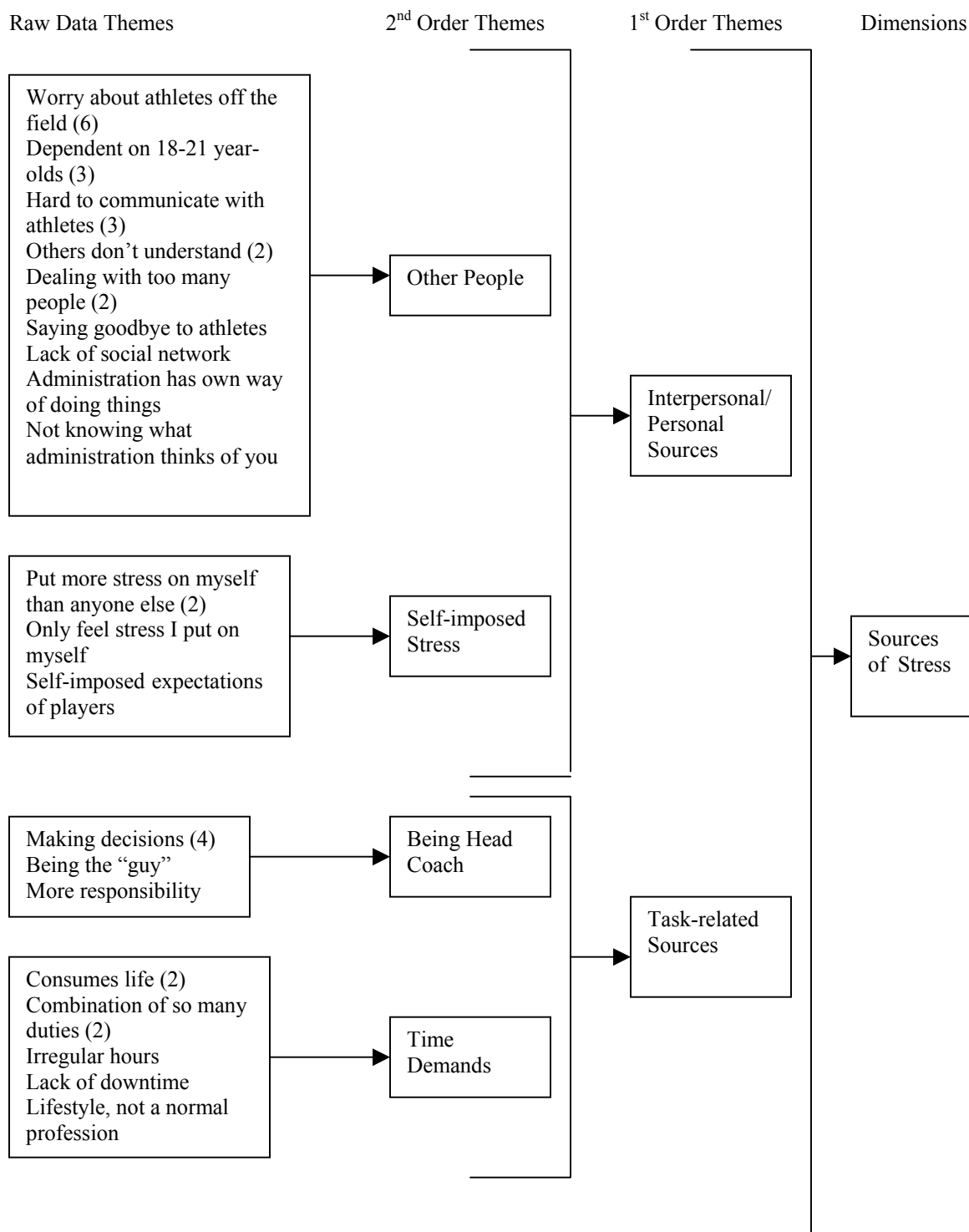


Figure 1. Continued.



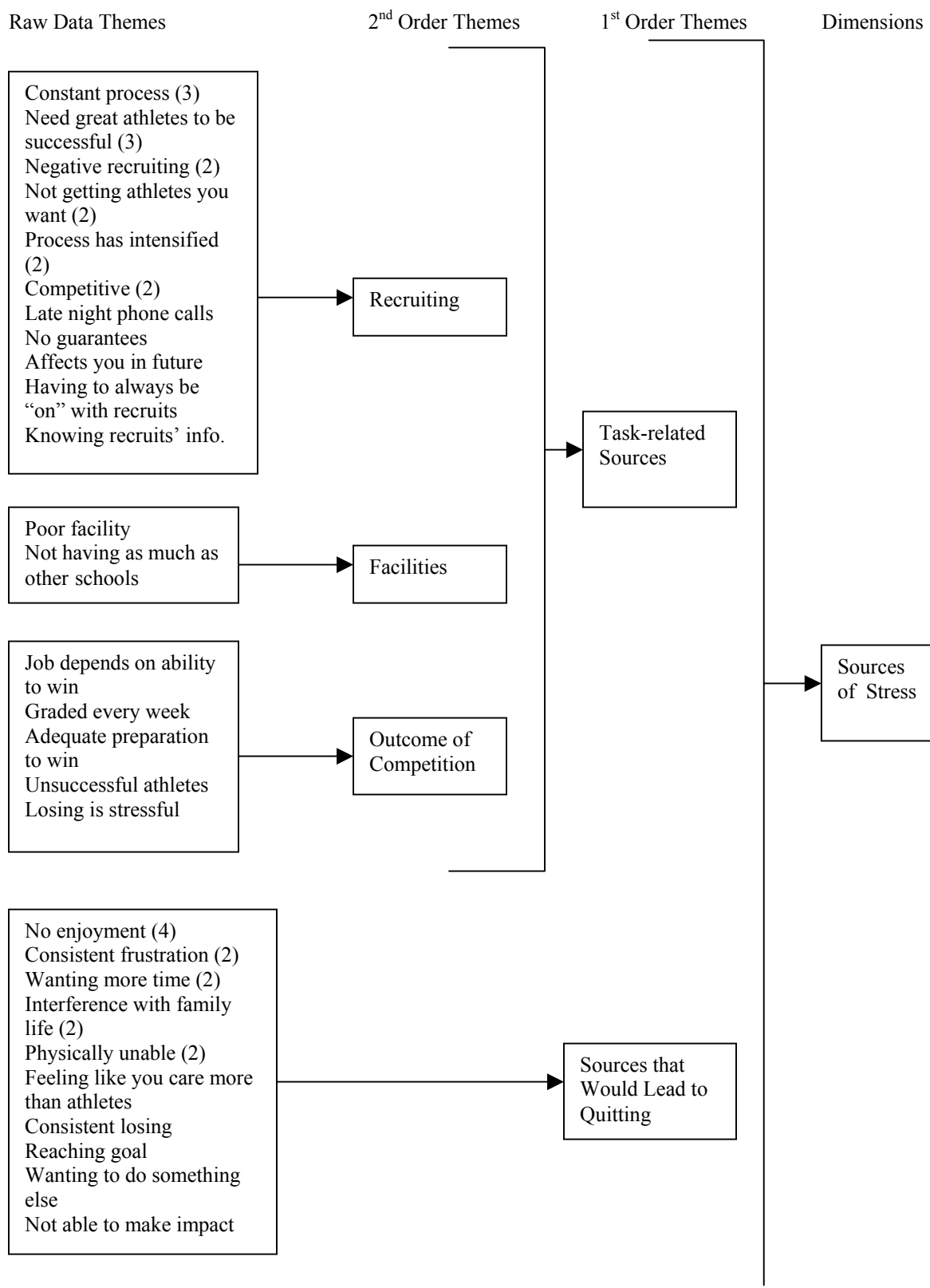


Figure 1. Continued.

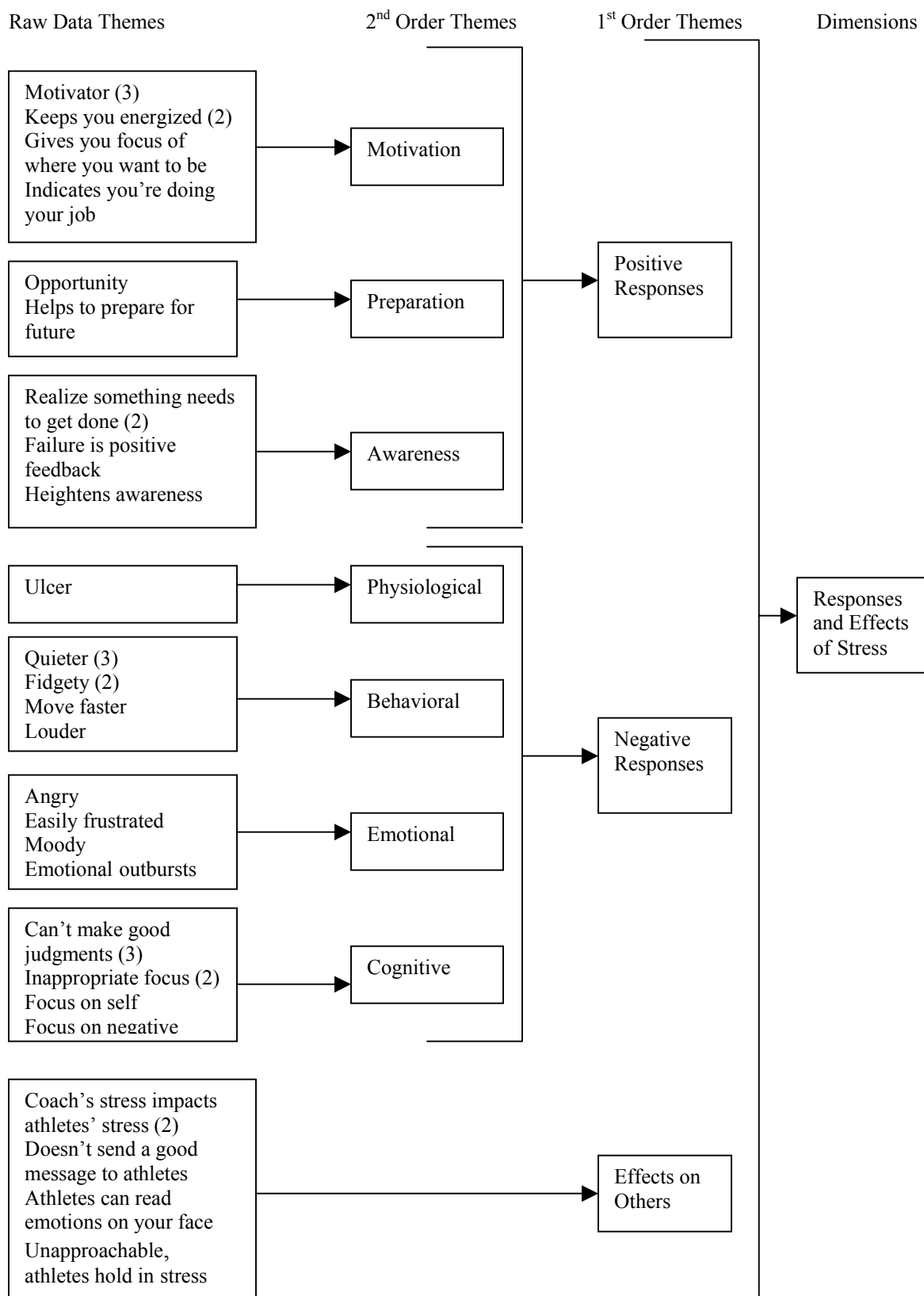


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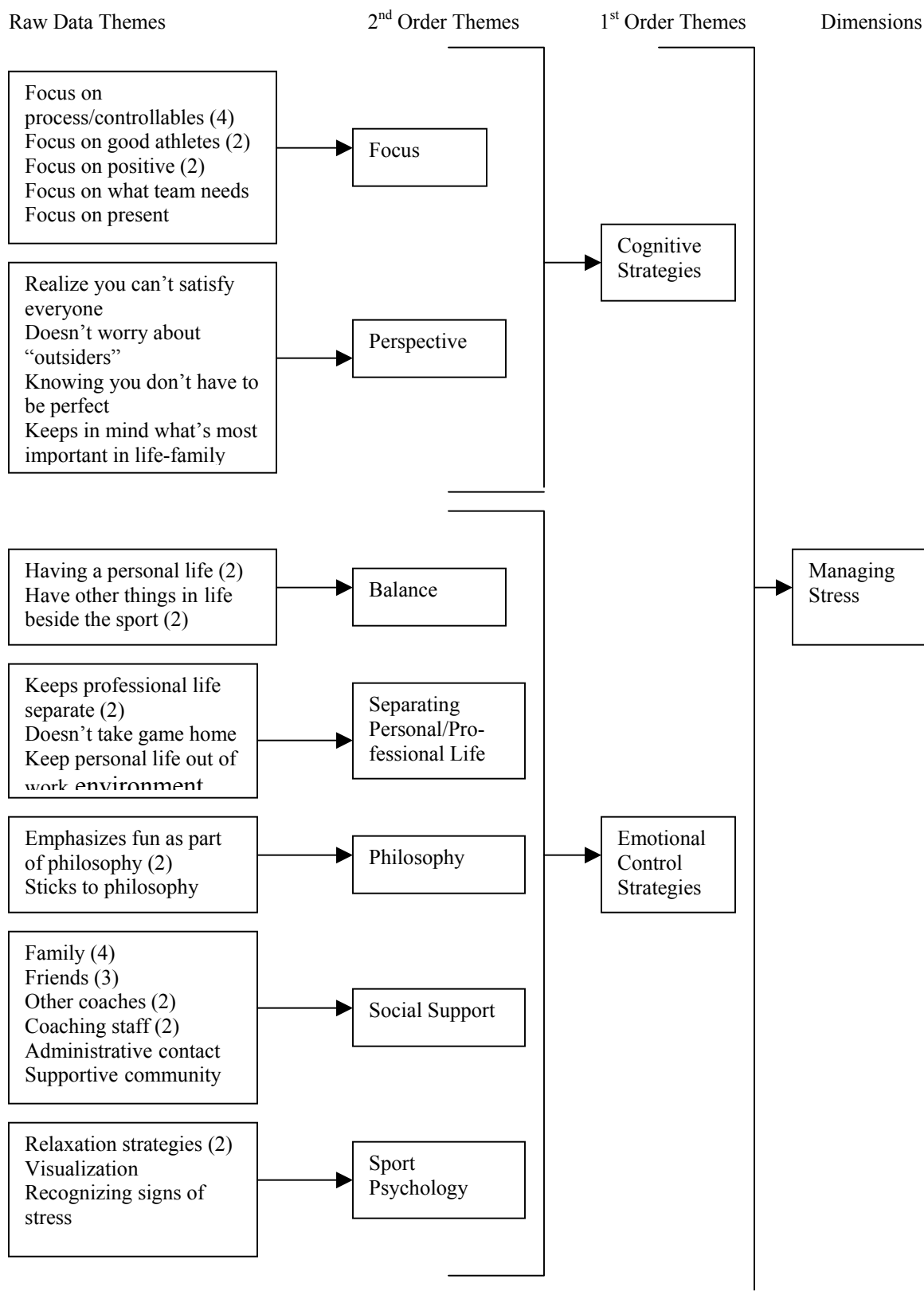


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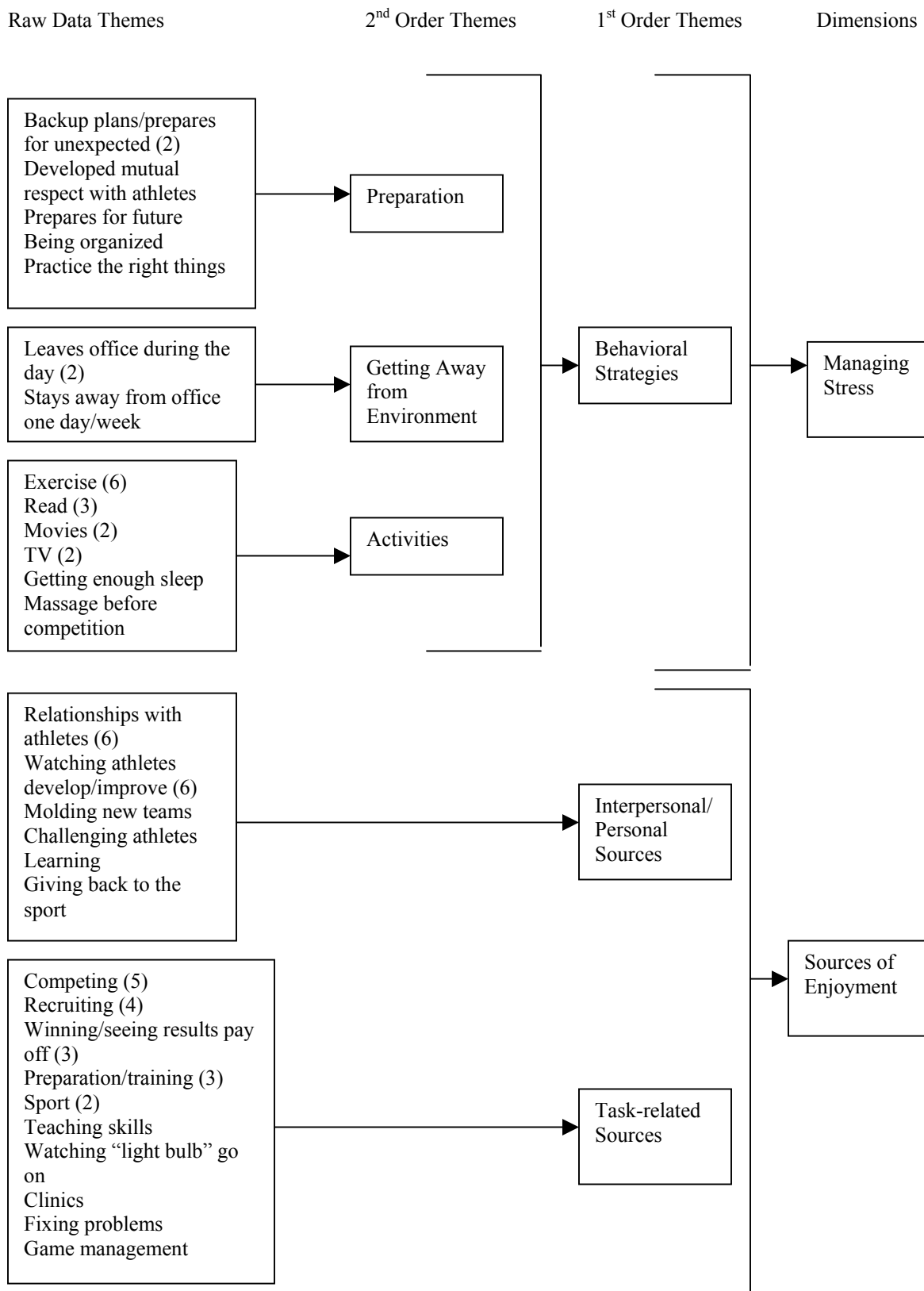


Figure 1. Continued.

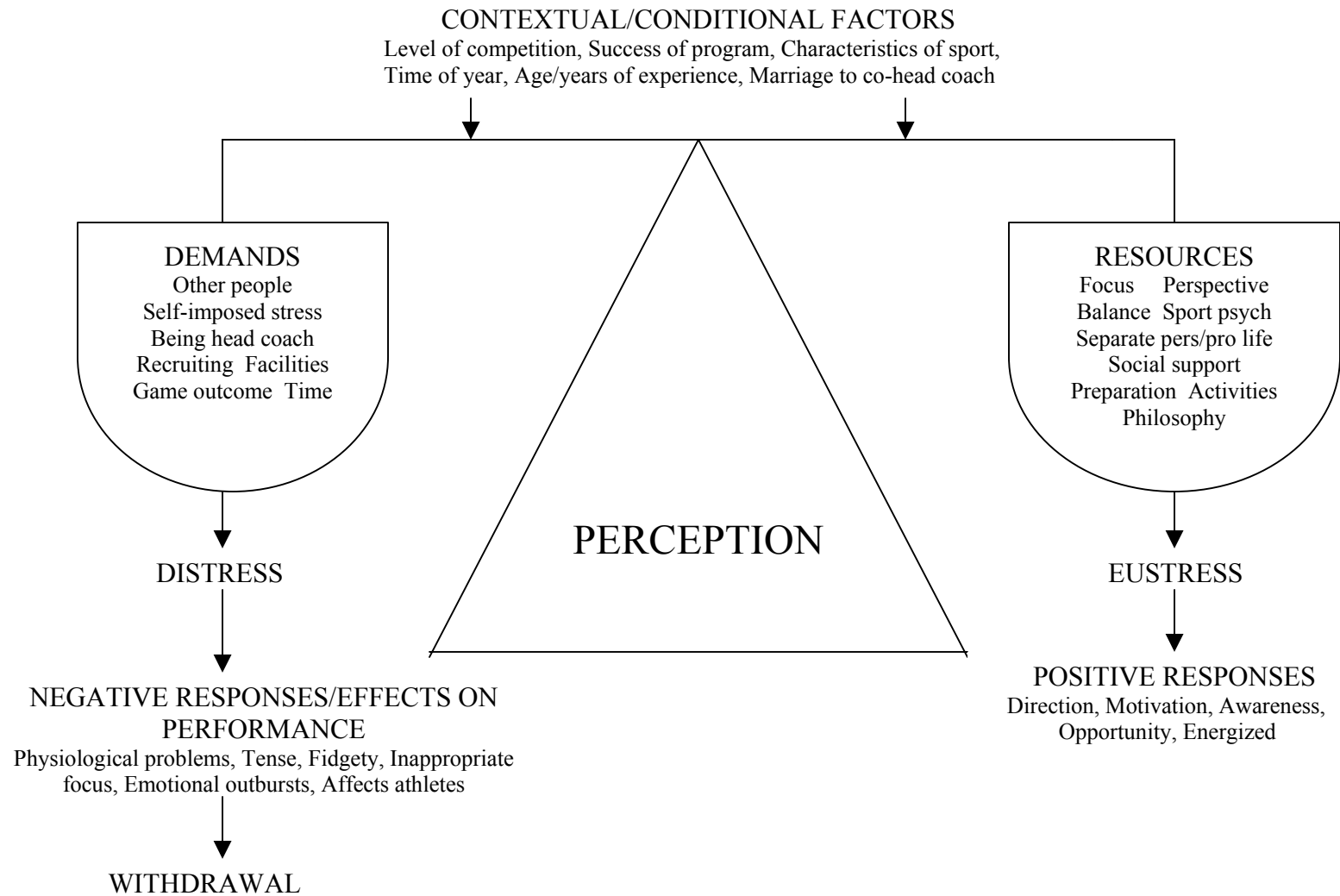


Figure 2. Model of coaching stress.

## VITA

Melinda Frey was born in Glendale, CA on July 14, 1976. She graduated from Crescenta Valley High School in 1994 and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1998. Melinda spent the next year as the research coordinator of UCLA's Fernald Child Study Center.

In 2001, Melinda earned her Master of Science degree in kinesiology and health promotion from the California State University, Fullerton, where she specialized in sport psychology. Her thesis was entitled, "Collegiate Athletes' Use of Mental Skills in Practice."

Upon earning her master's degree, Melinda entered the doctoral program in the sport studies department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Here, she taught physical activity courses and stress management, co-taught mental skills training for sports and life and introduction to sport and exercise psychology, and was a team facilitator for the MBA program. Her research focuses on seeking the coach's perspective and enhancing the coach-athlete relationship. Melinda received her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the College of Education, with an emphasis in sport psychology, in May, 2004.