

SUPPORT FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ATHLETE
INCLUSION IN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT

By

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Abstract: Within the American inter-collegiate sport setting, athletics is often experienced and labeled as being hostile and unwelcoming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athletes (Gill et al., 2010; Rankin & Merson, 2012). Competitive sport remains gender polarized, having only women's and men's sport categories while lacking other categories that would provide greater inclusion for gender and sexual minorities. This system creates in-group vs. outgroup dynamics for athletes who do not prescribe to traditional hypermasculinity or cisnormativity in athletics (Gleaves & Lehrbach, 2016). Minimal research, education, and training exists within the topic of including transgender individuals in athletics. Additionally, research has continued to evaluate the support for competing with lesbian, gay, or bisexual athletes, yet there is lacking exploration of how this support might differ for transgender athletes as teammates or competitors (Jenkins, 2009; Raiz, 2006; Woodford et al., 2013). The purpose of this study is to examine current intercollegiate student-athletes' support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) athlete inclusion in competitive sport. This will be further explored by identifying the differences in support when LGBT athletes are competing on the same team as the participant and when LGBT athletes are competing against the participant in competition. Levels of support were assessed through participant completion of a demographic questionnaire and Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion instrument. Analysis of the data included testing for reliability and validity of the instrumentation through principle component analysis and evaluating Cronbach's alpha, as well as utilizing Chi-Square analysis to test the hypothesized of the study. Theoretical implications and contributions of the study are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Competitive sport has evolved and changed over the years. Examples of such changes include increasing options for types of competition, expanding rules and regulations of sport, and allowing more transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary athletes to participate in competition. Competitive sport and physical activity were specifically recognized as a human rights for the first time in the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, from 1978 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), stating that “access to physical education and sport should consequently be assured and guaranteed for all human beings” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1978).

Competitive sport has expanded what its perceived limits were in terms of the persons originally thought to compete in sport, or at least welcomed into competitive play. Over time, women have continued to have a greater influence in competition, from coaching and administrative work, to playing. This movement has advanced with the implementation of Title IX which states that no person, regardless of sex, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program receiving any federal assistance. In addition to women entering into more sporting contexts, athletes who identify as LGBTQIA+ continue to also participate more in sports. These identities are often more inclusively stated including queer, intersex, asexual, and “+” for additional, variant, and

other identities not stated (LGBTQIA+). Similar to the hurdles and discrimination that women and athletes of color likely felt entering into this new territory, LGBTQIA+ athletes may also face what often feels like an unwelcoming environment, lack of support from other athletes, coaches, and sport staff alike, and programs lacking policies that protect LGBTQIA+ athletes. Whether the attitudes are angry or suspicious or supportive toward LGBTQIA+ athletes, attitudes matter in the development of the environment that those athletes participate in as well as in the development of the policies that are created toward or against this population of athletes. To begin understanding how attitudes held by student-athletes affect the integration of LGBTQIA+ athletes, one must begin with understanding the larger culture of sport culture and how that culture influences those embedded in it.

The Culture and Evolution of Athletics

Sexism, heteronormativity, homophobia and transphobia are pervasive in every social institution, and athletics is not commonly known for its sense of inclusivity (Scandurra et al., 2013). Historically, sports have served as an arena for men to display their power and dominance over others, including over other men. One old premise proposed that women should not participate in athletics because of the potentially harmful "masculinizing" effect of sports on them, fearing it would move them from the role they were expected to fill into a role expected of a man (Colker & Widom, 1980). In sport, there is an evident cultural framework of gender division, represented by a very strong sex-segregation of the female and male category. Intercollegiate sport is still divided by "men's" and "women's" sports at all levels, especially at national governing levels. Intramural and club teams are one space commonly created for ease of integration of all persons into competition due to commonly having mixed or open teams, rather than only male and female teams. This marked differences between male and female

categories can produce dangerous gender stereotypes facilitating the development of a heterosexist culture in sport (Scandurra et al., 2013). Gender stereotypes in sport not only raise men to have greater power and respect in sports, but it also places women and LGBTQIA+ persons at the “bottom” so-to-speak, creating a hierarchical system of oppression. Women are often viewed as “the other” in sport participation based on historical views of gender roles and sport division which features the dominant male gender and deemphasizes all other genders (Minichino, 2009).

In addition to the cisgender normative culture that evades sporting contexts, there is also a history of heteronormativity, where there is an advantage or privilege given to athletes who hold a heterosexual identity over any other sexual orientation. Messner (1992) described the perception of heteronormativity in the sports world as “staggering.” “Boys (in sport) learn early that to be gay, to be suspected of being gay, or even to be unable to prove one’s heterosexual status is not acceptable” (Messner, 1992). Heterosexism is built into various aspects of the game, including the jargon and language used to motivate, challenge, and tear down athletes (Greim, 2016). Expressions such as “don’t be a pussy,” “you (blank) like a girl,” “don’t be a faggot” are just a few of the commonly heard phrases that aggress towards LGBTQIA+ and/or female athletes (Greim, 2016). Because homophobic slurs are used as insults or negative punishment, it reinforces that no athletes have a sexual orientation apart from heteronormativity.

Although sport has not created the most welcoming space for LGBTQIA+ athletes, sport has continued to evolve, and more welcoming spaces are being forged for lesbian, gay, and bisexual athletes (Sarac, 2013). Athletes who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual have attained greater social acceptance and inclusion in sports, which now ushers in the possibility that other identities, such as transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary athletes, could

encounter a more welcoming environment in sports. It is likely that transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, or gender non-binary persons, in comparison to cisgender athletes (those who have a gender identity that aligns with their gender assigned at birth) may have greater hurdles to jump over in their efforts to gain social acceptance and inclusion. Transgender and intersex persons are becoming increasingly visible in society and beginning to be more involved in sporting contexts as well, which raises various concerns for athletes and spectators (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Tracking these concerns back to the culture of sport demonstrates just how the presence of transgender athletes in sport might “disrupt the binary ideas about sex that are reflected in the historical and contemporary organization of sport” that have been pervasive for most of sport’s existence (Singh, 2011, p. 8).

Acceptance for transgender persons is growing but seems to evolve at a slower rate in comparison to the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other LGBTQIA+ athletes (Griffin, 2012). In many ways, there is still ongoing active prejudice against transgender, LGB, and female-gendered persons in sport and such prejudice becomes deeply cemented into the sport culture (Cunningham & Pickett, 2018). This active prejudice is observed greater with transgender athletes than with gay or lesbian athletes (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Additionally, LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion does not appear to become a priority for sport teams or athletic departments until an incident of discrimination or homophobia is reported (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). This allows room for negative attitudes to create policy, participation decisions, and team dynamic decisions that impact LGBTQIA+ athletes before they are able to be protected from discrimination or violence. A non-inclusive environment fosters prejudice and exclusion, limits the effectiveness of a sport organization, inhibits team performance, and keeps LGBTQ student-athletes in the closet (Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Frankel, 2013).

Attitudes Towards Transgender, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Athletes

Homophobia represents an aversion to or irrational fear of LGB people, and often behaviors based on those attitudes (Berrill & Herek, 1990). Additionally, heterosexism is an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community (Berrill & Herek, 1990). Parrott et al. (2002) suggest that homophobia in men may not reflect necessarily negative sentiments against gay males but instead, may reflect greater negative attitudes toward feminine characteristics. Therefore, the role of sexism and genderism might play a larger role in sport due to the strong roots in traditional, binary gender roles and ideals rather than athletes' sexuality. Although some researchers are finding that attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ athletes are getting better, others are showing that the process of full acceptance and integration, especially for transgender athletes, is just beginning (VanPatten et al., 2016). While homophobia and transphobia have some commonalities, it should be pointed out that homophobia is centered around non-normative sexual orientations, with challenging normative gender roles a secondary effect (Nagoshi et al., 2008). Transphobia can be described in terms of "emotional disgust toward individuals who do not conform to society's gender expectations" (Hill, 2005, p. 533). This includes trans persons as well as those who identify as gender non-binary (those persons who may not behave, dress, or identify with any particular gender). Although some research has examined the experiences of and prejudice expressed toward LGB individuals in sport, there is an insufficiency of research in comparison that focuses on trans individuals specifically (Anderson, 2009; Campbell et al., 2011; Fink et al., 2012). As previously discussed, LGB athletes are still experiencing negative attitudes towards them even though they are continuously being accepted into sport. Despite

these gains for LGB athletes, the sport environment is frequently not as welcoming for trans persons.

There are several identified misperceptions about transgender and intersex athletes that influence the support for or attitude towards this group. There are four beliefs about transgender athletes that have been discussed in literature: (1) all athletes should neatly fall into a gender category and (2) transgender and intersex athletes have an unfair advantage in sport or are not participating in fair play (3) transgender athletes might be doping due to the use of testosterone (4) transgender athletes are choosing to be transgender for the sake of competition. (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011).

Considerable amounts of bias against transgender, gender nonbinary, and intersex athletes is grounded in the presumption that they look too masculine if they are female or too feminine if they are male (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). Commonly, discussions about transgender athletes' inclusion in sport turns to issues of fair play, especially related to male-to-female (MTF) trans athletes (Coggon et al., 2008; Teetzel, 2006). Most people postulate that to be born male implies innate athletic advantages that make the playing field unlevel for female-born athletes (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). A common response in this discussion is that MTF transgender athletes retain many physiological advantages that many males have over female athletes, such as more muscle mass and height, which creates an advantage for these athletes (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). This also relates to the misconception for FTM athletes who receive testosterone therapies are doping or abusing hormones to get an edge in competition. Using steroids or exogenous testosterone (e.g., from outside the body through pills or shots) is illegal in sport and is considered unfair. However, for transgender athletes, medical research supports that testosterone therapy maintains testosterone levels consistent with that of an average male and these levels are

highly monitored and controlled to make sure that the athlete is not receiving a competitive edge (Bhasin et al., 2001).

Lastly, there are often concerns voicing that trans athletes, specifically MTF athletes, might undergo surgery or hormone therapy so that they can compete in another (easier) category. This fallacy is grounded in the premise that male-born athletes have an innate advantage when competing against female-born athletes. Carlson (2005) quoted a trans athlete as stating, “No one goes through years of hormone therapy, massive surgery and this permanent life change on a whim, just to compete” (p. 40). The amount of medical work, pain, and rehab that this process takes if anything, harms performance more than improving it. The presented concerns are the most commonly discussed and debated topics around transgender athlete inclusion in competitive sports. These attitudes have been found to vary based on many demographic and social variables towards both LGB and transgender athletes in sport (Herek 2002; Harry, 1995; Jenkins et al., 2009; Woodford et al., 2013)

Factors Affecting Levels of Support

Gender

Both gender of the sport team and individual participant’s gender are being considered valuable to the purpose of the current study due to the expected differences between gender based on the culture of sexism and genderism in sport as well as previous research providing evidence for differences between genders. These interactions are likely to create variance between team gender (e.g. men’s team, women’s team) and/or individual gender of the participant.

It can be hypothesized that men’s anxieties about their masculinity are activated when they are confronted with non-traditional gender manifestations, whether of gender identity,

gender roles, or sexual orientation (Nagoshi et al., 2008). This anxiety, in turn, may cultivate both transphobia and homophobia in cisgender males. Norton (1997), for example, proposes that what men fear is that once you are able to feminize the male sex, then one would be able to form a feminization of all men, which breaks down the traditionally clear distinction between the superior male and the inferior female. Consequently, for men, beliefs about gender roles, gender identity, and sexual orientation are all driven by a common ideology, which could explain homophobia and transphobia in men. When sampling student-athletes, male athletes were found to have more negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people than female ones (Roper & Halloran, 2007). In another study sampling student-athletes, it was found that males who participated in core sports (e.g., football, baseball, basketball, and/or soccer) were nearly three times more likely than individuals who did not participate in core sports to express homophobic attitudes towards LGB athletes (Osborne & Wagner, 2007).

Many studies found somewhat different attitudes for women, when compared to their male counterparts. Higher levels of LGBT tolerance are consistently observed among women, with increased tolerance within the following identities: liberal Christian traditions, non-Christian faiths, the non-religious, and those who self-identify as LGBT (Holland et al., 2013). Additionally, female athletic trainers who cared for lesbian, gay, or bisexual student-athletes and worked with or knew someone who was lesbian, gay, or bisexual held more positive attitudes than did male athletic trainers without these personal connections (Ensign, 2011).

Knowing an LGBT Person/Athlete

Most of the research observing attitudes towards LGB athletes finds that males tend to have more negative attitudes towards LGB student-athletes than females do, but for all groups, when they have more contact with someone they know is LGB, their attitudes tend to become

more positive and inclusive (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Additionally, many athletes have shown to be open to having an LGB+ athlete on their team as well as coaching staff not opposing to a player being gay on their team (Bush et al., 2012). Often times, homophobia often decreases in athletic spaces after more people have had contact with those who identify as LGB (Roper & Halloran, 2007). According to Kardia (1996), the majority of college students become more accepting of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons as they experience higher levels of interpersonal contact with these persons by way of curricular and co-curricular programs. As cisgender, straight persons meet more LGBTQIA+ persons, attitudes and acceptance tend to become more positive due to having less unknowns or fears about people different than them. This pattern is expected to continue in the current study as well as project similarly to levels of support for competing with and against transgender athletes. One might expect to find that as more participants have met or know someone who is transgender, their levels of support are likely to increase, similar to trends for LGB athletes.

Frequency of Homophobic and Sexist Language Heard on Team

Given the widespread use of homophobic language and the often-hostile environment of college athletics and exercise spaces for LGBT students, it is important to consider how the frequency of hearing homophobic and/or sexist slurs or language in the sport setting influences participant's levels of support for transgender inclusion (Rankin & Merson, 2012). Atteberry-Ash and Woodford (2018) heavily influenced the current study due to their focus on levels of support for implementing guidelines that protect LGBT athletes. They found the frequency of homophobic language within a participant's team to be significant, where those who heard homophobic language more frequently indicated higher levels of support for protective guidelines. This result implies that athletes who heard homophobic language more frequently

were more likely to support protective policies and potentially increase levels of support for policy as they heard more inappropriate language (Atteberry-Ash & Woodford, 2018). Therefore, it is possible that respondents who recognize high-levels of homophobic language might witness the negative impacts it can have on LGBT targets and bystanders (Woodford et al., 2012), and consequently be more bothered by the use of homophobic slurs and see the need for such policies (Atteberry-Ash & Woodford, 2018). Given the pervasiveness of homophobic language on college campuses, especially in sporting venues, it is possible that students who recognize language as homophobic might generally have greater support for protections for LGBT students because of their critical consciousness of the problematic nature of such supposedly “harmless” slurs (Woodford et al. 2012). In addition, due to focusing specifically on transgender athletes apart from LGB athletes, it is proposed that similar trends will be found due to homophobic language often influencing attitudes about LGB persons and sexist language often influencing attitudes about gender, and consequently, transgender persons.

Athlete Support for LGB Athletes

Sport has been widely known as an institution that promotes heterosexuality over homosexuality and cisgender over transgender due to innate nature of using sexual orientations or gender as a way of insulting or isolating athletes. Many of the people using slurs as insults are often the people who would be competing with and against LGBTQIA+ athletes. The highest degrees of homophobia, or lack of support towards LGB persons, were with White male athletes (Wolf et al., 2001). This is consistent with the findings for gender when looking at non-athletes’ attitudes towards LGB non-athletes (Anderson, 2011).

Both male and female athletes who highly prescribe to the sport identity that they possess within athletics are at a higher likelihood of agreeing with many of the ideals of sport, such as

hypermasculinity and homonegativity. The more student-athletes associate themselves with these cultural ideologies as they participate in sport, the higher the levels of homophobia towards LGB athletes, especially for males (Harry, 1995). In regard to levels of acceptance of an LGB teammate, the results are not overwhelmingly consistent. Roughly 66% of a sampled group of student-athletes reported they would accept a gay or bisexual teammate, 20% said they would reject a gay or bisexual teammate and 6% say they do/would harass a teammate who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Southall et al., 2011). These findings typically are worse and more negative for LGB athletes of color, due to increased negativity towards persons of color who do not identify as straight (Bass et al., 2015). It is assumed that within the micro chasm of competitive sport, the attitudes and levels of support towards the inclusion and participation of LGBTQIA+ athletes matter most by those who are already in the sport, not by those in the general population.

Athlete Support for Transgender Athletes

Although there are few research studies explaining LGBTQIA+ athlete experiences in sport, there is lacking research around the culture of cisnormativity in sport and the attitudes of cisgender athletes' identities towards non-cisgender athletes. Additionally, there is lacking research showing attitudes towards transgender athletes and also how it compares to attitudes towards LBG athletes. Although it is observed that people tend to express more transgender prejudice than they might LGB prejudice, it would be worthwhile to continue strengthening this finding (Cunningham & Pickett, 2018). Despite what gains LGB athletes have experienced in sport by other athletes, the sport environment is frequently not as welcoming for transgender persons as well as those who identify as two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary (Carroll et al., 2012). Transgender athletes, potentially more than any other lesbian, gay, or bisexual

athletes, might face verbal abuse from opposing players due to their identities (Travers & Deri, 2010). One might hypothesize more expressed trans prejudice than LGB prejudice in sport at this time due to the amount of research that has been done on homophobia and heteronormativity in sport but the lack thereof with transgender athletes. (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012).

In addition to a lack of research over trans experiences in sport, most administrative policies and rules regarding participation of athletes who identify as transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary are lacking, exclusive, discriminatory, and usually leave decisions to individuals in administrative positions, leaving room for bias to influence decision-making (Buzuvis, 2012). This is an observed pattern from the elite to recreational level in sports, so it doesn't come as a surprise that many trans athletes frequently report difficulty in negotiating the sport space due to these restrictions and exclusionary rules (Krane et al., 2012; Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012). Due to the identified homophobia and transphobia researched in sport, it is easy to assume that sport also holds the expectation that athletes stick to their assigned gender at birth for the sake of being able to compete. Not only is the end goal of competing important, but trans athletes also want to compete in full capacity in conjunction with rules and policies, compete fairly, and be treated respectfully from athletes and coaches (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012).

Purpose of Current Study

As sport has seen women assimilate into competition, sporting contexts are having more open LGBTQIA+ athletes competing in sports. LGB athletes have been involved in competitive sport for longer than what is likely recorded due to many LGB athletes being stealth about their identities. For transgender or genderqueer athletes, it is typically near impossible to compete stealth without raising any concerns by athletes, coaches, or spectators, which postulates a different set of attitudes, policies, and outlook towards competition with transgender athletes.

Due to transgender athletes' inclusion being fairly novel for many sporting leagues and organizations, there is lacking empirical evidence that shows what this integration looks like and how current competitive athletes feel towards this integration. One might wonder how attitudes of those who currently participate in sport influence the course of change and inclusion, the environment that is created, and the policies that are informed by these beliefs and attitudes. As previously discussed, there is lack of knowledge of the culture, the experience of, and the attitudes regarding transgender (and to some degree) and LGB athlete inclusion. Therefore, a simple conclusion of where to begin is better understanding the attitudes of current student-athletes at the intercollegiate level towards transgender and LGB integration in intercollegiate sports. Attitudes motivate action; beginning with understanding attitudes will lead to understanding what action has been done and what action needs to follow suit based on these results.

The current study hopes to continue to evaluate the current levels of support for LGBTQIA+ athletes. In aims of extending this research topic, researchers are left with attempting to extend what is already known about LGB athlete inclusion into intercollegiate sports onto what can only be assumed as a more difficult inclusion for transgender athletes in this realm. It is possible that transgender athletes evoke stronger negative reactions and/or emotions among all persons regardless of athlete status. Because athletes are forced to compete with, interact with, and train with teammates and other athletes, the attitudes and levels of support for LGBTQIA+ athletes' participation matters. Current student-athlete's attitudes are likely to vary based on the intimacy of training with or competing against a LGBTQIA+ athlete. It is expected that athletes will vary in levels of support based on whether they are consistently practicing with,

competing for position/rank, traveling with, and getting to know an LGBT teammate or whether they are competing against an LGBT athlete for a victory.

Due to the significant lack transgender inclusion in sport at this point in time and the lack of research providing evidence of attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ athletes, it is necessary to begin identifying what current intercollegiate student-athletes feel towards the integration of LGBTQIA+ athletes in sport. This leads to the purpose of the current study, which expects to find team gender, knowing someone who is LGBT, and frequency of sexist and homophobic language impacting support for LGB and transgender athletes (separately) playing against and on a participant's team. Additionally, an important note to point out regarding the current study's choice to use "LGBT," "LGB," and/or "transgender" terminology is based on comparing previous literature that uses these terms and providing terms that will be easily recognized by sport participants, but are nonetheless, mainly outdated when discussing the LGBTQIA+ community. Although pansexual, asexual, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary individuals might be impacted by the unwelcoming climate within athletic communities in similar and different ways compared to LGBTQIA+ athletes, there is a scarcity of literature examining how individuals with these less-researched identities uniquely experience athletic contexts.

The value of the current study extends beyond the sport and athletic arena and well into the counseling psychology field due to the value the results can bring to counselors, advocates, allies, and all who work with LGBTQIA+ athletes. While large strides have been made in creating safer spaces for LGB athletes in intercollegiate sport, creating safe spaces for transgender athletes tend to be uncharted territory. Due to the lack of research and policy protecting these athletes, common experiences for trans athletes include higher rates of minority

stress, mental health concerns, and social isolation (Moradi et al., 2016). Barr et al. (2016) found community belongingness to have positive effects on the strength of transgender identity and individual wellbeing, which is consistent with McMillan and Chavis' (1986) theory that shared connection with community members is a critical component of a sense of community. Therefore, as community support and belongingness increase for LGBTQIA+ athletes in athletics, the environment will become more welcoming and safer and the athletes within it will have greater overall wellbeing.

The purpose of the current study for counselors, advocates, and allies include raising awareness, preparing those forging these inclusive spaces, and finding resources to support clients and persons being impacted by discriminatory or limiting policies in sport. Not only will work in this field look like new charted territory, but it likely will change the culture and environment of athletics. Although clinicians may be familiar with counseling approaches and tools in supporting persons dealing with sexual and/or gender prejudice, clinicians need to be particularly attuned to the potential struggles for individuals, teams, and the larger community of LGBTQIA+ people, especially during times of increased anti-LGBTQIA+ movements and policies in sports (Arm et al., 2009). Lastly, counselors and advocates might need to consider how these policies might be particularly sensitive to them and how their response might impact their ability to personally cope and help others cope.

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if there is a significant effect on levels of support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual and transgender athletes competing against

and competing with student-athletes amongst variables: (1) knowing a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual person, (2) knowing a transgender person, (3) frequency of homophobic and (4) sexist language on the team, and (5) team gender. The study addresses six key research questions by surveying a sample of current intercollegiate student-athletes:

- (1) Is the number of people participants know who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (2) Is the number of people participants know who are transgender related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (3) Is the frequency of sexist language heard on the participant's team related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (4) Is the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (5) Is team gender related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (6) Is team gender related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?

The following hypotheses will be tested using SPSS.

- (1) The number of people participants know who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (2) The number of people participants know who are transgender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (3) The frequency of sexist language heard on the participant's team is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

- (4) The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (5) Team gender is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (6) Team gender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Instrumentation

In the goal of better understanding the levels of support from current student athletes for the inclusion of LGBT athletes in current intercollegiate competition, research will be conducted utilizing a survey instrument that was created aimed at measuring the relationship between the identified independent and dependent variables and a second instrument that aims at collecting demographic information. In total, there will be 19 total items, 11 items for the Demographic Questionnaire and 8 items for the “Levels of Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion” instrument. The “Levels of Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion” instrument was developed for this study and contains eight items with response options in the form of a Likert-type scale (Appendix B). Each of the questions were applied to either levels of support for an LGB athlete or transgender athlete and comparing support for competing on the same team with an athlete and support for competing against an athlete. Item seven on the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix A) and items 1-4 on the Levels of Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion Questionnaire are items associated with the independent variables of the primary research question. Items 5-8 on the Levels of Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion Questionnaire identify the levels of support for competing on the same team with a transgender and LGB athlete as well as competing against a transgender and LGB athlete. Short and simple

language that is easily understandable and definitions of key terms (e.g. gender, sex, transgender) are used in order to encourage the respondents' cooperation and understanding throughout the instrument. Table 1 and Table 2 present the independent and dependent items that will be used for each variable of the research study.

Table 1

Independent Variables

	Item	Response Options
1. Knowing LGB person	Please indicate how many lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual person(s) you have met before or know personally? (Mark one)	a. 0 b. 1 c. 2 d. 3 e. 4 f. 5 g. 6 h. 7 i. 8 j. 9 k. More than 10
2. Knowing a transgender person	Please indicate how many transgender person(s) you have met before or know personally?	a. 0 b. 1 c. 2 d. 3 e. 4 f. 5 g. 6 h. 7 i. 8 j. 9 k. More than 10
3. Frequency of homophobic language	How often is homophobic language used on your team(s)? (Mark one)	a. Not at all b. Slightly c. Moderately d. Considerably e. A great deal
4. Frequency of sexist language	How often is sexist language used on your team(s)? (Mark one)	Prefer not to answer a. Not at all b. Slightly c. Moderately d. Considerably e. A great deal

5. Team gender	What gender category is your sports team?	Prefer not to answer a. Men's sport b. Women's sport
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Table 2

Dependent Variables

	Item	Response Options
1. Competing with an LGB athlete	I would support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on my team. (Mark one)	a. Definitely b. Very Probably c. Probably d. Probably Not e. Definitely Not
2. Competing with a transgender athlete	I would support a transgender athlete playing on my team. (Mark one)	a. Definitely b. Very Probably c. Probably d. Probably Not e. Definitely Not
3. Competing against LGB athlete	I would support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete competing against my team. (Mark one)	a. Definitely b. Very Probably c. Probably d. Probably Not e. Definitely Not
4. Competing against transgender athlete	I would support a transgender athlete competing against my team. (Mark one)	a. Definitely b. Very Probably c. Probably d. Probably Not e. Definitely Not

To serve as the effective data collection tool, instruments needs to be designed properly, particularly when the response rate as well as the reliability and validate of the data is affected by the design of items (Chan & Idris, 2017). Key indicators of the quality of the created instrument are the reliability and validity of the data. The process of developing and validating an instrument is in large part focused on reducing error in the measurement process. Prior to performing the analysis, the researcher will examine the accuracy of data entry, any missing values, normality, and outliers for properly cleaning and organizing data before running analyses in SPSS. The items will be evaluated for reliability and validity using Cronbach's alpha, expecting high reliability and validity with a minimum value of $\alpha = 0.80$ to ensure adequate

reliability of the instrument that in finality measure a single construct for support for LGBT inclusion in competitive sport. Upon determining proper reliability of the instrument, principle component analysis will be conducted to determine whether the constructs of the instrument are accurately measuring support for LGBT inclusion.

Site and Participant Selection

Participants for the current study will be selected based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria. All participants for the study will be required to be (1) a current member of an intercollegiate (e.g. NCAA, NAIA) varsity athletic team and (2) they must be 18 years of age or older. Athletes will be given the opportunity to participate, dependent on their coach and administration's prior approval. This is to ensure that the implications of participation will in no way negatively affect training and performance and will allow researchers to gain the contact information of athletes directly from coaches. A second option to electronic contacting of student-athletes is the Primary Investigator (PI) providing the survey instruments in person for athletes to complete in-person around a designated time appropriate for the team to gather for training.

Upon approval of the institutional review board, a solicitation email (Appendix D) will be sent to athletic directors and coaching staff at universities with an embedded link to the survey instrument. If the coaches are in favor of the study, they will pass on the information to their athletes themselves, or if preferred, they will provide the contact information for researchers to contact student-athletes directly for participation. Completion of the survey is estimated to take five to ten minutes, depending on rate of completion.

Upon approval from coaching staff and/or athletic administration, student-athletes will then receive an email (Appendix E) to request participation in the research project. This email

will include a brief description of the research topic and significance of the study, a description of the survey (number of questions and question type) and how long it is estimated to take to complete, a statement ensuring their confidentiality and the measures being used to maintain their privacy, and a link provided in order to access the online survey. For online participation, Qualtrics will be utilized. If student-athletes choose to participate online, the Information and Consent Form will be collected as a precursor to the online survey on the information and consent form (Appendix E), however no identifying information will be collected to maintain confidentiality of the participants. After completing this, further information regarding the directions for the survey will follow.

Athletes will also be given an option to take the survey in person by contacting the Primary Investigator (PI) by email or phone number. In this case, student-athletes will be able to take a paper version of the exact same survey that was made available to them online in addition to gaining their consent as a paper version. Upon completion, information and consent forms and instrument surveys will be placed in a sealed envelope by the athlete themselves before directly submitting it the envelope to the PI. This additional step is to continue ensuring the confidentiality of the athlete's participation. All paper survey data will then be collected, organized and entered into SPSS and password protected. Data will then further be organized in SPSS in order to facilitate the analysis process. All data and forms will be properly and confidentially discarded after being entered into SPSS to ensure proper elimination of private information.

Approval for the current study will be sought through this researcher's doctoral committee and Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Appropriate

adjustments will be made based on feedback from the PI's committee and IRB team. The PI = will continue seeking guidance from her committee throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Upon further analysis and exploration of the data after collection, results indicated that a Chi Square Analysis would be more appropriate in answering the research questions due to assumptions that were not met for the original use of MANOVA. The dependent variables, albeit arguably considered continuous due to Likert-scale instruments being used in either a categorical or continuous manner in analysis, using the software provided, SPSS, the variables were analyzed in a categorical manner. Most importantly, upon visual analysis of the data, the assumption of normal distributed data for MANOVA or ANOVA was not met due to weighted responses in the data that ultimately was not normally distributed. Due to these reasons, a Chi Square Test of Independence would be the most appropriate, suiting the assumptions and spread of the data collected.

Reliability and Validity

To evaluate the validity, a principle components analysis (PCA) was conducted using the four variables of competition with LGBT athletes to determine how the variables cluster together. There were two components with eigenvalues greater than one, and these accounted for 97.031% of the variability. Initially, a direct Oblimin rotation was fit and the two components were uncorrelated ($r = .003$) so an uncorrelated Varimax rotation was fit. The rotated component matrix was investigated and items 15 and 16 had a large loading on one of the components, and items 17 and 18 had a large loading on the other component.

For investigating the reliability, a Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. The reliability of the four items was $\alpha = .77$. There are different reports about the acceptable values of alpha, ranging

from 0.70 to 0.95 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Bland & Altman, 1997). The inter-item correlation matrix indicated that items 5 and 5 were highly correlated (.939) and items 7 and 8 were highly correlated (.942), indicating strong relatedness between competition and/or competition with LGB athletes to fall separately from competition and/or contact with transgender athletes. Participants' responses to LGB athletes appear to be distinct from responses to transgender athletes, and the following Chi-Square analysis further details these differences.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

As sport has seen women assimilate into competition, sport now is seeing more LGBTQIA+ persons competing in sports. There is an overwhelming lack of research understanding the experience of LGBT athletes and the attitudes regarding their participation in intercollegiate sport, primarily, transgender athlete participation. The current study is aimed at understanding the attitudes of current intercollegiate student-athletes towards transgender and LGB athlete integration in competitive sports. In the goal of better understanding the levels of support of current student athletes around the inclusion of LBG and transgender athletes in current intercollegiate competition, research was conducted surveying current, intercollegiate athletes and the results are as follows.

Descriptive Statistics

The overall sample was current, English-speaking intercollegiate student-athletes recruited by word of mouth and emailing athletic departments in the United States who would be willing to allow their athletes to participate. The sample likely varied from the population of student athletes across the United States, although anonymity ensured that no participants was able to be traced back to the university they attended, therefore, limiting the knowledge of universities participating in the study. The total sample size consisted of $N = 162$, though not all of these responded to every question. Therefore, the data analysis utilized only full sets of data

from each participant to ensure reliability and consistency among the data. The total analyzed sample size varied by research question dependent up on participant completion, varying from $N = 136$ through $N = 137$.

The sample consisted of a range of ages, with 14.5% of the sample being 18-years-old, 22.1% being 19-years-old, 22.8% being 20-years-old, 19.3% being 21-years-old, 11.7% being 22-years-old, 6.9% being 23-years-old, and the remaining 2.7% being 23-years-old and older. Table 3 presents the age distribution across the participants. For race/ethnicity, 14% of the sample identified as Black/African American, 1.2% as Pacific Islander/Polynesian, 7.3% as Latinx/Hispanic American/Latina/o, 3.0% as Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.2% as Asian American, 0.6% as South Asian, and 71.3% as White/Caucasian. Table 4 presents the race/ethnicity distribution across the participants. In response to gender identification, 73.8% of the sample identified as female and 24.1% of the study identified as male, 0.7% identified as non-binary/third gender, and 1.4% preferred self-describe. Table 5 presents the gender identity distribution across the participants. No participants in the sample identified as transgender. In response to sexual orientation, 84.8% of the sample identified as Heterosexual/Straight, 7.6% identified as gay or lesbian, and 7.6% identified as bisexual. Table 6 presents the sexual orientation distribution across the participants. In response to student status, 29.7% identified as freshman, 18.6% as a sophomore, 24.8% as a junior, 16.6% as a senior, 6.2% as a fifth year or higher, and 4.1% as a graduate student. Table 7 presents the student status distribution across the participants. The layout of sport participation is as follows: Soccer 4.9%, Softball 9.0%, Cross Country and Track 6.3%, Cheer 0.7%, Rowing 0.7%, Mascot 0.7%, Football 6.3%, Basketball 11.8%, Track and Field 22.2%, Swimming and Diving 7.6%, Tennis 9.0%, Volleyball 4.2%, Golf 2.1%, Cross Country 2.8%, Lacrosse 2.8%, Wrestling 2.8%, Basketball and Track 0.7%,

Ultimate Frisbee 1.4%, Rugby 0.7%, Equestrian 2.8%, and Baseball 0.7%. Table 8 presents the sport distribution across the participants.

Table 3

<i>Age</i>		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
18	21	14.5
19	32	22.1
20	33	22.8
21	28	19.3
22	17	11.7
23	10	6.9
24	1	0.7
25	1	0.7
26	1	0.7
28	1	0.7
Total	145	100.0

Table 4

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Asian American	2	1.2
Pacific Islander/Polynesian	2	1.2
Black/African American	23	14.0
LatinX/Hispanic American/Latina/o	12	7.3
Native American/American Indian/Alaskan	5	3.0
Native		
White/Caucasian	117	71.3
South Asian	1	0.6
Total	162	98.6

Table 5

<i>Gender Identity</i>		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	35	24.1
Female	107	73.8
Non-binary/Third gender	1	0.7
Prefer to self-describe	2	1.4
Total	145	100.0

Table 6
Sexual Orientation

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Heterosexual/Straight	123	84.8
Gay or Lesbian	11	7.6
Bisexual	11	7.6
Total	145	100%

Table 7
Student Status

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Freshman	43	29.7
Sophomore	27	18.6
Junior	36	24.8
Senior	24	16.6
Fifth Year or Higher	9	6.2
Graduate Student	6	4.1
Total	145	100.0

Table 8
Sport

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Soccer	7	4.9
Softball	13	9.0
Cross Country & Track	9	6.3
Cheer	1	.7
Rowing	1	.7
Mascot	1	.7
Football	9	6.3
Basketball	17	11.8
Track & Field	32	22.2
Swimming & Diving	11	7.6
Tennis	13	9.0
Volleyball	6	4.2
Golf	3	2.1
Cross Country	4	2.8
Lacrosse	4	2.8
Wrestling	4	2.8
Basketball & Track	1	.7
Ultimate Frisbee	2	1.4
Rugby	1	.7

Equestrian	4	2.8
Baseball	1	.7
Total	144	100.0

The descriptive statistics on the independent variables include knowing someone who is lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual (LGB), knowing someone who is transgender, frequency of homophobic language, and team gender. Of the sample, 98.5% stated that they knew at least one LGB person and 1.5% stated that they knew “0” LGB persons (Table 9). Of the sample, 55.8% stated that they knew at least one transgender person and 44.2% of the sample stated they knew “0” transgender persons (Table 10). For homophobic language, 56.1% of the sample stated that homophobic language was used “not at all” on their team, 21.6% stated it was “slightly” used on their team, 8.6% stated it was “moderately” used on their team, 8.6% stated it was “considerably” used on their team, and 5.0% stated it was used “a great deal” (Table 11). Lastly, for team gender, 72.4% of the sample participated on a women’s team (sex female) and 27.6% of the sample participated on a men’s team (sex male) (Table 12).

Table 9

Knowing LGB Persons:

Please indicate how many lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual person(s) you have met before or know personally

	Frequency	Valid Percent
0	2	1.5
1+	133	98.5
Total	135	100

Table 10

Knowing Transgender Persons:

Please indicate how many transgender person(s) you have met before or know personally

	Frequency	Valid Percent
0	61	44.2
1+	77	55.8
Total	138	100.0

Table 11

Frequency of Homophobic Language

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Not at all	78	56.1
Slightly	30	21.6
Moderately	12	8.6
Considerably	12	8.6
A great deal	7	5.0
Total	139	100.0

Table 12

Team Gender

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	40	27.6
Female	105	72.4
Total	145	100.0

The dependent variables include the level of support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual athlete participating on the participant’s team, level of support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual athlete competing against the participant’s team, level of support for a transgender athlete participating on the participant’s team, and level of support for a transgender athlete competing against the participant’s team. For the variable level of support for a LGB athlete participating on the same team, 69.8% stated they would “definitely” support, 14.4% stated they would “very probably” support, 8.6% stated they would probably support, 4.3% stated they would “probably not” support, and 2.9% stated they would “definitely not” support (Table 13). For variable, level

of support for LGB athlete competing against the participant, 69.1% stated they would “definitely” support, 15.1% stated they would “very probably” support, 9.4% stated they would “probably” support, 3.6% stated they would “probably not” support, and 2.9% stated they would “definitely not” support (Table 14). For variable, level of support for a transgender athlete participating on the participant’s team, 28.8% stated they would “definitely” support, 13.7% stated they would “very probably” support, 10.8% stated they would “probably” support, 23.0% stated they would “probably not” support, and 23.7% stated they would “definitely not” support (Table 15). For variable, level of support for a transgender competing against the participant, 28.8% stated they would “definitely” support, 12.2% stated they would “very probably” support, 10.8% stated they would “probably” support, 21.6% stated they would “probably not” support, and 26.6% stated they would “definitely not” support (Table 16).

Table 13

*Supporting LGB Person on Team:
To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on your team?*

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Definitely	97	69.8
Very Probably	20	14.4
Probably	12	8.6
Probably Not	6	4.3
Definitely Not	4	2.9
Total	139	100.0

Table 14

*Supporting LGB Person Competing Against Team:
To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete competing against your team?*

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Definitely	96	69.1
Very Probably	21	15.1

Probably	13	9.4
Probably Not	5	3.6
Definitely Not	4	2.9
Total	139	100.0

Table 15

Supporting Transgender Person on Team:

To what extent would you support a transgender athlete playing on your team?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Definitely	40	28.8
Very Probably	19	13.7
Probably	15	10.8
Probably Not	32	23.0
Definitely Not	33	23.7
Total	139	100.0

Table 16

Supporting LGB Person Competing Against Team:

To what extent would you support a transgender athlete competing against your team?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Definitely	40	28.8
Very Probably	17	12.2
Probably	15	10.8
Probably Not	30	21.6
Definitely Not	37	26.6
Total	139	100.0

The data was broken into four groups in order to better classify the variability in responding and to better identify outliers in the data. Based on this descriptive exploration, the variable, amount of sexist language experienced on the team, was eliminated due to a lack of representation in the data. Group 1 indicated that they knew at least one person who was LGB, knew at least one person who was transgender, and had at least “slightly” experienced homophobic language on their team. Group 2 indicated that they knew at least one person who

was LGB, knew at least one person who was transgender, and had “not at all” experienced homophobic language on their team. Group 3 indicated that they knew at least one person who was LGB, did not know anyone who was transgender, and had at least “slightly” experienced homophobic language on their team. Lastly, Group 4 indicated that they knew at least one person who was LGB, did not know anyone who was transgender, and had “not at all” experienced any homophobic language on their team. Table 17 presents the demographic information of the sample within each group.

Table 17

Group Demographics

		<i>Group 1: Those who know at least one LGB person, knew at least one transgender person, and “slightly” or more experienced homophobic language</i>		<i>Group 2: Those who know at least one LGB person, knew at least one transgender person, and “not at all” experienced homophobic language</i>		<i>Group 3: Those who know at least one LGB person, knew no one transgender, and “slightly” or more experienced homophobic language</i>		<i>Group 4: Those who know at least one LGB person, knew no one transgender, and “not at all” experienced homophobic language</i>		
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Race	Asian American Pacific Islander/Polynesian	1	3.2	2	5.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	
	Black/African American	5	16.1	7	17.9	0	0.0	7	21.9	
	LatinX/Hispanic American/Latina/o	6	19.4	3	7.8	1	5.0	2	6.3	
	Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	15.0	1	3.1	
	White	19	61.3	27	69.2	13	65.0	22	68.7	
	Bi/Multiracial	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	
	Total	31	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0	
	Age	18.00	5	16.1	6	15.4	4	20.0	5	15.6
		19.00	6	19.4	8	20.5	4	20.0	9	28.1
		20.00	5	16.1	9	23.1	6	30.0	6	18.9
21.00		5	16.1	9	23.1	3	15.0	4	12.5	

	22.00	6	19.4	4	10.3	2	10.0	4	12.5
	23.00	4	12.9	2	5.1	0	0.0	1	3.1
	24.00	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	3.1
	25.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.1
	26.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	0	0.0
	28.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.1
	Total	31	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0
Gender	Male	10	32.3	5	12.8	4	20.0	8	25.0
Orientation	Female	21	67.7	34	87.2	16	60.0	24	75.0
	Non-binary/Third gender	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	31	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual/Straight	25	80.6	31	79.5	17	85.0	28	87.5
	Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian	2	6.5	4	10.3	1	5.0	3	9.4
	Bisexual	4	12.9	4	10.3	2	10.0	1	3.1
	Total	31	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0
Student Status	Freshman	11	35.5	12	30.8	7	35.0	9	28.1
	Sophomore	5	16.1	6	15.4	3	15.0	8	25.0
	Junior	5	16.1	13	33.3	5	25.0	4	12.5
	Senior	4	12.9	6	15.4	4	20.0	6	18.8
	5 th Year or Higher	6	19.4	1	2.6	0	0.0	4	12.5
	Graduate Student	0	0.0	1	2.6	1	5.0	1	3.1
	Total	31	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0	32	100.0
Sport	Soccer	0	0.0	1	2.6	2	11.1	4	7.3
	Softball	3	9.7	4	10.3	2	11.1	4	7.3
	Cross Country & Track	2	6.5	3	7.7	1	5.6	3	5.5
	Cheer	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Rowing	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Mascot	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Football	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	5.6	7	12.7
	Basketball	2	6.5	10	25.6	2	11.1	3	5.5
	Track & Field	9	29.0	7	18.0	2	11.1	14	25.5
	Swimming & Diving	6	19.4	3	7.7	1	5.6	1	1.8
	Tennis	3	9.7	2	5.1	3	16.0	4	7.3
	Volleyball	1	3.2	3	7.7	1	5.6	1	1.8
	Golf	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	5.6	1	1.8
	Cross Country	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	5.6	2	3.6
	Lacrosse	1	3.2	1	2.6	0	0.0	2	3.6
	Wrestling	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	5.6	2	3.6
	Basketball & Track	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

Ultimate Frisbee	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	1.8
Rugby	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8
Equestrian	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	7.3
Baseball	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8
Total	31	100	39	100	18	100	55	100

Based on these results, all four groups indicated they knew at least one person who was LGB and then differed on whether they knew someone who was transgender and/or if they experienced any frequency of homophobic language on their team. Across the groups, Group 1 had the largest non-White racial and ethnic identities (61.3%) in comparison to Group 2 that had a larger sample of White participants (69.2%), but nonetheless, the majority of the overall sample identified as White. Group 1 had the highest percentage of participants aged 18 and 22 (19.4% respectively), Group 2 had the highest percentage of participants aged 20 and 21 (23.1%), Group 3 had the highest participants aged 20 (30%) and 18 and 19 (20.0%), and Group 4 had the highest participants aged 19 (28.1%) and 20 (18.9%). Group 4 had the most participants older than 22-years-old, four participants exactly, ranging from 23- to 28-years-old. Across the groups, the majority of the participants identified as female, with Group 2 being the most female-identifying (87.2%) and Group 3 being the least (60.0%). Across the groups, the majority of the participants identified as straight/heterosexual, with Group 4 having the most participants identifying as straight (87.5%) and Group 2 having the least (79.5%). Groups 1 and 2 had the highest amount of diversity around sexual orientation across the groups, reaching almost 20% of the groups being non-straight identifying. Group 1, Group 3, and Group 4 had the most freshman in the sample and Group 2 had the most juniors in the sample. Track and field was commonly the most represented sport in the sample, with Track and field (29.0%) and swimming and diving (19.4%) being the most represented sports in Group 1, basketball (25.6%) and track and field (18.0%) being the most represented sports in Group 2, tennis (16.7%), basketball (11.1%), and

track and field (11.1%) being the most represented in Group 3, and track and field (25.5%) and football (12.7%) being the most represented in Group 4.

Modified Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine if there is a significant effect on levels of support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual and transgender athletes competing against and playing on the same team with student-athletes amongst variables: (1) knowing a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual person, (2) knowing a transgender person, (3) frequency of homophobic and (4) sexist language on the team, and (5) team gender.

The study originally addressed six key research questions by surveying a sample of current intercollegiate student-athletes:

- (1) Is the number of people participants know who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (2) Is the number of people participants know who are transgender related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (3) Is the frequency of sexist language heard on the participant's team related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (4) Is the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (5) Is team gender related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?
- (6) Is team gender related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?

The following hypotheses were originally hypothesized be tested using SPSS.

- (1) The number of people participants know who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (2) The number of people participants know who are transgender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (3) The frequency of sexist language heard on the participant's team is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (4) The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (5) Team gender is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (6) Team gender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

Due to variables being condensed into four groups, the research questions and hypotheses invariantly changed. The only research question that was eliminated was "Is the frequency of sexist language heard on the participant's team related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team?" This research question was removed due to the variable, frequency of sexist language, was removed due to a lack of representation in the data. The independent variables frequencies are listed in Table 18 and dependent variables frequencies listed in Table 22. Therefore, the updated research questions, adjusted from the original research questions proposed, include:

- (1) For those who know at least one person who is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting LGB athletes competing against the participant's team?

- (2) For those who do not know at least one transgender person, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team?
- (3) For the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team?
- (4) For the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team, is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting an LGB athlete competing against the participant's team?
- (5) For team gender, is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting an LGB athlete competing against the participant's team?
- (6) For team gender, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team?

The updated hypotheses include:

- (1) Participants knowing at least one person who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (2) Participants not knowing at least one transgender person is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (3) The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.
- (4) The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

(5) Team gender is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

(6) Team gender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team.

Table 18

Independent Variables Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent
Team Gender	Male	40	27.6
	Female	105	72.4
	Total	145	100.0
Homophobic Language	Not at all	78	56.1
	Slightly	30	21.6
	Moderately	12	8.6
	Considerably	12	8.6
	A great deal	7	5.0
	Total	139	100.0
Knowing Transgender Person(s)	Knowing no transgender person (0)	61	44.2
	Knowing at least one transgender person (≥ 1)	77	65.8
	Total	138	100.0
Knowing LGB Person(s)	Knowing no LGB person (0)	2	1.5
	Knowing at least one LGB person (≥ 1)	133	98.5
	Total	135	100.0

Table 19

Dependent Variables Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent
Support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual (LGB) athlete playing on your team	Definitely	97	69.8
	Very Probably	20	14.4
	Probably	12	8.6
	Probably		

	Probably Not	6	4.3
	Definitely Not	4	2.9
	Total	139	100.0
Support for a lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual (LGB) athlete competing against your team			
	Definitely	96	69.1
	Very Probably	21	15.1
	Probably	13	9.4
	Probably Not	5	3.6
	Definitely Not	4	2.9
	Total	139	100.0
Support for a transgender athlete playing on your team			
	Definitely	40	28.8
	Very Probably	19	13.7
	Probably	15	10.8
	Probably Not	32	23.0
	Definitely Not	33	23.7
	Total	139	100.0
Support for a transgender athlete competing against your team			
	Definitely	40	28.8
	Very Probably	17	12.2
	Probably	15	10.8
	Probably Not	30	21.6
	Definitely Not	37	26.6
	Total	139	100.0

Hypothesis Testing

There were six research questions requiring statistical testing. These questions were addressed in sequential order and the results accompany each question.

Research Question 1

The research question (1) states: For those who know at least one person who is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting LGB athletes competing against the participant's team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: Participants knowing at least one person who is lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variable, levels of support for an LGB athlete playing on your team and dependent variable, levels of support for an LGB athlete competing against your team after both variables were collapsed into two categories from the original five categories (e.g. 5-point Likert Scale). The categories were dichotomized due to a lack of representation in the data for respondents indicating responses in the "probably not" and "definitely not" categories. The categories were suppressed to two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses (e.g. "probably") were combined ("definitely", "very probably", and "probably) and any variation of negative responses were combined ("probably not" and "definitely not"). A total of $n=137$ (94.5%) participants responded to this item. Because of empty cell count, $n=0$, for those who supported playing on a team with an LGB athlete and responded with not being in support of competing against an LGB athlete, a Chi-Square analysis cannot be conducted due to an unbalanced output and an expected count being less than 5, but interpretations can be made by the results.

Based on the responses, $n=128$ (93.4%) participants who responded as being in support of LGB athletes playing on their team were also likely to report support for an LGB athlete competing against their team (Table 20). This indicates that those who knew at least one LGB person and were in support of playing on the same team with someone who was LGB were more

likely to also be in support of competing against an LGB athlete. A total of $n=0$ (0.0%) participants reported knowing at least one LGB person, being in support of playing on the same team with an LGB athlete, but not being in support of competing against an LGB athlete. Similar results indicated a total of $n=1$ (0.8%) participant reported knowing at least one LGB person, not being in support of playing on the same team with an LGB athlete but being in support of competing against an LGB athlete. Lastly, a total of $n=8$ (5.8%) participants indicated knowing at least one LGB person and not being in support of playing on the same team with and competing against an LGB athlete. The Chi-Square test statistic cannot be used due to low and empty expected cell counts. However, the data strongly suggests that that the majority of participants who supported playing with a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual teammate were also likely to be in support of competing with and against LGB athletes, and vice versa. Reciprocally, those who were not supportive of playing with a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual teammate were likely to also not support competing with or against someone who is gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual, but only 5.8% of the participants indicated this response out of the total sample size.

Table 20

Research Question 1: Crosstabulation

		To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete competing against your team?		Total
		Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	Probably Not, Definitely Not	
To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	128 (93.4%)	0 (0.0%)	128
	Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (0.8%)	8 (5.8%)	9
Total		129	8	137

Research Question 2

The research question (2) states: For those who do not know at least one transgender person, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: Participants not knowing at least one transgender person is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team. Descriptive statistics for the independent variable (number of transgender persons the participant knows) and dependent variable (support for transgender athlete playing on the participant's team and support for transgender athlete competing against the participant's team) is displayed in Table 21. A total of $n=136$ (94.5%) participants responded to this item. Of the $n=59$ participants who did not know any transgender persons, $n=23$ (39.0%) indicated that they support for both playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=2$ (3.4%) participants who did not know any transgender persons indicated support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but not supporting competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=1$ (1.6%) participant who did not know any transgender persons indicated not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but were in support for competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=33$ (56.0%) participants who did not know any transgender persons indicated both not supporting playing on the same team with and not competing against a transgender athlete.

A total of $n=77$ participants did know at least one transgender person. Of these, $n=47$ (61.0%) indicated support for both playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=1$ (1.3%) participant who did know at least one transgender person indicated support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete

but not supporting competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=0$ (0.0%) participants who did know at least one transgender person indicated not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but were in support for competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=29$ (37.7%) participants who did know at least one transgender person indicated both not supporting playing on the same team with and not supporting competing against a transgender athlete.

Therefore, regardless of knowing any transgender persons, athletes were likely to either (1) support both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete or (2) not support both playing on the same team with and not competing against a transgender athlete. Only $n=3$ (5.1%) participants had variation in supporting one aspect of contact in competition with a transgender athlete and not supporting the other form of contact in competition when not knowing at least one transgender person. Only $n=1$ (1.3%) participant had variation in supporting one aspect of contact in competition with a transgender athlete and not supporting the other form of contact in competition when knowing at least one transgender person.

A Chi square was performed to test the null hypothesis for the research question. The independent variable, knowing a transgender person, was split so that results could be examined within groups of the data. Responses for Question 7 (support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete) and Question 8 (support for competing against a transgender athlete) was recoded and collapsed into dichotomous categories due to having low cell counts for the extreme categories of the original 5-point Likert Scale. The categories were collapsed into two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses (e.g. “probably”) were

combined (“definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably) and any variation of negative responses were combined (“probably not” and “definitely not”).

Table 21

Research Question 2: Crosstabulation

Please indicate how many transgender person(s) you have met before or know personally? (Please enter number)		Level of support for competing against a transgender athlete		Total	
		Definitely, Very Probably, and Probably	Probably Not, Definitely Not		
0	Level of support for competing on the same team with a transgender athlete	Definitely, Very Probably, and Probably	23 (39.0%)	2 (3.4%)	25
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (1.3%)	33 (56.0%)	34
		Total	24	35	59
1+	Level of support for competing on the same team with a transgender athlete	Definitely, Very Probably, and Probably	47 (61.0%)	1 (1.3%)	48
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	0 (0.0%)	29 (37.7%)	29
		Total	47	30	77

For those who knew zero transgender persons, results of the test were $X^2 (1) = 47.353, p < .005$. It was observed that the p-value=0.000 which is <0.05 , indicating significance. The results indicate that, for those not knowing any transgender persons, there is a statistically significant relationship between support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and support for competing against a transgender athlete. Participants who did not know any transgender persons were significantly more likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and also support competing against a transgender athlete. Reciprocally, for

participants who did not know any transgender persons, they were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and also not support competing against a transgender athlete.

Results of participants who knew at least one transgender person were similar. For those who knew at least one transgender person, results of the test were $X^2 (1) = 72.883, p < .005$. It was observed that the p-value=0.000 which is <0.05 , indicating significance. Participants who knew at least one transgender person were significantly more likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and also support competing against a transgender athlete. Reciprocally, participants who knew at least one transgender person were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and also not support competing against a transgender athlete.

Research Question 3

The research question (3) states: For the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant's team is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team. Descriptive statistics for the independent variable (frequency of homophobic language heard), dependent variable (support for a transgender athlete playing on a team, Question 7), and dependent variable (support for a transgender athlete competing against a team, Question 8) is displayed in Table 22. The dependent variables were dichotomized due to a lack of representation in the data for respondents indicating responses in the "probably not" and "definitely not" categories. The categories were suppressed to two dichotomous categories so

that any variation of positive responses (e.g. “probably”) were combined (“definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably) and any variation of negative responses were combined (“probably not” and “definitely not”). A total of $n=137$ (94.5%) participants responded to this item.

Of the $n=77$ participants who responded “not at all” to the frequency of homophobic language used on their team, a total of $n=43$ (55.8%) participants indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=1$ (1.3%) participant indicated “not at all” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team indicated support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but not supporting competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=0$ (0.0%) participants indicated “not at all” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team did not indicate support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but did support competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=33$ (42.9%) participants indicated “not at all” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team did not indicate support for both playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and not supporting competing against a transgender athlete.

Of the $n=60$ participants who responded “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language used on their team, a total of $n=27$ (45.0%) participants indicated “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team and indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=2$ (3.3%) participants indicated “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team and indicated support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but not supporting competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=1$ (1.7%) participant indicated “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team and

did not indicate support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete but did support competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=30$ (50.0%) participants indicated “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team and did not indicate support for both playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and competing against a transgender athlete.

Therefore, those who indicated “not at all” or “slightly or more” to the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team were likely to either (1) support both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete or (2) not support both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. Only $n=1$ participant had variation in supporting one aspect in competition with a transgender athlete and not supporting the other form of contact in competition when not have heard any homophobic language on their team. $n=3$ participants had variation in supporting one aspect in competition with a transgender athlete and not supporting the other form of contact in competition when they had heard “slightly” or more homophobic language on their team.

A Chi-Square analysis was performed to test the null hypothesis for the research question. The independent variable, frequency of homophobic language heard on a participant’s team, was split so that results could be examined within groups of the data. For the dependent variables Question 7 and Question 8, the data was recoded and collapsed into dichotomous categories due to having low cell counts for the extreme categories of the original 5-point Likert Scale. The categories were collapsed into two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses, or responses in support of, (e.g. “probably”) were combined (e.g. “definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably”) and any variation of negative, or responses not in support of, were combined (e.g. “probably not” and “definitely not”).

Table 22

Research Question 3: Crosstabulation

How often is homophobic language used on your team(s)?			To what extent would you support a transgender athlete competing against your team?		
			Definitely, Very Probably	Probably Not, Definitely Not	Total
Not at all	To what extent would you support a transgender athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	43 (55.8%)	1 (1.3%)	44
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	0 (0.0%)	33 (42.9%)	33
	Total	43	34	77	
Slightly or More	To what extent would you support a transgender athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	27 (45.0%)	2 (3.3%)	29
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (1.7%)	30 (50.0%)	31
	Total	28	32	60	

The result of the test for those “not at all” experiencing homophobic language on their team was $X^2(1) = 73.037$, $p < 0.005$. It was observed that the p-value=0.000 which is < 0.05 , indicating significance. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and for competing against a transgender athlete. For participants who did not indicate any homophobic language heard on their team, athletes who supported playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were significantly more likely to also support competing against a transgender athlete.

Reciprocally, for participants who did not indicate any homophobic language heard on their team, athletes who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete also did not support competing against a transgender athlete.

The results for participants who heard “slight or more” frequencies of homophobic language on their team were similar, $X^2(1) = 48.630$, $p < 0.005$. It was observed that the p -value=0.000 which is <0.05 , indicating significance. For participants who heard “slight or more” frequencies of homophobic language on their team, those who supported playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were also significantly more likely to support competing against a transgender athlete. Reciprocally, for participants who heard “slight or more” frequencies of homophobic language on their team, athletes who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were significantly more likely to also not support competing against a transgender athlete.

Research Question 4

The research question (4) states: For the frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant’s team, is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting an LGB athlete competing against the participant’s team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: The frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant’s team is related to support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant’s team. Descriptive statistics for the independent variable (frequency of homophobic language heard), dependent variable (support for an LGB athlete playing on a team, Question 5), and dependent variable (support for an LGB athlete competing against a team, Question 6) are displayed in Table 23. The independent variable, frequency of homophobic language heard on a participant’s team, was split so that results could be examined within groups of the data. For the

dependent variables Question 5 and Question 6, the data was recoded and collapsed into dichotomous categories due to having low cell counts for the extreme categories of the original 5-point Likert Scale. The categories were collapsed into two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses, or responses in support of, (e.g. “probably”) were combined (e.g. “definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably”) and any variation of negative, or responses not in support of, were combined (e.g. “probably not” and “definitely not”).

A total of $n=137$ (94.5%) participants responded to this item. Because of low cell count in four cells, a Chi-Square analysis cannot be conducted due to an unbalanced output and an expected count being less than 5, but interpretations can be made by the results. The interpretations of the frequency tables for this research question indicate that for the majority of participants who responded with “not at all” hearing homophobic language on their team and supporting a LGB athlete playing on the participant’s team were more likely to also support a LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=73$, 94.8%). For participants who responded with “not at all” hearing homophobic language on their team and supporting an LGB athlete playing on the participant’s team were less likely to not support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=0$, 0.0%). For participants who responded with “not at all” hearing homophobic language on their team and did not indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the participant’s team were less likely to support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=0$, 0.0%). For participants who responded with “not at all” hearing homophobic language on their team and did not indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the participant’s team were more likely to not support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=4$, 5.2%).

For participants who responded with “slightly” or more frequencies of hearing homophobic language on their team and did indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the

participant's team were more likely to support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=55$, 91.7%). For participants who responded with "slightly" or more frequencies of hearing homophobic language on their team and did indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the participant's team were less likely to not support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=0$, 0.0%). For participants who responded with "slightly" or more frequencies of hearing homophobic language on their team and did not indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the participant's team were less likely to support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=1$, 1.7%). Lastly, for participants who responded with "slightly" or more frequencies of hearing homophobic language on their team and did not indicate support for an LGB athlete playing on the participant's team were more likely to not support an LGB athlete competing against their team ($n=4$, 6.7%).

A total of $n=77$ participants reported "not at all" hearing homophobic language on their team and $n=60$ participants reported hearing "slightly" or more frequencies of homophobic language on their team. Based on the Chi Square results, the frequency of homophobic language heard on a participant's team did not greatly impact the relationship between support for competing with and/or competing against an LGB athlete. The majority of the responses fell within responses that were both in support of LGB athletes playing on and competing against the participants, regardless of the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team. A small number of participants indicated not being in support of both playing on the same team with and competing against LGB athletes, regardless of the frequency of homophobic language heard on their team. These results signify that that the majority of participants were likely to be in support of both types of contact in competing with and against LGB athletes. These results indicate that for the participants who were in support of playing with an LGB athlete on their team, they were

likely to also support competing against an LGB athlete. Reciprocally, for those who were not in support for one were likely to also not support the other, but only 5.8% of the participants indicated this response out of the total sample size. This is also the same proportion of responses for lack of support in the results of research question 1, with the only difference with independent variable stating that all participants indicated knowing at least one LGB person.

Table 23

Research Question 4: Crosstabulation

How often is homophobic language used on your team(s) (e.g. “you’re so gay,” “don’t be a faggot”)?			To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete competing against your team?		
			Definitely, Very Probably	Probably Not, Definitely Not	Total
Not at all	To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably	73 (94.8%)	0 (0.0%)	73
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.2%)	4
		Total	73	4	77
Slightly	To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably	55 (91.7%)	0 (0.0%)	55
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (1.7%)	4 (6.7%)	5
		Total	56	4	60

Research Question 5

The research question (5) states: For team gender, is there a relationship between support for an LGB athlete playing on a team and supporting an LGB athlete competing against the participant’s team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: Team gender is related to

support for an LGB athlete playing on and/or against the participant's team. Descriptive statistics for the independent variable (team gender), dependent variables (support for a LGB athlete playing on a team, Question 5), and dependent variable (support for a LGB athlete competing against a team, Question 6) is displayed in Table 24 For team gender, respondents answered question 3 "Sex Identity." The independent variable, team gender, was split between "male" and "female" sports teams because no respondents ($n=0$, 0.0%) answered as "intersex" so the categories were dichotomized to the two categories respondents answered. The data received was also representative of the categorization of current NCAA sports teams, which categorize two options for athletes, "men's sports" and "women's sports." For the dependent variables Question 5 and Question 6, the data was recoded and collapsed into dichotomous categories due to having low cell counts for the extreme categories of the original 5-point Likert Scale. The categories were collapsed into two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses, or responses in support of, (e.g. "probably") were combined (e.g. "definitely", "very probably", and "probably") and any variation of negative, or responses not in support of, were combined (e.g. "probably not" and "definitely not").

A total of $n=137$ (94.5%) participants responded to this item. Because of low cell count in 3 cells, a Chi-Square analysis cannot be conducted due to an unbalanced output and an expected count being less than 5, but interpretations can be made by the results. First, the majority of the participants in the study identified as being on a female-identified sports team ($n=100$, 73.0%) and the remainder of participants were on a male-identified sports team ($n=37$, 27.0%).

A total of $n=32$ (86.0%) male sports team participants indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against an LGB athlete. A total of $n=5$ (14.0%) male

sports team participants indicated both a lack of support for both playing on the same team with and competing against an LGB athlete. No participants ($n=0$, 0.0%) answered with supporting competing against a transgender athlete but not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. No participants ($n=0$, 0.0%) answered with not supporting competing against a transgender athlete and supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

The interpretations of the frequency tables for this research question indicate that for male sports teams, participants who supported competing against an LGB athlete were more likely to also support playing on the same team with an LGB athlete ($n=32$). The reciprocal was also true for a small number of male-teamed participants, where those who were not in support of competing against an LGB athlete were more likely to also not support playing on the same team with an LGB athlete ($n=5$). For both categories where support for competing against or on the same team with an LGB athlete was mixed with a lack of support for competing against or on the same team with an LGB athlete, no participants responded. Therefore, for male sports team participants, they were likely to either support both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (86% of male sports team respondents) or lack support for both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (14% of male sport team respondents).

A total of $n=96$ (96%) female sports team participants indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against an LGB athlete. A total of $n=3$ (3%) female sports team participants indicated both a lack of support for both playing on the same team with and competing against an LGB athlete. One female sports team participant ($n=1$, 1%) answered with supporting competing against a transgender athlete but not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. No female sports team participants ($n=0$, 0%) answered with not

supporting competing against a transgender athlete and supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

Female sport team participants who supported competing against an LGB athlete were more likely to also support playing on the same team with an LGB athlete ($n=96$, 96.0%). The reciprocal was also true for a small number of female-teamed participants, where those who were not in support of competing against an LGB athlete were more likely to also not support playing on the same team with an LGB athlete ($n=3$, 3.0%). For both categories where support for competing against or on the same team with an LGB athlete was mixed with a lack of support for competing against or on the same team with an LGB athlete, only one ($n=1$, 1.0%) participant responded with supporting competing against an LGB athlete but not supporting playing on the same team with an LGB athlete. Therefore, for female sports team participants, they were most likely to either support both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (96% of female sports team respondents) or lack support for both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (3% of female sport team respondents), but one participant (1% of female sport team respondents) indicated a mix of support and lack of support for various contact in competition.

Table 24

Research Question 5 Crosstabulation

Sex refers to a person’s biological status and is typically assigned as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female). (APA, 2012).		To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete competing against your team?			Total
Sex Identity: (Mark one)		Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	Not, Probably Definitely Not		
Male	To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	32 (86.5%)	0 (0.0%)	32
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	0 (0.0%)	5 (13.5%)	5

	playing on your team?	Total	32	5	37
Female	To what extent would you support a gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual athlete playing on your team?	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	96 (96.0%)	0 (0.0%)	96
		Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (1.0%)	3 (3.0%)	4
		Total	97	3	100

These results indicate that for the participants who were in support of playing with an LGB athlete on their team were likely to also support competing against an LGB athlete, regardless of team gender. Reciprocally, for those who were not in support for one were likely to also not support the other, but a small percentage of the participants indicated this response out of the total sample size. Male sport team participants (14%) were more likely to lack support for both forms of contact in competition than female sport team participants (3%).

Research Question 6

The research question (6) states: For team gender, is there a relationship between support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and supporting a transgender athlete competing against the participant’s team? The hypothesis pertinent to this question states: Team gender is related to support for a transgender athlete playing on and/or against the participant’s team. Descriptive statistics for the independent variable (team gender), dependent variable (support for a transgender athlete playing on a team, Question 7), and dependent variable (support for a transgender athlete competing against a team, Question 8) is displayed in Table 25 For team gender, respondents answered question 3 “Sex Identity” in reference for team gender. The independent variable, team gender, was split between “male” and “female” sports teams because no respondents ($n=0, 0.0\%$) answered as “intersex” so the categories were dichotomized to the

two categories respondents answered. The dependent variables were dichotomized due to a lack of representation in the data for respondents indicating responses in the “probably not” and “definitely not” categories. The categories were suppressed to two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses (e.g. “probably”) were combined (“definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably) and any variation of negative responses were combined (“probably not” and “definitely not”). A total of $n=137$ participants participated. Of the 137 participants, $n=37$ (27.0%) played on a male sports team and $n=100$ (73.0%) played on a female sports team.

A total of $n=15$ (40.5%) male sports team participants indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=21$ (56.8%) male sports team participants indicated both a lack of support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. One participant ($n=1$, 2.7%) answered with supporting competing against a transgender athlete but not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. No participants ($n=0$, 0.0%) answered with not supporting competing against a transgender athlete and supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

Therefore, for male sport participants those who indicated support for competing against a transgender athlete were more likely to also support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Male sport athletes who did not support competing against a transgender athlete were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Male sport athletes who indicated support for competing against a transgender athlete were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Lastly, male sport athletes who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were also more likely to not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

A total of $n=55$ (55.0%) female sports team participants indicated support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. A total of $n=42$ (42.0%) female sports team participants indicated both a lack of support for both playing on the same team with and competing against a transgender athlete. No female sports team participants ($n=0$, 0.0%) answered with supporting competing against a transgender athlete but not supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Three female sports team participants ($n=3$, 3.0%) answered with not supporting competing against a transgender athlete and supporting playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

Therefore, for female sport participants those who indicated support for competing against a transgender athlete were more likely to also support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Female sport athletes who did not support competing against a transgender athlete were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Female sport athletes who indicated support for competing against a transgender athlete were less likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete. Lastly, female sport athletes who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were also more likely to not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete.

A Chi-Square analysis was performed to test the null hypothesis for the research question. The independent variable, team gender, was split so that results could be examined within groups of the data. For the dependent variables Question 7 and Question 8, the data was recoded and collapsed into dichotomous categories due to having low cell counts for the extreme categories of the original 5-point Likert Scale. The categories were collapsed into two dichotomous categories so that any variation of positive responses, or responses in support of, (e.g. “probably”) were combined (e.g. “definitely”, “very probably”, and “probably”) and any

variation of negative, or responses not in support of, were combined (e.g. “probably not” and “definitely not”).

Table 25

Research Question 6: Crosstabulation

Sex refers to a person’s biological status and is typically assigned as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female). (APA, 2012).	Level of support for competing against a transgender athlete			Total
	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	Probably Not, Definitely Not	Probably Not, Definitely Not	
Male Level of support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	15 (40.5%)	0 (0.0%)	15
	Probably Not, Definitely Not	1 (2.7%)	21 (56.8%)	22
	Total	16	21	37
Female Level of support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete	Definitely, Very Probably, Probably	55 (55.0%)	3 (3.0%)	58
	Probably Not, Definitely Not	0 (0.0%)	42 (42.0%)	42
	Total	55	45	100

The result of the test for those participating on a male sports team was $X^2(1) = 33.111, p < 0.005$. It was observed that the $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ which is < 0.05 , indicating significance. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete and for competing against a transgender athlete. Male sport participants who were more likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were significantly more likely to also support competing against a transgender athlete (40.5%). Reciprocally, male sport participants who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete also did not support competing against a transgender athlete, which

was more commonly indicated in this sample (56.8%) than participants being in support of playing on the same team with and competing against transgender athletes.

The result of the test for those participating on a female sports team was $X^2(1) = 88.506$, $p < 0.005$. It was observed that the p -value = 0.000 which is < 0.05 , indicating significance. Female sport participants who supported playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were also significantly more likely to support competing against a transgender athlete (55.0%). Reciprocally, female sport participants who did not support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete were significantly more likely to also not support competing against a transgender athlete (42.0%), but results indicate that female sports team participants were more likely to accept both forms of contact in competition with transgender athletes than the male sport participants.

Summary of Significant Findings

The six research questions presented were evaluated by first breaking down the data set into four main groups to better classify the variability in responding and removing outliers in the data. The results of the Chi-Square analysis provided evidence for research questions focused on the dependent variables, support for a transgender athlete playing on a team and support for a transgender athlete competing against the participant's team. The remaining research questions were not able to be analyzed via Chi-Square analysis due to unbalanced outputs and cell counts having expected counts less than five. Interpretations of these research questions (#1, #4, and #5) are discussed previously.

The second research question examined differences between support for a transgender athlete playing on a participant's team and support for a transgender athlete competing against a participant's team based on participants' responses who did not know at least one transgender

person. Based on the chi-square results, there was statistical significance ($p < .005$) between the variables. Results indicate that support is likely to be high across both variables, competing with and competing against, or low across both, but not mixed levels of support. Results were similar for research question #3.

The third research question examined differences between support for a transgender athlete playing on a participant's team and support for a transgender athlete competing against a participant's team based on participants' frequency of homophobic language heard on their team. Based on the chi-square results, there was statistical significance ($p < .005$) between the variables. Results indicate that support is likely to be high across both variables, competing with and competing against, or low across both, but not mixed levels of support. Results were similar for research question #6.

The sixth research question examined differences between support for a transgender athlete playing on a participant's team and support for a transgender athlete competing against a participant's team based on team gender. Based on the chi-square results, there was statistical significance ($p < .005$) between the variables. Results indicate that support is likely to be high across both variables, competing with and competing against, or low across both, but not mixed levels of support.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

General Overview

Research addressing the topic of discrimination and prejudice against LGBTQIA+ persons is continuing to grow, even when looking at these instances within athletic departments. Although research and discussion has increased for athletes who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual competing collegiately, research has varied regarding the support for LGB athletes competing in college sports and how support differs based on forms of contact in competition, either being on the same team with or competing against current intercollegiate athletes. Beyond this, research is incredibly sparse around transgender and genderqueer athletes at the intercollegiate level, specifically, identifying attitudes of current college athletes towards the inclusion of athletes with non-cisgender identities. This study addresses both of these limitations in literature, illuminates current attitudes of college athletes towards LGBTQIA+ athletes' participation in college sports, and points to further recommendations for working with athletes and athletic departments and further research in this area.

Interpretation of Results

Research Questions #1, #4, and #5

Research questions #1, #4, and #5 were only able to be interpreted based on crosstabulation results due to unbalanced outputs that did not allow for Chi-Square assumptions

to be met. Nonetheless, meaningful contributions to the study and current literature can be made based on the results. For research questions #1, #4, and #5, the dependent variables remained the same (e.g. “support for an LGB athlete playing on a team” and “support for LGB athlete playing against the participant’s team”) and the independent variables differed. For research question #1, all participants reported knowing at least one LGB person, so the main analysis focused on the dependent variables, support for competing on the same team with an LGB athlete and competing against an LGB athlete. Research is finding that the college population of out LGBT individuals is the highest it has ever been, which came to be not surprising that all participants in the study indicated knowing at least one LGB person (Windmeyer, 2012). Additionally, as found in previous research, the research hypotheses stated as participants knew at least one LGB person or more, they would have more positive attitudes towards gay or lesbian persons, or for the current study, LGB inclusion (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Results indicated that although all participants sampled knew at least one LGB person, only n=8 participants (6% of the data) indicated some lack of support for LGB athlete contact in competition in collegiate sports. Considering these results compared to past research on the inclusion and support for LGB athletes, these findings indicate greater support for LGB athlete contact in competition than ever before.

The independent variable for research question #4 was frequency of homophobic language heard on the participant’s team, which was categorized as either “not at all” or “slightly” or more. The data was closely split between the two categories, indicating potential differences across athletic teams, departments, and individual experiences that provided great variation between respondents. In addition, the frequency of homophobic language heard on a participant’s team was not significant with the relationship between support for different contact

in competition with LGB athletes. Regardless of frequency of homophobic language heard on the participants' teams, the majority of participants continued to show trends of support towards competition with and against LGB athletes collegiately.

The independent variable for research question #5 was team gender, which was categorized as either "men's" or "women's" teams due to both participant responses falling within these binary categories and these results matching current NCAA practices only providing these two binary categories for competition. Overall, the majority of the respondents competed on a women's sports team (75%) and the remaining participants played on a men's sports team (25%). Undergraduate research pools have been known to be overrepresented by women, freshman, and psychology majors, which is representative in the current study, although major was not asked (Barlow & Cromer, 2006). Overall, women's sports team participants were much more likely to support both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (96% responded in support of both) in comparison to men's sports team participants who had slightly less support for both forms of contact in competition with LGB athletes (86% responded in support of both). On either team, only one participant indicated a mixed level of support, where they either supported playing with or playing against, but not both. These descriptive results mirror similar research conducted differentiating the attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women from student-athletes, where male student-athletes, with the exception of men's field hockey, were significantly more negative in their attitudes toward gay men and lesbians than female student-athletes (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Nonetheless, the majority of respondents (86% and greater) indicating support for LGB inclusion is noteworthy in comparison to other research conducted asking about these variables.

The majority of the participants sampled were in support of LGB athletes in either form of contact in competition, with only a minimal 5.8% of participants not supporting either form of contact in competition with LGB athletes. This indicates that of current college athletes sampled, the majority of athletes felt open and welcoming towards the potential to compete with LGB athletes. These results indicate a large improvement towards support for LGB athlete inclusion in comparison to a study conducted in 2011, where only 66% of a sampled group of student-athletes reported they would accept a gay or bisexual teammate compared to the 86% in the current study (Southall et al., 2011). Since, more current research has focused on sport personnel's' (non-student-athletes) acceptance and likelihood to intervene and establish safe environments, rather than polling current student-athlete's attitudes towards LGB student-athletes. However, previous research has shown that openly lesbian female athletes experience greater acceptance from straight female athlete teammates than do male athletes from their straight counterparts (Roper & Halloran, 2007). This is likely evident in the current study's results due to the large number of female athletes who participated in the study and the majority of them being in favor of LGB teammates and competitors. Only eight participants, which was 5.8% of the sample, would "probably not" or "definitely not" support an LGB athlete in competition in any form. This result could show an increase in support when compared to Southall et al. (2011) finding participants more likely to reject a gay or bisexual teammate (20%) and harass a teammate who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (6%).

Research Question #2, #3, and #6

Research questions 2, 3, and 6 were all found to be significant based on Chi-Square analyses and each of these research questions focused on dependent variables: support for a transgender athlete playing on the same team with the participant and support for a transgender

athlete competing against the participant. Across all three research questions aimed at understanding levels of support towards various contact in competition with transgender athletes, results were relatively consistent, with results ranging from 39% to almost 61% of support for both forms of contact in competition. Support was lowest for transgender athletes when participants had never met any transgender persons (39%) and was highest when participants had met at least one transgender person (61%). Interestingly, the widest range between levels of support were found from research question #2, where the independent variable was the number of transgender persons the participant had met. The other two research questions, #3 and #6, had less of a spread between levels of support. In regards to the number of transgender persons known variable, it is also noteworthy that for participants who indicated that they had never met anyone who identified as transgender, there were more participants who indicated mixed levels of support ($n=3$, 4.7%) than those who had met at least one person who identifies as transgender ($n=1$, 1.3%). This result points to positive attitudes and potentially support for LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion, specifically transgender athletes, based on the amount of contact in competition with those who identify as transgender. More specifically, results of this question pose that when participants have met at least one person who identifies as transgender, they are likely to either fully support (which is more likely based on the literature on contact improving attitudes) or fully not support (pointing to existing transphobia or other negative feelings towards transgender persons) based on their experiences of contact.

The dependent variables of contact in competition with transgender athletes, support for playing on the same team with and competing against, provided varying results. The expectation surrounding these two variables was that there would be differing levels of support for contact in competition with transgender athletes because of the potential frequency and/or intimacy

differences between competing on the same team with someone who identifies as transgender and only competing against them and likely not knowing them personally. The results varied, with 60% of participants not supporting competition against a transgender athlete when they had never met anyone who identified as transgender and results differed when they had met at least one person who identifies as transgender, where only 39% of participants did not support competing against a transgender athlete. Almost duplicate results were found for support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete, 58% and 38% did not support this contact in competition, respectively. These results indicate a noteworthy difference between desired contact in competition with transgender athletes based on their previous experience with meeting someone who identified as transgender.

The independent variable, frequency of homophobic language, was examined and found to be significant in relation to levels of support for contact in competition with transgender athletes. The majority of participants were in support of both forms of contact in competition when they had not at all experienced homophobic language on their team (55.8%). There was a 9% difference in support for playing with a transgender athlete based on the amount of homophobic language heard on the participants team, with support for contact in competition decreasing as the frequency of homophobic language increased. This result points to the question of whether transphobic and/or homophobic language used on teams is indicative of negative attitudes of inclusion/support for LGBT athletes or if homophobic language is not indicative of support and is present due to the homophobic and/or sexist language norms commonly seen within athletic environments.

Team gender provided results that indicated a difference in levels of support for contact in competition with transgender athletes. Overall, women's team athletes indicated much higher

levels of support for both forms of contact in competition (55%) than men's team athletes (40.5%). Men's team athletes had fewer cases of mixed levels of support ($n=1$, 2.7%) than women's sport athletes ($n=3$, 3.0%), but there was also a large difference in women's team athlete participation in the study than men's team participants. In regard to support for playing on the same team with a transgender athlete, women's sport athletes were in much higher support at 58% than men's sport athletes at 41%. Similarly, women's sport athletes were also in greater support of competing against transgender athletes (55%) than men's sport athletes (43%). Results indicate that women's team participants were more likely to support playing on the same team with a transgender athlete than compete against a transgender athlete and men's team participants indicated opposite sentiments. These results may point to the previously discussed assumption that female-sexed athletes are biased to be less athletic than male-sexed athletes, indicating potential support for men's team participants to be more willing to compete against someone assumed to have more of a stereotypical "female-sexed" body. The opposite may be true for women's team participants, who would rather be on the same team with a transgender athlete than compete against a transgender athlete, if assuming that the athlete would have more of a stereotypical "male-sexed" body.

Significance of Findings

The findings of the study extend the literature around gender differences between attitudes or support towards transgender athletes and provide new findings that begin to provide a wider base of literature on the inclusion of transgender athletes in intercollegiate sport. The results show that for current intercollegiate athletes, there are mixed levels of support for competing against and playing on the same team with transgender athletes, with variation on whether they have met someone who identifies as transgender, frequency of how much

homophobic language they hear on their team, and their team gender. These results can be expanded from previous research showing that for those who have met at least one person who identifies as transgender, they are more likely to support contact with them (Cunningham & Melton, 2011), but in the athletic setting. The variable, frequency of homophobic language heard on a participant's team, showed close outcomes with participants having the most support for contact in competition with transgender athletes when they did not experience any homophobic language used on their team. Lastly, women's sports team participants were found to be much more supportive of contact in competition with transgender athletes than participants on a men's sports team.

Previous research around assessing for attitudes towards transgender athletes has primarily been done qualitatively with small samples (VanPatten, 2016). Results indicate that the majority of coaches would "have an issue" with a transgender student-athlete in their program and all three of the cisgender student-athletes sampled expressed an issue with having a teammate who identified as transgender (VanPatten, 2016). The current study is not only providing a quantitative approach to extending this literature, but also considered how team gender, homophobic language, and knowing someone who identifies as transgender can impact levels of support. The current study also increases the literature around transgender inclusion and intercollegiate sport, which has traditionally been limited and continues to slowly increase in the amount of research being done to examine the inclusion of athletes with gender identities apart from cisgender orientation in sporting contexts.

Significance of The Study

Considering previous research on this topic has consistently shown negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ athletes, it is noteworthy that very few of the participants in this study held

negative attitudes towards competition with LGB specific athletes (Baird, 2002; VanPatten, 2016). As a society, research has found that attitudinal homophobia has been steadily decreasing over the course of the past thirty years (Twenge et al., 2016). Although there will likely always be traces of homophobia or a lack of support towards LGB individuals in sport, the current study shows significant trends towards support for LGB as well as transgender athletes. As mainstream society becomes more accepting of LGB persons, it can be expected that over time, athletic micro chasms and cultures will follow. Current literature assessing student-athlete to student-athlete attitudes found that there is likely a shift happening towards acceptance of gay and bisexual team members from both coaches and teammates (VanPatten, 2016). Additionally, past research found that the majority of collegiate sport participants do not exhibit high levels of measurable homophobic attitudes, but these findings are over ten years old and considerably out of date to what feelings current student-athletes may hold (Southall et al., 2009; Southall et al., 2010). These findings begin to bridge the gap between findings that non-competitive sport leagues, such as intramural or club sports, are more inclusive and have less measurable homophobic attitudes than competitive varsity collegiate sport, which show to be moving in similar directions (Anderson, 2011). Research has found lesbian, gay, and bisexual student-athletes have reported more positive experiences on collegiate sport teams since 2011 (Anderson, 2011; Griffin, 1998). With the current findings adding to the body of literature, it appears as though attitudes and acceptance of LGB persons and athletes are improving potentially with time, contact with someone who identifies as LGB, and/or other variables found to influence attitudes such as level of education and norms of the geographical region (Horton et al., 1993; Finlay & Walther, 2003).

Support for transgender inclusion was noticeably variant in comparison to the support for LGB inclusion, which supports current research regarding the slower evolution of acceptance for transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, or gender non-binary athletes than the levels of support for LGB athletes. Of the literature looking at the progress towards support for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, results indicate similar or less support for transgender athlete inclusion than what was found in the current study indicating potential improvements in this movement. Of a small sample, eight of twelve coaches polled stated they would have an issue with a transgendered student-athlete in their program and three out of three student-athletes also expressed an issue with a transgendered teammate (VanPatten, 2016). Additionally, in the first work exploring athletes' and coaches' attitudes toward homosexual athletes in Taiwan, results indicated that generally, attitudes of both athletes and coaches toward LGBTQIA+ athletes were neutral and slightly positive, but gaps were found around the acceptance and knowledge of transgender student-athletes (Shang et al., 2009). The current study's results joined with the differences noted between acceptance and support in Shang et al. (2009) point to future research that needs to understand the differences between attitudes (e.g. transphobia, homophobia) and support/acceptance for LGBT athlete participation of current intercollegiate athletes.

For gender differences, men are found to consistently score significantly higher than women on both homophobia and transphobia scales and experiences of transphobia is likely connected with socially conservative attitudes of adherence to social norms, which might be translated to the adherence to social norms within sports, which support a binary, cisgender system of competition (Hill, 2002). Those who have interacted personally with someone who identifies as transgender tend to show less transphobic attitudes than those who have not. This mirrors similar results in the current study, where levels of support were higher for those who

had met at least one person who identify as transgender (Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Tee & Hegarty, 2006). This effect is parallel for decreasing levels of homophobia when having met someone personally who identifies as gay (Altemeyer, 2002; Ellis & Vasseur, 1993).

To date, there are no quantitative studies looking at the attitudes towards the inclusion of transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, or gender non-binary athletes this study is the first to begin examining these results looking specifically at “transgender” athletes. The slow evolution of transgender inclusion could exist for many reasons, but current hypothesis would argue that a lack of education and understanding of transgender and non-binary experiences and lacking contact and/or experiences with those who differ from heteronormativity, especially in sporting contexts are large contributors. For many, the presence of transgender athletes in sport might feel like a disruption of the binary ideals about sex and gender that are reflected in the history of sport and competition as well as the current makeup of sport policy that maintains a binary system of operation (e.g. “men’s sports” and “women’s sports”) (Singh, 2011). Additionally, many athletes likely lack knowledge of NCAA rules pertaining to participation of transgender student-athletes and overall likely lack a general understanding of people within that community.

Another area of discussion based on the results of the current study point to the potential discomfort and/or fear of current cisgender student-athletes having concerns with contact with transgender athletes in both public and private spaces. In society, where the “bathroom problem” (Halberstam, 1998) is a bias for cisgender individuals, this likely translates to what student-athletes would consider a “changing room problem” when transgender athletes participate in sports (Hargie et al., 2017). In reality, this concern is as threatening to transgender persons, if not more, than cisgender athletic persons and/or environments that hold these concerns. Transgender athletes are likely to feel exposed and vulnerable when having to use shared changing rooms and

showers (Hargie et al., 2017). Additionally, further indication of this was the internalization of negative social attitudes about their transgender identities as expressed in the fear that they would be ‘violating’ others just by being in the locker room (Hargie et al., 2017). As examining the attitudes and varying support for transgender inclusion is important for those already competing and holding cisgender identities in sport, it is as equally important to understand the lack of inclusion of transgender persons in sport based on fear of violence, bias, and/or psychological to physical harm that could be done in these still commonly unwelcoming or indifferent spaces.

Implications of The Study

The results of the current study reveal application for future study, clinical practice, and theoretical use. Research has yet to explore fundamental and sweeping ideals from the current state of college athletics in regard to practice, administration, and policy managing fair, equal, and safe play for all athletes. This study is going to be the first of many that looks at the larger, intersectional picture of research for LGBTQIA+ justice and intercollegiate sport culture. Although it is important that research continues to identify the needs and experiences of LGBTQIA+ persons, specifically transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary persons in sport, it is also necessary that research explore the environments to which these persons would be entering into and how experts in the field can intervene to make spaces more inclusive and safe. It would be worthwhile for research to continue sampling the current environment of intercollegiate athletic programs, coaching and administrative staff, and student-athletes so that further research and interventions can be aimed at specific fears, resistance, and lack of education that is needed for fair and safe integration of LGBTQIA+ athletes. Extending exposure and discussion around LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion to coaching staff, administration,

and trainers could be useful to broaden systemic and social justice issues and work towards increasing safety on their teams and in their department.

This study's sample of primarily heterosexual and all cisgender persons' attitudes toward athletes who identify as LGBTQIA+ can play a meaningful role in contributing to the field of counseling psychology. These results highlight additional questions, thoughts, and concerns that can be focused on and targeted through intervention, raising awareness, education, and prevention and postvention for LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion. The findings of the current study can be used to identify current prejudicial attitudes, beliefs, and/or fears held in these spaces so that proper intervention can be utilized to decrease unwelcoming attitudes in these spaces. Not only might researchers in the counseling psychology field develop more tools for assessing these attitudes in sport specifically, but the outcomes can influence the clinical and professional work that counseling psychologists do for advocacy, education, and care. Further discussion, assimilation of research, and clinical learnings provide growth and space in the field to continue finding tools that can work with all people and/or systems towards decreasing prejudice and bias, increasing well-being and psychological safety, and adjusting systems that have been traditionally oppressive, exclusive, and/or biased towards specific persons in sport.

Implications for clinical work extend beyond discussion around research and the field of counseling psychology, as the direct contact and relationship with student-athletes and sport staff can make a monumental difference in forming supportive and more inclusive environments in sports. First, social contact with a variety of people who identify and operate differently than us has proven to only do good for increasing fair and positive perceptions and decreasing bias and stigma around homophobia or transphobia (Jneid et al., 2012). Intergroup contact results in bias reduction (Cunningham & Melton, 2011). Connection and discussion around inclusivity and

relationships with those who differ from us can promote more inclusive spaces on athletic teams and any other spaces we operate in. Inclusion is enhanced when differences between people are valued and each person's contribution is considered and there is room for open dialogue, challenge, and understanding that provides all of the positive benefits of diversity and connection (Cunningham & Melton, 2011). Alternatively, when working with the LGBTQIA+ community, it is important to consider how negative and/or exclusionary experiences in sport is likely one more incident of homophobia and/or transphobia in what is potentially being experienced by someone who identifies as LGBTQIA+. Exclusion from another system of potential benefit continues to bolster strong senses of rejection, hate, and/or fear of self that negatively impacts well-being, mental health, and the ability to continue connecting with others interpersonally. Using the results of the study allows for clinical practice to not only target the continued bias and prejudice in sporting contexts, but also extend support to those who are currently and/or have been excluded (literally and/or socially) and provide spaces that can be corrective, supportive, and healthy.

The implications for intercollegiate sport and athletics based on the results of the study holds large potentials for change, room for growth, and need for policy and practice adjustments. Changing athletics spaces' view of masculinity and femininity as well as sexual orientation norms is not a small undertaking. Pervasive messages supporting the traditional view of masculinity and femininity and heteronormativity undermine efforts to increase and improve student-athletes' health and mental wellbeing. There are many reasons why the presence of an LGBTQIA+-inclusive environment is beneficial for athletic programs. LGBT-inclusive environments create better bonding and trust, improve moral, and decrease conflict between team members (Cunningham, 2012). Diversity and inclusion initiatives are likely to increase the

effectiveness of intercollegiate athletic departments when they are LGBT inclusive (Barber & Krane, 2007; Cunningham, 2015; Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Elfman, 2007). When ingroup dynamics are improved, performance and team unity improve, all a result of inclusive diversity changes in team culture. The opposite is also true; non-inclusive environments promote prejudice and exclusion, which can dampen the positive effects of teamwork and interpersonal functioning of athletes, which can greatly impact performance. An inclusive and welcoming environment is set when people see the benefits of inclusion as more important for themselves, their team, and the larger organization and institution than continuing to hold views limited to lack of contact, knowledge, and understanding. The results of the current study provide rationale for inclusion programs that increase benefit for all student-athletes and sport personnel and ultimately improve the performance and outcomes of sports teams. In addition, there is still a significant lack of consistent policy for transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, or gender non-binary persons in sport at middle school and high school levels of competition. At this point in time, decisions are often left to school and/or sport administrators to decide on if, how, and to what extent transgender persons compete, which traces directly to those persons' potentially biased and prejudiced views of inclusion. In conclusion, attitudes, beliefs, and bias set the path of potentially unsafe and exclusionary experiences for LGBTQIA+ athletes, but if those attitudes are addressed and changed, then policy, treatment, and culture consequently changes to be more inclusive and welcoming of all athletes who wish to compete and where all of those involved see benefit.

Limitations

There are several areas of limitation of the current study. First, there is lack of certainty of geographical locations of participants sampled due to the emphasis on autonomy and privacy of respondents. Upon initial discussions about participation in the study with various athletic

departments, it was emphasized that autonomy was more important to administration than specificity. This outcome provides an argument that participants had greater buy-in and potentially answered more honestly with this sense of autonomy, but the study's generalizability is unknown due to anonymous geographical variations in the data.

Second, the variable definition, "transgender athletes," includes various orientations and experiences of gender but many persons who are not cisgender may not consider themselves "transgender" and may identify other ways, such as genderqueer, two spirit, or gender non-binary, which may have limited responses to this variable. Binary or singularity for the term "transgender" (the term "transgender" does not encompass all gender identities) and LGB is limiting for the spectrum of orientations and attractions (which may also be diverse and/or fluid) that may influence response patterns for anyone who identifies outside of these identifiers. Understanding that these terms leave out a variety of orientations and identities, these specifiers were chosen in order to compare and contrast previous literature using similar variables and provide as much room for participant understanding for various identities.

Third, the sample was not purposefully selected so that there was diversity in participants' age, sexual orientation, gender orientation, race, ethnicity, and sport. The sample was very diverse in regard to participants' age and sport, but there was lacking diversity in specific areas, such as the number of male-identifying persons and non-White racial background persons in the sample. This sample was primarily White, cisgender, and straight persons responding, which very likely influenced the outcomes and results regarding support of LGBT athletes in competitive sports.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is encouraged that the results of the current study continue to be expanded and furthered in sporting contexts as well as counseling psychology realms, where knowledge, awareness, and inclusion can be increased in traditionally exclusive spaces through advocacy, exposure, prevention, and education.

Suggestions for Future Research for Counseling Psychology

Future studies should investigate the environmental impact on LGBTQIA+ persons in sport, as many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender identifying athletes leave athletic contexts at early ages (Baiocco et al., 2018). Examining the environment, areas of growth, and more complex feelings and/or biases coaches, administration, and other student-athletes hold towards LGBTQIA+ persons would be valuable in determining what intervention is needed for the space and context. An environment of more acceptance from a coach and/or teammate would help reduce mental distress experienced by a LGBTQIA+ student-athlete. Although sporting environments may not be as safe and welcoming for LGBTQIA+ persons as it is for their straight or cisgender persons, the results of the current study, paired with findings of other research being conducted, shows general trends of support increasing and transphobia decreasing in sports, especially in non-varsity intercollegiate sporting environments (Anderson, 2011). The hope is that this trend will not only improve sport spaces for underrepresented and/or commonly excluded groups, but it will increase cohesion, trust, and mental wellbeing of all athletes at this level. One way this can be done is for future research to create measures that can be given to assess for homophobic and transphobic attitudes in the culture of sport and performance, as the tools used in the current study were created specifically to assess for these attitudes and lacks the rigor of other developed measures. Additionally, examining the attitudes of coaches and

administration would be beneficial to gather a larger picture of the attitudes in this environment. Considering how valuable coaches' attitudes and behaviors are to influencing team dynamics, more ownership might be placed on these figures rather than teammates and student-athletes for the environment that is created for LGBTQIA+ athletes in sport. This topic would benefit from a qualitative perspective to allow for a deeper understanding of why, to what extent, and how prejudicial attitudes can be formed and projected by student-athletes, coaches, and administration identifying with majority identities (e.g. cisgender, straight) toward LGBTQIA+ athletes in sporting contexts.

Suggestions for Future Research in Sport

There continues to be a lack of research around the experiences of transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and/or gender non-binary student-athletes at all levels. Future research should continue to acknowledge and understand the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ persons in sport so that policy, interventions, and systematic functions can be adapted to be more fitting, inclusive, and open to those who do not fit the current binary system in place specifically in intercollegiate varsity sports.

The results also indicate a need for research and intervention that increases awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community. It would be valuable for research to disseminate how interventions around diversity and multiculturalism in sport is received, how attitudes or behaviors are impacted from this intervention, and how policies shift to be more inclusive, less biased, and fairer for all athletes to participate competitively. These results show mixed reviews on the support for transgender athletes competing at the collegiate level, which indicates a need for mental health care providers and organizations to invest in, enforce, and encourage diversity and sensitivity training to increase mental health outcomes, inclusion

initiatives, and increased environmental safety for those in the LGBTQIA+ community to enter sports or for those who are already in sports, open or not about their various identities.

There is currently a lack of comprehensive and objective policy in place across sporting contexts and levels for the inclusion of transgender persons in sport and decisions are often left to athletic directors and coaches to determine how or if a transgender athlete can play (Griffin & Carroll, 2010). Seemingly simple issues that may arise include locker room usage and/or team dress code, as well as larger issues, such as which team an athlete plays on (e.g. men's team or women's team) are left to be decided by school leadership, who may or may not have training or education around creating a fair and safe environment for LGBTQIA+ persons. Although coaches and athletic directors must adhere to state and federal laws that protect students from discrimination, they may lack the knowledge of how to work with and support genderqueer persons (Griffin & Carroll, 2010). Therefore, athletic administrators, staff, parents of athletes, and student-athletes would benefit in receiving education and training about the participation of transgender (and seemingly genderqueer, two spirit, or gender non-binary) athletes on athletic teams (Griffin & Carroll, 2010; Coufal, 2018). Lastly, it is also recommended that additional studies gather data on larger, more diverse populations in multiple geographical areas across the United States. This would give a greater degree of generalizability to broader populations that this study was unable to prove.

Conclusions

The conclusions gathered in this research may help intercollegiate athletic departments as well as those working in helping or advocacy fields in gaining breadth in current levels of support for LGBTQIA+ athletes' involvement in intercollegiate sport from current collegiate athletes. In summary, there have been tremendous improvements to the support for lesbian, gay,

and bisexual athletes' competing in college athletics, from competing closer on a team with LGB athletes to competing against an LGB athlete. When assessing levels of support for transgender athlete inclusion, the results were not as consistent or overwhelmingly positive as the support for LGB athletes, with results indicating that just over half of participants are in support of the inclusion of transgender athletes in college sports with the most support from cisgender female athletes. By understanding the current state of attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion, additional research and interventions can be done to increase awareness, knowledge, and openness of many majority-identifying athletic personnel and bolster efforts to create fair and welcoming policies for transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary athletes in intercollegiate sport. These findings are one of the first larger-scaled studies to look at current views of collegiate student-athletes and further research should continue looking into attitudes from those in higher positions of power, such as coaches and administration, on diversity and inclusion. The results gathered may help start conversation around needed progress in this area, education, and training around creating inclusive and safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ athletes, and more specifically, athletes who have gender identities outside of the binary system of NCAA classification.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Evolution of Inclusivity in Athletics

Athletics has not always been known for their sense of inclusivity. Historically, sports have served as an arena for men to display their power and dominance over others, including other men, ranging as far back to human's primitive days. It can be argued that sport developed during this primitive time as a way to display the qualities of the strong and powerful, while evaluating the qualities of potential allies or rivals (Lombardo, 2012). This required male-to-male physical competition within hunting, warfare, and eventually, competitive sport. In Greek culture, male citizens were only allowed to compete in the first modern Olympic Games (Women's Sport History, n.d.). It took many years and a great deal of societal change before sport became known as something less exclusive for anyone but men, but this has been a long and arduous journey.

Women's Inclusivity to Sport

There have been many waves in which sport has evolved over time. Beginning from the 1900's, women who were considered high social class were allowed to play specific sports, such as tennis, horseback riding, archery, and golf, but never assumed to be in the competitive framework. In fact, the first time any female athletes were allowed to compete in the Olympic Games was the second annual games in 1900 (Women's Sport History, n.d.). Of the women allowed to compete in the second annual games, only 12 female athletes competed out of 1,066 athletes from 19 different countries (Women's Sport History, n.d.). These few women were only allowed to compete in two sports: tennis and golf. As the Olympic Games evolved, women slowly emerged into other categories, such as archery, figure skating, diving, and swimming,

stretching from the second annual games to the fourth annual games (ranging over eight years). At the collegiate level, women's opportunity to participate competitively was generally limited until Title IX was created in 1972. Title IX gave women the right to participate in competitive sports on as equal of a plane as possible to men. It states that no person, regardless of sex, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program receiving any federal assistance. Before this federal statute was in place, women were able to compete competitively but often ran into the difficulty of equal opportunity, inclusion, and benefit of sports that their male counterparts received. Between 1981 and 2016, the number of women competing in college sports increased over 300 percent (Vollman, 2016). After its enactment, women were slowly growing in numbers at the collegiate level but attitudes towards their inclusion were discriminatory, at best. Women were not being portrayed as strong, athletic women, but rather beginning to be sexualized as an attempt to continue making women feel inferior as competitors (Acosta & Carpender, 2000).

Most women's sport categories are equal to what men have as available to them at the NCAA level, but still don't have equal policy (e.g. shorter distance for cross country) and generally have less sports offered at collegiate institutions compared to male-available sports. In terms of media coverage, women's stories averaged 77 seconds, nearly 50 percent shorter than men's stories, though still better than the 44 seconds given to women's stories on local affiliates (Chaffee, 2017).

All in all, women are finding more room in competitive athletics, yet attitudes towards their inclusion often hold traditional gendered beliefs. These attitudes include encouraging women in playing less contact or aggressive sports, emphasizing what female athletes wear in competition rather than what uniforms are most sound for the movement, and general biases

towards women in high level competition (Cohen, 2001). This can be traced back to the evolution of sport for men who were training for fighting, hunting, and warfare, where men had no choice but to participate and excel for survival. This also required men to “pay close attention to male athletic contests” so they can evaluate potential mates and threats. For women, it is argued that participating in sport from an ecological perspective was a choice, not for survival or for vetting mates (Lombardo, 2012.). Because women are not typically viewed positively towards being soldiers, people also feel that they should not be on the front lines of participation in masculine sports (Minichino, 2009).

Gendered bias against biological males and females competing together is commonly due to arguments around physical and/or developmental differences in body mass, muscle density, and body size. The relatively greater upper body strength and muscularity of men relative to women (Abe et al., 2003; Lassek & Gaulin, 2009) appears to have played a role in the ongoing prioritizing of male to male physical competition, resulting in women being relegated to their own category due to the apparent fear of women getting hurt or not having fair competition with men. This is also seen in policy differences between male and female categorized sporting events, such as cross country, where men run a 12-kilometre course while women and “junior men” compete on an 8-kilometre course. Not to mention, women are excluded from high contact sports, such as football, in competitive sport at the collegiate level due to this suggested physical inferiority. These perceived physical limitations for women also extend beyond what women are able to do with their bodies in physical sport. In competitive sport, women are not only supposedly more susceptible to not only bodily harm, but emotional hurt and instability (Minichino, 2009). Female athletes are believed to be pushed beyond what they are emotionally capable of tolerating when participating in sport (Postow, 1983). This is believed to cause

nervous instability and physical harm such as pelvic ossification and narrowed vaginas (Postow, 1983). Although this seems to be humorous to most, these pieces of literature do continue to endorse the sexist and genderist view that women are emotional beings who are not able to tolerate the aggressive, masculine culture that is focal in today's competitive sport.

Gender stereotypes in sport not only raise men to have greater power and respect in sports, but it also places women at the bottom so-to-speak, creating a hierarchical system of oppression. Women are viewed as “the other” in sport participation that features the dominant male gender (Minichino, 2009). This means that women not only experience lower representation in sport, especially prior to Title IX, but those who do participate in especially male-dominated sports are less likely to find support and acceptance (Minichino, 2009). This has often resulted in most sports maintaining binaries or dichotomies between genders, lowering the value of the female athletes while simultaneously excluding transgender and intersex individuals even more so from competition (Colker & Widom, 1980). This is especially evident for any persons who have any gendered-variant attributes outside of the normative binary gender roles and norms (Minichino, 2009). Over time and through many policy changes, attitudes towards women competing in sport have evolved. To this day, 87% of parents feel it is important that girls are involved in athletics compared to only 4% in 1972 (Cohen, 2001). This growing acceptance of women in athletics may have led to increased support for LGBTQIA+ athletes' inclusion in competitive collegiate sport.

LGB Inclusivity in Sport

Over time, sports have seen the evolution of diverse groups integrated into participation, such as athletes of color and female athletes. The population of out LGBT individuals in young adulthood is the highest it has ever been (Windmeyer, 2012). Unlike previous generations,

college freshman in 2012 and beyond are more likely to have come out in high school (Windmeyer, 2012). As the numbers of LGB athletes increase in sport participation, so has the discussion around including social integration of athletes who may not fit the traditional, hegemonic masculine ideals. Sports have played a role in introducing under-represented groups to the public, often well before they gained rights politically or legally (Conlin et al., 2010). Despite being a venue for progress, sports—along with the military—have not openly accepted non-straight persons onto its teams. This despite the fact that both sports and the military were among the first national institutions to integrate racially (Dreier, 2003). Sports have been known to be on the forefront of integration of diverse groups, while simultaneously leaving many athletes to explore their place within sport in often unfamiliar and unwelcoming territories.

Even though LGBTQIA+ athletes are generally not accepted in the sporting world, they still make up a significant portion of the athletic population (Conlin et al., 2010). The last few decades have shown a growth in the number of organizations designed for gay and lesbian athletes or at least have come to understand that there are more LGBTQIA+ athletes in sports that are “closeted” or stealth about their orientation due to various factors. But an environment of segregation and exclusion still largely persists for LGBTQIA+ athletes, especially in social integration (Jones & LeBlanc, 2005). While the number of athletes who are diverse in their sexual orientation can be debated, the last few decades have shown growth in the number of organizations designed for gay and lesbian athletes. A 1989 study showed that gay and lesbian athletics organizations were formed at a rate of three per year in Southern California in 1976-81. In 1982-86, the rate increased to 4.4 organizations per year. By the 1990s, growth could be seen in the rest of the United States, Western Europe and Australia (Jones & LeBlanc, 2005). Within the past two decades, sports have seen a large increase in diverse athletes, especially within the

younger years of play. As society changes, the world of sport also changes. As society sees more LGBTQIA+ athletes coming out, sport is also likely to seeing more athletes who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community competing in athletic events. Although sports has been slowly changing, it is likely that the community still doesn't see the true number of LGBTQIA+ athletes due to presumable assumption of fear of judgement, treatment, and the culture of heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity, homonegativity in sport culture.

Sports, especially contact sports, have been described as a place where hegemonic masculinity is duplicated and defined as a male student-athlete characterizes what it means to be a man, anything that is in contrast to or opposition to what it means to be feminine and/or gay (Andersen, 2002). American football for example emphasizes traditionally masculine characteristics such as power, strength, and violence (Messner, 2005). Men generally tend to see sports as a means of validating male ideals and feeling superior to women through hegemonic masculinity of displaying power, strength, and dominance in sporting competitions. Male socialization into sports tends to constitute training in sexism and homophobia by just the means of operating (Harry, 1995). This homophobia perpetuates what has been called *hyper-heterosexuality* as a form of opposition against homosexuality in sports (Anderson, 2011). Athletes are often used to define what masculinity looks and behaves and anyone who deviates from this ideal tends to stand out. For LGBTQIA+ athletes, this automatically forces them into an outgroup due to the rigid and rudimentary ideals that assumes heteronormativity. When this is displayed in sporting contexts, LGBTQIA+ athletes are likely to be socially isolated, pushed out, discriminated against, and/or made to feel inadequate in their sport.

In organized sport, “heterosexism” (a belief system that heterosexuality is the norm and dominant sexual orientation) and “homonegativism” (discrimination against people who are not

heterosexual) exist (Kauer & Krane, 2007; Anderson, 2002). Heterosexism is built into various aspects of the game, including the jargon and language used to motivate, challenge, and tear down athletes (Greim, 2016). Expressions such as “don’t be a pussy,” “you (blank) like a girl,” “don’t be a faggot” are just a few of the commonly heard phrases that not only aggress towards the female athletes that it relates to, but also challenges athletes who don’t identify with the more privileged group, to oppose those identities and view them as negative or undesirable. These expressions are used as threats, takedown, and insults which increase sexism and homonegativism in sport (Greim, 2016).

The culture of sport tends to be rigid and traditional or conservative in its values, and most people within it equate male heterosexuality with strength—and homosexuality with weakness (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Participation in sport is perceived to validate a male as heterosexual. Therefore, gay, lesbian, or bisexual athletes may feel forced to conceal their sexual identity and perform “heterosexual” roles of conforming to the masculine norms that structure athletics.

Although sport has not created the most welcoming space for LGBTQIA+ athletes, sport has continued to evolve, and more and more athletes are coming out publicly at all levels. Although some athletes have experienced persecution for coming out publicly, it has not kept more athletes from coming out or not allowing it to keep them from participating in competitive sports. Consistent with previous research done around attitudes towards gay and lesbian athletes (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Lim, 2002; Roper & Halloran, 2007), compared to female student-athletes, male student-athletes held more negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. In some studies, male student-athletes were found to hold more negative attitudes toward gay men, compared to lesbian women (Lim, 2002; Roper & Halloran, 2007). Such findings are not

surprising considering the extensive research addressing the homophobic nature of sport in general, and men's sport in particular (Andersen, 2002; Pronger, 1990). Research findings that suggest that LGBTQIA+ athletes are becoming more involved in the culture of competitive sport, it is important to discuss the distinction between how LGBTQIA+ athletes might compare with social acceptance and inclusion into sports compared to other identities, such as transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary. The distinction between sexual orientation and gender orientation are still being incorporated in the world of sport as it also becomes more understood in our society. It is likely that transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, and gender non-binary persons, in comparison to cisgender athletes, who have a gender identity that aligns with their gender assigned at birth, may have greater hurdles to jump over in hopes towards social acceptance and inclusion.

Transgender and Intersex Inclusion

Everyone has a gender identity, which is one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). This includes gender expression, where one expresses this gender identity through the way in which attire is chosen, personal grooming is approached, and the name and pronouns are preferred. Stigma against transgender persons might go as far as to say that they are not “real” in the athletic community or that they at least don't participate in sports (Hargie, Mitchell, Somerville, 2017). In actuality, there are growing numbers of young people transitioning at younger ages and also want to participate in athletic programs. More elementary, middle, and high schools around the country are beginning to see more transgender persons competing in athletic programs. Many competitive programs, such as the NCAA or the Women's Sports Foundation, who support the rights of athletes, including transgender athletes, to

participate in competitive athletics, while remaining fair and respectful of all persons. In a 2010 study, merely 13 percent of colleges and universities had non-discrimination policies that included sexual orientation and only 6 percent included transgender (Rankin et al., 2010).

Transgender and intersex individuals are becoming increasingly visible in society and beginning to do so in sporting contexts as well (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). When transgender athletes first appeared, much of the public response reflected fear and ignorance regarding the population (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Many sporting programs don't have consistent or standardized policies that allow transgender athletes to clearly understand what rules and regulations they must follow in order to participate. Cisgender persons, or persons whose gender identity aligns with the gender identity assigned at birth, also sometimes unsure of what transgender inclusion means for them in competition. Although many sporting programs encourage the equal and respectful competition to all persons and students, many still have not clarified how to allow transgender athletes to integrate into sporting competitions due to fear around competition not being equitable and fair for all athletes competing (Teetzel, 2006). Acceptance for transgender persons is growing but seems to evolve at a slower rate in comparison to the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other LGBTQIA+ athletes (Griffin, 2012). By keeping transgender and intersex athletes sidelined from participation due to their gender identity, it excludes a large portion of athletes who are developing gender identity while participating in sports. It might keep any persons identifying within the LGBTQIA+ population stealth, closeted, or averse to the sporting community. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ athlete inclusion does not appear to become a priority for sport teams or athletic departments until an incident of prejudice or homophobia is reported (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). The late-1980s and 1990s saw an increase in acceptance of transgender people through the transgender rights

movement (Griffin & Carroll, 2010). Just the presence of transgender persons in sport begin to challenge the traditional, hegemonic masculinity norms that are often experienced in sport. This is seen with transgender athletes even more than any gay or lesbian athletes (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Just the presence of transgender athletes in sport “disrupts the essential and binary ideas about sex that are reflected in the historical and contemporary organization of sport” (Singh, 2011). This is arguably issue underlying the fear or aversion to including transgender and intersex athletes into competition at all levels, especially at higher levels of competition. A non-inclusive environment fosters prejudice and exclusion, limits the effectiveness of a sport organization, inhibits team performance, and keeps LGBTQ student-athletes in the closet (Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Frankel, 2013).

Increasing transgender inclusion in sport requires taking a step beyond just providing athletes with a chance to participate in sporting events, as early as childhood events or club or community events. These non-regulated competitive arenas such as community sporting, club, intramural (case by case), or local advocacy groups often move towards inclusion for transgender and intersex athletes. These progressive sporting groups don’t often settle for just letting LGBTQIA+ persons participate, but they are integrated in a purposeful, intentional way that provides a higher level of support than merely allowing competition. Integration goes a step beyond inclusion to ensure that members of diverse groups have equal participation in an institution (Tienda, 2013). This concept may be difficult for larger, organizational sporting groups, such as NCAA, IOC, and other large sporting groups that set rules around participation, exclusion criteria, treatment of athletes, and rules for fair play. These groups have begun to implement policies that allow transgender persons to compete in sporting events, but

simultaneously make competition difficult if not impossible for transgender athletes due to strict medical treatment criteria and testosterone levels that allow for fair competition (Teetzel, 2006).

Sports play a significant role in establishing what a man or woman might believe to be his or her role in society (Duquin, 1992) and a team climate can have a significant influence on a student-athletes' construct of gender and experience within sport (Messner, 1989). Therefore, for many young transgender and intersex persons, there may be more focus on exploring their gender identity and less focus on athletics, or the two processes may not mix well. Consequently, the culture of athletics may not endorse healthy attitudes of inclusion of athletes who identify as transgender, two spirit, genderqueer, or gender non-binary, which might deter younger, LGBTQIA+ persons from continuing in sport. This can be pointed back to the traditional, masculine ideals that sports have encapsulated since its origination. The sporting binary is meant to support and encourage the participation of persons who fit the gender and sex binary of the larger system, so transgender and intersex athletes are often left to either be excluded, included but socially excluded by other athletes, or included and mistreated by outside groups such as the media, parents, and/or other sporting organizations or administrations. Sternod (2011) found the defense of heterosexuality and accompanying hostility toward homosexuality to be engrained in culture of sports as part of participants' development. Due to the limited research around transphobia within the athletic community, it might be assumed that derogatory language and hostility, similar to that directed toward LGB athletes, would similarly be directed at transgender athletes. Although the culture of athletics is slowly changing towards integration and not just inclusion for many excluded groups or identities, there appears to be still larger cultural influences that contribute to the slow-moving inclusion of transgender athletes into policies, social acceptance, and the creation of diverse and safe spaces for all athletes.

The Culture of Sport

Sexism, heteronormativity, homophobia and transphobia are pervasive in every social institution (Scandurra et al., 2013). In sport such culture is evident because the cultural frame is represented by a very strong sex-segregation. The marked difference between males and females can produce dangerous gender stereotypes facilitating the development of a heterosexist culture (Scandurra et al., 2013). Heterosexism is an integral part of the male identity and seems to be particularly evident in team sports. Men socialize their own identity in opposition to the feminine one perceiving themselves as stronger and more powerful.

Hypermasculinity

For some people, the assumption is that sports are meant to bring people together, to provide a space for establishing trust, respect, and hard work for all ages of people. For others, sport is a space that allows for competition, for dividing the “best” from the “worst” and establishing hierarchies that provide power and privilege. Ultimately, sports can be both things, but in competitive arenas, such as levels that are run by national organizations such as NCAA or OIC, sport is meant to provide a space for athletes that allows for fair competition and rivalries between different universities and conferences.

Originally, sport evolved as a male only dominated space that allowed for males to compete as gaining social capital. As it has evolved to what we would consider modern sport today, where there are still hierarchies established and categories drawn that separate anything from the “best” of varsity of A-team from the “worst” or JV-team or B-team to male, female, and “mixed” team layouts for gender inclusion. Women emerging in sport created a lot of backlash, including questioning whether women were socially able to juggle both traditional gender norms that were expected of them while also questioning their psychological ability to handle “rough

and tough” sports competitions (Colker & Widom, 1980). For a long time, it was thought that women should not participate in athletics because of the potentially harmful " masculinizing" effect of sports (Colker & Widom, 1980). The fear that many people held operated within the ideals that sports were really a male-dominated space that allowed for their “masculinity” to show, to be tough, dominant, and strong. Even physical fitness " experts" from the 1970’s argued that " competitive sports tend to develop behavior patterns which are contrary to feminine nature" (Gerber, 1974, p. 16). The traditional female gender roles were presumed to be in opposition to natural sporting contexts and women who did participate were assumed to be somehow deviant (Colker & Widom, 1980). Women's bodies and mental health were thought to be unable to deal with the emotional and physical stress and/or the competitive nature of athletics (Gerber, 1974). With that in mind, the evolution of sport has shown that female participation in sport was not only protested, but it began the progress of men in sports needing to prove their masculinity in order to be seen as separate from and better than females in competition. Women’s involvement in sport began a new trend of hierarchy, one that allowed men to have more power and domination in sports while being able to use the gender identity of those “weaker” to prove their status.

Sports have always been a place where masculinity is learned and practiced. Men, specifically in sporting contexts, need to appear as what would be “masculine” or macho in order to appear strong, capable, and avoid the label of “playing or acting like a woman” or “gay.” Sport is a rite of passage for boys, and an institution that reinforces a hierarchy of masculinity (Grossman & Brake, 2013). The very nature of sports, as developed in schools and at other competitive levels, is connected with core principles of masculinity—physicality, aggression, competition, and winning (Grossman & Brake, 2013). The more a sport or the players involved

in it operate within these ideals, the more masculine they are perceived to be and the better off they are in the hierarchy of power and privilege in sport. To some degree, this hypermasculinity might also emphasize violence, aggression, or brute strength over aesthetics, as the perception of or attainment towards masculinity increases.

Having such power devices seem to be necessary to the survival of male identity which has to be built in opposition to the female one (Scandurra et al., 2013). For many males in sports, they are able to gain more power and privilege if they are able to put other gender identifying persons down, metaphorically, so that they are seen as the “best” or “most elite” in sports. One assumption that has been discussed about this topic is the idea that if athletic involvement promoted psychological or physical masculinity, then it should or would deter women from being involved in sports. This also means that for men, if more women participate in sports, then they are at greater risk of competing in closer proximity to them, therefore, being at a greater risk of looking and feeling emasculated. It would be no surprise for LGBTQIA+ athletes who participate in competitive sports to feel the sense of no belonging, exclusion, and/or a recipient of violence or aggression due to these power struggles. These struggles can be extremely dangerous for women and LGBTQIA+ youths who could feel isolated and alienated and ultimately deciding not to participate in sport activities or not to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity. (Scandurra et al., 2013). The more that masculinity is amplified, the more systems of oppression around sexism, cisnormativity, and heteronormativity continue to perpetuate the culture of athletics, providing more space and power to those who fit in the traditional, masculine mold, and excluding and ostracizing those who don't fit.

Sexism

Competitive sport in modern day society is still segregated by sex-differences between athletes. Intercollegiate sport is still divided by “men’s” and “women’s” sports at national governing levels, but intramural and club teams are often seen as integrating all genders into teams. As previously discussed, the differences between males and females in sport can produce strong divisions, and consequently, stereotypes about the other gender that might feed a sexist culture. Heterosexism is an integral part of the male identity and seems to be particularly evident in team sports (Scandurra et al., 2013). Based on the available research, findings seem to confirm that sport is “sex-segregated” and that males are considered as more suitable for physical force and bodily contact (e.g. rugby, football, motocross and wrestling) and females are more suitable for skill and grace (ballet, dance, gym and skate) (Metheny, 1989).

Men in sports socialize their own identity in opposition to the feminine identity in order to perceive themselves as stronger and more powerful. Sport links men together and leads to perceive themselves as superior and stronger than women due to the sheer fact that sport originated for men to display their dominance over one another, and consequently, over any other persons in or out of the sporting context. It also implies that a man cannot and should not be effeminate. They must acquire behaviors, thoughts and emotions socially perceived as masculine in order to continue ranking into the dominant group of males. As Messner (1992) noted, an athlete has to represent the ideal of what to be a man means in opposition to what to be a woman and/or a gay means in our culture. To be a strong sporting competitor, you must be strong, tough, and masculine. Therefore, sport is a field in which biological, physical, competitive and hierarchical values emerge, almost always in favor of males (Messner, 1992). It could be assumed that sexism is an essential element of sport, as it also is foundational to the creation and

existence of the masculine, male identity. Without a “minority” group of “others,” such as women and/or gay men who are perceived as feminine, males turn to one another to create these hierarchies, which is possible, yet not as easily achieved due to smaller ranges of comparisons.

As Messner (1992) states, sport represents a powerful strength that leads young boys and men to socialize with a restricted male identity. Therefore, many boys begin having homophobic and heterosexist belief systems in order to fit socially in the restricted ideals of athletics. This also means that sport reinforces and perpetuates gender stereotypes, gender hierarchies, homophobia, and sexism within its own culture and outside, in the larger society. Many studies have demonstrated a homonegative and heterosexist climate in different sports, talking about negative stereotypes, social isolation, verbal comments, discrimination in team selection and homophobic harassment (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 2001; Pronger, 1990). This dynamic creates serious problems for LGBTQIA+ youth who are affected by homophobia and genderism (Scandurra et al., 2013).

The sport climate for women and LGBTQIA+ persons is exclusionary, whether explicit through policy or rules or more implicit through actions or statements that promote social exclusion, rejection, and/or acts of violence. According to Rankin (2005), organized sport is a hostile environment for LGB youths who conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation. For LGBTQIA+ youths interested in sport while also exploring their own identities, sport culture does not promote the inclusion of, let alone the space for exploration of gender or sexual identity, in the space where competition is valued. Roper and Halloran (2007), analyzed a sample of heterosexual male and female athletes and found that male athletes have more negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people than female ones. Furthermore, such negative attitudes are more negative toward gay men compared to lesbian women.

Heteronormativity

Messner (1992) confirmed the perception of heteronormativity: “The extent of homophobia in the sports world is staggering,” he wrote. “Boys (in sport) learn early that to be gay, to be suspected of being gay, or even to be unable to prove one’s heterosexual status is not acceptable” (Messner, 1992). These beliefs stem from and are often reinforced by other ideals in sports, such as sexism and hypermasculinity. When understanding heteronormativity, one has to also look at homophobia in sport, since the expectation of being straight (heteronormativity) is the opposite of being LGB+ and not supporting those who identify within the LGB+ community (homophobia). Due to needing to compete as a masculine competitor, it is often assumed and expected that athletes are heterosexual. Because homophobic slurs are used as insults or negative punishment, it reinforces that no athletes have a sexual orientation apart from heteronormativity, especially male athletes who are not heterosexual. Wolf Wendel, Toma, and Morphew (2001) found that White male athletes exhibited disproportionate degrees of homophobia compared to their attitudes toward people of color. Therefore, sport has been widely known as an institution that promotes heterosexuality over homosexuality due to innate nature of using any other sexual orientations as a way of insulting or isolating athletes.

This is expanded further for athletes who are not straight or heterosexual, making them feel disliked, ostracized, and/or isolated from other people in sport. Homophobia and transphobia are considered significant barriers to participation in sport (Scandurra et al., 2013). This perception strengthens when asking athletes if homophobia or transphobia represent a barrier to LGBT people participating in sport. As a matter of fact, 74% of males and 75% of females think that being openly LGBT represents a difficulty (Scandurra et al., 2013). Many athletes from differing identities have been found sport to be a difficult and unwelcoming space to participate

in as their true selves. Often times, LGB+ athletes will keep their sexual orientations stealth from their teammates and coaching staff in order to avoid the harsh criticisms, potential for punishment, and/or ruining the relationship with their team. Identifying as an LGB participant in the heavily masculinized arena of sport can be expected to result in severe social and individual consequences. This could serve to dissuade otherwise interested participants from engaging in sporting opportunities, thus denying them of the numerous benefits of participation (Elling & Janssens, 2009; Wellard, 2002).

This perception is worsened by the fact that 55% of males and 60% of females think that it is doing not enough to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport. it means that homophobia is widespread and represents a power device (Messner, 1995). Many athletes have shown to be open to having an LGB+ athlete on their team as well as coaching staff not opposing to a player being gay (Bush et al., 2012). Often times, homophobia often decreases in athletic spaces after more people have had contact with those who identify as LGB (Roper & Halloran, 2007). At this point in time, many sporting communities at differing competitive levels are recruiting and/or drafting to teams, all the while, many other teams, administrations, or coaches still use homophobia as an agent to keep athletes who fit into the heteronormative role that has been foundation in sport. Although there are more active communities, events, and leaders in sport who are combating the heteronormative beliefs in sports, heteronormativity and homophobia will persist due to the basic tenants of sport being competitive, “manly,” and rough, which is assumed to fit into a heteronormative stance.

Cisnormativity

In many ways, there is still ongoing active prejudice against trans, LBT, and female individuals in sport and such prejudice becomes taken-for granted and deeply cemented into the

sport culture (Cunningham & Pickett, 2018). As Cunningham (2012) has noted, “institutionalized norms and rules related to gender, sport, and participation can influence the experiences and opportunities for women and sexual minorities.” As previously discussed, there is still active discrimination and prejudice against LGBTQIA+ persons, although sport has improved in the levels of acceptance towards LGB athletes. In regard to gender and sporting culture, there is a significant difference in how these individuals have safe space within sport environments. This idea ties into the issues of sexism imbedded in the fabric of sport, due to the gender roles that women are expected to uphold and the instrumental function of sport not fitting those expected roles. In the same breath, sexism is still easily identifiable in sporting contexts, but beyond those expectations lie the expectation that any athlete involved in sport is expected to have a cisgender identity, or a gender identity that aligns with the gender identity they were assigned at birth (Cunningham & Pickett, 2018).

There is lacking research around the culture of cisnormativity in sport, though there is inadequate research identifying other persons identifying as LGBTQIA+ within sports. Athletes who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual have identified feeling as if there are barriers to them playing sports even though they hold a cisgender identity (Scandurra et al., 2013). We suspect the differential evaluations are due to the notion that trans athletes serve to challenge cisgender individuals’ assumptions about gender binaries (Norton & Herek, 2012). As Sykes (2006) has suggested, trans athletes evoke fear about the destabilization of cultural notions of gender identity.

Even for women, there’s the idea that if they act more “masculine” they might fit into sport culture better than women who hold more “traditional” female ideals due to the idea that being more “masculine” for sport is appropriate for women when they would typically be

expected to hold more traditional gender norms. That being said, women are still expected to still identify as women in sport, even if she is perceived or labeled as a “tomboy.” As for LBT persons, they are sometimes included and welcomed into sporting environments, but are still expected to have a cisgender identity along with their sexual identity. Cunningham & Pickett (2018) observed that people express more trans prejudice than they do LGB prejudice. Therefore, despite what gains LGB persons have experienced, the sport environment is frequently not as welcoming for transgender persons—that is, persons whose gender identity and expression do not match their sex assigned at birth (Carroll et al., 2012). This is where the value of cisgender normativity comes into play. Sporting culture is built on a binary system of segregating men from women, the best from the worst, and also, the lack of freedom to identify outside of the binary system at play in sport. Although research lacks in many of these areas, it has started talking about how non-cisgender athletes experience and perceive safety in sporting contexts.

Those who do not fit into the cisgender normative roles in sports have a difficult time not only being themselves safely in sport, but they also run into issues with how and when they are allowed to compete in competitive sports. Within the sport context, most league, administrative policies, and rules regarding transgender and genderqueer participation are exclusive and at least partially restrict participation opportunities (Buzuvis, 2012). This is a pattern observed from the elite to recreational level in sports. Not surprisingly, trans athletes frequently report difficulty in negotiating the sport space (Krane et al., 2012; Lucas-Carr, & Krane, 2012) due to these restrictions and exclusionary rules. Trans athletes might also face verbal abuse from opposing players due to their identities (Travers and Deri, 2010). Due to the identified homophobia and transphobia researched in sport, it is easy to assume that sport also holds the expectation that athletes stick to their assigned gender at birth for the sake of being able to compete. Not only is

the end goal of competing important, but trans athletes also want to compete in full capacity in conjunction with rules and policies, play fair games and be treated humanely and respectfully from athletes and coaches. Society believes in fair competition as long as the opposite sexes or genders don't mix for the sake of a fair arena as well as the safety of those lesser than (Travers and Deri, 2010).

History of Athletic Policy

In addition to examining how sport culture shapes the experience of athletes, it is important to understand what policies are in place that either include or exclude participation due to gender identity. Policies that promote inclusion are difficult to find in the history of athletic competition, but in more recent years large sporting corporations have begun developing policy that is more inclusive for transgender or genderqueer athletes. Some divisions, specific regions or conferences, and universities or schools still have policy that varies nation-wide. Many universities or schools create policy when needed, depending on the demands in place for athletic inclusion and also due to not having a unanimous policy nation-wide or competitive-level wide that provides an inclusive space for transgender and genderqueer athletes.

USA Today Sports asked 75 NCAA Division I programs if they had adopted recommendations for transgender inclusion in sports, and out of the 50 that responded, 10 had used the recommendations to enact for a formal policy that specifically addresses the inclusion of transgender athletes in intercollegiate athletics (Kanno-Youngs, 2015). Out of the 40 who had not, 21 said they were still reviewing the recommendations while referring to a general non-discrimination policy that does not specifically address transgender athletes. (Kanno-Youngs, 2015). Therefore, it can be plausible that roughly half of the NCAA Division I programs sampled in this one study are actively working towards implementing policy for transgender inclusion in

sport, while the remaining schools make decisions for participation when the situation demands it of them, creating space for wide variations of transgender inclusion from division, to region, and to sport specific discrimination and exclusion. There are additional recommendations provided by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as well as the NCAA providing insight to this issue.

Since the 2003 Stockholm Consensus on Sex Reassignment in Sports, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of expression of one's gender identity in society, as reflected in the laws of many jurisdictions worldwide. (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). There are also, however, jurisdictions where autonomy of gender identity is not recognized in law at all (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). In this case, there leaves room for sporting participants, observers, and administrative personnel to question the legitimacy of one's gender identity with the intent of competing in athletics. In the event that the gender of a competing athlete is questioned, the medical delegate (or equivalent) of the relevant sporting body has the authority to take all appropriate measures for the determination of the gender of a competitor. (Ljungqvist et al., 2003). This means that in organizations or programs that lack a structured policy for transgender inclusion leave the decision to allow an athlete to play on the shoulders of a medical delegate. Many programs and organizations are often aware of their lack of structure through policy and make a point to still express their intent for inclusiveness.

The IOC (2015) states that "it is necessary to ensure insofar as possible that trans athletes are not excluded from the opportunity to participate in sporting competition." The overriding sporting objective is and remains the guarantee of fair competition. The concerns for lack of fair

play and cheating still exist in sporting circles today, as evidenced through social media discussions, local postings, and discussion with those involved in sports.

One of the most debated topics within policy inclusion for transgender athletes was the requirement that transgender persons had to undergo surgical procedures in order to compete in the identified gender category they wished to compete in. There were several stipulations that individuals undergoing sex reassignment from male to female after puberty (and the converse) had to do in order to be eligible for participation in female or male competitions, such as: surgical anatomical changes had to be completed, including external genitalia changes and gonadectomy and the athlete had to declare that her gender identity is female and this declaration could not be changed, for sporting purposes, for a minimum of four years (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). Eventually, the IOC changed this stance to not requiring any surgical procedures in order to compete, realizing that any surgical treatment will not and could not provide any advantage to athletes. If anything, many transgender persons who compete in athletics might have additive difficulty when undergoing surgical procedures due to the nature of these operations being very invasive and recovery time being extensive. Today's policy through the IOC does not require surgical anatomical changes as a pre-condition to participation. It is stated that surgical changes are not necessary to preserve fair competition and may be inconsistent with developing legislation and notions of human rights (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). Beyond this outdated policy lies more specific policies that govern whether transgender athletes can compete based on their sex.

There are a lot more policies surrounding competition with transgender women, who have transitioned from the male gender assigned at birth to a female identity. For these athletes,

there are concerns about physical size (e.g. bone density, muscle mass, height) and hormone, or doping, concerns that would give an advantage to someone who was actively doing hormone treatment or naturally had higher levels of testosterone than those they would be competing with. The Stockholm consensus recommends that any “individuals undergoing sex reassignment of male to female before puberty should be regarded as girls and women” (female). This applies as well for female to male reassignment, who should be regarded as boys and men (male) (Ljungqvist et al., 2003). Therefore, national organizations are beginning to move towards inclusion with how they perceive, talk to, and reference transgender athletes. At the same time, bodies such as the IOC and NCAA are also focused on how to increase transgender inclusion while keeping fair competition in mind.

According to the IOC, a transgender woman must demonstrate that her total testosterone level in serum has been below 10 nmol/L for at least 12 months prior to her first competition and it must remain below 10 nmol/L throughout the period of desired eligibility to compete in the female category (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). Transgender women have to be compliant through these conditions if they wish to compete, including a constant monitoring that might lead to additional testing. In the event of non-compliance, the athlete’s eligibility for female competition will be suspended for 12 months (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). It is important to note that the IOC (2015) wishes to note that “nothing in these guidelines is intended to undermine in any way the requirement to comply with the World Anti-Doping Code and the WADA International Standards.” They make sure to note that anyone who is actively receiving hormone treatment follows anti-doping regulations set for all athletes at all levels while

balancing the intentionality of increasing participation of transgender persons in competitive athletics (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015).

Lastly, in reference to transgender males' competition in sports, there is a lot more leeway for participation quicker and with less obstacles to tackle. Those who transition from female to male are eligible to compete in the male category without restriction (IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism, 2015). Additionally, the NCAA also has similar views where a transgender male student-athlete who is not taking testosterone related to gender transition may participate on a men's or women's team of their choosing (NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (2011)). Therefore, for most higher sport organizations, transgender males are expected to be able to compete in either category, regardless of gender identity or hormone levels. The NCAA also requires that a transgender male student-athlete having been diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder or gender dysphoria, and/or Transsexualism (NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (2011)). Otherwise, the NCAA states that the team would not be eligible as a "men's" or "women's" team but rather, would have to be categorized as a "mixed" team (NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (2011)).

Attitudes Towards LGBT Persons

Attitudes Towards LGB Persons

There have been varying instances where attitudes towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons have displayed intolerance and/or homophobia, but sometimes shown greater acceptance and more social connectedness with LGBTQIA+ persons. Higher levels of LGBT tolerance or acceptance are often observed among women, more liberal Christian traditions, non-Christian faiths, the non-religious, and those who self-identify as LGBT (Holland et al., 2013). Therefore,

research has found that women tend to be more accepting of gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual persons as well as those from less strict religious groups. This doesn't mean that there is necessarily higher homophobia in our society among men, religious groups, and those who don't identify or know someone else who identifies, but they have been found to have more limiting attitudes of tolerance than these other groups.

Homophobia represents an aversion to or irrational fear of LGB people, and often behaviors based on those attitudes (Berrill & Herek, 1990). Otherwise, heterosexism is an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community (Berrill & Herek, 1990). Society postulates that those who are straight, or heterosexual, are more of the "norm" and consequently, able to operate in relationships without fear or being stigmatized or acted on begrudgingly. Parrott et al. (2002) suggest that homophobia in men may not reflect necessarily negative sentiments specifically against homosexual males but instead, may reflect greater negative attitudes toward feminine characteristics. In society and in sport, anyone who identifies as LGB might battle homophobia that is rooted in sexism and the notion that those who are not heterosexual maintain more feminine characteristics, increasing negative attitudes at behaviors towards these persons. Homophobia-related aggression may not be due to men's moral rulings against homosexuality, but may be their negative behavioral expression, when the presence of homosexual stimuli evokes threats to masculine identity (Parrott et al., 2002). A positive relationship has been found between hypermasculinity and homophobia in research, showing that a potential barrier to positive attitudes towards LGB persons might lie within how individuals express and hold their gender identities central to their being (Patel et al., 1995; Sinn, 1997). Both sexism and the fear

of threats to a masculine identity contribute to the negative attitudes that society or specific communities within it might hold towards LGB persons.

There are developmental influences in young adults around homophobia becoming less significant as they leave home for the college campus. Parental influence has been found to be the single greatest determinant in the development of tolerance and exposure to issues of diversity (Ousley, 2006). Additionally, schools are a significant setting in which homophobia is prevalent (Lance, 2002; Pascoe, 2005; Unks, 2003). Upon enrollment at higher education institutions, influences or biases around attitudes towards LGB persons are likely to shift, as years of college correlate with higher levels of tolerance (Sax, 2004). This creates a space for young adults to begin developing their own beliefs and attitudes towards other persons and communities different than themselves. According to Kardia (1996), the majority of college students become more accepting of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons as they experience higher levels of interpersonal contact with these persons by way of curricular and co-curricular programs. With more contact and interactions with people different than one another, attitudes and acceptance tend to skew positively due to having less unknown about those who might identify differently from others.

It is additionally important to address the issue of homophobia on the college campus due to it being a common space for college students to “come out” (Evans & Broido, 1999; Lance, 2008). Research shows that remaining closeted increases psychological stress, which means that anyone who identifies as LGB, and transgender, is suffering from not only psychological stress but potential social exclusion (Garnets et al., 1990; Herek, 1990; Berrill & Herek, 1990). Fear of discrimination and harassment is the primary reason college students remain closeted or try to adopt a heterosexual identity (Wright et al., 1999). Wright et al. (1999) also found that the higher

the level of education a person achieved, the lower their likelihood of being homophobic. When young adults pursue higher education by move away from home and parental influences, they tend to have higher positive regard and attitudes towards LGB persons, which benefits the college environment as being more open and welcoming of LGBTQIA+ persons. Rankin (2005) noted that the challenges and threats faced by LGBT college students can “prevent them from achieving their full academic potential or participating fully in campus communities.” When considering how LGB persons have been accepted or lack thereof in society, it is vital to use this information to begin unpacking what society may feels towards athletes with non-cisgender identities in and out of the sporting context.

In addition to negative attitudes towards lesbian and gay persons, there is evidence to support that negative attitudes towards bisexual persons is just as great, if not greater than towards gay and lesbian persons. One study found that straight persons tend to have more negative attitudes towards bisexual persons than toward lesbian women or gay men (Dryar et al., 2014). Additionally, this research showed that gay and lesbian persons also tend to have more negative attitudes towards bisexuals than towards straight persons (Dryar et al., 2014). These instances are typically fueled by attitudes such as the perception that bisexuality is an illegitimate sexual orientation and/or bisexual persons are sexually irresponsible, which can create hostility as well as social exclusion/rejection of bisexual persons from all other identities and majority groups. (Dryar et al., 2014).

Attitudes Towards Transgender and Genderqueer Persons

Homophobia looks different than transphobia due to the nature in which people feel differently about sexual minorities compared to gender minorities in society and in sport. While homophobia and transphobia clearly have some commonalities, it should be pointed out that

homophobia is centered around non-normative sexual orientations, with the challenge to normative gender roles a secondary effect (Nagoshi et al., 2008). This ties into transphobia, which is specifically about challenging normative gender roles and gender identity. Transphobia can be described in terms of “emotional disgust toward individuals who do not conform to society’s gender expectations” (Hill, 2005, p. 533). This definition is consistent with an older definition of homophobia, stated as an irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of being in close quarters with homosexual men and women (Weinberg, 1972). As discussed previously, there is often stigma against sexual minorities due to the assumption that sexual orientation influences beliefs and behaviors for identifying persons. This extends into the concept of transphobia, where the fear is directly related to the way in which someone identifies their gender different from what was assigned at birth, which includes gender expression and behaviors that feel congruent with the preferred gender. Transphobia contrasts with homophobia in not only being about revulsion and irrational fears of transgender persons, but also cross-dressers, feminine men, and masculine women (Weinberg, 1972). This includes persons who identify as gender non-binary due to the intention of behaving, dressing, and not identifying with any particular gender. It can be hypothesized that due to what research has shown towards transgender persons that similar feelings of transphobia could extend to those who are non-binary due to society still expecting individuals to conform to the gender assigned at birth.

There are many ways in which homophobia findings can extend to instances of transphobia due to the idea of gender expectations being important for society as a whole affecting both gender and sexual minorities. Recently, Hill and Willoughby (2005) developed and validated a 32-item transphobia and genderism scale to measure emotional disgust, violence, harassment, and discrimination towards transgender, transsexual, and cross-dressing persons. In

the last of three studies, the new Genderism and Transphobia Scale was administered to 180 undergraduate and graduate students with results that found large amounts of intolerant attitudes toward people with gender variance. Theoretical formulations suggest that male prejudice against homosexuals is about encouraging heteronormative ideals of manhood in order to maintain dominance over women (Hamilton, 2007). Therefore, not only can transphobia be described as a fear of individuals who have a gender identity different than what was assigned at birth, but it is also a fear of the idea that the hierarchy might be challenged if the concept of masculinity is feminized in any way. Norton (1997), for example, proposes that what men fear is that once the male sex is feminized in any way, then one would be able to form a feminization of all men, which breaks down the traditionally clear distinction between the superior male and the inferior female. (Nagoshi et al., 2008)

Attitudes Towards LGB Athletes

Due to the culture of athletics being hyper-masculinized, exclusive against most LGBTQIA+ or non-normative (e.g. White males) groups, and fundamentally operating off of the submission of less privileged groups through language and/or actions, it is important to investigate how athletes are viewed and thought of when they identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. As previously discussed, there are negative attitudes towards LGB persons, regardless of other identities held, such as being an athlete. Although some researchers are finding that attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ athletes are getting better, others are showing that the process of full acceptance and integration is just beginning (VanPatten et al., 2016). Attitudes towards LBG athletes has not been widely studied, but more recent research has begun looking at specific community's attitudes towards this population, specifically other athletes, coaching staff, and athletic trainers, all people who might work with this community.

Most athletic trainers held positive attitudes toward lesbian, gay, or bisexual student-athletes, however, nearly 15% held negative attitudes towards this population (Ensign et al., 2011). Female athletic trainers who cared for lesbian, gay, or bisexual student-athletes and worked with or knew someone who was lesbian, gay, or bisexual held more positive attitudes than did male athletic trainers without these personal connections (Ensign, 2011). These findings tend to align with what research tends to show, that males tend to have overall more negative attitudes towards sexual minorities than females, including athletic trainers who work with student-athletes. This implies that athletic trainers must act to improve the athletic training department environment so that all student-athletes (including lesbian, gay, or bisexual student-athletes) feel safe and respected due to many programs insisting that athletic trainers be part of the reporting process when student-athletes have medical and/or mental health concerns (Ensign, 2011).

Overwhelming research tends to show that the athletic environment is challenging for not only players, but LGB athletic personnel (Baird, 2002). Most of this research tends to highlight that sport is not a safe nor welcoming environment for LGB athletes, due to the fundamental culture of heteronormativity and traditional masculinity being the fabric of competitive sport. In contrast to what many of these findings tend to show, other studies have found that some coaches hold moderately positive attitudes towards GLB individuals and possess low levels of heterosexism (Oswalt & Vargas, 2013). These results seem in contrast the majority of research around negative attitudes towards LGBT athletes, especially from the coaching staff (Baird, 2002). With few quantitative studies on this topic being published in the past decade, these results could be indicative of a changing environment within collegiate athletics. Nevertheless, these results should be examined critically due to the trends in response and participation rates

when looking for attitudes towards student-athletes that these coaches work with and don't want to be perceived as hateful or homophobic. Low response rates may reflect a responder bias in that only those coaches who are comfortable with LGB student-athletes, or even discussing issues surrounding climate for LGB student-athletes, responded, leaving out the coaching staffs that likely would have responded negatively towards their own student-athletes (Oswalt & Vargas, 2013).

College student-athletes are a unique population that must endure stress from being a student in higher education, juggle their responsibilities as student-athletes for their prospective universities, and also operate within their own identities that are often being explored at young ages (Salgado et al., 2011). Not only do student-athletes need to be successful as a student, but also as an athlete that must be competitive and prosperous. Society praises male athletes in their physicality and success in sports and rewards them with attention and praise (Maurer-Starks et al., 2008) As discussed previously, in young boys' early stages of development, they are often praised or scolded when they don't "measure up" to the ideals of what it means to be a man in society, but also in the sporting world (Plummer, 2006). This sets the stage at a young age that men who participate in sport must follow the rigid guidelines of society's expectations for male behavior and identities, but of the sporting world's expectations for what it means to be a male athlete, which does not mean being a gay male. Further connecting the theme of homophobia and participation in sports is the adherence to a sports ideology, or rather, a belief that sports offer individuals an outlet for moral development. The more student-athletes associate themselves with this ideology as they participate in sport, the higher the levels of homophobia towards LGB athletes, especially for males (Harry, 1995).

Of the research around this topic, many studies wanted to continue identifying gender differences in attitudes towards LGB athletes. Consistent with other research, when compared to heterosexual female student-athletes, heterosexual male student-athletes held more negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Roper & Halloran, 2007). In another closely identified study, it was found that males who participated in core sports (e.g., football, baseball, basketball, and/or soccer) were nearly three times more likely than individuals who did not participate in core sports to express homophobic attitudes towards LGB athletes (Osborne & Wagner, 2007). However, this effect was only observed for male participants, suggesting that the manner in which masculinity is constructed has a substantial impact on their attitudes toward gay and lesbian athletes. (Osborne & Wagner, 2007).

Most of the research looking at attitudes towards LGB athletes is identifying that males have more negative attitudes towards LGB student-athletes than females do, but for all groups, when they have more contact with someone they know is LGB, their attitudes tend to become more positive and inclusive (Roper & Halloran, 2007). In comparison to what was found for male attitudes, females who participated in nonathletic extracurricular activities (e.g., debate club, science club), they were half as likely as individuals who did not participate in nonathletic extracurricular activities to express homophobic attitudes towards LGB athletes (Osborne & Wagner, 2007). This finding implies that men tend to have greater negative attitudes towards gay men than lesbian women might be attributed to the notion that violating gender roles is more severe for men than for women (Roper & Halloran, 2007). The implications for LGB male student-athletes have been discussed, but the impact of negative attitudes on LGB female student-athletes has yet to be examined.

Even though male athletes experience more pressure to conform to sexual orientation norms, women also experience negative effects from homophobia as a control tactic. Better female athletes are often stigmatized by being labeled lesbians, reflecting a dichotomy between competence in their sport and the expectation for femininity (Higgs & Schell, 1998). Not surprisingly, many female athletes avoid participating in sports for fear of being labeled a lesbian, a label that may be responsible for the lower levels of participation in sports for female athletes (Shakib, 2003; Shakib & Dunbar, 2002). Nonetheless, women who conform to more traditional forms of masculinity within sport are still accepted more in sport than outside of sport, due to the notion that greater adherence to male identities in sport can only benefit female players (Roper & Halloran, 2007). Of course, this puts female student-athletes in a difficult position due to potentially being more accepted as identifying as lesbian and being judged as more “masculine,” which could help their status in sport and perceived ability to be a good competitor, while simultaneously operating in a society that still holds to varying degrees homophobic ideals (Griffin, 1998).

In regard to levels of acceptance of an LGB teammate, the results are not overwhelming comprehensive. Roughly 66% of a sampled group of student-athletes reported they would accept a gay or bisexual teammate, 20% said they would reject a gay or bisexual teammate and 6% say they do/would harass a teammate identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Southall et al., 2011). This reveals staggering consequences for LGB athletes who desire to be included, respected, and be treated the same as straight athletes in their competing experience. These findings typically are worse and more negative for LGB athletes of color, due to increased negativity towards persons of color who deviate from the norm of sexual orientation (Bass et al., 2015). Therefore, many athletes often feel as though they need to hide their sexual orientation when they identify

as LGBTQIA+ or they risk the social rejection, fear, and isolation from others in their sport (Roper & Halloran, 2007). LGBTQIA+ student-athletes are viewed negatively, which likely impacts how they are treated, and the nature of the climate created in athletic spaces they operate in. In addition to looking at attitudes towards LGB student-athletes, it is also necessary to examine what attitudes are attributed to gender-diverse student-athletes.

Attitudes Towards Transgender and Genderqueer Athletes

Although a number of researchers have examined the experiences of and prejudice expressed toward LGB individuals in sport (Anderson, 2009; Campbell et al., 2011; Fink et al., 2012), there is a comparative scarceness of research focused on trans individuals. As previously discussed, LGB athletes are still experiencing negative attitudes towards them even though they are continuously being accepted into sport. Despite these gains for LGB athletes, the sport environment is frequently not as welcoming for trans persons—that is, persons whose gender identity and expression do not match their sex assigned at birth (Carroll et al., 2012). Within competitive sporting contexts, most leagues' policies and rules regarding trans participation are exclusive and at least partially restrict participation opportunities (Buzuvis, 2012). Not surprisingly, trans athletes frequently report difficulty in negotiating the sport space (Krane et al., 2012; Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012) and sometimes face verbal abuse from opposing players (Travers & Deri, 2010). At this point in time in sport, one can wonder if there might be more expressed trans prejudice than LGB prejudice due to the amount of research that has been done on homophobia and heteronormativity in sport but not as much work done in attitudes transgender athletes. (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2012).

It can be argued that trans individuals evoke stronger reactions because they challenge people's assumptions of organized gender binaries. This is likely challenged differently than the

dissonance LGB individuals do not necessarily evoke around sexual orientation. People have expectations that individuals assigned a particular sex at birth will identify that way, and when they do not, negative reactions are likely to occur (Cahn, 2011). In the same way that sport is categorized in a binary system, society also expects or tends to only understand the same binaries. Part of the concern are around the reluctance towards inclusion of those with non-standard gender representations due to fear regarding the weakening of cultural notions of gender identity. (Sykes, 2006). The desire for clear binaries is only amplified in sport, where teams and events are demarcated by sex. From an early age, boys compete against boys, and girls against girls, a pattern that tends to continue throughout adult competition. There is little space in sport for individuals who do not neatly fit into the rigid gender-norms system for mainly this reason. The mere presence of trans athletes on athletic teams also raises concerns of fairness and undue advantage, which exhibits the negative reactions athletes have on trans athletes' inclusion (Buzuvis, 2012; Tagg, 2012).

It is expected that women and men would differ in their expression of trans prejudice as seen in differences found in research regarding attitudes towards LGB athletes. Surprisingly, these findings differed from past research focusing on LGB persons in sport (Cunningham et al. 2010; Gill et al., 2006; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). There are a few explanations for this finding and how it differs from attitudes towards LBG athletes. First, it is possible that trans athletes evoke stronger negative reactions and/or emotions among all persons and athlete status. Therefore, everyone appears to have an opinion or emotion from the discussion around transgender inclusion in competitive sport. When comparing this to attitudes towards LBG athletes, there are more gender differences in responses due to greater influences of heteronormativity and homophobia in sport that drives negative attitudes. From a different

perspective, it is possible that as forms of masculinity have become more inclusive and flexible, maybe more men have adopted more egalitarian, accepting views toward trans athletes (Anderson, 2009). This might put both genders in similar positions for views that are more inclusive rather than exclusive. Part of continuing research would mean that future studies would need to continue proving that there is less of a gender difference in attitudes towards trans athletes compared to attitudes towards LGB athletes, where research has found gender differences.

In many ways, prejudice against trans individuals is so customary in sport that the prejudice becomes deeply cemented into the sport culture. This is consistent with Herek's (2007, 2009) notion of structural forms of stigma. As Cunningham (2012) noted, institutionalized norms and rules related to gender, sport, and participation can influence the experiences and opportunities for women and sexual minorities. The essence of norms that continue to hold athletes into set rules and guidelines for how they behave continues to reinforce the heteronormativity and cisnormativity that continues in sport. Additionally, these differences are likely a function of norms and a culture of hegemonic masculinity (Fink, 2008). Not only do these factors serve to privilege men and certain forms of masculinity, but they also exclude many other athletes who are gender or sexual minorities. Relative to women, men participating in sport might feel more compelled to adhere to these norms and, when they do not, they might face ridicule or shame. This likely feeds into the transphobia that has been identified in athletics due to the rigidity of masculinity and men being expected to hold true to those values. Herek and McLemore (2013) also recognized these dynamics, suggesting that men, more so than women, might feel social norms to express prejudice against LGBT individuals.

Biases Towards Transgender Persons in Athletics

Transgender individuals report widespread exposure to prejudice (Clements-Nolle et al., 2006; Lombardi et al., 2001; Stotzer, 2008). Transgender individuals are one of the most discriminated against social groups in society today (Stryker, 2008). A recent national report documented the experiences of 6,450 transgender respondents revealing that 47% reported an adverse job outcome, 29% reporting police disrespect or harassment, and 15% of students in either K–12 or higher education left their school as a result of severe harassment (Grant et al., 2011). For many transgender persons, there is a genuine risk to being out and operating in spaces that may or may not be welcoming and inclusive. For most transgender persons, a reality is often being in an environment or wanting to work in an environment that is not open to transgender inclusion. Many trans people face daily verbal harassment from strangers, peers, teachers, coworkers, and even family members (Sausa, 2005). From a young age, boys who fail to do gender-appropriate things well might be called “sissies” and/or beaten up. Additionally, girls who fail to do gender-appropriate things are sometimes socially shunned. There are a few notions tend to misperceive people’s understanding about transgender and intersex athletes: (1) that all athletes should neatly fall into a gender category and (2) that transgender and intersex athletes have an unfair advantage in sport or are not participating in fair play (3) that they might be doping due to the use of testosterone (4) they are choosing to be transgender for the sake of competition. (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011).

Not Falling into A Specific Gender Category

Quite a bit of the bias against transgender, gender nonbinary, and intersex athletes is grounded in the presumption that they look too masculine if they are female or too feminine if they are male (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). There is a high need for people to know how to label and interact with one another, and for many, gender ambiguity often creates an uneasy feeling.

Need for closure is defined as a person's desire for order, structure, and nonambiguity (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Those who possess a high need for closure are typically motivated to avoid conditions of uncertainty that threaten their ability to attain cognitive closure (Kruglanski, 1990). Therefore, individuals with a high need for closure would be expected to have negative attitudes toward persons who might disrupt or challenge what is traditionally expected of what women and men look and act like. Transgender athletes staunchly disrupt these existing social norms, especially for what is expected of masculinity, thereby threatening cognitive closure for many around them. Research has found a link between the need for closure and the closely associated construct of intolerance for ambiguity have been linked positively with anti-LGB prejudice (Mohr et al., 1999; Haslam et al., 2002). Similar to how LGB persons challenge assumptions of heteronormativity, so do transgender persons challenge conventional notions of gender categories and also sexual orientation as well. Scholars have argued that traditional gender role beliefs are the basis of anti-transgender prejudice (e.g., Lombardi, 2009; Nadal et al., 2010). Therefore, individuals with a high need for closure may endorse low levels of attitudes towards inclusion in competitive sport. The reason why transphobia tends to outweigh homophobia is likely in part due to these groups being perceived as violating gender role prescriptions, which also challenges traditional gender role attitudes.

Fair Play

Most commonly, discussions about transgender athletes' inclusion in sport turns to issues of fair play, especially related to male-to-female (MTF) trans athletes (Coggon et al., 2008; Teetzel, 2006). Most people presume that to be born male implies innate athletic advantages that "unlevel" the playing field for female-born athletes (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). A common response in this discussion is that MTF transgender athletes retain many physiological

advantages that many males have over female athletes, such as more muscle mass and height (Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011). Another common concern in girls' and women's sport are athletes who appear too masculine, controversial if anything, presuming that they would have an advantage as well. Many times, these cisgender female athletes are questioned to athletic departments, boards, or organizations for further testing due to this concern. For example, many of the sensationalism about runner Caster Semenya was based on her "masculine" appearance.

One thing that is often not addressed in the discussion of fair play is the natural differences that are often seen between persons within the same sex and how this variation can vary from physical traits to psychological differences that might provide advantages or disadvantages to athletes within their own category. The misconception is that MTF transgender athletes retain the physical strength of their previously male body, which is not supported by medical facts. A transitioning MTF athlete's body undergoes enormous change as testosterone levels are reduced and female hormones are introduced. Within one year, testosterone levels drop to levels consistent with a female body, muscle mass decreases, body fat is redistributed in female patterns, bone density is reduced, and body composition changes (Elbers et al., 1999; Gooren & Bunck, 2004; Lapauw et al., 2008). With all of these things in mind, many researchers conclude that MTF transsexual athletes can compete against other female athletes without a physiological advantage (Genel & Ljungqvist, 2005). However, the body goes through numerous and dramatic changes as its hormones are altered. Research supports that postsurgical transgender persons have a physiological profile comparable to individuals in their desired sex. For example, Gooren and Bunck (2004) compared muscle mass pre- and post-hormone therapy in female-to-male (FTM) and male-to-female (MTF) individuals. The decrease of muscle mass in MTF individuals after testosterone deprivation resulted in a large overlap with FTM individuals'

pre-testosterone therapy muscle mass. This overlap was great enough for the authors to suggest that it is justifiable for MTF athletes to compete with other female athletes (Gooren & Bunck, 2004). In addition, Elbers et al. (1999) found that MTF persons had increased body fat after being on hormone treatment, which was positioned in the same patterns as is found in other females, one year after beginning hormone therapy. Muscularity, measured at the thigh, also decreased in MTF transgender persons. Additionally, Lapauw et al. (2008) compared body composition and bone parameters in MTF transgender persons three years post hormone therapy to age- and height-matched cisgender men. The results showed the transgender women had less muscle mass and strength, more body fat, and less bone mineral content and bone areal density (i.e., bone size) compared with the nontrans males (Lapauw et al., 2008). These findings imply that the MTF body types were more similar to cisgender female bodies than cisgender male bodies. Altogether, these studies support that transgender athletes, specifically MTF transgender athletes, would have no physiological advantage over other athletes in the category of preference, especially in women's sports.

Another common argument regarding fair play is that testosterone hormone therapy unfairly benefits FTM transgender persons (Teetzel, 2006). Generally, individuals with XY chromosomes produce higher levels of androgens than individuals with XX chromosomes. Cisgender men (XY) have been presumed to be stronger than women (XX) because of their higher blood testosterone levels which can account for body mass and height. When hormone therapy comes into play for transgender athletes, the fear is that those who are born female who transition to male and take testosterone, might have added benefits than someone who was a cisgender male athlete (Jones et al., 2016). On the contrary, the levels of testosterone created through hormone therapy for a transgender male would actually be similar to an average adult,

cisgender male, and significantly less than testosterone levels seen in men using testosterone as an illegal doping agent (Gooren & Bunck, 2004; Ljungqvist & Genel, 2005; Teetzal, 2006;). Additionally, testosterone levels in FTM transgender persons did not exceed the levels of testosterone in MTF transgender persons before receiving any hormone therapy (Jones et al., 2016). Therefore, someone who received testosterone through hormone therapy actually had the same amount or less testosterone than someone who was born male at the same age. In conclusion, there is no consistent research that states that any transgender person in hormone therapy is doing so in order to gain a competitive edge by receiving higher levels of testosterone or other hormones that might increase performance or physiology. If anything, those who are receiving hormone therapy are at similar levels or less than those who they are pursuing to compete with in their preferred category of competition. This bias still continues though in competitive sport policies to this day, which is just another form of discrimination to transgender athletes in pursuit of inclusion in competition.

Doping

A related misconception focuses on the testosterone therapies prescribed to FTM athletes. The foundation for questioning the inclusion of male transsexual athletes is the perception that they are doping. That is, male-born athletes sometimes take supplemental hormones (or steroids) to increase testosterone levels and gain additional muscle mass, increased strength, and decreased recovery time. Using steroids or exogenous testosterone (e.g., from outside the body through pills or shots) is illegal in sport and is considered unfair. However, for transsexual athletes, medical research supports that testosterone therapy maintains their testosterone levels consistent with average male levels (Bhasin et al., 2001). In other words, testosterone may boost performance, but only to the level of an average man, not to the level of a male using steroids or

additional testosterone illicitly. Considering that testosterone is a banned substance in sport, the levels provided for transsexual athletes are highly monitored and regulated and will not provide FTM athletes with a competitive edge.

What the MTF and FTM hormone misperceptions reveal is two sides of the same coin: the presumption that all males have an innate advantage in sport related to testosterone. The concerns are that MTF athletes might retain some of the physical differences that give them an advantage in sport and that FTM athletes will be able to drastically improve their performance by using a performance-enhancing hormone. Medical research soundly debunks these concerns. Postoperative transsexuals are physiologically and hormonally closer to the gender they identify with than to the sex into which they were born. Hormone treatments are meant to help people's body change to be consistent with their gender identity. The ghost of the person's previous physiological and physical anatomy is just that, in the past; thus, MTF and FTM athletes do not have a competitive advantage in sport.

Choosing to Be Transgender

One concern often voiced is that by allowing trans athletes to participate in sport, some males will undergo SRS so that they can compete against women. This fallacy is grounded in the premise that male-born athletes have an innate advantage when competing against female-born athletes. To dispel this myth, we explore the process of becoming transgender and how this process may affect sport participation. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) Standards of Care, previously called the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care (Meyer et al., 2001), have been adopted by the medical community. These standards identify a series of benchmarks supporting the preparedness of an individual to undergo SRS. According to these guidelines, before trans individuals interested in hormone therapy and/or SRS could seek

medical intervention, they had to obtain a psychological diagnosis of gender identity disorder (GID). As described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR (DSM-IV-TR), individuals are considered to have GID when demonstrating a deep cross-gender identification and unremitting discomfort with their body (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Complete sex reassignment involves personal, legal, and biological change. The surgeries (often more than one is needed) are invasive, painful, and can require long rehabilitation. Preparation for surgery also is extensive as guided by the standards of care. Not only is psychological assessment and a diagnosis of GID required before medical intervention begins, trans people also must undergo 12 months of continuous hormonal therapy and 12 months of successful, continuous, full time real-life experience (i.e., living full-time in one's gender of choice). Throughout this time, they also continue psychological therapy.

Presumably, individuals with only sport motivation to change their sex will not go to such lengths to gain entrée into women's sport events. Consider the transition process in relationship to sport for a female-to-male trans athlete who wants to begin competing as a male. To be accepted as a male, he would have to pass through the stages dictated by the standards of care: a minimum of 12 months of hormone therapy and real life experience, top (i.e., chest/breast) and bottom (e.g., hysterectomy, genital reconstruction) surgeries, both followed by necessary rehabilitation. Then, the athlete would have to regain competitive conditioning. For male-to-female transsexuals, Spehr (2007) explained that after vaginoplasty, patients typically begin walking after two to three days and they can leave the hospital within three to five days. However, it could take up to 19 months before the ability to walk normally is regained (the range reported was 5–19 months). In other words, a transsexual athlete could lose a year of training.

Carlson (2005) quoted a trans athlete as stating, “No one goes through years of hormone therapy, massive surgery and this permanent life change on a whim, just to compete” (p. S40).

The 2016 IOC policy [20] also states that to avoid discrimination against transgender female individuals, they are allowed to compete in a male category if they do not meet the requirements for transgender female athletes. For most transgender female individuals, competing in a male category, when their experienced gender is female, would be distressing and may deter engagement in competitive sport altogether. This particular requirement may be promoting exclusion of transgender female individuals in competitive sport, rather than avoiding discrimination.

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age: (Please write) _____

2. Race/Ethnicity: (Select all that apply:)

- Asian American
- Pacific Islander/Polynesian
- Black/African-American
- LatinX/Hispanic American/Latina/o
- Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native
- White/Caucasian
- Other (Please Specify)_____

Sex refers to a person’s biological status and is typically assigned as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female). (APA, 2012)

3. Sex Identity: (Mark one)

- Male
- Female
- Intersex

Gender refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex. (APA, 2012)

4. Gender Identity: (Mark one)

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/Third gender
- Prefer to self-describe _____

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more. (Human Rights Campaign, 2016)

5. Do you identify as transgender? (Mark one)

- Yes
- No

6. Which of the of the following best describes your **sexual orientation**?

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other (Please specify)_____

7. Which of the following best describes the type of geographical area did you **grew up in**?
(Mark one)

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
My religious beliefs are a very important part of my life.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. Which of the of the following best describes your **student status**?

Undergraduate

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Fifth year or higher
- Graduate Student

10. As an intercollegiate athlete, what is your sport?

11. What **gender category** is your sports team?

- Men's sport

Women's sport

APPENDIX C

Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion

1. How often is **homophobic language** used on your team(s) (e.g. “you’re so gay,” “don’t be a faggot”)? (Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

2. How often is **sexist language** used on your team(s) (e.g. “don’t be a pussy/sissy/sissy boy,” “you (blank) like a girl,”)? (Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

3. Please indicate how many **transgender person(s)** you have met before or know personally?
(Please write): _____

4. Please indicate how many **lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual person(s)** you have met before or know personally?
(Please write): _____

To what degree would you support the following statements:

5. To what extent would you support a **gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual** athlete playing **on** your team? (Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

6. To what extent would you support a **gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual** athlete competing **against** your team? (Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

7. To what extent would you support a **transgender** athlete playing **on** your team? (Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

8. To what extent would you support a **transgender** athlete competing **against** your team?
(Mark one)

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- A great deal

APPENDIX D

COACH/ADMINISTRATION PARTICIPATION REQUEST E-MAIL

Dear [first and last name],

My name is Brooke Powers, and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program at Oklahoma State University. This email is to invite your athletes to participate in my study entitled “Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athlete Inclusion in Intercollegiate Sport.” To be eligible to participate, athletes must be current, eligible intercollegiate student-athlete enrolled in course(s) at a university in the United States.

The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athlete participation in intercollegiate sport by current student-athletes. This survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete (depending on their rate of response), and their participation is completely voluntary. Any personal individual information, your personal information as the coach and/or administrator, and institution you work for will be kept completely anonymous. No identifiers linking you or your institution to this study will be included in any report that might be published. At the end of the survey, participants will be asked whether they would like to enter a drawing for winning one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards. This is completely optional and will not affect their participation in the study.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 574-536-8100 or by email at bboys@okstate.edu. I would really appreciate it if you would be willing to pass along this email to student-athletes you work with in helping this study complete successfully. This research is under the supervision of Alfred Carlozzi Ed.D. (al.carlozzi@okstate.edu) and has been approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board.

If athletes are interested in participating, please click the link provided below to access the survey.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brooke Powers

APPENDIX E

STUDENT-ATHLETE PARTICIPATION REQUEST E-MAIL

Dear [first and last name],

My name is Brooke Powers, and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program at Oklahoma State University. This email is to invite you to participate in my study entitled “Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athlete Inclusion in Intercollegiate Sport.” To be eligible to participate, you must be a current intercollegiate student-athlete enrolled in course(s) at a university in the United States.

The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athlete participation in intercollegiate sport by current student-athletes. This survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete (depending on your rate of response), and your participation is completely voluntary. Your personal information and institution you compete for will be kept completely anonymous. No identifiers linking you or your institution to this study will be included in any report that might be published. At the end of the survey, you will be asked whether you would like to enter a draw for winning one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards. This is completely optional and will not affect your participation in the study.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 574-536-8100 or by email at bboys@okstate.edu. I would really appreciate it if you would be willing to pass along this email to student-athletes you have contact with and/or your friends, family members, coworkers, and/or acquaintances who may also have contact with student-athletes. This research is under the supervision of Alfred Carlozzi Ed.D. (al.carlozzi@okstate.edu) and has been approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board.

If you are interested in participating, please click the link provided below to access the survey.

.....

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brooke Powers

APPENDIX F

CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHEET

Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athlete Inclusion in Intercollegiate Sport

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. By filling out this survey questionnaire you are consenting to participate in the study. By participating in this study, you are also certifying that you are 18 years of age or older and are currently competing in on an intercollegiate athletic team through your institution. You have been asked to participate in a research project investigating the levels of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender athlete inclusion in intercollegiate sport. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of current student-athletes towards competing with (on the same team with) and against (in competition) with lesbian, gay, and bisexual athletes and transgender athletes, separately. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a current student-athlete participating at an institution in the U.S.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a survey that includes a short demographic questionnaire consisting of 11 questions and survey “Support for LGBT Student-Athlete Inclusion” consisting of 8 questions that are all Likert-style questions. The entire process will take you about 5 minutes to complete, depending on your rate of response.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal and are not considered to be greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

Participants who complete the survey will be given the option to enter a drawing to win one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards that will be randomly selected at the completion of the study. If participants choose not to participate in the drawing, their participation in the study will not be affected in any way.

Do I have to participate?

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is completely anonymous. No information that could directly identify you as a participant or the institution you compete for. Furthermore, research records will be stored securely and only Brooke Powers M.S.Ed. and Al Carlozzi, Ed.D., will have access to the records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Brooke Powers at 574-536-8100 or by e-mail bboyts@okstate.edu as well as Al Carlozzi Ed.D. at 918-594-8063 or by email at al.carlozzi@okstate.edu

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University upon proposal, expected by mid-March 2019.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. If I consent to take part in the study, please continue to complete the demographic questionnaire and Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athlete Inclusion in Intercollegiate Sport Questionnaire.

APPENDIX G



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 03/25/2019
Application Number: ED-19-34
Proposal Title: Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athlete Inclusion in Intercollegiate Sport

Principal Investigator: Brooke Powers
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Al F Carlozzi, EdD
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Conditionally Approved

The research procedures of the IRB application referenced above have been reviewed by the IRB and are conditionally approved pending receipt of documentation listed below. Once this documentation is received, full approval will be granted and an approval letter sent to the PI(s).

No research activities involving human subjects can begin prior to receipt of final approval.

Conditions of Approval:

Conditions Required for Approval: Changes needed to study information sheets to include Qualtrics (or online technology they are using) privacy practices and notice about future research. Re-review not required upon making these changes..

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Brooke Ann Powers

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: SUPPORT FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER
ATHLETE INCLUSION IN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT

Major Field: Counseling Psychology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling
Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
In July, 2021

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Education in Counseling
and Counselor Education at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN
in May, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Pre-Art Therapy and
Psychology at The University of Indianapolis in Indianapolis, IN
In May 2015