Champions of Women in Sport Coaching: An Analysis of the Hiring Procedures of Intercollegiate Head Coaches

Lindsey Darvin, State University of New York at Cortland
Nicole LaVoi, University of Minnesota
Courtney Boucher, University of Minnesota

Abstract 2021-164

20-minute oral presentation (including questions)
Mode: Synchronous
Friday June 4, 2021, 3:10 PM - 3:30 PM

The percentage of women head coaches throughout intercollegiate sport have remained stagnant over the last two decades. Scholars have attributed the underrepresentation of women head coaches to a leaking pipeline of women assistant coaches, determining that even when women do enter the coaching occupation, they are more likely to leave prior to reaching a head coach role (Hancock, 2016; LaVoi, 2016; Darvin, 2020). Previous literature has attributed this stagnation to a myriad of obstacles facing women in sport including a lack of knowledge about the field of sport coaching prior to entry, work-family balance, self-limiting behaviors, and treatment discrimination (Darvin, 2020). That being said, while there are many obstacles to entry, as well as sustainment, for women within the coaching occupation, recent homologous reproduction inquires have uncovered a positive trend in the hiring practices of head coaches (Darvin & Lubke, 2020). Specifically, male head coaches have continued to decrease their homologous reproduction hiring practices over the previous ten years while women head coaches have increased their engagement with homologous reproduction within their hiring. Given that previous inquires have determined that the assistant coach role is a significant pre-requisite to the successful attainment of a head coach position in the future (e.g. Darvin, Taylor, & Wells, 2019), this trend indicates an increasing number of allies and champions of women in sport coaching throughout the intercollegiate space. To our knowledge, limited to no data exists which uncovers the hiring procedures, processes, and considerations of intercollegiate head coaches in hiring their coaching staff, especially in terms of those coaches who are sponsoring and hiring women into the sport coaching profession. Therefore, it is critically important to further understand the hiring procedures and considerations of intercollegiate head coaches who are documented as hiring and maintaining all women assistant coaching staffs (Darvin & Lubke, 2020; LaVoi, Boucher, & Silber, 2019). In order to accomplish this task, a qualitative approach was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 NCAA division 1 coaches, 11 men and 7 women. Participants were identified and included based on maintaining a composition of 100% women assistant coaches on their staff during the 2018-19 season. The interview guide was designed to elicit themes related to the processes and considerations made by the participants (head coaches) related to hiring assistant coaches, as well as their experiences serving as an ally for women in sport coaching. Data analysis procedures will include the use of a third-party transcription service, followed by a thematic analysis procedure. Thematic analysis is a methodology that may be used to identify, organize, and offer insights regarding patterns of meaning across an entire set of data. As a result of focusing on meaning across the entire data set, thematic analysis allows the researcher(s) to both see and make sense of the collective experiences and shared meanings of all participants (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Following the analysis procedures, the results and implications will be shared.