

SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTING THE FEMALE ATHLETE:  
A MONOLITHIC MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF ACTIVE WOMEN

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COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

BY  
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DENTON, TEXAS  
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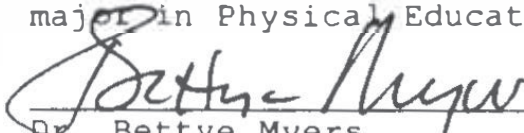
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November 1, 1999

Date

To the Associate Vice President for Research  
and Dean of the Graduate School.

I am submitting herewith a dissertation by Lea Ann "Beez"  
Schell entitled, "Socially Constructing the Female Athlete:  
A Monolithic Media Representation of Active Women." I have  
examined this dissertation for form and content and  
recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a  
major in Physical Education.

  
Dr. Betty Myers,  
Major Professor

  
Dr. Brenda Phillips,  
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its  
acceptance:







Department Chair

  
Dean of College

Accepted:



Associate Vice President for  
Research and Dean of the  
Graduate School

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COMPLETED RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY, Texas  
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The purpose of this study was to conduct a content analysis of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women, currently titled Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports and fitness, and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. All covers, sport and fitness feature articles, photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined using standardized worksheets and the hermeneutic method of textual interpretation. Results indicated that the magazine presents an homogenized image of active women that accentuates gender differences while creating a hierarchy between women based on race, dis/ability, age, body type, and sexual identity. With regard to women's sports, the magazine focused on the women athletes as character

portraits rather than as competitive athletes. The implications of these findings may involve the further trivialization of women's sports and women athletes and the silencing of minority women's experiences with sport and fitness.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of Title IX in 1972 and the fitness boom of the 1980s, the number of girls and women participating in competitive and recreational sports has increased (Acosta & Carpenter, 1996). Subsequently, more female athletes and women's sports have received international and national attention via television, newspaper, and magazines. Despite the seeming optimism that may be generated from such an increase in the amount of media attention given to women's sports, several sport scholars have examined sport media text for their meaning, especially the meanings related to gender issues. Magazines (Davis, 1997; Duncan, 1986, 1990, 1994; Duncan & Sayaovon, 1990; Endel, 1991; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998; Hilliard, 1984; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994), television (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991; Daddario, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Higgs & Weiller, 1994) and newspapers (Duncan, 1986; Theberge & Cronk, 1986) have been

critically analyzed for the amount and type of coverage given to women athletes. With few exceptions, researchers have found that the mainstream media contribute to dominant notions that sport primarily is a male domain and women athletes are "other" or inferior to male athletes (Duncan, 1990; Messner, 1988).

Two major themes are evident with regard to the mass media literature on female sport involvement. The first is that women athletes and women's sport are underrepresented in sport media coverage as compared to men's sport (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Daddarrio, 1984; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994; Theberge & Cronk, 1986). This "symbolic annihilation" (Gerber, 1978) of female sport participation and success gives a false impression that women are absent or are rarely involved with sport (Kane, 1996), especially team sports and male-identified individual sports (Duncan, 1988). The second theme involves the type of coverage given to women athletes and women's sport. Several researchers (Blinde et al., 1991; Boutilier & SanGiovanni,

1983; Duncan, 1986; Duncan, 1990; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Hilliard, 1984; Rintala & Birrell, 1984) have found that, when women are depicted in the sport media, their efforts are often trivialized or they are portrayed in stereotypical feminine ways. One insidious way that the media trivialize or sexualize women's sport efforts is through ambivalent reporting. Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) proposed that the media's use of ambivalent images and language is a clever process whereby the media provide both positive and negative messages about female athleticism. Both the quantity and quality of media coverage of women athletes and women's sport have contributed to a strict and narrow representation of the female athlete.

Few studies exist that explore women sports magazines' visual and textual content. Endel (1991) examined the cover, the editor's page, and selected feature stories of Women's Sports & Fitness (WS&F) (earlier titled womenSports and Women's Sport) magazine published between 1974 and 1989. Endel found that, during the 15 years of publication and three title changes, the magazine transformed from one

that celebrated women's strength and power in sport to one that sexualized and depoliticized women's involvement in sport. Similarly, Leath and Lumpkin (1992) reviewed the feature articles and covers of WS&F magazines published between 1975 and 1989. The authors concluded that, with the magazine's shift in focus during the 1980s, the focus on recreation and fitness could reinforce stereotypical notions about women in sport being noncompetitive and interested only in sex-appropriate sports. The results from these studies indicate that the media texts written for women in sport may support the negative representations of women athletes and women's sport that are frequently promoted in other sport media texts.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contents of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women/Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports and fitness and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. By utilizing a standardized worksheet based on prior content analysis of sports media texts

(Duncan, 1990; Endel, 1991; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991) and the hermeneutic method, aspects of the magazine including covers, feature articles, photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined from a feminist perspective.

### Problem Statement

Several studies (Davis, 1997; Duncan, 1986, 1990; Hilliard, 1984; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994) have explored the amount and type of coverage given to women athletes and women's sports in mainstream and male-oriented sport magazines, such as Sports Illustrated, Sport, Young Athlete, Newsweek, and Time. Because of the limited number of women-oriented sports magazines, few researchers have analyzed whether or not similar representations appear in women-only sport media texts. This investigation evaluated existing research and worked to confirm, challenge, or modify those findings. The use of feminist cultural theory offered a new perspective and represented the distention of the interpretations in existing literature, such as

stereotypical femininity (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Higgs & Weiller, 1994), female submissivity and compulsory heterosexuality (Duncan, 1990; Pirinen, 1997), and passivity and disempowerment (Duncan, 1993; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Endel, 1991; Pirinen, 1997)

### Research Questions

Based on the patterns evident in the literature regarding media representations of women in sport, and an initial evaluation of possible categories for content analysis of CN/WS&F magazine, four main research questions were formulated:

1. How are women's sports, women athletes, and active (fitness) women represented in the covers, photographs, feature articles, and editor's letters of the magazine?
2. What kinds of women are depicted and in what ways?
3. Do these representations support or contradict the messages provided by the magazine's editor?

4. What, if any, implications do the representations in the magazine have for women's sports, women athletes, active women, and feminist sport researchers?

#### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

Fitness article. For the purpose of this study, the feature article was identified if there was attention directed to "recreational and leisure activities" (Endel, 1991, p. 119) meant to improve cardiovascular and muscular endurance and/or flexibility.

Grounded theory. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), grounded theory "is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. .it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (p. 23).

Hermeneutics. "Hermeneutics is text-oriented interpretation" (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 25). The method "is increasingly used in the social sciences, as the



understanding of what a text has grown to encompass, not merely written inscriptions but different types of human phenomena" (Duncan, 1986, p. 51).

Ideology. "The complex of ideas in society and their expression in social institutions. .which in turn dominate the way we live and how we understand the world around us" (Downing, Mohammadi & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990, p. 366).

Representation. May be recognized as "constructions taken from a specific social and physical viewpoint, selecting one activity or instant out of vast choices to represent, and materially made out of and formed by the technical process of the medium and its conventions" (King, 1992, p. 131).

Ricoeurian hermeneutics. The theory of hermeneutics as developed by philosopher Paul Ricoeur.

Sports article. For the purpose of this study, the sports article was identified if the story was about "the sporting achievements of athletes, coaches, and significant sports figures" (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992, p. 122), or "sportswomen who were actually athletes with accompanying

settings signifying a position within a sport environment" (Endel, 1991, p. 119).

Taxonomic analysis. An analytical method in qualitative research that looks at "the relationships among all the included terms in a domain. .reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole" (Spradley, 1980, p. 113).

Texts. "A work of discourse submitted to the condition of inscription" (Thompson, 1981, p. 51) that may be written, spoken, or cultural (Riceaur, 1981).

#### Limitations

This study was limited by the following factors:

1. Generalizing of findings because as of January, 1999, the studied text was the only mainstream women's sports magazine that claimed to be written for women.
2. The existence of particular categories, or codes, in the written and visual texts that are not delineated by the researcher because only selected aspects of the text were analyzed.

3. Representativeness of the entire magazine because only selected elements were analyzed.

#### Delimitations

The parameters for this study were defined by the following factors:

1. The sample for this study included 13 issues of CN/WS&F magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999.
2. Selected magazine elements that were analyzed included all covers, one sport feature story, and one fitness feature story from each issue, identified feature story photographs, and all editor's letters.
3. Quantitative information was derived from a standardized worksheet created by the researcher based on prior content analysis and feedback given by three professional reviewers.
4. Qualitative information was derived from the magazines via the hermeneutic method.
5. Selected variables emerged from these original resources using the worksheet and the hermeneutic method.

### Summary

Limited research exists that explores the representations of women athletes and women's sports and fitness in texts written by, about, and for women. This research analyzed elements of 13 issues of the CN/WS&F magazine, the oldest and only women's sports and fitness magazine in publication as of January 1999, to explore the visual and textual representations of women athletes and women's sports. The content analysis, using the hermeneutic method of textual interpretation, involved coding the written and visual elements of the magazine to support or refute existing theoretical categories and identify emergent themes. Through theoretical analysis using concepts and perspectives from feminist theory, insight was gained as to the amount and types of representations of women athletes and women's sport and fitness that are provided by a sports magazine produced by, about, and for women.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contents of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women, currently titled Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports and fitness and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. By utilizing standardized worksheets and the hermeneutic method, aspects of the magazine including covers, feature articles, photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined. The following literature review is presented in three sections: (a) feminist perspectives of culture, (b) media representations of women athletes and women's sports, and (c) feminist cultural criticism of sport research.

#### Feminist Perspectives of Culture

Assuming that most women throughout time and across cultures have endured subordination and have somehow worked

to resist that subordination, it may be said that there has always existed a feminist consciousness (Lerner, 1993).

Yet, it has only been in the last half of this century that formal feminist theories have been identified to address how and why societies develop particular sex/gender systems (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 1996). Feminist theorists, generally speaking, challenge and critique the patriarchal frameworks of the dominant culture(s) and seek to develop new theories that consider the diverse range of women and their experiences. Lengermann and Niebrugge described three ways that feminist theory is woma(e)n-centered:

First, its major 'object' of investigation. .is the situation (or the situations) and experiences of women in society. Second, it treats women as the central 'subjects' in the investigative process; that is, it seeks to see the world from the distinctive vantage points of women in the social world. Third, feminist theory is critical and activist on behalf of women, seeking to produce a better world for women - and thus, it argues, for humankind (p. 436).

Cultural, liberal, radical, socialist, and psychoanalytic feminisms represent some of the existing

perspectives within contemporary feminist theory that seek to understand the origins and outcomes of women's relationships to themselves and society. Each perspective's attention generally remains focused on women in order to create a better understanding of the full range of human experience; yet because of the plurality of feminist theory, it is difficult to make clear distinctions within and among each philosophical framework. In fact, it is not uncommon to have "these different strands [of theories]. .often woven together" (Sapiro, 1994, p. 471) in order to approach a particular sex/gender issue. The categories delineated by Lengermann & Niebrugge (1996) will be described and it must be noted that these groupings are neither universal nor exclusive.

Different feminist perspectives may be arranged based on each theory's "response" to three questions: (a) what about the women? (b) why is it this way for women?, and (c) what are the differences among women? (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 1996). The first class of theories proposes that "women's location in, and experience of, most situations is different from that of the men in those situations" (p. 444). The second class recognizes gender differences and

that women are less privileged in those situations. The third class addresses the issue of power over women, or that "women are oppressed. . .restrained, subordinated, molded and used and abused by men" (p. 444). The fourth class, or third-wave feminism, recognizes the differences among women based on "their total locatedness within societies' stratificational arrangements or vectors of oppression and privilege" (p. 444). This final category has emerged from feminist concerns over the homogenizing effect of gender-only theorizing. Third-wave feminists focus on the diversity of women's experiences from the perspective of oppressed women, also termed "standpoint epistemology" (Harding, 1993, p. 51); they "critique existing concepts in feminist theory" (Lengermann & Niebrugge, p. 469) such as "woman," "gender," and "race"; and they seek to understand how various forms of oppression and privilege affect women's individual and collective experiences.

One example of third-wave feminist work is Spelman's book, Inessential Woman (1988), in which she described how many Western feminist writers have assumed there to be an 'essential' or basic sense of woman-ness. Essentializing 'woman' is to disregard differences in women's sexualities,



racism, class statuses, physical/mental functions etc., and to assume that one woman's experience may be representative of all women. Spelman also suggested that "feminists have also assumed that sexism is distinctly different from racism and classism, that whether and how one is subject to sexism is unaffected by whether and how one is subject to racism or classism" (p. 81). Thus, if sexism is held as a constant we should be able to overcome women's subordination to men. Unfortunately, such a premise does not recognize the interconnectedness of oppressions and offers a simplistic solution to complex problems. As Lorde (1995) described the predicament faced by those who seek to redefine difference, "for we have, built in all of us, old blueprints of expectations and response, old structures of oppressions, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of these structures" (p. 271).

Determining which oppression is more fundamental is also being tested by feminist theorists. Saying that women are subject to sexism is to assume that all women experience sexism in the same way. The "ampersand problem" (Spelman, 1988, p. 114) describes how some feminist writers

have viewed oppression as additive where sexism, racism, and classism build upon each other rather than being different burdens. Wing (1997) furthered this notion by describing how her experience is not an addition-type formula, but that "I am an indivisible black female with a multiple consciousness" (p. 30). What Wing asserted is that she cannot be considered as "merely the sum of separate parts that can be added together or subtracted from" (p. 31); rather she (and other black women) is one human being who, when multiplied by another factor, remains one. And, Grillo and Wildman (1997) described how discussions of oppression often lead individuals to assert that because they understand sexism they automatically understand racism. Such a comparison "minimizes the impact of racism, rendering it an insignificant phenomenon" (Grillo & Wildman, 1997, p. 43). Most of these examples, while stressing the need to recognize multiple layers of existence and oppression, often forget to include other factors that influence uniqueness of experience such as sexual identity and physical/mental functioning. Marginalizing elements of oppression can lead to wrongly

assuming that all women are the same and all oppressions incite similar experiences.

From a feminist perspective of culture, issues involving the representations and interpretations of women in culture and the association of these representations to systems of power become more lucid. For example, in her analysis of the complex cultural influences on the female body, Bordo (1993) recognized that the mass cultural images of women are often homogenized and normalized rather than expressive of variances between women. Such homogenizing images "will smooth out all racial, ethnic, and sexual 'differences' that disturb Anglo-Saxon, heterosexual expectations and identifications" (p. 25). Similarly, the normalized image becomes the yardstick from which women measure and judge themselves. Both of these forms "have dominance" (p. 29) and women assume an active role in following "the routes to success in this culture" (p. 30) by buying the products and services that promote the images. Yet, through feminist cultural criticism of such images, there does exist the possibility of subversive resistance and an "enhanced consciousness of the power, complexity, and systematic nature of culture, the

interconnected webs of its functioning" (p. 30).

### Feminist Cultural Perspectives on Media Images of Women

All language is discourse (written and/or spoken), and there are four key assumptions about language: it (a) always occurs in a context, (b) is context sensitive, (c) is always communicative, and (d) is designed for communication (Schiffrin, 1987). The context in which language is produced may range from cultural contexts (shared worldviews) to social contexts (self and situations constructed) to cognitive contexts (past knowledge and experiences). The sensitivity of language is such that discourse may actually reflect and situate that context. When discourse is fixed in writing rather than in speech it may be termed a "text" (Ricoeur, 1981). The writer and the reader do not exchange discourse in the same manner as the speaker and responder in that the act of writing and reading intercepts the immediate relationship obtained in a dialogue. Two additional characteristics of creating the written text are one, that it "preserves discourse and makes it an archive available for individual and collective memory" (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 147) and, two, opens itself up to be being minutely examined.

Transformations can take place when spoken discourse becomes inscribed in writing. The medium (transient to fixed), the speaker (direct association to disassociation from text), the hearer (known hearer to universal audience), the code (particular rules tied to dialogue to particular rules tied to genre types), and the referent (direct to implied) all endure an alteration when moving from verbal dialogue to inscription; thus the written text becomes an object of study (Ricoeur, 1976). It is for these reasons that written texts are often the focus of critical analysis in the social sciences. For the purpose of this study, research will be discussed that has explored the manner in which women have been represented in media texts, specifically women's magazines.

In Western culture, there exist various media that stimulate discourse within a diversity of audiences. Print, visual, and sound media have been tailored to meet the demands of a broad range of consumers as well as to offer services to very specific groups, such as African-Americans (Ebony magazine), teenagers (NBC-TV Saturday morning shows), pet owners (Cat Fancy magazine), and educators (The Chronicle of Higher Education). The

discourses created in such texts offer popular representations of the referent, or subject matter, that may either be accepted or challenged by the reader. Within the social sciences there has been a growing interest in understanding such media-created representations and symbolizations (Barrett, 1992), and what effect that these have on the public, and visa versa. For example, Rhode (1995) found that the mass media played a large role in many of the defeats and advances made during the 1960s-1970s feminist movement. Rhode suggested that many of the frustrations endured by these feminists were partly due to the dearth of women in power positions within the media, the "inattention to women and 'women's issues'" (p. 687), and press coverage that "demonize, trivialize, and unduly personalize feminist struggles" (p. 686). Yet, as the public's concern grew about women's issues, the media responded by promoting women into decision making positions and providing more impartial coverage to "feminism, feminists, and gender-related issues" (p. 685).

Cultural representations of women in magazines. A feminist focus on cultural representations considers the ways that women are represented in media discourse and the

influence this has on male and female readers. Of course it is possible to have multiple readings of a particular representation, yet to focus solely on the multiple readings may prevent understanding the everyday arrangement of mass cultural representations of "masculinity, femininity, beauty, and success" (Bordo, 1993, p. 24). Smith (1988) proposed that femininity may be considered a social text that "can be examined as actual practices, actual activities, taking place in real time, in real places using definite material means and under definite material conditions" (p. 38). This 'femininity as text' does not assume that women are passive recipients of the media's influence or male power, rather women participate in "creating themselves" (p. 39) and work toward the overall organization of the relationship. There exists a constant interplay between the text and society that contributes to the structuring of everyday life and social relations so that "within discourse there is play and interplay" (p. 54).

The "structuring of desire" (Smith, 1988, p. 47), in the notion of femininity as discourse, seeks to create a desire in individual women to look, act, and be the perfect

image reflected in the popular media. The media, especially advertisers, do not control but must be in touch with what customers are telling them and respond accordingly. At the personal, or local, level women may follow this desire and actively participate in the discourse (via using particular make-up, jewelry, and clothing) while, at the same time, contributing to the construction of 'femininity' (p. 39). So, there exists a connection between women's subjectivities and the power of consumer institutions that limit and connect specific meanings to the experiences of woman.

One particular medium that "educate[s] their readers in the moral dimensions of femininity as well as in the local production of discursive appearance" (Smith, 1988, p. 46) is women's magazines. Being that women's magazines are often for women, about women and sometimes by women, it may be difficult to believe that this medium includes dominant notions about women that ensure women's subordination in a patriarchal society (Winship, 1978, p. 135). Focusing on British women's magazines, Ferguson (1983) noted the specialized messages and longevity of the medium are what make women's magazines different from mass media texts.



Including the articles, pictures, and advertisements, women's magazines "tell women what to think and do about themselves, their lovers, their husbands, parents, children, colleagues, neighbors, or bosses" (p. 2).

Likening the effect of women's magazines to a religious cult, the "cult of femininity" (p. 11) relies on devoted readers, tailored messages to acquire new readers and maintain current ones, someone to control the messages, and a marker of membership.

The editor of the women's magazine plays an important role in reinforcing the cult of femininity. These "high priestesses" make numerous decisions based on advice given by a variety of players (photographers, copy editors, budgets, etc.), but ultimately "it is she who selects the content of the magazine" (p. 119). The editor's decisions are of great social significance in that she/he is selecting 'what will be included or excluded from the agenda of feminine concerns" (p. 131). These decisions are developed into a layout that includes particular camera angles, words, and symbols that are developed around cultural notions of femininity. The messages conveyed in the representations of women in these magazines "continues

to be that women are uniquely different, [and] they require separate treatment and instruction in ways that men do not" (p. 190).

Women's magazines are also sites of pleasure and suppliers of dominant notions of class, sex, and racial differences (Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, & Hebron, 1991). Although some transformations occurred in women's magazines between the late 1700s (the first women's magazines) and the late 1900s, the magazines have consistently worked to address female readers and maintain their social function: "rather than direct or influence the female social body, [the magazines] find themselves reproducing those very contradictions and paradoxes they ostensibly promise to resolve" (p. 173). Nonetheless, many women experience or seek pleasure, not necessarily sexual pleasure, in reading women's magazines. This pleasure is heightened when the text is positioned as to embrace and situate the reader as an ally (Pearce, 1995).

Pleasure is also found in the viewing of an object and in most cases, women are objects of the male view, or gaze. But, in the case of women's magazines, the object is woman and the gazer/reader/subject is woman. It may be possible

for a reader's lesbian desire to be projected onto these texts. Or, the gaze may be "the adoption of a masculine subject position in relation to the female image or as an indicator of the continuing symmetry of the terms 'woman' and 'commodity' even for women themselves" (Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer, & Hebron, 1991, p. 38). With regard to the female reader's pleasure in becoming the subjective viewer, such a feeling is precarious because she ultimately exists in a social reality that posits her as an object. Such a reading is pleasurable in that it is not only rousing but offers safe respite from the social reality. Although the notion of the female gaze may be commended for discovering resistance in women's ways of seeing images and constructing meaning, women investing in their own objectification may be sustaining a dangerous practice (Walters, 1995). Nonetheless, women's resistance is important especially "what women do with all this resistance, how they use it and work with it in their everyday lives" (Walters, p. 114). In order for resistance to have any significance, it must be directed toward altering women's current social condition.

## Media Representation of Women Athletes and Women's Sports

One area that is receiving more attention from feminist and feminist cultural researchers is on women's representation in sport and fitness media. The media can provide instructions to interpret certain events based on dominant societal ideology in order to give viewers more than 'just' a sporting event (Hargreaves, 1986). For example, media representations of female and male athleticism continue to reinforce the unequal power dynamic between men and women in sport (Messner, 1988). Such perspectives are supported by research about the unequal amount and type of coverage given to women athletes as compared to male athletes.

As the popularity of women's sport grew after the passage of Title IX in 1972, various sport sociologists examined the television and print media as texts. The studies generally focus on two areas: (a) the amount of coverage given to male and female athletes and (b) the content of that coverage. With few exceptions, researchers have found that the mainstream media contribute to dominant notions that sport primarily is a male domain (Messner, 1988) and women athletes are inferior to male athletes

(Duncan, 1990; Messner, 1988). Other findings have included trivialization, sexualization, and heterosexualization of female athletes and women's sport (Birrell & Theberge, 1994; Kane, 1989). While earliest research compared the differences in coverage given to men and women, more recent efforts explore hierarchical relations between women. The following sections will explore the topics of (a) underrepresentation and trivialization of women in the sport media, (b) sexualization and heterosexualization of women in the sport media, (c) invisibility of minority women in the sport media, and (d) body monitoring of women in fitness.

### Underrepresentation and Trivialization

Two major themes emerging from research on media representations of women athletes and women's sports involve the underreporting and biased coverage given to female athletes. Disparities in a variety of media have been found to exist between the amount and type of coverage given to men as compared to women, as well as coverage given to certain groups of women. The lack of representation combined with the stereotypical manner in which women are depicted may lead many to believe that few

women are interested in sports and those who do participate are successful only when they "fit" traditional standards of appropriate female behavior.

Much of the early research in media representation focus on gender differences in coverage, and the media strategies that can reinforce a power differential between male and female athleticism. Generally, men's sports receive considerably more media attention than women's sports (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Theberge & Cronk, 1986). When women are the focus of media attention, the coverage often trivializes their efforts. Ambivalent reporting is one insidious way that the media trivialize women's sports efforts. The media's use of ambivalent images and language is a clever process whereby the media provide both positive (strength descriptors) and negative (weakness descriptors) messages about female athleticism (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) found that the visual and verbal ambivalence throughout the coverage contributed to a denial of power to women athletes: "ambivalence in positive portrayals stressing women's strength, skill, or expertise along with negative

suggestions that trivialized the women's efforts or implied that they were unsuited to sport" (p. 18). Trivialization can also exist with regard to the technical quality of telecasts (Duncan, Messner, Williams, & Jensen, 1990) as women's sports "have a lower budge feel to them" (p. 266) which depict "a less-than-dramatic game" (p. 267).

In addition to ambivalent reporting, the men's game and male players are often the standards used for comparing and describing the women's games and players (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991). More attention is also given to the women players' nonsport activities (such as academic and/or social honors) and unexpected displays of athleticism, while the skills of the male players are not as surprising because their "performances. . .are generally taken for granted" (p. 107). In the case of basketball when, despite networks' attempts to telecast more women's basketball games and "grant a certain legitimacy to women's basketball" (p. 111), they "undermine this message by reproducing images and descriptions that subtly devalue, trivialize, and marginalize women's basketball" (p. 111).

Some of the most apparent underrepresentations and stereotypes of women's sports are found in sports magazines

designed for adult males. A number of studies have critically analyzed Sports Illustrated (SI), a predominately male-oriented sports magazine, for its amount and type of coverage given to women's sports and female athletes. Early research revealed that women and minority women were grossly underrepresented in the magazine. For example, of 1,250 SI covers published from 1954 to 1978, women appeared on 115 covers and only 55 of these were female athletes who mostly represented individual sports, such as tennis professional Billie Jean King and golfer Nancy Lopez (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983). Even the 1979 SI Silver Anniversary Issue that included 25 years of sport photographs, included only 10% of women-only pictures and less than 3% were of minority women. All of the pictured sportswomen competed in individual rather than team sports, and in most of the photos the women were posed in passive stances that "captured their personality rather than their active athleticism" (p. 210).

The aforementioned research must be considered in light of the fact that the impact of Title IX was not felt until the 1980s. Before this time, women were given limited opportunities to compete in school sponsored sports and



very few chances to compete in professional sports; thus, the limited coverage allotted to women athletes in sports magazines like SI. As was stated in 1972, "the coverage [of women] in Sports Illustrated, however minimal, has been the best coverage of women available" (Gerber, Felshin, Berlin, & Wyrick, 1974, p. 253). Yet, more current research findings indicate that SI still lags behind the changing patterns emerging in women's sports. For example, a greater number of women and women of color participate at all levels of sport, yet remain absent in the covers, pages, and photographs of SI. Only 5.1% of SI covers in the 1980s were of women athletes, and the photographed women represented individual sports such as tennis, track and field, swimming, and skiing (Salwen & Wood, 1994). Of 3,723 features published between 1954 and 1987, only 8% (280) were of female athletes and only 16 articles were of Black women (Lumpkins & Williams, 1991). Moreover, the descriptors used by male SI authors were markedly sexist and "perpetuate[d] and reinforce[d] traditional images and stereotypes of blacks and women in sport" (p. 30).

Although more coverage is being devoted to women's elite sport, biases still exist in media's framing of elite

women athletes competing in the Olympics. Daddario (1994) analyzed "the overall packaging of women's Olympic sports coverage" (p. 278) and found four "strategies" that were used by the media to marginalize the female athletes: (a) condescending descriptors and imagery, (b) compensatory rhetoric (blaming the athlete for her failures), (c) adolescent ideal (infantilization), and (d) cooperative athletes rather than competitive athletes. The media's production of televised sport continues undermining women's athletic achievements and reproducing "the sexist ideology that pervades the sport industry" (p. 286). Similarly, Higgs and Weiller (1994) analyzed NBC's coverage of men and women competing the 1992 Summer Olympic Games and found that the on-air time given to covering women's sport was comparable to the men's. However, male athletes received considerably more coverage in the two "power" (p. 236) events of basketball and volleyball while the highest percentage of coverage for women was in the traditional female sports of gymnastics, tennis, cycling, and rowing. Despite any promising results, the narrative still focused on the trivialization and sexualization of women athletes by "gender marking of women's events, sexist descriptors,

biased commentary. .ambivalent reporting. .the drama focused more on the personalities of athletes than on the competition" (p. 245).

The underrepresentation and trivialization of female athletes exist in sport texts available for young readers. Beginning in 1975, Young Athlete targeted males and females ages 12 to 22 and had an estimated readership of 1.4 million in 1982. Focusing on a publication directed at a younger audience is important because "Young Athlete has the potential to act as a socializing agent by presenting new images of girls in sport or by reinforcing old images" (Rintala & Birrell, 1984, p. 232). Rintala and Birrell (1984) examined 45 issues published between 1975 and 1982 and found that, although Young Athlete was not as sexist in its representation of women athletes as compared to "staunchly ultra-conservative sport magazines as Sports Illustrated" (p. 247), Young Athlete did create an impression that sport is dominated by males and that few females are available as sport models for children. Few females were pictured or described as participating in team sports, including those sports dominated by females such as field hockey, softball, and volleyball. Similarly, few

females were shown playing contact, or traditionally male identified sports, but were more likely to be shown engaging in individual sports such as gymnastics and figure skating.

Similar themes are present in the Sports Illustrated for Kids (SIK) magazine, which is a more recent publication for young readers between the ages of 8 and 13 with nearly 25% of the subscribers being female (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990). One surprising finding was the relatively high percentage of females shown in high-risk sports such as car racing and rock climbing. For the most part, the photographs "tended to contribute to the ideology of difference by depicting females and males as having different strengths, different preferences, different personality traits, and different roles" (p. 108), and these depictions may work to limit various sport options for females. Despite many negative representations found in the magazine, "a few photographs" (p. 112) and accompanying text challenged the ideology of sexual difference and featured females who were successfully participating in male identified activities. On the other hand, some pictures and stories that promised to resist dominant

stereotypical images were undercut by ambivalent messages that supported gender variance: "an explicit denial of sexual difference coexisting with an implicit insistence on sexual difference, a mixed message par excellence" (p. 112).

### Sexualization and Heterosexualization

The sexualization and heterosexualization of women athletes and women's sports are related themes emerging in analyses of sport media. In written texts, visual images, and spoken commentaries, women athletes are often portrayed as sexual objects available for male consumption rather than as competitive athletes. When notable female athletes are not being sexualized, female models are often used to portray "ideal" (feminine) athleticism or to represent society's traditional notions of women's role in sport (as passive objects of men's pleasure). One reason for the emphasis on femininity and heterosexuality may be linked to the demands made by corporate sponsors and paying spectators: "the athletes and journalists, as participants in an ongoing commercial athletic system, may enter into an unspoken complicity to present an image that emphasizes underlying femininity" (Hilliard, 1984, p. 261). For

example, the media guide for the 1987 Northwestern Louisiana State women's basketball season pictured team members wearing Playboy bunny ears and tails. Regardless of the reason, such media tactics reinforce stereotypical notions about women's 'rightful' place in sport and emphasize the differences between males and females.

The sexualizing of women in sport occurs in magazines written specifically for women in sport. In these magazines, certain portrayals create an image of a "heterosexy" female athlete who can be athletic while maintaining heterosexual sex appeal and gaining men's sexual attention. The "heterosexy image" (Griffin, 1998, p. 75) is used to reinforce the notion that sport does not detract from a woman's femininity (synonymous with heterosexuality). By emphasizing physical appearance and femininity over athletic skill and strength, such magazines fail to challenge popular images of 'appropriate' feminine behavior. And, because these representations appear in women's magazines, they may be considered more damaging as they imply agreement to similar images found in general and men's magazines.

The following example demonstrates how consumer demand

and mass culture images of women can influence changing representations of women in sport. The first mass produced magazine showcasing eminent women in sport was originally published in 1974 under the title of womenSports (Endel, 1991). Throughout its 15 years of publication, the researchers found that the magazine altered its focus, its name, and changed from one that celebrated women's strength and power in sport to one that sexualized and depoliticized women's sport involvement. In the first 10 years, the magazine's cover photographs focused on "strong sportswomen within a competitive framing" (Endel, p. 135) and showed a wide variety of sporting activities. The magazine shifted focus after 1984 with the advent of the fitness boom and "to promote fitness consumerism via use of fashion models" (p. 135). The editor's letter also shifted from being highly public, resistant and political to being private, politically passive, and "replace[d] development of the body as instrument to a development as the body of object" (p. 149). From the beginning, "the majority of feature stories framed women primarily in terms of their social identity, in their relationships with significant men in their lives, or by their feminine physical

appearance or emotional status (p. 157), and rarely were women athletes of color given any mention (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992). As the magazine replaced sportswomen with fashion models, the number of articles focused on women as sports figures declined while articles that espoused the benefits of recreation and fitness activities increased. In fact, more fashion models than recognized athletes were pictured on the covers (Leath & Lumpkin). Personal bodily improvement via physical activity, diet, nutrition, and fashion became the magazine's focus in the 1980s. This shift reinforces stereotypical notions about women in sport being noncompetitive and interested only in sex-appropriate sport and diverts attention away from women's achievements as serious athletes.

One way to sexualize a woman athlete in the media is to focus on her physical appearance. Most often, the "feminine-looking female body" (Pirinen, 1997, p. 295) is privileged over "the masculine-looking female body" (p. 296) because femininity is equated with appropriate female behavior. Characteristics of the feminine-looking body include smiling, attractive, slender, long blonde hair, and not too muscular (Pirinen). Another means to sexualize the



woman athlete is to focus on her private life and personal relationships by including articles about her boyfriend, fiancée, and/or ex-boyfriends, while "all other presentations of self as sexual beings were made invisible and thus signified as nonexistent and unacceptable" (p. 297). Similar to the feminine-looking woman, the heterosexual woman is privileged over the nonsexual or lesbian athlete, which, in turn, reinforces the natural or normal distinction between male and female, and heterosexual and homosexual. Thus, hierarchies exist between representations of different types of women. Those afforded privileged positions are women with feminine looking bodies who can prove their heterosexuality.

The emphasis on women in sport to create and maintain a heterosexual appeal extends to sports magazines published mostly for male consumption. Davis (1997), in a thorough analysis of SI's Swimsuit Issues which picture beautiful models in revealing swimwear, argued that one defining principle of the swimsuit edition is the assumption that all readers are heterosexual; therefore, consumer response to the text depends upon one's gender. According to interviews, the readers generally stated that "men are

naturally attracted to looking at the swimsuit issue" while "women either hold a neutral or opposition opinion" (p. 48). The possibility of women reading the magazine for sexual reasons, or men not being at all interested in (or opposed to) the edition, was not considered an option being that heterosexuality is assumed to be universal and natural. Therefore, the magazine allows "heterosexual men to [publicly] flaunt their heterosexuality to enhance their masculine status" (p. 54).

The sexualization of women in sport also applies to minority women. In the swimsuit issue, the near absence of racially diverse female models eulogizes the white, European standard of beauty which emphasizes "light-color and straight hair, and mostly have blue eyes" (Davis, 1997, p. 91) while excluding "women with dark skin, black and curly hair, and big noses" (p. 92). Historically, the swimsuit issues rarely include women of color and when women with African ancestry were pictured they "typically possessed very light-color skin and the facial features that conform to the Anglo-American beauty ideal" (p. 90). In addition to Black women's underrepresentation, even fewer women of Asian, Latina, or Native American heritages

have been used as models. The exotic settings for many of the photographs also contribute to the stereotypical notion that "people from post (colonized) lands are inferior because they are culturally and sexually exotic, uncivilized, and feminized people of color who have a natural inclination for serving other people" (p. 116)

Sport photographs that portray women and women athletes in highly sexualized ways contribute to popular notions of femininity and masculinity. The subject's position and photographic techniques used to capture her image can add to or change the meaning of the representation (Duncan, 1990). Generally, the physical appearance of photographed women suggests that only the most glamorous women athletes are worthy of being photographed, and their poses often resemble soft-core pornography (Duncan, 1990). The position of the body in a photograph "may signify femininity" (p. 34) when the female athlete is in a submissive posture that includes head tilting and lower physical positions. Often times, the camera angle will set the female athlete at below-the-eye, thus suggesting inferiority and smallness, and she is frequently pictured crying and in nonactive poses. Such

photographs emphasize differences between male and female athletes that support the dominant ideology that women in sport are inferior to men and "in a position of weakness" (p. 40). However, when images of beautiful and physically powerful women are available, opportunities may emerge for other images of powerful women to be pictured in sports magazines.

### Body Monitoring

Consistent with the sexualization of women in sports is the representation of women in women's fitness texts. Highly theoretical approaches have been used to understand how women's fitness magazines influence women's relationships with their bodies. Not unlike the images of women athletes, women engaged in noncompetitive physical fitness activities are depicted in ways that maintain stereotypical notions of ideal femininity and encourage women to seek fitness activities for the sake of beauty rather than health.

One way to understand why females in American culture become obsessed with the need to pursue and attain unrealistic bodily perfection is to use Foucault's notion of the panopticon (Duncan, 1994; Foucault, 1979).

Essentially, the panopticon is "a prison structure that places a guard tower at its center and positions prisoners in a circle around that center" (Duncan, p. 50). With this physical layout, the prisoners become self-monitors of their behavior because they constantly assume that they are being watched from the tower, regardless of whether a guard is present or not. This form of hidden supervision compares to patriarchal notions of femininity that exist for women in our society. Reinforced with media depictions of the female bodily ideal, the panoptic gaze is elusively present and encourages women to self-monitor their behaviors as being either compatible with or threatening the attainment of female beauty.

Duncan studied two 1992 issues of Shape magazine and its "Success Stories" feature column to demonstrate how the panoptic gaze is integral to women's self-monitoring of their bodies. Shape's "Success Stories" column often features a woman reader who confesses her dissatisfaction with personal problems, aspects of her eating and/ or exercise behaviors, and her bodily appearance. Such confessional-type stories perpetuate the belief that each woman is to blame for her emotional and physical

imperfections, and "all that is needed to fix the problem is a little personal initiative, a concern for health, and the right diet and exercise plan. .and then one is beautifully transformed" (P. 61). Rather than questioning the unattainable feminine bodily standards, the media consistently focus on women, as individuals, as being able (successful) or unable (failure) to meet these standards. Thus, the media (especially women's magazines), or the public arena, become social tools for encouraging the panopticon gaze as a way for women to self-monitor their relation to socially prescribed feminine ideals.

Taking this research a step further, Eskes, Duncan, and Miller (1998) referred to Foucault (1979) and Marcuse (1964) to structure their research about the 1996 issues of Fitness and Shape magazines in order to find meanings that encourage women to seek empowerment and physical attractiveness through fitness at the expense of personal resources. Foucault's notion of the panoptic gaze was one of the primary theories framing this study, and Marcuse's work was included because it "offers an argument complementary to Foucault's discussion of power relations" (p. 320). While it is recognized that exercise can be

empowering, "this empowerment offered in fitness magazines is framed in such a way that true health is bypassed for the sake of beauty" (p. 340). Several contradictions between empowering images of women and traditional images of ideal feminine beauty were also found to undermine any resistance to the dominant ideology of what makes "real" women. Certain words used in feminist language, such as "strong, choice, and empowerment" (p. 341) that once were considered counter-ideological have been adopted by fitness texts to encourage women to seek false needs, such as obtaining a perfect body at the expense of personal health. While such magazines may contain positive images of women and encourage awareness for health and wellness, the existence of text and pictures that promote unattainable beauty often subvert the empowering images.

#### Marginalization of Minority Women Athletes

In most of the aforementioned research, little consideration was given to minority women in sport when, in fact, many of the issues are compounded when the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and physical/mental functions are considered. Issues of marginalization, trivialization, and underrepresentation of

minority women exist in the popular and sport media and in feminist critical research of such texts (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). In media coverage of women in sport, the absence of minority women lends to the traditional notion that sport, and sport consumption, is for white, heterosexual, able bodied women. Female athletes not meeting American society's criteria of what constitutes ideal femininity, both in physical and mental characteristics, are often excluded from written and visual texts.

In the U.S. sports press, non-White women of color have received considerably less coverage than their white female counterparts and have often been depicted in a racially stereotypical manner (Davis, 1997). Although most feminist critical analysis of the sports media have focused solely on gender and have ignored racial disparities and non-White media texts, more recent studies are beginning to include race in textual analysis (Williams, 1994; Williams & Lumpkin, 1990). For example, of 151 Women's Sports and Fitness magazine covers published between 1975 and 1989, only 12 were women of color, all Black women, and only 8% of the feature articles were written about Black women with



nearly 70% of these articles focused on track athletes or basketball players (Leath and Lumpkin, 1992): "The sparse coverage given the accomplishments of black athletes could be attributed to marketing economics, fewer black female athletes in sports, or racial discrimination" (p. 125).

Such findings indicate that the invisibility of sportswomen of color is not confined to the mainstream sport publications targeted primarily to male readers (Kane, 1996).

The underrepresentation of African-American women in the white sport media leads many to believe that this group has no sport history, and the media's depiction of the Black woman's experience in sport has "resorted in a distorted picture" (Williams, 1994, p. 49) that suggests female athletes of color share similar histories and issues to that of White female athletes. But, in fact, Black women have a very rich history in sport that is quite different from white women's. For example, early 20<sup>th</sup> century newspapers written for African-Americans found that Black female athletes received the same coverage as compared to the Black male athletes of that time (Williams). In addition, "the coverage of the black female athlete.

.reveals a far more active sporting culture for women in competitive sport in the black community than for the white female athlete in the white community during the 1920s and 1930s" (p. 56). Such a homogenization of histories and experiences across racial groups by the white press further perpetuates the notion that sport is for white, middle/upper class females. And, the disparity of coverage in the media supports Davis' (1997) argument that the white standard of beauty that is prevalent in mainstream media may be one factor for the absence of Black women athletes in the White and Black media.

Another marginalized group is women athletes with disabilities. Although discussion of the American media's treatment of males with disabilities is well documented (Bogdan, Biklen, Shapiro, & Spelkoman, 1982; Dillon, Byrd, & Byrd, 1980; Elliott & Byrd, 1982; Shapiro, 1993; Zola, 1985), few studies exist that critically analyze the media treatment of women with disabilities and "still less [is known] about those [women]who engage in sport" (Sherrill, 1993, p. 238). While specialized magazines and journals do exist for athletes with disabilities, such as Sports 'n' Spokes, Palaestra, and Deaf Sports Review, the mainstream

press practically ignore national and international elite disability sport competitions and the accomplishments of athletes with disabilities, especially women (Sherrill, 1993). When the media do present information about this population, "such programs have often focused on anything and everything but the competition itself and the athletes themselves" (Stein, 1988, p. 419) and are often believed to be second-rate performers compared with athletes without disabilities (Orr, 1979). Analysis of the Paralympic games revealed that although "some aspects of the televised Paralympic coverage could be considered empowering, [and] leading to more positive and less stereotypical coverage of athletes with disabilities" (Schell & Duncan, 1999, p.45), other aspects were discovered to reinforce negative and demeaning stereotypes about people/athletes with disabilities.

These issues are compounded when the gender of the athlete with a disability is considered. Schell and Duncan (1999), although not directing complete attention to female Paralympians, noted that the announcers' commentaries did not include sexist naming or descriptors when referring to women athletes - something usually found in analysis of

female Olympians (Duncan, 1986). However, this absence was probably related to the careful editing of the taped coverage (not live) whereby commentators' remarks could be checked for any sexist or demeaning statements. Or, the absence of sexist descriptors may be because individuals with disabilities are often regarded as aesthetically unpleasing and asexual (Shapiro, 1993, p. 263; Waxman, 1994). According to Schell and Duncan, "this erroneous perception [of individuals with disabilities begin asexual] may account for the absence of typically sexist comments focusing on women's appearance, their facial or bodily beauty, their sexiness, and their 'cuteness' in Paralympic commentary" (p. 45).

Lesbians in sport are also marginalized by the media and ignored in research studies about women's experience in sport. Because women in sport are often perceived as challenging the boundaries created by the feminine/masculine gender role (Blinde & Taub, 1992), many question whether a woman can be athletic and retain her femininity. Challenging this question, Hall (1996) suggested "that in reality femininity [is] a thinly disguised code word for heterosexuality. The real issue

behind so much attention to an athlete's femininity [is] the fear that she might be lesbian" (p. 19). Consequently, when a woman is called "masculine," "unfeminine," or "dyke," she knows she has crossed the gender boundary or challenged male privilege (Peper, 1994).

The growing media and commercial interest in women's college and professional sport have contributed to the reinforcement of the negative lesbian label associated with women athletes. Because sexuality, specifically heterosexuality, sells in America, sport promoters and advertisers are likely to distance themselves from women athletes who are believed to be, or who do identify as lesbian. For example, in the early 1980s, tennis professionals Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova were publicly 'outed' as lesbians when they were forced to acknowledge their relationship with other women (Griffin, 1998). The subsequent media fervor drew unwanted attention to the Women's Tennis Association, and both players lost millions of dollars in corporate sponsorship (Brownworth, 1994). Perhaps most disturbing was the verbal accusations made by other professional players about how lesbian players were ruining the Tour for the heterosexual players

(Brownworth, 1994). Such incidences are usually presented as feature stories outside of the sports context. The athlete-as-lesbian story line grabs the public's attention while fostering the fears of parents, coaches, administrators, and athletes about the predatory nature of lesbians (Griffin, 1998). Unfortunately, the public responses from women's sports allies include little more than silence or denial that lesbian athletes are an issue that deserves public attention.

Not only do the media rarely explore the experiences of lesbians in sport, they also utilize verbal and visual strategies that may discourage lesbians from revealing their sexual identity and becoming the focus of negative media attention. Thus, few notable women athletes have openly admitted to being lesbian. Tennis superstars Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King, bike racer Missy Giove, and golfer Muffin Spencer-Devlin are among the professional athletes who have risked, and sometimes marred, their public reputations because they revealed their sexual identities. Unfortunately, "the vast majority of lesbians in sport maintain a veil of secrecy around their identities and are afraid that revealing themselves to the general

public would have both financial and professional consequences" (Griffin, 1998, p. 48). The fear that surrounds lesbians in sport and keeps them from coming out has inhibited research efforts that could give these women a voice regarding their experiences in sport (Genasci & Griffin, 1990; Lenskyj, 1991; Griffin, 1998). Perhaps best describing this phenomenon was a chapter in Billie Jean King's (1982) book titled A Silence So Loud It Screams. The silence is what perpetrates the myths and stereotypes about women/lesbians in sport, and "deprives those who are hiding a sense of community and history" (Nelson, 1991, p. 134).

One American scholar who has written extensively on the topic of heterosexism and homophobia in sport is Pat Griffin. Her 1998 book, titled Strong Women: Deep Closets, is the first and only book to explore the lesbian experience in sport. But, it was Griffin's 1992 paper that categorically listed six manifestations of homophobia in women's sports, all of which may be supported by the media: (a) silence, (b) denial, (c) apology, (d) heterosexy image, (e) preference for male coaches, and (f) attacks on lesbians in sport. For example, the 'apologetic' describes how a woman athlete "frequently denies the importance of

her athletic endeavors and avows the importance of her appearance and the desire to be attractive and to marry" (Felshin, 1974, p. 37). Thus, the "apology" (Griffin, 1992, p. 254) is represented in women promoting the feminine image and exemplifying characteristics synonymous with heterosexuality. The apologetic may also include visibility of heterosexual relationships, physical appearance and demeanor, and attitudes and actions about lesbians (Griffin, 1998). Usually the media will mention that a particular player or coach has a husband or children, yet they will acknowledge the families of lesbian players and coaches. One recent example was the cover of the premier issue of Sports Illustrated Women/Sport (1997) that pictured Women's National Basketball Association's (WNBA), Sheryl Swoopes, holding a basketball in one hand while the other hand rested gently over her very pregnant abdomen.

The stereotype of the lesbian athlete is based on several assumptions about her appearance and demeanor (Lenskyj, 1986). Short hair, lack of make-up and jewelry, masculine-type walk and clothes, and superior athletic ability are some characteristics believed to be a sign of lesbianism (Griffin, 1998). To avoid garnering any



suspicion about her sexuality based on her looks, various covering strategies may be employed by the athlete or coach, such as using jewelry, growing her hair long and wearing hair bows, wearing feminine-type clothes, and downplaying their athletic talents. Blinde and Taub (1992) reported that many athletes "made a conscious effort not to wear athletic attire" (p. 156). A final technique is to ignore or detach oneself from association with lesbians or the signs of lesbianism. For example, an athlete may disidentify herself by consciously avoiding associations with groups of women athletes and displays of physical contact with her teammates. Therefore, given the prevalence of such stereotypes that equate a less-than feminine appearance and manner with lesbianism, mass media representations of women athletes often emphasize the visual signs of femininity that, in turn, perpetuate the ideology that heterosexuality and femininity are "'natural,' 'normal,' and 'commonsense'" (Pirinen, 1997, p. 299).

#### Feminist Cultural Criticism of Sport Research

A few feminist scholars are narrowing their analysis to raise questions about the essentialized tone of certain

sport studies research efforts. For example, Dewar (1993) challenged existing research, including feminist research, that universalizes and normalizes women's experiences in sport based on "the experiences and concerns of White, middle-class, able-bodied, young, heterosexual women" (p. 213). Excluded from such analysis are women whose concerns exist on multiple levels including race, sexuality, disability, age, culture, and language. Dewar suggested that feminist scholars must recognize the compounded and interactive effects of racism, ableism, and heterosexism. Further exploring the differences among women, Hall (1996) warned that scholars cannot merely add diversity and stir it into the existing theoretical framework. Rather, "we must pay attention to relations among women and re-theorize at the same time" (p. 44). As other factors are considered, then the framework for understanding women's oppression in relation to men and other women in sport is qualitatively changed.

As a result of feminist researchers' challenges to certain theories, a need for a new theory is emerging in North America. This new theory must "focus on sport as a site for relations of domination and subordination (gender,

race, class, sexuality, and other forms) and on how sport serves as a site of resistance and transformation" (Hall, 1996, p. 31). One possible avenue being explored is within the framework of feminist cultural studies. Cultural studies has origins in Britain and examines "the social relations and system through which culture is produced and consumed" (Kellner, 1995, p. 6). Not limited to popular culture, cultural studies seek to examine all social practices that may be viewed from a cultural perspective and recognize the agency of humans in the making of culture. Yet, cultural studies did not engage in feminist theorizing until the 1970s when debate was raised over the nonrecognition of patriarchy's role in shaping culture (Hall, 1996).

Various feminist sport researchers have advocated for a feminist cultural studies approach as the most promising way to understand the relationships between and within women and sport and the cultural meaning of those relationships (Cole, 1994; Hall, 1988, 1996; Hargreaves, 1986; Theberge, 1985). Cole (1994), one of the major advocates of feminist cultural analysis of sport, has most recently pointed to the crisis-condition of sport studies

that involves the reconceptualization of the "isolating boundaries it [sport studies] has placed around the field and the knowledges and canon it has produced" (p. 6). By recognizing the crisis, possibilities open up for understanding the fluidity of what constitutes "sport" and the many structures that "intersect with and produce multiple bodies (raced, sexed, classed, heterosexualized, reproductive, hierarchization, identity production)" (p. 6). Thus, sport is viewed as an institutional structure and seen as being "expressed in the everyday normalizing practices of remaking bodies, identities, and pleasures" (p. 6). Within the realm of feminist cultural studies, traditional notions of sport are deconstructed and refigured in relation to other cultural/social constructs, such as race, gender, the body, power, representation, and resistance.

Hall (1996) also espoused a feminist cultural perspective but expressed concern because (a) women's studies departments are most likely to be the place where feminist cultural studies takes place and many programs may not have an interest in sport, and (b) students in physical education and sport studies are less likely to be

interested in women's studies. Given this, Hall pointed to the need to "think through the ramifications of where and how the building of a radical, gendered, and nonracist theory of sport will take place and by whom" (p. 36). Once the issue is determined of "where" the research should occur and by whom, Hall pointed to five issues that deserve analysis: (a) the need for historically grounded research, (b) a concern for differences amongst and between women, (c) the perspective of masculinity viewed from a feminist perspective, (d) the importance of the body, and (e) feminist activism and sport. Little has been discussed about the relevance of sport for females because this has not been a focus of political struggle for most feminists. Yet, because the female body may be a site of cultural struggle and resistance, it is important that cultural analysis consider the meaning that certain discourses have on those who may engage in the sport activities (Hall, 1996). And, as these discourses may have different influences on different women's bodies (gendered/raced/classed/abled), the effects should be thoroughly examined and theorized. For example, much research exists that examines the amount and type of media coverage given to

women in sport; however there is a lack of research that considers the media coverage of minority women in sport. The answer is not to add minority women to the pot and stir; rather their experiences as minority women in sport become "qualitatively different in kind" (Hall, p. 44) and the research must account for those differences.

### Summary

The review of literature included research pertaining to three major areas: (a) feminist perspectives of culture, (b) media representations of women athletes and women's sports, and (c) feminist cultural criticism of sport research.

There exist various theoretical frameworks that seek to understand particular sex/gender systems that are present in societal structures. In particular, contemporary feminist theorists analyze such structures and raise questions regarding the status of women in relation to themselves and society. One perspective to emerge in feminist theory recognizes the different experiences between and among women, and seeks to understand how issues of race, class, sexuality, and dis/ability can influence those experiences. When analyzing culture from such a

perspective, a better understanding emerges of how mass cultural images are created to homogenize the popular notion of "woman" rather than emphasize differences. Thus, popular representations of women rarely include images of women who are not White, young, heterosexual, and able-bodied.

One powerful Western cultural influence that exacerbates the common sense ideal of "woman"/femininity and encourages women to embody that ideal is the mass media. Through a variety of print, visual, and sound media messages, the cultural notions of femininity are presented and subsequently reinforced as women seek pleasure and contribute as consumers (via viewing, buying, wearing, speaking, etc.). One particular area in the study of mass media that has gained attention from feminist and feminist cultural researchers is women's representation in the sport and fitness media. These researchers have not only found differences in the amount of attention given to female athletes and sports as compared to men but in the quality of that coverage as well. Such disparities in the amount and type of coverage contribute to dominant notions that sport is primarily for men and women athletes are less than

adequate competitors. Underrepresenting, trivializing, sexualizing, heterosexualizing, ignoring minority women, and monitoring women's bodies, are factors that are evident in the sport and fitness media that create and perpetuate dominant images of women in sport.

Despite researchers' efforts to explore media representations of women athletes and women's sports, some feminist researchers have critiqued such research on the basis that the studies inadequately considered the different experiences of women in sport. These feminist researchers argue that current paradigms used for understanding media representations of women in sport account only for gender and ignore the multiplicative effects of race, sexuality, dis/ability, and class. By considering such factors, and not merely assimilating such differences into current models, a deeper understanding can emerge of women's oppression in relation to men and other women in sport. Consequently, a feminist cultural perspective that recognizes the limits of existing research standards may be an adequate framework in which analysis of media representations of women in sport and fitness can occur.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contents of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women, currently titled Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports and fitness, and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. By utilizing standardized worksheets and the hermeneutic method, aspects of the magazine including covers, feature articles and photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined. The following outline of the methodology is presented in four sections: (a) research design, (b) sample, (c) instrument, and (d) treatment of data.

#### Research Design

A content analysis was conducted in the spring of 1999 on 13 issues of CN/WS&F magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999 to explore how women are

represented in the magazine. Hermeneutics, based on the works of Paul Ricoeur (1976, 1981) was used to analyze the magazine's visual and written texts as these are deemed as the magazine's most essential components by the magazine's producers (Berger, 1982). Worksheets, based on categories delineated in existing research, were developed to quantify data regarding visual (cover and feature article photographs) and textual (editor's letter and feature articles) sources. These data were derived using the worksheets to document the frequency of items occurring within the visual and textual categories of analysis. Frequencies and percentages were calculated per edition and cumulatively. Qualitative analysis of the visual and written texts identified characteristics that could not be assessed solely through quantitative means.

### Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics was used in this study to critically analyze the magazine's visual and written texts. The word hermeneutics has its origins in the Greek verb *hermeneu*in and the noun *hermeneia*, which have three meanings: to express/expression, to interpret/interpretation, and to translate/translation (Tillich, 1951). The root of the word

was derived from Greek mythology as the messenger-god, Hermes, transmitted the gods' messages and offered interpretations of their meanings to mortals (Bleicher, 1980). The primary use of hermeneutics initially was for scriptural explanation in Judaism and medieval Christianity (Bleicher, 1980). In the 19th century, with the work of Schleiermacher (1938) and his successor, Dilthey (1947), hermeneutics moved from the realm of specific traditions (e.g. religion and theology) into general theory. Behind this shift was the recognition of the power of critique "as the recognition of the infinite capacity within the human spirit to dislodge the meaning or being of whatever may appear self-evident" (Klemm, 1983, p. 19). No longer could a certain text be considered an ahistoric reality, unaffected by changing cultural contexts, within a certain tradition. Rather, Schleiermacher (1938) recognized the importance of the hermeneutic method to consider the linguistical context used by the author (or speaker) in combination with the context shaping the author's everyday life (Klemm, 1983). As Schleiermacher's successor, Dilthey (1947) faced the challenges of keeping the hermeneutic tradition alive as the positivist influence found its way

into the realm of philosophy and required methods to assess objective knowledge. The objective component was found by referring to written texts as products of a particular, measurable, definable context. Dilthey, despite securing an aspect of an objectivity within the hermeneutic method, continued to believe that the "highest art" (Klemm, p. 25) in textual interpretation was the ability to put the self into the author via "empathetic transportation" (p. 25).

Furthering the hermeneutic tradition, Ricoeur hoped to use textual interpretation to better understand what it means to be human. Ricoeur believed that "in a certain significant sense man is language, and that, since writing is the full development of language, the laying out of the principles of textual meaning may uncover something that points to the being of man and ultimately the being itself" (Klemm, 1983, p. 26). Therefore, rather than focusing on the psychological intentions of the author (understanding), Ricoeurian hermeneutics seek to interpret the written text in and of itself, autonomous of the author's intent (explanation) (Ricoeur, 1981). Because hermeneutics is focused on textual interpretation, Ricoeur focused much attention to the "problem" of writing. Writing, as opposed

to speaking, "is the full manifestation of something that is in a virtual state, something that is nascent and inchoate. .namely the detachment from that event" (Ricoeur, p. 25, 1976). But, this detachment referred to the author's intention for the text and not the contextual meaning. Ricoeur likened the text to a musical score "and the reader like the orchestra conductor who obeys the instructions of the notation" (p. 75).

Multiple readings. Ricoeur (1976) recognized that interpretation of the text may take different forms for different readers and that "misunderstanding is possible and even unavoidable" (p 76). Thus, the reader must "guess" in order to construe meaning from the text. This initial moment in reading is at a naive level whereby the reader begins to initiate, correct, and move toward explanation (Klemm, 1983). Although there are no guidelines for how to make a correct guess, Ricoeur outlined a methodology for how the reader can validate the guesses made about a text. First, discourse is recognized as work, a cumulative process that involves a relationship between the whole text and its parts. To understand the whole involves an understanding of the parts and vice versa: "the whole

appears as a hierarchy of topics, of primary and subordinate topics that are not...at the same altitude" (Ricoeur, p. 77). Second, if the text is a whole it must also be considered as an individual, similar to an animal or a work of art. As an individual unit, the type of genre, class, and intersecting structures of different texts may be discerned - also a guess. Taken as a singular whole, the text becomes observable from different sides but never from all sides at once: "It is always possible to relate the same sentence in different ways to this or that other sentence considered as the cornerstone of the text" (p. 78). And, lastly, the text has "horizons of meanings" (p. 78), which refers to a secondary meaning that the text may have as seen from the margins of the main work. In light of this technique for validating guesses, Klemm (1983) described that the "most probable reading is the one that makes sense of the greatest number of details as they fit into a whole" (p. 93).

The balance between guessing and validation has been termed the "hermeneutic circle" (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 79) that, as a methodological device, can provide a means for inquiry into the human sciences. Moving within the circle

allows for the possibility to "argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them and to seek agreement" (p. 79). The possibility of linking literary criticism with the social sciences is a matter of guessing the meaning of action. As a written text may be read in several ways, so too can human action. One example may involve an action that is subject to a judicial decision. As a multitude of interpretations for the action are presented and argued in a courtroom, a final interpretation or explanation is made by the jury, which in turn may be contested or appealed. Taking the dialectic between comprehension and explanation a step further, Ricoeur also considered proceeding from explanation to understanding, thus moving from a surface interpretation to one of depth. The sense of the text "is not something hidden, but something disclosed" (p. 87) that points to what the text is talking about, or its referent. Considering that such an in-depth interpretation is not possible without a personal commitment to the reading, Ricoeur (1981) raised the concern of subjective bias within scientific inquiry. In response, Ricoeur noted that the "solution is not to deny the role of personal commitment in

understanding human phenomena, but to qualify it" (p. 220). A modern feminist cultural theorist recognized a similar dilemma and suggested that "we should admit our lack of control in the reading process and somehow write this into our scripts. . 'Knowing our place' as readers means finding a place from which to write" (Pearce, 1995, p. 93).

Hermeneutics in the study of sport. Hermeneutics has been used to understand the symbolic dimensions of the Olympics as spectator sport. Relying on Ricoeur's (1981) assertion that a text can include more than written work, Duncan (1986) suggested that spectator sport may be considered for critical textual interpretation. The meaning of sport is not understood by "noting the specific, particular, individual features of thousands of games and sporting events, but by trying to grasp the underlying. . meanings that games and sporting events in general hold for the spectators" (Duncan, p. 51). Because using hermeneutics derives meanings about societal values, to understand the meaning of the Olympics as a spectator sport is to understand the values of the larger society.

The hermeneutic method was also used to determine if television's exclusion of women symbolically denies power



for women (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). The hermeneutical analyst does not follow a specified protocol because "it is a matter of experiencing meanings more consciously and intentionally" (p. 7) and may be guided by a particular theoretical framework. Textual analysts search for recurring themes about what/who is presented, what/who is missing, and how things are said within the text. Often times the meanings are implicit and must be derived from close and active reading of the text: "the hermeneutical researcher is a kind of detective who has cultivated a sensitivity to the phenomenon being studied, who is familiar with the theory in her or his field, and who has a large conceptual repertoire" (p. 7). For example, Duncan and Hasbrook were guided by their observations and knowledge of previous work about the exclusion and representation of women athletes in the media.

Two recent studies (Kane & Parks, 1992; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998) have furthered the contributions of previous research by improving upon the methodology used with hermeneutics. In one study (Kane & Park, 1992), individuals were trained as recorders in order to enhance intercoder reliability. Using the descriptors (codes)

identified by the coders, the researchers, as interpreters, then discerned "the meanings underlying the themes that emerged from those recurrent factual particulars" in the coding (Kane & Parks, 1992, p. 59). In another study (Esques, et al., 1998), both written text and visuals were included in analysis because these express ideologies, or dominant cultural ideas, and are "critical to understanding how dominant patriarchal notions of femininity. .are sustained while using ideologies of empowerment" (p.323) The researchers used Thompson's (1987) techniques to ensuring accurate interpretation of the text. These techniques consider the wider social context within which the text is found, focus on narrative structures (legitimization of messages), and interpret the ideologies that are present in the text.

### Photographs as Data Sources

The following research on advertisements and sports photography provides the framework for photographic analysis in this study. These studies have been selected based on their clearly defined categories for understanding how women and racial diversities are depicted in photographs and how photographs may be coded. Goffman's

(1979) groundbreaking work is useful because of the "quality of the insight he brings to bear on male-female images" (p. viii) and the comprehensive nature of the categories that he delineated. Kang's (1997) research that confirmed and furthered Goffman's work will provide two additional categories and be the model for coding in this study. And, Plous' and Neptune's (1997) study will facilitate understanding the interaction of race and gender in photography. Specific to sports photography, Duncan's (1990) and Bowman and Daniels (1995) categories will provide insight the unique nature of women athletes in photographs.

Goffman (1979) delineated two classes of pictures: private and public pictures. Private pictures are those that commemorate a personal occasion or are "designed for display within the intimate social circle of the persons featured in them" (p. 10), whereas public pictures provide for public consumption "designed to catch a wider audience" (p. 10). In either case, images in photographs are often interpreted as real, unchanged, and a truthful source of information. It is argued that photography is a powerful legitimating source because of its ability to project a

sense of naturalness, realism, and authenticity (Barthes, 1977, Berger, 1985). Because a camera operates mechanically, the photographic process seems to be a totally objective projection of reality (Barthes, 1977). Thus, photographs are never neutral. Pictures are merely the result of the photographer's constructed interpretation of a reality upon which many influences are imposed (Duncan, 1990). Unfortunately, based on the objective sense of photographs, the reader may observe these interpretations without explanation or concern for the context of the visual reproduction (Messner, 1988).

The synthetic process that goes into "creating" some photographs is another powerful characteristic of photography. Such creations involve the picture itself and/or the scene being depicted: "there are photographs. .which have been covertly 'doctored' or 'faked,' as when a picture of someone's face is superimposed on a picture of someone else's body, and the whole passed off as evidence that the owner of the face was present in the scene depicted" (Goffman, 1979, p. 14). In a staged scene, which involves collaboration with the models and the photographer, the picture is real but the scene is not an

actual one. Such photographs may be airbrushed, cropped, enlarged, reduced, or retouched. A number of techniques are adopted by the photographer to create the best image, such as selecting one exposure over another, what should be the theme of the picture, and how that subject should appear within the picture (Mills, 1984). Such visual perfection is artificially created because "they [the glossy photograph] are spectacles that are intended to draw the eye and to meet the viewers' exacting standards" (Duncan, 1993, p. 357). The glossy photographs are never "overexposed, underexposed, blemished, blurred, or unattractive" (Duncan, p. 357).

Photographs in advertisements consistently support and maintain gender distinctions (Goffman, 1979). In Goffman's research, women were frequently pictured as being smaller in physical size than men; were seen displaying a "bashful knee bend" (p. 45); were tilting their heads to the side or bowing their heads; were behaving in a childlike manner; were nuzzling with objects, children, or men, and were averting direct eye contact with the camera. Smiles "seem more the offering of an inferior than a superior" and women smiled more and "more expansively" (Goffman, p. 48) than

men. These features may be used singly or in combination, and are meant to represent the supposed "natural" (p. 84) differences and relationships between men and women.

Photographs also are ideologically powerful because of their commodity form (Duncan, 1990). Photographs may be consumed in a variety of ways such as being purchased at a newsstand or by subscription: "commercial pictures often link a product to a celebrity, selling them both" (Goffman, 1979, p. 11). Magazines often are customized to be consumed by a particular audience rather than a mass market (Horne, 1992). According to Duncan, "unlike words, photographs do not require literacy or other special skills. Furthermore, the photographs may be cut out and displayed for the pleasure of the viewer, and may be easily transposed to various contexts (e.g., the office, home, and friends' houses)" (p. 361). Therefore, one does not need to purchase a magazine to be exposed to its images. The consumer is often in a position of power when he/she has selected a particular magazine and can view the images at will. This may be potentially dangerous as it provides a market setting for a disempowering of women, as objects of consumption (Kuhn, 1985).

Kang (1997) sought to determine if the representations of women in magazine advertisements changed between 1979 and 1991. Comparing 252 magazine advertisements from 1979 and 252 comparable advertisements from 1991, Kang answered the question, "what messages about women have been given to society through magazine advertisements?" (p. 979). Five of Goffman's (1979) theoretical definitions were used as the basis of analysis: (a) relative size of the female models compared to male models, (b) models using a feminine touch when displaying a product, (c) male models pictured in a supervisory or instructor role over the woman, (d) female models pictured in subordinate, lower positions, and (e) models exhibiting behaviors that mentally or physically withdraw them from the situation (expansive smile, head/eye aversion, withdrawing gaze). Also, two dimensions were added: (a) female models wearing revealing type clothing or exposing various body parts (cleavage, buttocks, etc.), and (b) the overall meaning of the advertisements that was used to evaluate "female model's overall images in terms of independence and self assertiveness" (Kang, p. 986). Coding the pictures involved designating a score of one if "it is stereotypical behavior (e.g., male taller, male

instructing female, etc.)" (p. 988) and a score of zero if the image was nonstereotypical. A total "stereotyping score" (p. 988) of 15 represented a highly stereotypical advertisement while a lower score equated to a lesser stereotypical advertisement. Few changes occurred in the images of women in magazine advertisements over 12 years, but the advertisements in 1991 included more women engaged in withdrawal and body display than women pictured in earlier advertisements.

Plous and Neptune (1997) explored 1,800 visual images present in six fashion magazines (two with mostly white female readership, two with mostly Black female audience, and two with mostly white male readership) issued between 1985 and 1994 to determine the interaction of racial and gender differences in magazine advertisements. Coding advertisements was done within four dimensions: (a) the number of Black women and men and White women and men appearing in each ad (coded as zero, one, or more than one), (b) the number of body parts exposed, including shoulders, buttocks, cleavage, upper leg, stomach, and back, (c) the number of models who were positioned on all-fours, sitting, lying down, or kneeling, and (d) the number



of models wearing sexual attire (form fitting underwear or bikini swimsuits, and the number of models wearing an outfit resembling an animal print. White women were four times more likely than men to have some part of their body exposed and be displayed in a subordinate position, and Black women were stereotypically portrayed as animal-like. Although an increased number of Black women appeared in White women's magazines, evidence existed of racial bias in magazine advertisements.

Sports photographs. Photography may contribute to the subordinate status of women in sport and further emphasize the perceived natural differences between male and female athletes (Duncan, 1990). Given that the majority of sport photographs appear in male sport magazines, many publishers assume that the typical reader is the young heterosexual male. Therefore, it may also be assumed that any photographed female (athlete or spectator) must be marked as feminine and appealing to the presumed reader. So, how are these images constructed in order to enhance the sexual difference between males and females? There are basically two categories of photographic features: (a) content, or discourse within a photograph, and (b) context of the

photograph (Duncan). The content includes physical appearance (glamour and beauty), poses (soft-core pornographic-like), position of the body (submissive stance), emotional displays (crying), camera angle (below-eye level, at-eye level, above-eye level), and visual groupings (the differences between multiple photographs). The context includes "visual space in which the photo appears, its caption, the surrounding written text, and the title and substantive nature of the article in which the photograph appears" (p. 26). Thus, when taken together, the context and content of sports photographs "can connote sexual difference" and trivialize women's accomplishments in sport. For example, by picturing a sexually appealing, alluring female athlete and then describing her as highly athletic and competitive, the reader/viewer is given a contradictory image that may cause her to be viewed as a second-rate female athlete.

These dimensions of sport photography were used to examine pre-Olympic issues of Sports Illustrated (S.I.) from 1960 to 1994 (Bowman & Daniels, 1995). Because sport is often considered a male domain, the pictures in S.I. used to represent women in sport were designed to

heterosexualize the women so the "male viewers/consumers can enjoy the images without having to identify with women as athletes" (Bowman & Daniels, p. 84). With the exception of the 1968 issue that included positive visual representation and accompanying text, the remaining issues were filled with ambivalent messages that raised questions about the women's true athletic abilities. Female athletes in posed-passive positions, a focus on human interest rather than competitive involvement, the use of weakness descriptors beneath powerful visual representations, the presence of childhood photographs, attention to sexy workout clothing, and camera angles that situated on female erogenous (crotch, buttocks) zones "set the trend for Sports Illustrated photojournalism" (p. 87) on women's sport. Most importantly, the visual representations began to include more positive, empowering images, but the accompanying text remained focused on "attention to size, age, physical attractiveness, and sexuality" (p. 87).

Background of the Conde Nast Sports for Women/Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F).

A brief history of the magazine under investigation is provided to understand the context within which the text

originated. Until women's successes in the 1996 Summer Olympics and the inception of two professional women's basketball leagues spurred interest in a women's sport publication, few women in sport magazines existed.

Subsequently, companies such as Time Warner and Conde Nast Publications Inc., a unit of Advance Publications, designed new women's sports magazines written about and for women in sport (Pogrebin, 1997). Before Time Warner and Conde Nast entered the women's sports magazine market, the only sports-for-women's magazine was Women's Sports & Fitness which began in 1974 under the name womenSport (Gramillion, 1996) and subsequently folded in January of 1998.

Time Warner was the first to test the new market in April, 1997 by publishing two issues of their proposed Sports Illustrated/Women/Sport magazine (Malanga, 1997). Publishers of the women's 'version' of Sports Illustrated guaranteed a circulation of 350,000 and "promised to take women's sports very seriously" by not being a "fitness magazine" (Pogrebin, 1997, p. 1). After the two test publications were distributed, Time Warner put the project on hold with no plans to continue publication of Women/Sport (Goldfisher, 1998). However, by 1999, the

magazine began publishing new editions under the name of Sports Illustrated for Women.

The first issue of Conde Nast Sports for Women appeared on newsstands in October of 1997. Beginning with a \$30 million budget and 350,000 guaranteed subscribers, the monthly 'slick-back' magazine promised to send a different message that would be "focusing on subject matter beyond the typical fare of fashion, beauty and sex. And they are presenting a female aesthetic that departs radically from the you-can-never-be-too-thin ideal" (Pogrebin, 1997, p. 1). After nearly a year of monthly publications of Conde Nast Sports for Women, Conde Nast purchased the 24-year-old WS&F from Boulder, Colorado based Sports & Fitness Publishing. After paying \$7 million and adding 140,000 subscribers from the acquired magazine, Conde Nast decided to drop Conde Nast from the magazine's title, renamed the publication Women's Sports & Fitness, and began publishing the magazine on a bimonthly basis (Kerwin, 1998). Justifying the change, Editor in Chief Lucy Danziger said "[Women] may not recognize the word 'sports' as something they have a personal stake in. . .I think the word 'fitness' clarifies it" (Whitmire, 1998). And, president

and CEO of Conde Nast, Steve Florio said, "There's a sales reason to go [published] six times because we're going to be able to share pockets with Bride's [magazine], which effectively takes the magazine out of the sports section and into the women's area of the newsstand, an area we wanted to be" (MediaWeek, 1998). Of note, the magazine's layout and purpose was only slightly reformatted after the acquisition of WS&F.

Considering the acquisition of WS&F, there are only two competitors for Conde Nast's Women's Sports & Fitness. One is Sports Illustrated for Women and the second is Real Sports magazine published by Amy Love. Now in full publication, Real Sports is funded by a group of 10 investors who provided \$250,000 to start up the magazine (Goldfisher, 1998). Since July 1999, the magazine has been published on a bimonthly basis. A free first issue was sent to 50,000 people in the U.S., and it was expected that 200,000 people would subscribe once the magazine was published on a regular basis (Goldfisher, 1998). Promising to focus on sports, especially team sports, tournaments and races, Love said "We're not an exercise or a fitness magazine. That's what separates us from the rest"

(Goldfisher, 1998).

### Sample

The sample selected for analysis was all 13 issues of CN/WS&F magazine published between October 1997 (first issue) and January/February 1999. Because the entire contents of each magazine could not be studied, prior research studies and suggestions from my dissertation committee dictated which magazine sections were to be analyzed. Visual elements selected for analysis included the cover photographs (Davis, 1997; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Endel, 1991; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994) and the feature article photographs (Davis, 1997; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Rintala & Birrell, 1984). Written elements that were selected for analysis included two feature articles (Endel, 1991; Hilliard, 1984; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Pirinen, 1997; Rintala & Birrell, 1984) and all editor's letters (Endel, 1991). The dissertation committee suggested that I analyze one fitness feature and one sports feature in order to reflect the magazine's title, Women's Sports & Fitness. The editor's letter, written by Editor-in-Chief, Lucy Danziger, was an important component because

the editor's page is where the magazine's priorities and philosophies are discussed: "To dismiss the editor's page is to deny the powerful commentary of the person in control of the production process" (Endel, 1991, p. 137).

#### Instrument

Worksheets, based on existing visual and textual research, were designed to gather data from each magazine. Because each magazine included several feature articles, criteria were established to guide selection of the primary sports feature and fitness feature. One criterion for article selection was based on whether or not the cover model was featured in either a sports or fitness article. If the cover model was not referred to in text, then the fitness feature story and the sports feature story with the largest cover headline were analyzed because it was assumed that those stories considered most significant by the magazine's producers (Endel, 1991) would be clearly recognized on the cover.

Because there exist many definitions of sport (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983), one task was to identify a term that would serve as a tool for determining which article would be considered as the sport article. For the



purpose of this paper, Coakley's (1994) definition of sport, which represents a sport sociological perspective, was used:

Sports are institutionalized competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (p. 21)

Based on this formal definition, the sports article was subsequently identified if the story was about "the sporting achievements of athletes, coaches, and significant sports figures" (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992, p. 122), or "sportswomen who were actual athletes with accompanying settings signifying a position within a sport environment" (Endel, 1991, p. 119).

The fitness article was identified as such if the criteria for the sports article were not met and there was attention directed to "recreational and leisure activities" (Endel, 1991, p. 129) meant to improve physical conditioning. Specifically, the article was considered as "fitness" if it was primarily concerned with the health-related components of fitness such as cardiorespiratory

endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. Anspaugh, Hamrick, and Rosato (1991) claimed that "fitness for health purposes can be achieved with minimal psychomotor ability when activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, hiking, backpacking, orienteering, swimming, rope jumping, weight training, and so on are selected" (p. 140).

A pilot study was conducted using a diverse group of individuals to critique and determine the effectiveness of the worksheets as they corresponded to each magazine. Following revisions made from the pilot study, copies of the worksheets were sent to a focus group comprised of three sport sociologists who reviewed and suggested further changes to the worksheets. I then made final revisions, reviewed each magazine issue, and recorded quantitative and qualitative data as they corresponded to the criteria. Throughout the data gathering process, I asked one individual who worked on the pilot study to serve as an independent coder who completed random worksheets that were used to compare and verify accuracy of categorical data. To further ensure credibility, I used two editions as referential adequacy materials that "provide[d] a 'slice of

life' from the context being studied" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 31) and allowed me to compare the data from these editions with the data already gathered from 11 editions.

### Treatment of Data

A thorough qualitative analysis was conducted first in order to modify the items that were included on the worksheets and to identify characteristics that could not be assessed solely through quantitative means. According to Glaser (1992), this approach is common when combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies: "do the qualitative research and analysis first in order to formulate the quantitative research so it will not force the data under study and will yield the empirical facts that test, verify and extend the qualitative hypothesis" (p. 12). As a result of this approach, I found that many of Goffman's (1979) categories for analyzing advertisements (smiling, head tilting, head averting, gaze averting, touching self and others, posing submissively, crying, and covering mouth/face with hand) were relevant only for those photographs that were "posed passive" or staged, and not applicable to photographs that depicted action or

spontaneous motion. I also found that previous findings regarding the written content of sports and fitness articles and the editor's letter (Duncan, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Endel, 1991; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998; Hilliard, 1984; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Pirinen, 1997) could not be precisely quantified because of the heterogeneous, often contradictory messages that were often present in each piece. Consequently, only those aspects of each article that could clearly be counted, or quantified, were added to the worksheets.

Coding the qualitative data involved a combination of deductive and inductive approaches (Strauss, 1987). The deductive approach involved using categories based on existing research, while the inductive method allowed additional categories to emerge through a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), specifically "open coding" (Strauss, 1987, p. 28) which requires the researcher to "analyze the data minutely" (Strauss, p. 31). Descriptive words, phrases, and sentences (descriptors) regarding the representations of women and women's sports were coded. Further guiding the coding process were the principles outlined by Lofland and Lofland (1971) regarding

the units, or categories, being analyzed and the questions about the selected units. The questions about the units were meant to focus analysis and were directed toward identifying the structure, frequency, causes, processes, and consequences of each unit

Enhancing reproducibility, or intercoder reliability (Weber, 1985), of data involved having a second coder analyze the text using the existing coding scheme and the emerging coding scheme. I also asked an individual from the pilot study to review the final categories and themes, and compare these to the contents of the magazine. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to not only "generate theory more systematically" (p. 102) but also allowed both coders to confirm, modify, or identify coding categories. The aforementioned coding process was facilitated by using the NUD.IST (1991-1997) computer software that managed complex data and was "used in the discovery and management of unrecognized ideas and concepts, and the construction and exploration of explanatory links between the data and emergent ideas" (Richards & Richards, 1994, p. 446). The computer program allowed me to create fields of categories, sort textual

data into those fields, and then automatically calculate how many times a theme was placed into a given thematic category.

Quantitative data were derived from the worksheets by documenting the frequency of items occurring within the visual and textual categories of analysis. Frequencies and percentages were calculated per edition and cumulatively. Each category was based on selected existing research about women's representation in photographs and text. Because no research in sports studies has used comprehensive standardized coding of sports photographs, Kang's (1997) and Plous' and Neptune's (1997) procedures were used as a model for coding each category. Specifically, for those categories needing a nominal score, a "yes" (possesses that trait) equaled one and a "no" (does not possess that trait) equaled a zero. After adding up all of the scores for a category, a high score indicated more agreement with that category than a lower score (minimum score of zero).

Cover and feature story photographs were coded and assessed for reliability using the same techniques for analyzing the written text. Elements of the photographs that were analyzed were based on Duncan's (1990) research

on sports photographs. Duncan outlined two categories of photographic features: (a) content, or discourse within photograph, and (b) context of the photograph. The content includes physical appearance, poses, position of the body, emotional displays, camera angle, and visual groupings. The context includes "visual space in which the photo appears, its caption, the surrounding written text, and the title and substantive nature of the article in which the photograph appears" (p. 26). Based on these elements, categories were determined based on existing research and those emerging from the grounded theory approach.

### Coding Categories

The coding categories for photographs was based primarily on Goffman's (1979), Kang's (1997), and Plous' and Neptune's (1997) work on advertisements and on Duncan's (1990) and Bowman's and Daniels' (1995) analysis of sport photographs. The coding categories for the sports and fitness articles and the editor's letters were based primarily on the work of Leath and Lumpkin (1992), Endel (1992), Duncan and Hasbrook (1988), and Lumpkin and Williams (1991). The following two sections (photographs and text) include checklists of the major categories that

were explored in the four major magazine sections (covers, fitness articles, sports articles, and editor's letters) under analysis.

Photographs. The following categories were used to analyze the photographs on all of the covers (Appendix A) and in all of the sports and fitness articles (Appendix B):

1. Number of people in picture.
2. Name of activity and/or sport.
3. Number of females/males in picture.
4. Number of White/nonWhite people in picture.
5. Number of able-bodied people in picture.
6. Number of females with hair longer than shoulder length.
7. Picture is a full-body shot, waist and up shot, and/or head and shoulders only.
8. Individual is posed passive, posed active, competitive, and/or historical/childhood.
9. Individual is a recognized athlete and/or model.
10. Individual is wearing an athletic uniform and/or fitness/leisure clothing.
11. Individual's bare shoulder, buttocks, cleavage, thigh, stomach, and/or back is exposed.



12. Individual has a closed smile (no teeth showing), an open smile (teeth showing, mouth opened), and/or an intense "game face."

13. The camera angle is at eye, above eye, and/or below eye level.

14. The picture is an outdoor and/or indoor setting.

In the case of "posed passive" photographs, the following items were then analyzed:

1. Individual's head is tilted, gaze is averted, and/or head is averted.

2. Individual is touching self and/or touching others.

3. Individual is standing upright, sitting, kneeling/crouching, and/or lying down or on all-fours.

4. Individual's hand covers mouth and face.

Text. The following categories were used to analyze the written contents of the sports (Appendix C) and fitness articles (Appendix D):

1. Name of sport and/or activity.

2. Number of photographs that accompany article.

3. Featured individual in article was pictured on the cover.

4. Featured individual was White and/or able-bodied.

Analysis of sports articles also included the following categories:

1. Rules of the game or strategies were discussed.

2. Tournaments or standings were listed.

3. Statistics or scores were available.

4. Feature was about an individual athlete and/or a team.

Analysis of fitness articles included the following categories:

1. Workout was primarily for a health issue, for looks, and/or for weight control.

2. Clothing style of pictured individuals was mentioned.

3. Fitness focus was on cardiovascular and/or muscular fitness.

4. Workout focus was on arms, legs, abdominals, back, butt, and/or whole body.

5. Proper technique and/or stretching was mentioned

Analysis of the editor's letters (Appendix E) included the following categories:

1. A current women's fitness or sport issue was discussed.

2. Editor made a call for collective and/or specific political action.

3. Mention of readers' personal relationships and/or editor's personal life.

4. Editor referred to readers as "we" or "us."

#### Summary

Limited research exists that explores the representations of active women, women athletes, and women's sports in women's sports and fitness magazines. The proposed research analyzed elements of 13 issues of the CN/WS&F magazine, the oldest and women's sports magazine in full publication as of January 1999, to explore the visual and textual representations of active women, women athletes, and women's sports. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from reviewing the covers, fitness and sports articles, and editor's letters from the 13 issues. Using the hermeneutic method of textual interpretation, qualitative data were gathered, coded, and categorized. Quantitative data were gathered using standardized worksheets that were developed to gather information

(frequencies and percentages) about particular aspects of the magazine's contents. The worksheets were developed based on existing research and modified from the suggestions made by peer reviewers, three sport sociologists, and the information gleaned from the qualitative analysis. Photographs and text were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contents of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women, currently titled Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine, published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports and fitness and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. By utilizing standardized worksheets based on prior content analysis of sport media photographs and texts (Duncan, 1990; Endel, 1991; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991) and the hermeneutic method, aspects of the magazine including covers, feature articles and photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined. This chapter is divided into two main sections: (a) analysis of results, (b) summary.

#### Analysis of Results

Quantitative data were collected from the text and pictures of the 13 issues of CN/WS&F magazines using

standardized worksheets that were developed from the existing literature and modified following qualitative analysis. Analysis of the qualitative data involved using the hermeneutic method to interpret the text autonomous of the author's intent. This was done by carefully analyzing the headlines, subheadings, photographs, photograph captions, and text; coding sections of the text; and, categorizing the data into common themes. Themes were based both on a combination of existing themes in the literature and themes that emerged during analysis. The NUD.IST computer program facilitated the categorizing of themes through organizing and arranging the information into thematic units.

According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993), there are techniques to establish credibility, or trustworthiness, in a qualitative study "to make a reasonable claim to methodological soundness" (p. 131). In the present study, enhancing trustworthiness for the taxonomy involved checking the identified themes and subthemes against the magazine's contents by an individual who assisted with the pilot study. This technique is termed "peer debriefing" (Erlanson et al., p. 140) and provided me

with a different perspective that helped me to confirm, challenge, and interpret my findings. Because there can exist multiple interpretations and realities, the peer debriefer addressed alternative explanations of the data which then served as a "negative case analysis" (p. 121) against which I reevaluated my original findings. From the negative case analysis, the presence of ambivalence throughout the magazine was further substantiated.

Thematic analysis led to a taxonomic data reporting structure. Typologizing, according to Snow and Anderson (1993), is an analytical tool that can be used to categorize items with regard to their likeness and difference. The taxonomy, as triangulated through qualitative and quantitative data, will "show the relationship among all the included terms. .[and] reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole" (Spradley, 1980, p. 113). I will present the results based on those themes that support the primary, or dominant domain. Data gathered from the covers, articles, photographs, and editor's letter will be used to test the existence of each theme. A list of all articles analyzed is presented in Appendix F.

Quantitative and qualitative data were grouped, or categorized, based on their similarities. Based on these groupings, one main theme, or cover term was found to be consistent throughout the text and photographs: "Socially constructing the female athlete: A monolithic media representation of active women." This representation was based on findings that revealed the homogeneity of race, gender, able-body status, and sexuality of the women featured in the magazine. The major theme was supported visually, verbally, and editorially. Four main supporting themes were found to relate to the cover term: (a) physical appearance, (b) personal character, (c) gender difference, and (d) trivialization of athleticism and team. With regard to qualitative data, Appendix G includes a list of the range of magazine editions that were evident within the four subthemes. Figure 1 represents the taxonomy that includes the themes and subthemes that will be described in this section. For the sake of clarity, the term "active women" was used to refer to women involved with fitness, while "women athletes" refers to women involved in organized, competitive sport.



Figure 1

Theme: Socially Constructing the Female Athlete: A  
Monolithic Media Representation of Active Women

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A. Physical appearance

1. Homogenized image
2. Able bodied
3. Feminine ideal body
4. Clothing
5. Physical size

B. Personal character

1. Material focus
  - a. salary
  - b. commercial success
  - c. symbolic acceptance
  - d. concrete evidence
  - e. gender comparison
2. Emotional state
  - a. feminine traits
  - b. masculine traits
3. Bad Girl Athlete
  - a. rivalries

b. rebellious athletes

c. childish attitudes

C. Gender difference

1. Feminine sexualization

2. Body segmentation

3. Body exposure and feminine pose

4. Assumption of heterosexuality

5. Reduces gender differences

D. Trivialization of athleticism and team

1. Denial of team

2. Anti-jock

3. Sport as calorie burn

4. Rejection of the women's game

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Physical Appearance

The first category relates to components of the magazine that emphasized the physical appearance of the women written about and pictured in the magazine. Findings revealed five subthemes within the category of physical appearance: (a) a homogenized image, (b) able bodied, (c) feminine ideal body, (d) clothing, and (e) physical size.

Appendix H displays where the 5 subthemes exist within the magazine.

Homogenized image. A homogenized image refers to the lack of racial, body status, age, and body type diversity in text and photographs; the similarities in ways women are photographed; and, the uniformity in foci of sports and fitness activities. One example of the homogenized image was found in the contents of the editor's letters where readers were described as young, able bodied, White, heterosexual, and interested in fitness to lose weight and look good. The editor referred to her relationship with readers as "us," "we," and "them." And, in the first edition, the editor stated, "This magazine is devoted to women like me, those of us who love to play."

In further analysis of the editor's letter, I found that the editor, who is White, able-bodied, with long hair, and heterosexual, wrote that there exists a prototype of active women and women in sport: "most women don't want to be given a grade, a score, a stat sheet. We just want to be active, healthy and, above all, enjoy ourselves," "our readers are like us: They want to celebrate the physical life," "we do sports because we are healthy and in shape."

Sport was consistently described as a means for getting into shape and improving one's physical aesthetic: "this magazine will assess the fitness payoff for the sports we write about," "we do sports in part because we want to be fit, and we want to be fit so we can look and feel our best," and "the idea is to look and feel better than we did." Various posed pictures showed the editor engaged in outdoor fitness activities - some of which were with her family or other women with families. She was never pictured with a woman with a disability or of a racial minority.

As shown in Table 1, all of the cover models were white, able-bodied, young, with long hair, heterosexy females pictured mostly from the waist up. All but five of the models were posed in a passive manner while smiling directly into the camera. The activities that the models represented, when discernible, included throwing a football, canoeing, surfing, running, tennis, and skiing. But, none of the models were actually engaged in the activity - they were either posed, smiling while holding a ball or sporting gear, or passively sitting in a boat or on a surfboard. These images were frequently captured in photographs of models, or athletes posed in passive (n 8

of 13, 61%), nonactive stances while being in the outdoors ( $n = 13$  of 13, 100%), usually around water or the beach ( $n = 7$  of 13, 54%). Of the eight cover pictures that were posed passive, five of the models displayed a head tilt, four had their gazes averted from the camera, and two were touching themselves. Based on Duncan's (1990) work, these findings led me to conclude that such characteristics emphasize the models' femininity and suggest a heterosexy image whereby she is posed to highlight stereotypically feminine traits.

Table 1

Homogeneous characteristics of cover models.

<u>Category</u>	<u>n = 13</u>	<u>%</u>
Young	13	100
Able-bodied	13	100
White	13	100
Hair longer than shoulder length	11	85
Model	11	85
Wearing fitness clothing	10	77
Posed passive	8	61

Authors of the sports articles rarely focused on women athletes who were nonwhite, older, or members of a team sport. Eight of the articles emphasized the drama in the athlete's personal lives and family relationships rather than their athletic skills, women sports issues, or competitions. Specifically, none of the sports articles included game rules or strategies, or listed tournaments and statistics. None of the articles featured women athletes with disabilities or discussed disability sport. The photographs accompanying the articles further illustrated the lack of diversity in the sports articles. Table 2 shows the homogeneity of women depicted in the sports photographs. For example, in the sports photographs, the majority of the women athletes pictured were young, White, able-bodied females with longer-than-shoulder-length hair, representing individual sports. The articles titled "1997 Sports Stars," "Double Trouble," and "Leagues Apart" (about the women's professional basketball leagues) featured the most non-White athletes ( $n = 48$  of 314, 15%), all of which were identified as African-American. The feature on tennis players Venus and Serena Williams was the

only sports feature that focused solely on nonwhite female athletes.

Table 2

Homogeneous characteristics of women in sports photographs.

<u>Category</u>	<u>n = 314</u>	<u>%</u>
Able-bodied	314	100
Young	271	86
White	248	79
Hair longer than shoulder length	118	38

The other nonwhite women athletes pictured competed in basketball and track. Only two articles featured retired, or older athletes, Billie Jean King and Chris Evert.

Despite the homogeneous characteristics of the women in the sports photographs, the presentation of the women were somewhat different than in other photographs shown in the magazine. For example, when discernible, more (n = 132 of 314, 42%) women pictured did have a competitive, or "game face" look while in a standing, or direct position. These women were recognized athletes who frequently appeared in

the nonposed, or competitive pictures ( $\underline{n}$  = 63 of 143, 44%). In fact, most of the photographs were full body ( $\underline{n}$  = 83 of 143, 58%), eye-level ( $\underline{n}$  = 101 of 143, 70%), competitive ( $\underline{n}$  = 63 of 143, 44%) action shots.

In analyzing the fitness articles, I found a focus on the need to workout to improve one's looks and control one's weight. The workouts described primarily emphasized either aerobic exercise and/or muscular fitness. Parts of the body, rather than the whole, were targeted for aesthetic improvement ( $\underline{n}$  = 10 of 13, 77%) rather than to prevent disease or injury. Illustrating the fitness articles were young, able-bodied, white, smiling, thin women with some muscle tone and hair longer than shoulder length (Table 3). In the only fitness photographs that featured a Black female, the model's body type, clothes, and pose were similar to the other models' appearances. Only 22 of 190 (12%) of the women pictured were recognized athletes; the remaining women were models who were shown working out alone or, usually, with one or two other women. Although nearly the same number of women were pictured with open or closed smiles ( $\underline{n}$  = 66 of 190, 35%) and intense, focused faces ( $\underline{n}$  = 61 of 190, 32%), the intensity reflected



more of a model-type pout rather than the "game faces" featured in competitive shots. Perhaps to demonstrate proper technique for each exercise, most of the photographs ( $n = 118$  of 143, 82%) were posed in an active manner, showing the person's full body ( $n = 109$  out of 143, 76%) in order to stage, or simulate the model's movement. Although the fitness articles discussed sports as a means to staying physically fit, only nine of the 143 (6%) photographs were nonstaged, sport competitive shots.

Table 3

Homogeneous characteristics of women in fitness photographs.

Category	n = 190	%
Young	190	100
Able-bodied	190	100
White	180	95
Model	154	81
Hair longer than shoulder length	102	54

Able bodied. Hall (1996) proposed that feminist sport theorists often overlook, or neglect the experiences

of sportswomen with disabilities, which leads to an assumption that all women in sport are nondisabled. Thus, based on my findings, I concluded that CN/WS&F assumes that all women's bodies are fully functioning, or nondisabled; and, privileges bodies that are able to adequately move and perform. For example, none of the photographs or textual references from the covers, articles, or editor's letter inferred that women in sport or physical activity may be living with a disability, or needing accommodations or modifications to engage in sport and/or physical activity. According to the magazine's writers, the perfect, or ideal body is one that has all working "parts," is energetic, void of illness, and does not age. The possibility of physical or environmental barriers that may inhibit movement, or the fact that not everyone moves in similar ways was not described in text.

Certain aspects of the fitness articles described the functional, able body: "The Payoff: A body that's strong and the energy to use it," "what really counts as exercise depends on how fit you already are," "whether you want to be a weekend warrior or flaunt your figure on the beach," "the only way to get a respectable body in time for summer

- one that looks good and plays well," "that helps those muscles work overtime, which is exactly what you need to do right now to get your body revved up for summer," and, "one amazing result, that better, buffer body." One author stated that "humans are genetically hardwired to walk, run, push, and pull." None of the accompanying photographs depicted the models as being disabled or having a health impairment.

As stated in the editor's letter, the ideal body is one that is young, fully functioning, and complete: "the idea of the perfect body, for us, is one that is above all functional." A subheading of one letter read, "Being able-bodied is the point." A body that does not work, or breaks down was described as being undesirable and something that needs to be fixed: "Function drives form: Our bodies work, therefore we feed them, thank them for not breaking down and celebrate the physical," "by sharing their [women athletes] own vulnerabilities, they inspire us and remind us that we all have to work through our [physical] problems," "we believe there should be a new list, of a variety of abilities. .of things every woman should be able to do," and "it may not be the best body for fashion,

but I've learned to appreciate the importance of being able and healthy." As described in the editor's letter, fitness can only be attained with a working body to make one stronger, healthier, and looking good: "we do sports in part because we want to be fit, and we want to be fit so we can look and feel our best," "being fit now means having a body that works," "we do sports because we are healthy and in shape," "We want to be active, get outside, have fun, use our bodies, not just tame them," and, "we look at a simple way to create, better, stronger bodies; jump training." The editor also described her body: "When I am moving, I have nothing but nice things to think about my body. It is strong and I love the feeling of air flowing into my lungs, sweat on my skin, leg muscles flushed and tired after a good long jog in Central Park," and "it's time to myself, time when I test out my body and push it to the limit. I never know whether I'm going to have a good run or a lousy one, but either way, if I come back physically spent and sweaty, I'm happy."

Feminine ideal body. Duncan (1994) and Eskes, Duncan, and Miller (1998) suggested that fitness-oriented women's magazines create a notion that an ideal, or preferred

female body exists and can be attained. This ideal body is one that displays characteristics of stereotypical femininity, such as an emphasis on hair, facial features, physical attractiveness, and body type. I found that, in the sports articles, written comments about hair and facial features were often used to describe the female athletes. For example, Lisa Leslie, "has elegant cheekbones and a deadly spin move," while another professional basketball player "combine[s] virtuoso play on the court with blond-tinted, individually gyrating braids and a lamplight smile." One extreme athlete was pictured as being "in her late 30s, with wavy blonde hair and round blue eyes (she looks as if she might have played Alice in Wonderland in the high school play)." Similarly, Evert's influence on young tennis players was such that she "became a media darling and model of femininity who engendered scores of imitators, little girls in tennis dresses in ponytails and blue eye shadow." The maturation of Oksana Bauil was described: "her long brown tresses are now platinum blonde, short, almost tomboyish. The waifish, stick-thin child with the elastic body has morphed into a woman with powerful thighs and broad shoulders." And, the most notable head of

hair was soccer player Mia Hamm's: "corporate America took notice, anointing Hamm - with her wondrous cheekbones and luxuriant mane - the sports It Girl," and "Pert Plus turned her into a household name in households, that value clean, shiny hair, as well as a lethal right foot."

Lofland and Lofland (1971) suggested that units, or categories, can be analyzed for their processes, or successive changes. As found in the magazine, there existed a continuum, or process, for evaluating women athletes who do and do not possess the ideal feminine body (Table 4). On one end of the continuum was the need to be physically attractive, or to model the ideal female body in women's sports. As described by one sports writer about the USA women's soccer team: "it's these private, gutwrenching workouts that are sculpting a new breed of American role models, not to mention a team full of really buff thighs," and "at the same time, these women are upending the old jock stereotype of that incredibly powerful figure. 'They're not afraid to be feminine' says Gregg [female assistant coach]. 'They have a wide range of interests

Table 4

Continuum of acceptability for the feminine ideal based on textual descriptors.

<u>Continuum</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>
Acceptable femininity	buffer; leaner; fitter; thinner; sexy; phenomenal beauty; defined; tighter; smaller
Unacceptable or nonfeminine	amazon; doughy; bulky; beefy biceps; thunder thighs; fat and tired; bulging

outside soccer, and some are even raising families. Plus, they're attractive'." At the other end of the continuum were those women described as not meeting ideal body criteria. For example, the women from Brazil's soccer team, "with their boyish, Jheri-curled hair and slight physiques, more often than not are the products of the favelas, like

the shantytowns of Rio." During her playing years, retired athlete, King, "was down to 136 pounds, fighting weight for her five-foot-five frame" but eventually was overshadowed by "the appearance in the tennis world of Chris Evert, so young, so feminine, so adored, everything that King was not." Today, King "looks much as she did in her hey-day, though heavier and paler," the "middle-aged woman in sweats with the rinsed-brown hair."

A continuum of feminine acceptability was also present in the fitness articles. Feminine traits, including a leaner, buffer, tighter body were described: "it makes the body leaner, too," "get fit, have fun and remember: The body you take home isn't just buffer - it's better," "get stronger, fitter and leaner with this foolproof plan," "leaner: stretching creates long, graceful limbs that have greater mobility and a lot less tension," and "you think the payoff will be a fitter, thinner body." Some women who have attained this body were portrayed: "but like these 'natural' beauties who spend thousands of dollars on personal upkeep, she was only telling part of the story...the woman pumps iron three times a week and logs more on the treadmill than Gandhi on a pilgrimage," and "the hot new



classes can give you the body of a Navy SEAL." The magazine writers also presented various fitness plans that could change one's body: "adding twice-weekly strength training can keep the sag where it belongs; in your clothes," "4 weeks to a great summer body," "there's only one way to change your body fast, and that's to keep changing your routine," and "if you do it three times a week for a month, you'll reap its benefits; tones muscles, leaner body, more energy and complete satisfaction."

At the other end of the ideal body spectrum, I found that the magazine writers warned against aspiring to have the body that does not fit the ideal or depicted the masculine body as an anomaly for women. As one fitness writer described, "a new study demonstrates that weight training won't bulk you up," and "many women refuse to 'pump iron' for fear they'll build beefy biceps and thunder thighs. The reality is, lifting weights makes you smaller, not bigger." Yet, any fears of working one's body too much was alleviated with the author's reminder that most women's bodies are not biologically capable of bulking up. As one author described, "they weren't bulkier either - they were leaner (It's a common misconception that strength training

will make women brawny. In fact, as estrogen factories, we're not hormonally equipped to bulk up)," and

people think of swimmers as Amazons. Tall girls with shoulders strong enough to carry a roped calf. Mostly that's genetics. For those of us with landlubber DNA, clocking laps in a pool or on the open water can build shoulders that appear broad and elegant, not bulky.

The photographs provided visual referents of the ideal female body. Those photographs depicting the feminine ideal body were often in full color with the women smiling ( $\underline{n}$  = 66 of 190, 35%) or laughing, and wearing revealing clothing ( $\underline{n}$  = 154 of 190, 81%). For example, Kournikova, the only athlete to be on the cover and featured in a sports article, was pictured in revealing athletic and casual attire (tight jog bra and spandex shorts) that accentuated her femininity (thighs, abdomen, and breast). Conversely, pictures of women who do not fit the ideal were often posed in serious poses, wearing less revealing clothes, and photographed in black and white. For example, Hingis, who was described as "doughy" was pictured wearing a long-sleeved sweater while looking earnestly into the camera. Likewise, the elder King was photographed in black and

white, wearing long sleeved shirt and pants, and staring sternly into the camera.

Clothing. Duncan (1990) suggested that the clothing worn by sportswomen in photographs can greatly accentuate the women's femininity and heterosexuality. I found that the clothes worn by the fitness models and athletes contributed to the representation of femininity and heterosexy. In particular, eight of 13 (61%) cover models wore sports bras, tight spandex shorts, and/or bathing suits that highlighted, and revealed, the women's breasts, legs, abdomen, and shoulders. The most revealing cover photograph was the June 1998 cover of Kournikova wearing a low-cut jog bra and spandex pants as she bent at the waist towards the camera, thus revealing her cleavage. In the fitness photographs, the models' clothing consisted mostly of fitness wear (n = 154 of 190, 81%) that included tight spandex shorts and jog bra tops. Although the clothing was an integral component to the photographs, the accompanying text did not mention the price or designer of the outfit.

Conversely, half (n = 156 of 314, 50%) of women athletes in the sports photographs were pictured wearing athletic uniforms, such as basketball, tennis, hockey, and

figure skating uniforms with the most revealing sport uniform being Kournikova's lime green spandex tennis outfit. Although the sports photographs included women wearing sport uniforms, in the accompanying sports articles the clothing worn by the athletes, generally in noncompetitive settings, was described in great detail: "Hingis was the star of the evening. Dressed in rust-colored Donna Karan gown, sauntering across the stage in high heels," "McCray was elegant in a brown suit and stack heels as she stood before reporters at the WNBA's New York headquarters," and "she [Baiul] delighted in the provocative clothing like the trendy hip huggers and skintight halter top bought in New York." In two cases, the sports writers described how the clothes did not seem to fit the women's physique. Hingis "displays a pampered teenager's tendency to put on weight, but that doesn't stop her from wearing clothes that are too mature and too tight for her: a black pleated miniskirt, cropped top and high-heeled sling-back shoes." And, for Baiul who was "dressed in black DKNY tights and top, she pulls the material away from her skin to demonstrate that it is the thick, fleecy fabric that is making her look heavier."

In only one sports article did the athlete's on-court uniform become the focus of the attention. Accompanied by a full-page picture, Kournikova's outfit and ensuing reaction was described in full detail:

But the largest crowd has gathered not to follow the drama of competition between young women in white skirts, slugging it out for a slot in the next round, but rather to ogle and adore one girl dressed in black who is simply hitting with her coach. Her practice togs consist of nothing more than an Adidas bathing suit - black stretch halter top and wee black shorts, which appear to have been painted on her bronzed lean body. Her choice of attire - or the lack of it - suggests she revels in the role of exhibitionist.

Physical size. The physical sizes of the women athletes were also described in the magazine. The actual height of the athletes was mentioned in six sports articles. For example: "at four feet, ten inches, she's [Tara Lipinski] tiny, even doll-like," "Hill is diminutive: five feet two, around 100 pounds. She is also quick and lithe and can virtually scamper up the face of a cliff in the way a larger, bulkier guy can't," and "Five feet tall

with cropped dark hair and magenta bangs." Venus Williams was described as "a supple six-foot-two inch young woman with a giant wingspan," while her sister, Serena "is four inches shorter, with a more expansive personality and game." Those athletes with different body types were also described: "[Dawn] Riley - a stocky five feet six inches, 160 pound," and "On court, Hingis' creativity is her best weapon. There is little in her five-foot-six frame that suggests athleticism. She is even a little doughy."

### Personal Character

Three major subthemes were found within the category related to the focus on personal character: (a) material focus, (b) emotional state, and (c) bad girl athlete. These themes were primarily evident in the sports articles and photographs because these components of the magazine focused on individual athlete's stories and personal dramas, whereas the fitness articles and photographs concentrated on fitness programs and did not feature specific women. Table 5 visually depicts those aspects of the magazine that described or displayed the personal character of women featured in the magazine.

Table 5

Existence of personal character theme in magazine

	<u>Themes</u>		
	Material Focus	Emotional State	Bad Girl Athlete
Covers			
Editor's Letter			
Sports Articles	*	*	*
Sports Photographs	*	*	
Fitness Articles			
Fitness Photographs			

Note. Those marked with an \* mean that the subtheme was mentioned, or evident at least one time in an article or photograph. Those without an \* mean that the subtheme was never mentioned or present in the article or photograph.

Material focus. The emphasis on materiality occurred when the magazine illustrated well-known women professional athletes obtaining and displaying wealth and fame. Player's and coach's salaries, commercial success, symbolic

acceptance, financial endorsements, and flashy lifestyles were often used to describe the athlete's current and/or past situations in sport in CN/WS&F. In the articles, all of the individual athletes and the players in the WNBA and ABL were professional athletes, whereas the two team sports featured, USA soccer and USA hockey, were of amateur status. All but two (the Williams sisters) of the individual professional athletes and soccer and hockey players featured were white, young, able-bodied women. Interestingly, the first editor's letter specifically mentioned that the magazine would be "dedicated to the women we haven't seen in the sports pages, those who flock to the parks and fields, gyms and mountains, courts and rivers to get into the action" and less emphasis would be given to athletes in the upper echelons of sport. Although the editor's letter did mention that "we will report on the stories from the world of professional sports," the main message to readers involved sport as "play," "a new type of attitude [toward sport]," and "redefin[ing] our vision of sports as a vital part of our daily lives." Yet, the sport writers directed attention to famous elite athletes and the materiality of professional women's sports.



Most frequently mentioned were the athlete's contracts with well known consumer products. Basketball players, Leslie "was busy making deals with everyone from General Motors to Pepsi for some \$2 million a year," and Nikki McCray, "as part of a reported \$1 million contract she signed with Fila in October, McCray will have her own signature sneaker." Figure skater, Baiul, "signed a professional contract reported to be worth \$1.5 million. .she drove a Mercedes, wore Prada and Versace, and bought a \$450,000 house." Venus Williams was given "a \$12 million contract over five years" from Reebok, and Serena Williams "signed a multiyear, multimillion-dollar exclusive contract with Puma." With the shoes that carry her namesake, skateboarder, Cara Burnside, "receive[s] a per-pair royalty of 75 cents against a guaranteed salary she won't name." And, for tennis player, Kournikova, "IMG negotiated multimillion dollar deals for her with Adidas and Yonex racquets."

In the case of tennis player, Hingis, the author drew comparisons between her salary and male athlete's salaries. It was twice mentioned that "the \$3.26 million in prize

money, more than Tiger Woods." This difference was later described in more detail:

Hingis' sense of entitlement is understandable. Late last year she signed a four-year multimillion-dollar contract with the designer Sergio Tacchini. .she had surpassed Peter Sampras and Tiger Woods in 1997 in prize money, with more than \$2.2 million.

For skateboarder, Burnside, it was written that symbolic acceptance rests in the selling of the Vans tennis shoes that carry her name: "with order of more than 100,000 pairs, it is outselling most of the men's lines." And, for women's basketball coach, Pat Head Summit, "Tennessee rewarded Summit with a new contract that more than doubled her annual compensation, to around \$500,000, making her the highest-paid women's coach."

The extravagant lifestyles of the athletes were also mentioned. The names of well known agents, products, movie stars, and male professional athletes were listed as well as suggestions that these women athletes have moved beyond being women's sports stars and into the realms of men's professional sports and/or Hollywood. According to the author, the Williams sisters use "Keven Davis, a Seattle-

based attorney who counted entertainers and NBA players among his clients." In one sports photograph, Kournikova was shown standing on a red carpet, wearing a skin-tight, one-piece dress, while being watched by two security guards. In another picture, Kournikova was seen posed with the members of the Spice Girls band. Evert was shown enjoying life with her husband and sons while spending time in her pool and bike riding in her suburban Florida neighborhood. Hingis, who was pictured horseback riding and wearing a full dressage outfit while "in the English countryside after inheriting the realm," is also "a born shopper whose favorite city is Paris, where she loves to stroll the Champs-Elysees, credit card in hand." For Baiul, she had:

created a new support group. . .her publicist at PMK, the same high-powered public relations agency that represents Tom Cruise and Rosie O'Donnell; and her three agents at the William Morris Agency, the one who handles her touring; another her commercial merchandising, and Michael Carlisle, her primary agent Professional basketball player and fashion model,

Leslie was described in terms equated with high class and

elegance: "She'd signed on with Shaq's agent. .brazenly modeling herself after the \$120 million multimedia NBA superstar." In one section of the article, another player, Dawn Staley, was visiting Leslie in Los Angeles. As written in the article, "riding the freeways in the passenger seat of Lesley's shiny white Mercedes-Benz S500 offered a glimpse [for Staley] of what a seven-figure endorsement package could buy," "the view from a \$90,000 Mercedes is bound to be good", and:

She [Staley] floated behind Leslie, who, decked out in a miniskirt and heels that left her a whisper short of seven feet, got waved past the throngs at the hip Century Club, west of Beverly Hills, just like any other celeb. And, while Staley never seemed to have much interest in glamour (Leslie says she's always trying to get her to 'put on a little lipstick'), somewhere along the way she may have begun to understand what promoted Leslie to trade one league for another.

Written statements were made that the lure of money found in professional sports may ultimately be the defining moment for women athletes: "someday a young player hungry

for her millions will take her cue from the men's game and open the door [for high school recruiting]." For Staley, who was contemplating a move from the American Basketball League to the WNBA, "this has become the million-dollar question." And, Kournikova wants to venture "in the footsteps of Gabrielle Sabatini, a beauty who made millions."

An opposing or dissenting view about the material focus of professional sports was rarely mentioned by the authors. In fact, only once did an article mention the potentially negative impact of professionalism. When describing the perception of the USA amateur women's hockey coaches, Ben Smith and Michael Boyle, it was noted that they:

had found something of a sanctuary, a place where there was a sense of excellence and dedication but none of the countervailing egotism, born of the intense new materialism of sport that is destructive to the concept of team.

This sentiment was reiterated by Smith, who "hopes that women's hockey will not be corrupted if it becomes more successful. He is wary of the game becoming big-time too

quickly." This struggle between excess and modest materiality was described in strict dichotomy: "the WNBA and the ABL have seemed to be alternately confused and confident about how to sell their game to the public. Do the players strive to dunk, or don't they? Do they aspire to make millions and buy mansions? Or, should they remain, as in the tradition of women's sports, modest team players?"

Emotional state. Hilliard (1984) found that magazine coverage of female tennis players focused on the women's physical attractiveness and their emotional issues, such as dependency, anxiety, and depression. Similarly, in CN/WS&F, the emotional states of the women athletes were frequent topics. Table 6 demonstrates the type of descriptors used to highlight the women's varying emotional states.

Designations of weak character traits are those that are consistent with stereotypical femininity, such as passivity, naiveté, nurturing, and emotional difficulty (Hilliard, 1984). Such traits were included in the sports articles of CN/WS&F. College basketball player, Chamique Holdsclaw, was described as a "soft spoken forward;" hockey

Table 6

Continuum of emotional states as presented in text.

<u>Continuum</u>	<u>Descriptors</u>
Weakness	playfully dances; soft spoken; shrieking giggles; weeping; whispering; tearful tantrums; darling; disheveled; tennis vigin; adolescent back-talk
Strength	The Leader; smashing bullets; competitor; intense focus; passionate and committed; dedication and guts

---

player, A.J. Mleczko, was praised for not wanting to show-up other female players, "now, even as she played among girls, she wanted to do nothing more that might set her apart from her teammates," and retired tennis champion, Evert, was humorously contrasted with the roles of athlete and mother, "she knows how funny it is for her, the champion in ruffles, the quintessential cool icon of

American girlhood, to be perpetually disheveled," and "the second act of Evert's life is underway. At 43 she is a fixture in the tennis Hall of Fame, but at home she is distinctly lacking in stature. Children rule Evert's every waking moment."

Two articles, in particular, emphasized weakness in the women athletes. First, figure skater, Baiul, was described as a childlike and flighty rather than as a competitive athlete: "animated, funny and constantly entertaining. Baiul keeps turning those famously large blue-green eyes away from the road...checking the reaction to something that she has said," "she [Baiul] playfully dances in her seat to the music," "she sounds more like a teenager testing out potential roles than a wealthy Olympic champion," "she misses an exit and makes several false turns, all the while chatting, singing, and dancing," and "the choreography is perfect for Baiul's personality: sexy with a clowning humor." The second article focused on tennis player, King's emotional struggle with an eating disorder and her lesbian identity. According to the article's author, an "eating disorder has plagued her [King] for decades," and "she has carried with her, along



with her feelings of pride and accomplishment, a nagging sense of shame." This shame emerged from "her bingeing and her body getting all mixed up with her angst and confusion over her sexuality." Even in telling the story "the flicker of pain across her eyes attests to the depth of the struggle. Billie Jean King did not want to be gay, not then, with so much at stake." Even later in the article, "King was haunted by her ongoing struggle with herself. She was still bingeing, hiding, and hurting." The emotional struggle of giving the interview was further described:

Her intensity and commitment to this interview process are unwavering. . .alternatingly laughing raucously and falling reflective, her face taking on a disarming sweetness - and weariness, especially when she takes off her glasses to rub her eyes.

Included with weakness descriptors was the mention of the women athletes crying. For example, the Tennessee women's basketball team "lost ten games, unheard of in Knoxville, and sobbed so brokenly and disconsolately after a midseason loss. . .that Summit was afraid they'd need medical attention." Riley, a sailboat skipper, "spotted a teammate in tears onshore." Baiul, after winning a medal

was described as: "the steely athlete was quickly replaced by a sensitive child, who cried unending primal sobs after winning." And, Evert's "eyes fill up and suddenly she is weeping," while King:

learned very early not to cry, and only on a couple of occasions has she succumbed since (Once, in fact, when she was in the shower getting ready to play the 17-year-old Chrissie. . .she imagined that if she lost, everything she had been working for in women's tennis would slip away. King did win that match after pulling herself together).

The accompanying photographs for these stories further supported the weak emotional states of the women. In the photographs of Baiul she was shown, in color, being playful or laughing, whereas King's photographs were in black and white and showed her stern face and her hand holding a tennis ball. In one picture of Baiul, she was photographed in a sweatsuit while playfully skating by the camera and flashing a huge smile. In a second picture, Baiul was shown wearing a baggy sweater while crouching, childlike on a boulder - the caption reading "always emotional, Baiul can be sexy and goofy simultaneously." Similar pictures

captured the playfulness of the USA women's soccer team. In one photograph, three players were bending towards the camera, all smiling, while one squeezes the cheeks of her teammate. And, hockey player, A.J. Mleczko was pictured goofing around with her brother and sister while her parents stand nearby and laugh. In the article titled "The Battles of Billie Jean King," two full-page photographs of King appeared in black and white. One photograph shows only her forearm holding a tennis ball with the caption, "'Nobody can hurt me anymore. .because when you hide is when you get hurt.'" In the second photograph, King sits facing the camera, holding her eyeglasses in one hand, not smiling while staring directly into the camera. The caption reads, "Here, for the first time, she talks openly about sport, sexuality, and self-doubt."

Stereotypically masculine character descriptions were also provided about some of the women athletes. According to Hilliard (1984), strong characterizations are those that emphasized athleticism, confidence, and self-assuredness. This was illustrated by the sports writers: "she is a committed world champion..who is shredding sexist archetypes on her sport," "it takes backbone to become so good at

something so unconventional," "Riley, who is more of a guy's girl, didn't cry," "[she] is one of the game's most ingenious motivators," and "it is a testament to McCray's tenacity." Many of the strength descriptors were directed at the athletes engaged in nontraditional women's sports such as ice hockey, yachting, or extreme sports. "[she] loved to skate, and she was by nature aggressive and competitive on the ice," "[she] is an uncommon athlete with an uncommon commitment," "there was a certain toughness and resilience to her personality," and "what dazzles is not that these women do what they do, but their absolute, unwavering confidence that they can do it." And, the article about sailboat captain, Dawn Riley, described and showed her as a very strong female athlete. Riley, "a sailing pioneer who has done more than any other American woman to break down the sport's barriers of elitism and chauvinism," "[her] ability to organize, to motivate, and inspire a crew's trust," and "her earlier accomplishments have established her as one of the world's top sailors male or female." Four photographs were action shots of Riley skippering the sailboats and one action shot highlighted her muscular arms.

Black and white photographs were shown in the sports articles. One full-page photograph of soccer player, Hamm, showed her from the waist up with her head turned to display an earnest profile, while a teammate's blurred figure is offset in the background. The caption read, "Celebrity is something that chafes Mia Hamm, but it is something she puts up with for the sake of her teammates and the game." In the only photograph of an entire team, the two-page posed shot of the Tennessee women's basketball team, titled "The Leader," head coach, Summitt, stands over her seated players, angled slightly sideways, and stares solemnly into the camera. Although most of the players are smiling with arms and legs casually draped over their teammates, some players tilt their heads to the side while staring soberly into the camera.

The colored photographs of the athletes were often posed in similar ways to the ones in black and white. Skateboarder, Burnside, was shown leaning against her skateboard, helmet in hand, while tilting her head to look straight into the camera with a slight smile showing at the corners of her mouth. In two full-page photographs of Hingis, she wore the same half smile without her head ever

turning directly to the camera. In one shot, Hingis was shown from the waist up, wearing a black sweater and short white shorts, holding her hands on her hips, tilting her head so that her gaze is slightly angled, and her closed-mouth smile accentuates her full lips. Only her profile appeared in the other full-page photograph with the captions, "Freedom's Child," and "She's precocious, gifted, and set to lead tennis into the twenty-first century." The two-page photograph of the 14 female extreme athletes included a mix of facial expressions, stances, and outfits. Although some of the women slightly smile, most look into the camera with direct gazes and set stares.

Bad girl athlete. The final theme, "The Bad Girl Athlete," was demonstrated by the focus on rivalries between athletes, rebellious athletes, and the childish attitudes of the younger athletes. In fact, as shown in Table 7, there existed a range of written descriptors that characterized the women's bad girl behaviors.

Table 7

The athletes who are bad-girls.

Characteristic	Athlete
Willfully Opinionated	Hingis; Kournikova
Rebellious	Bauil; Capriate; Williams' sisters
Bad-Ass	Giove; Zoolalian; WNBA players

The willfully opinionated bad girl theme was particularly evident in the articles about women's tennis: "in an age of sheltered, angst-ridden, terminally shy teen prodigies," "this generation, poised saucy and outspoken," and "women's tennis has become increasingly populated by spoiled, one-dimensional teenagers lacking both manners and high school diplomas." In particular, one player's disposition was mentioned several times throughout the article:

Hingis' most prominent feature is a fixed grin that reveals two enormous, white front teeth. The smile

does not particularly reflect her disposition...when she is displeased, she resembles not Heidi so much as Chucky, the clever killer doll in the thriller 'Child's Play' who confides, 'I'll be your friend to the end,' as he throws the baby-sitter out of the window.

Also a focus in the article was Hingis' bad-girl attitude that sets her apart from other tennis players: "her breezy disregard for the woman she supplanted as No. 1, Steffi Graf. .is startling," "Hingis is utterly convinced that she is different - that she is smarter, stronger, better reared and a better player than her peers who failed to manage under the glare of the lights and pressure," and "Hingis will come through it - both on and off the court - is what separates her from other girl wonders. Champions don't let anyone tell them what to do. They are opinionated, willful and impervious to setbacks. Hingis is all of those things." And, one of Hingis' rivals, Kournikova, was described as "the brashest of the new brat pack of megarich tennis teens," and the attention given Kournikova "clearly rankles some of her fellow players."



While former tennis star, Jennifer Capriati, was described as a "burnout victim" of the game.

Another individual athlete, figure skater, Baiul, was singled out by the sports writer for her rebellious antics away from sports: "a made-to-order metaphor for a young life spinning out of control." The article focused on Baiul's 1997 drunk driving accident that served as a turning point in Baiul's career:

The heart tugging Cinderella fable of the impoverished child, a virtual orphan after her mother's death three years before she became an Olympic champion at 16, was replaced in the public consciousness with the new story of the poor little rich girl, one who achieved too much too young, then forsook her talent and became a self-indulgent party girl.

The severity of Baiul's offenses was then discussed in light of other bad-girl/guy athletes: "compared with athletes who use cocaine or beat their wives, Oksana's infractions might seem relatively minor. What may prove unforgivable is seeing such a unique talent squandered by lack of discipline."

The bad-girl as rebel was most evident in the sports feature about the Williams sisters. The title of the article was, "Double Trouble. .Are the sisters master manipulators - or are they just acting their age," and the feature described the rebellious antics of the sisters. The sister's behaviors become the fulcrum of the article: "The thing you have to decide about Venus and Serena Williams is whether they are worth the trouble," "they raise contrariness to performance art," "to their anger, their ambivalence and their irreverence as they expose the dry rot in one of the most elitist sports on earth," and "they have also behaved like attitudinal jerks." Their behavior both on the court includes, "Venus threw a tantrum reminiscent of John McEnroe," "in a match rent with her screams of temper and frustration," and "but that precocious display was undermined by her tearful tantrums over line calls," while their off court behavior has involved blatantly shunning their peers in the locker room.

The bad-ass bad-girl was used to describe women athletes representing team sport. For example, the women in the professional basketball leagues, described by the author as "Women Behaving Badly," provided spectators with:

glints of unapologetic, raw fire that rips through men's sports and makes them dastardly and riveting at once. It was about winners winning and losers getting mad. .even for those traditionalists who fervently love women's basketball. .had to recognize how the pulse races when something naughty happens.

Mountain biker, Missy Giove, epitomized the bad-ass bad-girl, "she is a Gen X poster girl, part performance artist, part bad-ass biker chick - and a whole new visual of an athlete, with shaved blonde sidewalls, a black topknot, a nose ring, and a dead piranha around her neck." And, one article described how competing against men is what makes extreme athlete, Pam Zoolalian, a bad-girl athlete: "Zoolalian is loving this. She clearly enjoys her position as the one gutsy girl who can beat up the guys. Indeed, on the back of her helmet, in block letters it says SPANKED BY A CHICK."

### Gender Difference

Four major subthemes comprise the main category of gender difference: (a) feminine sexualization, (b) body segmentation, (c) body exposure and feminine pose, and (d) assumption of heterosexuality. The category of gender

difference refers to the magazine's focus on the sexual differences between men and women by emphasizing the stereotypically feminine traits of the women featured in the magazine. According to Duncan (1990), these differences may be presented by focusing on those cultural attributes that typically identify a woman as female, such as clothing, specific body parts (breast, hips, thighs), behaviors, and having a sexual interest in men. Appendix I shows those aspects of the magazine that contributed to the emphasis on gender difference.

Feminine sexualization. Accentuating the women's sexuality, or hypersexualization, was particularly evident in the fitness articles and photographs. For example, the authors described how working-out cannot only help a woman attain the ideal, sexy body but sweating while working-out can also be sexy: "the world has always been a sweaty place. .to the flattering slime on Ellen Ripley's cheekbones," "sweat is an attractive useful evolutionary phenomenon," and

sweat makes a woman look as good as she feels after an hour of sculling. Now, models glisten at us from the pages of fashion magazine, flushed from make-believe

workouts, their high cheekbones sculpted by the light bouncing off the pseudo-sweat.

Volleyball player, Gabrielle Reece explained the difference between the athletic body and the feminine, sexy body:

"Being in shape is my job, but the shape varies. There's 'performance' shape and there's 'cosmetic' shape. I have to look like I'm in shape all year. .I never know when I'll get called to do a photo shoot where I'll have to wear bandeau top and a bikini bottom."

The editor's letters also described the ideal, feminine body, the women who possess one, and how a reader can attain one. For example, movie star, Linda Hamilton, "did more for making muscles sexy than most Olympians have." A favorite archetype used in the editor's letters to describe the perfect body was volleyball player, Reece, who also writes a regular column for the magazine. In one letter, Reece "[is] the beach volleyball star who embodies strength and femininity," "America's uber-girl-jock, [who is] arguably the most glamorous sportswoman in the country," "at six-feet-three-inches and with a physique to die for," and, "[she] has shown us that it's possible to be

a dedicated athlete, an intelligent thinker and a phenomenal beauty."

Body segmentation. The hypersexualization of the women was also achieved by the focus on specific body parts that are predominantly associated with femininity. Again, this theme was mostly evident in the fitness articles and photographs, and the editor's letters. Body segmentation refers to those elements within the text and photographs that depicted parts of the body as objects, rather than as instruments, to be molded and transformed into something "better," or closer to the ideal. In six of the articles, a fitness program was described to target specific areas of the body such as legs ( $\underline{n}$  = 9 of 13, 69%), arms ( $\underline{n}$  = 7 of 13, 54%), abdominals ( $\underline{n}$  = 6 of 13, 46%), back ( $\underline{n}$  = 6 of 13, 46%), and buttocks ( $\underline{n}$  = 5 of 13, 38%). In addition to the text were the various photographs that showed specific body parts that were exposed and the main object of the picture. Often times in these pictures, the woman's face and head were either turned away or cropped off in order to accentuate the particular body part.

Sections of the fitness articles highlighted the focus on women's body parts rather than a whole: "This year,

instead of doing your usual vowing to start over. .try a new approach. Hold on to your stalwart resolve to change your body. .parts of your body you worry about most - your abs, arms, butt, legs, and back." The need for toned legs was emphasized: "giving Venturini the booster-rocket legs," and "for better balance, quicker feet and stronger, more defined legs." Yet, on the other hand, the need to improve one's legs was qualified with a warning against developing legs that are too muscular: "those who stretch to slim bulging calf muscles," and "whether your goal is to develop stronger, more defined legs (without the bulk)."

Buttocks and abdominals were also a focus of attention in the articles: "Killer abs? Buns of Steel?," "all women want one. Many would trade their right arm for one. And Peggy Tillinghast has one: a great butt," "the mother of all butt machines," "and without toiling for that cast-iron stomach," and "to save your butt (literally)." And, women's breasts were described as being problem areas: "Go low. .since your joints (and breasts) have seen better days," and "targets the hard-to-hit chest area (and combats gravity)."

Body exposure and feminine pose. Contributing to the hypersexualization of women's bodies in the magazine was the amount of the cover and fitness models' bodies being exposed and the position in which the models' exposed areas are photographed. Except in rare instances, the fitness models were shown wearing tight fitting shorts, jog bras, or swimming suits. Therefore, shoulders, legs, abdominals, butts, and backs were frequently displayed. Table 8 illustrates the number of times that certain body parts were exposed in fitness photographs.

Table 8

Body parts exposed in fitness photographs.


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<u>Category</u>	<u>n = 190</u>	<u>%</u>
Shoulders	125	66
Thigh	111	58
Abdominals	73	38
Back	26	14
Cleavage	19	10
Buttocks	11	5

---



The manner in which the body parts were displayed in pictures related to the notion of feminine pose whereby the model's sexual difference is emphasized. An example of body exposure and feminine pose was found in the six pictures accompanying the article titled "The Perfect 10." In the succession of photographs, all full-page and in black and white, the model's body part was exposed in relation to the suggested exercises to tone that particular area. The model wore a loose-fitting cloth bra and skin-tight short-shorts. Her lean, tight, slightly muscular body was spotted with water drops to resemble sweat as she bent and stretched to accentuate the exposed area. One shot focused solely on her buttocks while another picture is taken looking up into the models' crotch. Only once was the model's face shown as the camera angled up towards the model's body exposing her thighs and abdominals. The accompanying caption read, "not by crunches alone: Vary your workout to get flatter, firmer, abs." Another example was the full-page colored photograph that was shot from behind the model as she climbed a set of stairs. She wore tight shorts and jog bra thus exposing her back, shoulders,

buttocks, and legs. The camera angle was such that the model's crotch is at the center of the photograph.

Given that the models wore either tight fitness clothes or bathing suits, much of the 13 cover models' bodies were exposed in the photographs. The two outfits determined to be athletic wear was the bathing suit worn by world champion surfer, Lisa Anderson, as she was pictured on her surfboard, and the cover of two skiers in ski helmets and body suits. Bare shoulders ( $\underline{n} = 9$  of 13; 69 %), thighs ( $\underline{n} = 5$  of 13, 38%), abdominals( $\underline{n} = 4$  of 13, 31%), and cleavage ( $\underline{n} = 3$  of 13, 23 %) were revealed in most of the photographs. Only three cover photographs did not show any skin as these models were in winter clothing. The most revealing cover was the June 1998 issue of Anna Kournikova wearing a revealing jog bra and spandex pants as she bent at the waist towards the camera showing her cleavage.

The clothing worn by the fitness models ( $\underline{n} = 190$ ) consisted mostly of fitness wear ( $\underline{n} = 154$ ; 81%) that included tight spandex shorts and jog bra tops. For this reason, shoulders ( $\underline{n} = 125$ , 66 %), thighs ( $\underline{n} = 111$ , 58%), and stomachs ( $\underline{n} = 73$ , 38%) were exposed in the photographs.

When buttocks were exposed, the photographs were often taken from below the model and looking up at her buttocks during a workout. Although the clothing was an integral component to the photographs, the accompanying text did not mention the price or designer of the outfit. Given the type of clothing worn, it was apparent that the activities were for warm weather or indoor activities.

Assumption of heterosexuality. Pirinen (1997) noted that the mass media, particularly women's magazines, represent heterosexuality in women to be "natural, normal, and commonsense" (p. 299) by privileging women who express their female sexuality in appropriate ways, such as having boyfriends, husbands, and children. And, the heterosexualization of women in the magazine was another example of how gender difference is constructed and promoted (Duncan, 1990; Pirinen, 1997). Based on consistent statements throughout CN/WS&F, I found that there existed an assumption of heterosexuality being the normal or natural sexual identity of women who were featured in the magazine, the editor, and the women who read the magazine. Mentioning children was one way that the magazine writers implied heterosexuality of readers: "and your kids a whole

new definition of 'play date'," "Dilemma: Hang with the kids or hit the gym?," "you'll hike the Alps (virtually), play ice hockey with the kids and get a mammogram," and "Don't come back [from pregnancy] too hard, Mama." Also mentioned was the heterosexual status of the women featured in the fitness articles: "says Ciarelli, a mother of two," and "Sheryl Swoope's challenge: Pregnancy." And in one article, the heterosexual appeal of inner-tube water polo was described: "where doers bash the ball into gals at either end. 'There's sex appeal to it' says Chelsea Piers' Erik Stevens. 'You're floating around in swim trunks, and it's coed.'" And, in one fitness article the writer suggested that all women have sex with men: "during arousal, both men and women experience an invigorating surge."

The editor also mentioned her heterosexuality while describing readers' heterosexuality. Mentioning husbands, children, and pregnancy were ways that the editor discussed heterosexuality and emphasized gender difference: "snowboarding as aggressively pregnant as most people do for one," "[she] somehow found the time to raise her daughter," "Sheryl Swoopes shares her tips for coming back

from pregnant," "if Tipper Gore, with four kids," and "sports. . . can be the glue for a family." The editor frequently mentioned her sexuality by including information about her family: "I'll be in the park with my family," "I can withstand anything the day throws at me: children melting down, traffic jams, baby showers," "where can I go on a trip with my husband and do something that is both active and romantic," "after I became a mother. . . I can still keep up with my 4-year-old son," and "I owe it to Jesse, my 3-year-old daughter."

Reduces Gender Difference. In some instances, the magazine's photographs challenged the traditional notions of gender difference, or sex typing. Most of the 143 photographs were the nonposed, competitive shots ( $n = 63$ ; 44%) found in the sports articles. Specifically, one sports article consisted entirely of intensely competitive pictures; the remaining sports articles included a mix of nonposed, posed active, and posed passive photographs. Characteristics of the intensely competitive shots included those showing real, or unstaged action between athletes, or a single athlete in nonposed motion. Most often, the camera was at eye-level ( $n = 101$  of 143; 71%) while the athlete's

wore uniforms ( $\underline{n}$  = 156 of 314; 49%), and had intense looks on their faces ( $\underline{n}$  = 132 of 314; 42%). For example, two large photographs in the article about the women's professional basketball league showed Nikki McCray dribbling fiercely against a competitor, and Leslie one-arm rebounding against a defender. Hockey player, Shelley Looney, was the focus of one full-page photograph which showed her, in full hockey uniform, skating to reach the puck with a Canadian defender in pursuit. Several pictures in the article featuring various sports stars included intensely competitive pictures, including one of mountain biker, Missy Giove, standing on her pedals, muscled-arms extended to the handlebars, while she guides her bike through a patch of mud.

In analyzing the fitness photographs, there existed some images that challenged gender difference. These pictures typically featured models with intense faces ( $\underline{n}$  61 of 190; 32%), straining muscles, and in explosive movements. The article that included the photographs that best typified this theme was titled, "Body by Sport." Six photographs featured the female models in motion by kicking, swinging, swimming, climbing, and spiking. In

particular, one model was pictured on the side of a mountain as her arms strain to keep hold of the rock as she climbs. Her face is intensely focused on her movements, she is wearing rock climbing gear, and the size of her arm and leg muscles verify that she is a rock climbing competitor. In another photograph, a model was pictured in three successive shots as she performs a standing triple jump. Her face is focused on the track in front of her as she stretches her arms and legs in proper jumping form. And, Gabrielle Reece was shown straining to lift a 40-lb dumbbell and then pictured lifting a stack of weights as her thigh muscles bulge against the weight. In both photographs she has an intense face and is demonstrating proper lifting form.

#### Trivialization of Athleticism , Team, and Game

The final category, trivialization of athleticism and team, includes four subthemes: (a) denial of team, (b) anti-jock, (c) sport as calorie burn, and (d) rejection of the women's game. These themes existed mostly in the sports articles and editor's letters. Appendix J depicts the trivialization of athleticism and team subthemes that existed in the magazine.

Denial of team and game. Duncan's (1988) suggested that a denial of team means that individual players, rather than the team, are the focus of the coverage; and, denial of game refers to the coverage's lack of commentary about strategy, physical skill, and competition. In CN/WS&F, I found that the lack of coverage given to women's sports teams contributed to a denial of team. Specifically, three (23%) articles were written about teams or athletes who play team sports (basketball, hockey, and soccer), nine (69%) articles were about women who play individual sports (tennis, ice skating, skateboarding, and extreme sports), and one article written about "sports stars" featured seven individual athletes and one team, the Tennessee Lady Volunteer basketball team. Also, statistics, tournaments, strategy, and team standings were never mentioned in any of the sports articles or editor's letters.

In the article about the two women's professional basketball leagues, individual players, more so than teams were the focus of the writer's attention. In particular, Leslie was described as the WNBA's promised child: "Leslie had been elected as one of the figureheads of the WNBA's reported \$15 million marketing campaign to change all



that," "after a dismal early season during which even the image-conscious Lisa Leslie sometimes looked as if she could barely tolerate being in the same zip code as her foundering teammates," and

Yet, as Lisa Leslie rocketed to the hoop with nary a defender in sight, in that heartbeat of hang time, some seedling of doubt seemed to take root in her mind, a small damaging flashing of uncertainty. Fully crystallized, Leslie's thought might have been a question: 'Where the hell are we [women's league] headed?'. .

An article about the USA women's hockey team was written about one player's, Mleczko's, experience: "when women's hockey makes its Olympic debut, a generation that grew up playing with the boys will shoot for the gold - and a place in history. Here, one player's story." As the story unfolded, confirming the team aspect of hockey was not mentioned by the writer. Instead, Mleczko's development as an individual player was described by the writer: "recognizing that the boys were becoming stronger, she took lessons on the weekends to improve her speed and strength," "she had marvelously soft hands, which meant

that when she controlled the puck, her teammates were likely to get it not only in the right place at the right time but also in a way they could handle," and "[she] was fiercely competitive. In this way she tended to hold back, as if not wanting to call attention to herself and become too big a star." The same was true of soccer player, Hamm, who was frequently singled out from the team by the sports writer: "Mia wrecked every defense delusional enough to believe that it could stop her with anything short of homicide," and "Hamm, one of People's '50 Most Beautiful People in the World' who in another sport would rate an entourage but here is just one more set of tawny muscles to carry the team's gear."

Anti-jock. I found this theme to exist in the consistent statements in the editor's letter regarding the trivialization, or dismissal of the term "athlete" to describe women in the magazine, or women who read the magazine. Despite the editor's written insistence that readers are those who are "secure enough to 'own' sports and even remake them," she stated that the term "athlete" is equated with men's sports and that women's sports is different: "women don't do sports the way men do."

Therefore, as written in the editor's letter, to be called an athlete, or jock is unflattering: "women love sports. Just don't call us athletes," "this is a sports magazine, but it isn't just a place where superjocks can find a home," "not all of us here at CNSFW [CN/WS&F] are 'jocks'," "a self-proclaimed anti-jock," "hardly any of them would be comfortable using the word athlete to describe herself. Few women are," and "after a momentary squirm came the standard answer, 'oh, I'm not an athlete.'" And, for the editor, "nothing makes me feel better than getting really dressed up and managing not to look like a jock."

Concurrent with the trivialization of athlete was the editor's insistence that sport and fitness for women have converged and "sometimes they're even interchangeable." The editor's letter consistently regarded women's participation in sport as a way to transform the body and get a good work-out. Thus, the editor's definition of sport represented a departure from scholarly definitions of sport that acknowledge sports as having other components, such as competition, organization, rules, and formal governance. One letter read, "It never occurred to me before starting this new magazine that the word sports had been co-opted by

men, that sports had become, somewhere along the way, a masculine noun." So, the editor wrote that "sports, clearly are for women" if it involves "[being] active, get[ting] outside, hav[ing] fun, us[ing] our bodies, not just tam[ing] them." According to one letter, the difference between sports and fitness "lies in my head" and "fitness is so rewarding because it is so personal, something we do for ourselves. .Sports are about sharing the fun, connecting in the moment." Furthermore, women "train to be healthy and get in shape. We [women] do sports because we are healthy and in shape." But, this shape created by sport means that "women. .don't want to be skinny; they want a few feminine curves, defined legs and hips that aren't too boyish."

The photographs accompanying many of the fitness articles also illustrated a trivialization of athleticism. Endel (1991) found that when photographed athletes were used "as a smiling representation of the 'cosmetic ideal' [it] swiftly and powerfully connects femininity to physical activity while erasing a competitive sport identity" (p. 127). This was demonstrated in this study by several images that depicted playfullness and frolic while

engaging in fitness activities. As shown in the models' faces and the activities, there was a lack of intensity while exercising. In the article titled, "The 30 min. Quickie Workout," two similar looking models were shown in a succession of numerous photographs. The models wore expansive smiles and laughed as they jogged, climbed fences, performed chin-ups using a tree branch, did push-ups on a picnic table, and performed lunges on a boat dock. In a similar article titled, "4 Weeks to a Great Summer Body," two models are pictured engaged in various activities. They are frequently smiling or laughing as they lift weights, ride a stationary bike, do yoga, and play tug-of-war on the beach. Other beach shots focus on the female models frolicking in the water or sand by themselves or with a group of other smiling, laughing women.

Sport as calorie burn. One predominant theme in the fitness articles characterized the focus on calorie burning while being physically active. Because of the editor's insistence that sport and fitness are interchangeable, and that engaging in sport is a way to get fit, I concluded that the fitness articles may be considered a demonstration of sport. Writing about the importance of engaging in

calorie burning fitness activities or sport, cardiovascular or weight bearing, was often the motivation and advantages given for working out: "Need inspiration? Jump-start your fitness routine with an interval workout at the track. You'll burn more fat, build more muscle and shift you metabolism into high gear." Rarely were other benefits of exercise, or involvement in sport mentioned, such as lowered risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, and stress. In some cases, the exact number of calories burned in an activity were mentioned: "100 cal. = 95 min. of kissing. .200 cal. = 83 min. of washing dishes." In one article, a question and answer section included many questions focused solely on burning calories: "Does being stress-out burn calories?," "What about the weather?," "Do you burn more calories if you exercise in the cold?," "Does working out in heavy sweats, even on a hot day, help you lose weight?," and "If you run for an hour, do you burn more fat in the second half-hour?"

Despite the editor's insistence in one letter that the magazine will not focus on "quick life fixes," she stated in a later edition that, "strength training is the best shortcut to getting leaner, stronger" and referred to the

article that stated, "it's [weight training] is the best shortcut to getting in shape." Calorie burning was often described as the main incentive for participating in weight training: "strength training raises metabolism by 15 percent - meaning you lose up to 300 extra calories a day," "Weigh it out. The more muscle you build, the higher your resting metabolism - and the more calories your body burns just sitting at the computer doing spreadsheets," "by forcing your muscles to work anaerobically. .you strengthen the body as you burn calories," and "an interval workout is one of the most effective ways to incinerate fat, burn calories, and tone muscles."

Rejection of the women's game. One new aspect with regard to denial of team that emerged in this research involved a rejection of the traditional concept of women's team sports that is characterized by teamwork, fair play, and inclusivity. This framework of women's team sports developed prior to the passage of Title IX when women's opportunities to participate in sport were severely limited. However, as found in the sports articles and editor's letters of CN/WS&F, the existence of professional women's basketball signals a change in this attitude - from

one of team to one of individuality, and toward a mirroring of the men's game:

all this choice [between playing in two professional leagues] signals progress, but it has also given way to a general uncertainty surrounding the women's game . . . .Do they aspire to make millions. . .or should the remain, as in the tradition in women's sports, modest team players?

According to the article's author, the distancing from the traditional concept of team is the natural evolution for women's professional team sports: "Whereas the ABL operated with an undercurrent of political correctness, reflected in its first-season ad slogans. . .the WNBA's 'We Got Next' campaign took a different track. These were not grateful Title IXers headed to the court, modest and thankful about the opportunity to play pro ball." And, further estrangement from the traditional team approach, "the p.c. [politically correct] brand that has ruled women's sports until now," to more individuality was described: "in one ad. . .Leslie, Swoopes, and Lobo, stride menacingly into Madison Square Garden. They don't smile. They don't hug or high-five. They just walk. But they walk



with attitude. The gosh-we're-just-so-glad-to-be-here era in women's basketball was over."

### Summary of Findings

Data gathered from textual and photographic elements of the magazine were analyzed using standardized worksheets and the NUDIST computer program. By combining the results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, one common theme emerged as being present throughout the magazine. The dominant theme was termed "the social construction of the monolithic representation of women in sport and active women" and was supported textually, visually, and editorially. Four subthemes were found in relation to the dominant theme: (a) physical appearance, (b) personal character, (c) gender difference, and (d) trivialization of athleticism and team. More specific themes existed within each of the four subthemes.

The subtheme titled physical appearance referred to the outward appearance of the models and female athletes. Most of the women were White, able-bodied, young, thin, and feminine. Such a homogenized image meant that minority women were not represented in the magazine and this reinforced the notion of a universal image of woman that is

preferred or ideal. Clothing and the women's physical size were also frequently discussed more so than athletic achievements or health benefits. The personal character theme, mostly found in the sports articles and photographs, involved a focus on the women's economic status, emotional state, and their on and off-court behaviors.

Emphasis on feminine sexuality, and exposure of body parts, characterized the third subtheme, gender difference. By focusing on items that are typically identified as feminine, this theme demonstrated how the magazine's contents collude to accentuate and naturalize gender differences. Finally, by trivializing athleticism and team the magazine further emphasized gender differences and created a dichotomy between athleticism and femininity. Promoting sport as a means to burn calories, rejecting the traditional women's game, focusing on individual athletes, and demeaning athleticism were all ways that the magazine trivialized women in sport and women's sport.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contents of 13 issues of the Conde Nast Sports for Women, currently titled Women's Sports & Fitness (CN/WS&F) magazine published between October 1997 and January/February 1999. Written and visual texts were analyzed to determine how women's sports, fitness, and women athletes are represented in the first 13 issues. By utilizing standardized worksheets based on prior content analysis of sport media photographs and texts (Duncan, 1990; Endel, 1991; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991) and the hermeneutic method, aspects of the magazine including covers, feature articles, photographs, and the editor's letters were critically examined.

#### Summary of Study

Following an extensive review of the literature, two major themes emerged with regard to media coverage, television, magazine, and newspaper, of women's sport,

women athletes, and active women. The first theme reflects the immense disparity in the amount of coverage given to women's sports as compared to men's sport. By ignoring or underrepresenting women's sports in the popular media, a common myth is perpetuated that insinuates women are not as involved or as interested in sport. The second theme involves the quality of coverage given to women's sport. Typically, media coverage is constructed in such a way as to demean or trivialize women's efforts in sport and depict women athletes in stereotypical feminine ways. One way that women in sport are trivialized is in the ambivalent or contradictory messages presented by the media. Specifically, by combining strength descriptors with weak or negative messages, an overall ambivalence develops that does not challenge common stereotypes. Both the amount and type of media coverage has helped to create restrictive and demeaning representations of women athletes and women in sport.

In addition to the underrepresentation and trivialization, there exist other characteristics of the media's treatment of women in sport and active women. Delineating these themes has involved research studies

focused on textual and photographic analysis in newspapers and magazines. Sexualization and heterosexualization refer to the manner in which the media can sexually objectify women athletes and accentuate gender differences that reinforce the idea that differences between men and women are natural and normal. Body monitoring involves the media's, specifically women's fitness magazines, promotion and creation of the feminine ideal body against which women compare their own bodies. According to Eskes, Duncan, and Miller (1998), to monitor one's body means to pursue fitness for the sake of body transformation and aesthetic improvement rather than for health reasons. The media also marginalize minority women athletes and active women by ignoring their efforts, thus assuming that all active women and women in sport are white, nondisabled, young, and heterosexual. Yet, many feminist researchers in the area of media representations have also failed to address the issues pertinent to minority women and have assumed a universal, or generic woman to represent all women.

### Summary of Results

This study sought to examine the contents of 13 issues of the WS&F magazine from October 1997 through

January/February, 1999 in order to explore the representations of women in sport and active women in the magazine. This magazine was chosen because it is the oldest magazine dedicated to women's sport and fitness that is still in circulation. The covers, fitness articles, sports articles, and editor's letters were analyzed using the hermeneutic method of textual interpretation that led to coding of data for qualitative analysis. Duncan's (1990) and Goffman's (1979) work in analyzing photographs helped to guide analysis of this magazine's photographs.

Taxonomy. The results from this study revealed a dominant theme that was consistent throughout the magazine's text and photographs, and this was presented in the form of taxonomy. Quantitative and qualitative data supported the existence of this topic. The dominant theme was termed "Socially constructing the female athlete: A monolithic media representation of active women." Four subthemes delineated the main theme: (a) physical appearance, (b) personal character, (c) gender difference, and (d) trivialization of athleticism and team.

Physical appearance referred to the physical characteristics of the women pictured and written about in

the sports and fitness articles, the editor's letter, and covers. Five components of the text and pictures supported this theme: (a) homogenized image, (b) able-bodied, (c) feminine ideal body, (d) clothing, and (e) physical size. Typically, the fitness models and women athletes were white, able-bodied, feminine, and similar in body type. Discussion of the women's clothing and their physical size contributed to the construction of the homogenized image of the ideal, feminine woman in sport and fitness. Personal character was reflected in the magazine's focus on the women's emotional state, financial status, and on-court and off-court behaviors. This theme was mostly present in the sports articles that featured professional athletes and reported on their personal lives and relationships rather than athletic competitions. Several of the athletes were described using weak, or stereotypically feminine emotional traits, and depicted as materialistic, spoiled, rebellious bad girls.

A frequent theme that was supported textually, visually, and editorially was the emphasis on gender differences. The "natural" differences between men and women were perpetuated by sexualizing the women, segmenting

women's bodies, exposing body parts and posing them in ways that accentuated femininity, and assuming women's heterosexuality. Finally, by trivializing women's athleticism and teams, the magazine further heightened gender differences and created a dichotomy between femininity and athleticism. This was accomplished by featuring individual athletes rather than teams, denouncing athleticism in women, promoting sport as a means to burn calories and transform the body, and to reject the traditions of the women's game.

#### Interpretation of Results

The proceeding section outlines the interpretation of the findings of this study with regard to the current literature, and the research questions presented in Chapter One.

#### Research Questions

How are women's sports, women's fitness, and women athletes represented in the covers, photographs, feature articles, and editor's letters of the magazine? The results from this study both support and further the research with regard to the media representations of women's sports and women athletes (Davis, 1997; Duncan,



1986, 1990, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Duncan & Sayaovon, 1990; Endel, 1991; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998; Hilliard, 1984; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Pirinen, 1997; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994). The main theme consistent throughout the different aspects of the magazine is titled, "Socially constructing the female athlete: A monolithic media representation of active women." By focusing on physical appearance, personal character, gender differences, and trivializing athleticism and team, the text and photographs within CN/WS&F produce a homogenized image of women in sport and fitness. Specifically, the magazine's contents lead to a universalized image of woman that lacks diversity in race, age, physical ability, body type, and sexual identity. Conversely, the magazine did accentuate sexual differences between men and women by focusing specifically on women's pursuits in sport and fitness and accentuating those features stereotypically identified as feminine. These two factors, related to representational difference in the magazine, highlight Hall's (1996) suggestion that (a) attention to sexual difference can challenge notions that male/man represent the universal and, instead,

recognize women's participation in culture, and (b) ignoring differences between women creates a universal conception of woman and women's experiences and creates an homogeneous female voice. Unfortunately, with regard to the gender differences present in the magazine, these representations did not challenge traditional images of women found in the sports and fitness media, such as attaining the ideal body, trivializing athleticism, and heterosexualizing and sexualizing women (Birrell & Theberge, 1994; Duncan, 1994; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998; Kane, 1989; Pirinen, 1997). Therefore, the monolithic representation of women in CN/WS&F is one that is consistent with traditional representations of women and one that silences nonwhite, nonable bodied, nonheterosexual, nonyoung women.

One reason why the representations in the magazine did not challenge traditional portrayals of women involved the ambivalence that existed between the messages provided in the photographs and text. Duncan (1986, 1990), Duncan and Hasbrook (1988), and Hilliard (1984) have documented the mass media's ambivalence toward female athletes. Similar to Duncan's and Hasbrook's (1988) findings that indicated

"positive portrayals stressing women's strength, skill, or expertise along with negative suggestions that trivialized the women's efforts" (p. 18), I discovered that the representations of women's sports and women athletes to be somewhat contradictory. For example, several of the photographs depicted live, intense sport action that emphasized the women's strength and skill. These powerful images, although not very common, symbolize a form of resistance to the representations of women athletes as being sexualized, inferior others (Duncan, 1990). Yet, the accompanying text, and other photographs often focused on the athlete's physical appearance, clothing, and weak character - descriptors often equated with femininity and sexuality. Such contradictory messages do little to challenge stereotypical images of women athletes and women's sports and, instead, maintain the popular media image of the female athlete as being attractive, sexualized, and passive (Bowman & Daniels, 1995; Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Duncan, 1990).

Another representation of women's sports and women athletes found in this study supported Hilliard's (1984) and Endel's (1991) findings with regard to the media's

focus on the athletes' personal characters more so than their athletic achievements. Similar to the ambivalence described above, Hilliard (1984) found that magazine coverage of women tennis players vacillated between positive coverage and coverage that focused on the weak character traits of the players. Endel (1991) discovered that the WS&F magazine relied heavily on presenting character portraits that framed the athletes as both athletes and women. In this study, both strong and weak character descriptions with regard to their emotional and social relationships were given about the women athletes. The supporting texts and pictures worked together to create these images and to reinforce the dominant messages regarding the women's character flaws and/or admirable traits. Thus "there was little space for the sportswoman to express her own image and representation" (Endel, 1991, p. 171). Athletes described in the present study as athletically strong and confident (masculine characteristics) were most often representative of extreme or team sports, whereas younger players in individual sports were depicted as spoiled or weak in character (feminine characteristics). This finding suggests that

women who engage in sports that are commonly associated with masculinity may receive less sexually biased coverage than women engaged in traditionally feminine associated sports, such as tennis and figure skating. However, this dichotomy in representations reinforces dominant beliefs that masculinity is associated with athleticism and femininity is not compatible with competitive sport.

Along with the emphasis on character traits was the focus on the athletes' personal lives, such as their lifestyles, earnings, family histories, and emotional struggles. Higgs and Weiller (1994) found the same to be true in the television coverage of the 1992 Summer Olympics when the commentator's narratives focused more on the women athletes' personal drama than the competition. Likewise, in CN/WS&F, the focus on the women athletes' characters or personalities was far greater than attention given to the athletes' sports accomplishments or other aspects of sports, such as strategy, technique, competitions, or statistics. Examples of this included the drama surrounding Oksana Baiul's career, A.J. Mieczko's emergence into hockey, Anna Kournikova's sex appeal, and Lisa Leslie's display of fame and fortune. But, perhaps the best example

of personal drama was in the differential treatment given to retired tennis players, Chris Evert and Billie Jean King. Although at times throughout the articles, both women were described in either weak or strong terms, the overriding themes were markedly different with regard to the women's characters. While Evert was depicted as the successful athlete and mother, happy to be raising her family and running her business, King was portrayed as the tortured, weak, distraught lesbian who has struggled with an eating disorder. The dramatic poses and black and white photographs accompanying King's article supported the drama that was being reported. This focus on the women athletes' personal stories rather than on sports competition or athleticism lends to a devaluing of women's sports and reinforces a common representation that women's sports and athletes cannot be taken seriously.

A monolithic representation of active women in CN/WS&F was supported textually and visually. By emphasizing feminine traits, and exposing body parts equated with feminine sexuality, the representation of the body ideal in active women was made apparent. This ideal is characterized by being white, able, young, attractive, thin, and toned

without muscle bulk. Monitoring or attaining this ideal body was encouraged through calorie burning activities, dieting hints, fitness how-to programs, and photographing look alike models who represent the body ideal. Although Duncan (1994) focused on different mechanisms used by a fitness magazine to encourage body monitoring in women, parallels may be drawn between Duncan's (1994) study and the present study. Duncan's (1994) research involved readers' personal stories with weight loss and how these representations may encourage women to "become obsessively self-monitoring" (p. 60) and transform their bodies. In CN/WS&F, encouragement to lose weight, look better, and become leaner, toner, and fitter was accomplished through the editor's letter, fitness articles, and photographs. In each aspect of the magazine, very little attention is given to health benefits of eating right and exercising; instead the possibility of nearing the body ideal becomes a means to a happier, better life. Thus, the constructed image of the ideal female body in CN/WS&F is one that encourages fitness and healthy activities for the sake of beauty rather than for overall physical strength and fitness.

These representations found in the various components of CN/WS&F are consistent with the findings presented by Endel (1991), and Leath and Lumpkin (1992) who reviewed WS&F prior to Conde Nast's purchase of the name. These researchers found that the magazine's representations of women reinforced several restrictive attitudes about women in sport that send messages that being a competitive athlete may not be compatible with being female, and that women are more interested in fitness and fun rather than competitive sports. Also, the discordant images of strength and traditional images of femininity that exist throughout the magazine are not effective means to challenge such messages.

What kinds of women are depicted and in what ways?

According to the results, a limited range of difference existed in the women who were depicted in the magazine's text and photographs, and a hierarchical relationship occurred between those depictions. The majority of women athletes were white, able-bodied, young, attractive, thin, professional athletes who compete in individual sports with personalities consistent with traditional notions of femininity. Similarly, the active



women depicted were white, able-bodied, young, attractive, thin, and concerned with working out in order to look good and feel better. Similar to Endel's (1991) findings, minority groups in the current study received very little attention or acknowledgment as there were few older and/or nonwhite women and no larger and/or disabled women featured. In fact, the most diversity (racial) was depicted in the sports articles where well-known women athletes were featured rather than models selected by the magazine. Those women most frequently depicted in the magazine were deemed more privileged as they mirrored the bodily image of the ideal female. This privileging of the universal woman lends to marginalizing and silencing women in subordinate or minority positions. As Grillo and Wildman (1997) described, "part of being a member of a privileged group is being the center and the subject of all inquiry in which people of color or other nonprivileged groups are the objects" (p. 46). Thus, those in the center are accustomed to being "center stage" (p. 46) and the focus of attention, while the concerns of those on the periphery are disregarded.

When minority women athletes were depicted, the coverage frequently alluded to their divergence from the ideal population. For example, the two older athletes, Billie Jean King and Chris Evert, were portrayed as the older, wiser tennis mentors to aspiring, younger players. Stories of their current lives as established women were intermingled with tales from their competitive days that are greatly different from the renegade lives of today's tennis prodigies. Historical, black and white photographs of the women documented the physical and emotional changes that they have endured since their childhoods. For Evert, the biggest difference was in her current life focus on emotional stability, children, husband, and lucrative tennis academy business. Yet, for Billie Jean King, her deviance from the ideal was qualitatively different and further elaborated upon because not only is she older, she is also a lesbian. King, therefore, was depicted as a tortured, ailing, lesbian whose demons continue to haunt her in old age. Although King's accomplishments in tennis and for women in sport were described, this "successful athlete" story line was frequently intermingled with tales of hardship, loss, and personal shame that emerged as

result of her sexual identity. For example, as described in the magazine, "she has carried with her. . .a nagging sense of shame," and "the flicker of pain across her eyes attests to the depth of the struggle." Such a dichotomy in the Evert/King depictions resembles what Pirinen (1997) found as being a hierarchy of acceptability between women that is constructed by women's magazines. On the one hand, feminine, family oriented (heterosexual) women were depicted in more empowering terms than women who were more masculine or nonheterosexual.

Similarly, the only two racial minorities to be the sole focus of a sports article were the Williams sisters who are African -American. This lack of attention given to racial minorities continues what Smith (1992) called " a tradition in silence and invisibility in society with parallel traditions in sport, sport being a microcosm of society" (p. 229). Although the magazine did include some descriptors of white tennis players being rebels or spoiled adolescents, the Williams' were depicted as the epitome of insubordination - based mostly on their experiences with the elitist, white tennis world. The fact that the sisters are Black was the article's cornerstone and upon which the

magazine built the "Cinderella of the ghetto" rags to riches story. The rationale given for the sisters' insurgent behaviors was often assumed to be based on their efforts to reenact the prejudice and discrimination that they experience as minorities, rather than being based on their current economic status or adolescence - reasons frequently given for the behaviors of other young tennis players. This is consistent with Smith's observation that when analysis of nonwhite women are conducted by majority groups, the focus lies solely on issues of race relations rather than on "women of color are women who are also involved in gender, race, and class relations" (p. 232)

Converse to the hierarchy of difference found in the sports features, the few nonwhite fitness models were depicted in similar manners to the white models. Other than race, there existed no other physical differences between the photographed models (able-bodied status, body type, and age). Interestingly, the type of clothing, amount of body exposure, body type, and age did not deviate based on the model's race. This finding is consistent with Davis (1997) who suggested that the ideal female body is defined in terms of European standards whereby nonwhite women who

conform to such standards are more frequently used as models than nonwhite women who possess features associated with nonEuropean heritage. Such homogenizing depictions, whereas minority women are shown to look like majority women, further legitimizes the ideology of the ideal woman to be white, able-bodied, young, thin, and heterosexual - even if one does not possess these traits, she may, at least, conform to the image. Therefore, to merely add a few token women of color, larger women, or women with disabilities does not allow for accurate or alternative depictions that are representative of all women.

Do these representations support or contradict the messages provided by the magazine's editor? According to Endel (1991), "the editor's page is a significant site for the presentation of particular value systems and must be viewed as contested terrain where power relations are played out" (p. 137). And, Ferguson (1985) suggested that through their content choices, the "women's magazine editors truly act as gatekeepers of the female world" (p. 10). Therefore, analysis of the editor's page provides valuable insights from the person who controls the magazine's production process. The one-page forum written

by CN/WS&F editor, Lucy Danziger, not only contained information about each issue's contents but laid the framework for the magazine's philosophy and standpoint about women in sport and active women. According to Ferguson, (1985) this role is particularly powerful because women's magazine editors "in deciding what their magazines will deal with. . .are also deciding what will be included or excluded from the agenda of feminine concerns" (p. 131).

In CN/WS&F, the editor often utilized a conversational tone, referring to the relationship with her readers as "us" and "we," thereby removing herself as an authoritative voice for political issues affecting women. The editor's letters were consistently apolitical while encouraging women, in a personal tone, to engage in sports for the sake of bodily improvement and transformation. This political passivity extended into realm of professional women's sports as textual accolades were extended to those elite female athletes who earn similar or higher salaries than well known male athletes or other women in sport. Yet, never was it mentioned that, on average, women athletes earn considerably less than male athletes, or that women athletes have fewer opportunities to earn money in sports.

This characteristic of the editor's letters is similar to Endel's findings and "seemed to be an effective means of silencing the likely problems facing the readership - such as employment discrimination, comparable pay issues, reproductive rights, and sports equity issues" (p. 149).

The dominant messages within the editor's letter both supported and contradicted a monolithic representation of women in sport and active women presented in the magazine. The editor helped to construct a monolithic representation by including messages that privileged the nondisabled body, heterosexuality, femininity, and the ideal female body. Similar universalizing themes may be found in the writings of feminist theorists who have addressed issues assumed to be those of all women. Unfortunately, their theories have described the situation of one group of women as if it were the situation for all. As Spelman (1988) described, "any attempt to talk about all women in terms of something we have in common undermines attempts to talk about the differences among us, and visa versa" (p. 3). Consequently, in the pages of CN/WS&F, the issues of concern for minority women in sport and fitness are implicitly assumed to be the same for majority women.

Perhaps most notable was the editor's preference for nondisabled bodies, which is consistent with all of the photographs and articles. Often times, the editor included information about herself and then related that to her readers ("we," "us") as if they possessed the same traits. She also contributed by setting up a strict dichotomy between athleticism and femininity - a factor that is quite evident throughout the magazine. The editor accomplished this by celebrating traits often equated with femininity in sport and fitness, while denouncing too much athleticism or referring to elite athletes as "them." And, the editor did state that the magazine's intent was to appeal to women "who love to play" and use sport for fun. Thus, fitness and recreational activities were validated as added benefits to women's sports. This message was apparent in the photographs that showed models who, when working out in nonsport settings, were smiling and laughing - essentially, having fun. This message may reinforce the popular misconception that women do not want to compete in sports, or those who do cannot be taken seriously. Leath and Lumpkin (1992) concluded that such a tone in the later editions of the old WS&F led to the magazine losing "its



leadership role in promoting active sports competition for women" that was present in earlier editions (p. 125).

Because the magazine under investigation stated and promoted this message since its inception, it may be assumed that CN/WS&F has neither aspired to advocate for women's sports competition - nor plan on ever doing so.

Conversely, much of what the editor proposed often did not appear or was contradicted in the pages of the magazine. In particular, the first letter, which set the stage for the magazine's overall philosophy, included statements that countered the images represented in the magazine. The editor professed that "we will. .[not] focus on quick life fixes," and "there will be no conventional fashion models in this magazine." Yet, the tone of the fitness articles did emphasize quick fixes for losing weight and toning up, while being illustrated by women who strongly resemble typical fashion models who are white, thin, young, and able-bodied. The editor also stated that the magazine "is dedicated to the women we haven't seen in the sports pages;" yet the main sports articles focused on elite, mostly professional, women athletes. None of the sports articles discussed game rules,

strategies, or techniques; listed tournaments or statistics; or encouraged women to become involved with organized sport competitions or issues concerning women in sport. When the magazine acquired the name WS&F in June 1998, the editor noted that, as a result, they "expanded the coverage of fitness in our pages." Yet, interestingly, the title change hardly impacted the presentation and amount of coverage given to fitness because previous editions already contained substantial amounts of information about fitness or fitness related issues. The title change seemed to give the editor permission to draw an even stronger connection between sport and fitness, thus further deemphasizing sport and female athletes.

What, if any, implications do the representations in the magazine have for women in sport? The results from this study have ramifications for women's sports, women athletes, active women, and feminist sport scholars. From this research, I believe that these implications lie in five major areas: (a) the continued privileging of the universal image of the female athlete and the active woman, (b) the marginalization of minority women, (c) the trivialization of women's sports, (d) the monitoring of

active women's bodies, and (e) the research conducted by feminist sport researchers. These implications are particularly important because the representations appear in a women's sports magazine with a female editor and a readership that is predominantly female. Therefore, the images that appear in the magazine's text and photographs are assumed to be created and endorsed by women, thus making it somewhat more difficult to challenge those messages that sustain women's inadequacies or encourage stereotypical notions of femininity.

One meaning that the representations in CN/WS&F have for women in sports and active women is in the reinforcement of the mythical notion of the female ideal, or the universal woman. Dewar (1993) has argued that the "generic" woman serving as the ideal model for sportswomen has been the white, middle-class, heterosexual, and able-bodied female. The characteristics described by Dewar were the images that most frequently appeared in the CN/WS&F magazine, thus further privileging and promoting a homogenized female ideal body in women's sports magazines. The presence of conflicting or ambivalent images throughout the magazine, while serving as a form of resistance to the

homogenized image, are not enough to challenge the underlying assumptions about what is and is not the appropriate "look" that garners the attention of sport writers and photographers. The continued creation and promotion of such an ideal look for active women and women in sport greatly restricts the availability of role models and representations that depict a wider range of women who are involved in sport and fitness.

Concurrent with the construction of the ideal female body is the heightening of gender differences and the support of a hierarchy between women (those who do resemble the ideal and those who don't). Because a universal notion of woman accentuates the traits stereotypically associated with being female, and because Western culture identifies women with corporeality, such differences between men and women are perceived as being natural, or normal (Hall, 1996). This naturalization of difference is especially problematic for women in sport and active women because women are perceived as being naturally weaker, more emotional, and less interested in sports. Duncan (1990) concluded that "focusing on female difference [to men] is a political strategy that places women in a position of

weakness" (p. 40). This weakness emphasizes a woman's otherness and contributes to her marginalization in patriarchal institutions, such as sport. Interestingly, these themes were evident throughout the text and photographs of CN/WS&F, thus further contributing to the naturalization of gender difference and the ideology that women can only be superficially interested in sports, which is maintained as a male domain. The reinforcement of the male/female dichotomy can further contribute to the popular notion that women engage in sports and/or fitness for fun and are not "naturally" capable of engaging in serious competition.

I also believe that the representations within CN/WS&F create gender-specific standards that have implications for the ways in which girls and young women are socialized into sport. Given the scarcity of sports magazines written exclusively about women and the paucity of other mass media images of women in sport, CN/WS&F has the potential to be a great influence on girls and young women who are interested in sports. Specifically, CN/WS&F can feasibility act as a socialization agent by presenting new images of females in sport or by reinforcing old images. Based on the results of

this study, CN/WS&F clearly reinforces old, stereotypical images of women in sport, thus supporting the notion of natural, or real differences between males and females. Duncan and Sayaovong (1990) argued that maintenance of sexual differences in sports "produces and reproduces stereotypes that are more likely to disenfranchise sporting women and girls than to empower them" (p. 98). As found in text and photographs of CN/WS&F, there was an under-representation of women in team sports, with an over-representation of white women who participate in traditionally identified women's sports (tennis, figure skating) and of individual professional athletes. Such differences in representations restrict the number and type of role models available for girls and young women. By not providing a wide range of women athletes and women's sports as role models, and "unless girls see other females involved in sport, they may hesitate to participate themselves" (Rintala & Birrell, 1984, p. 247). Or, the quality of representations available may lead them to "judge certain kinds of sports as unseemly for females" (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990, p. 113).

The implications for minority women in sport and physical activity stem from the aforementioned discussion about CN/WS&F's presentation of the homogeneous, ideal woman. There existed a lack of diversity in the types of women written about and photographed in CN/WS&F. This finding is consistent with previous analysis of sports magazines that included women (Davis, 1997; Endel, 1990; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). The lack of diversity, based on race, class, sexual identity, age, and dis/ability, further marginalizes the efforts and experiences of minority women in sport, accentuates their disempowered roles in sport, and reinforces a hierarchy between women. The hierarchy of differences between women in CN/WS&F are indicative that "some groups of women are more privileged than others" (Pirinen, 1997, p. 291) which can qualitatively alter the experiences of minority women and the issues that they face in sport. Therefore, what is absent and silenced in CN/WS&F is that fact that "there are multiple perspectives and different social realities" (Smith, 1992, p. 228) that exist in American sports. And, as Lorde (1985) implored:

"as women, we must root out internalized patterns of oppression within ourselves. . .we must recognize differences among women who are our equals, neither inferior nor superior, and devise ways to use each other's difference to enrich our visions and joint struggles" (p. 122).

In addition to the limited number of minority women represented in CN/WS&F is the manner in which the few minority women are depicted. The representations available in CN/WS&F perpetuate an image that only white, young, heterosexual, able-bodied women can, and do engage in sport and physical activity, thus decreasing the number of role models for minority youth. For example, the only role models available for African-American females were professional basketball players or track athletes - two sports stereotypically associated with African-American sportswomen (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Or, two other role models, tennis players, Venus and Serena Williams, were African-American but were simultaneously depicted as spoiled, emotional, and self-segregated from other tennis players because of their age and race. The only lesbian role model was Billie Jean King



who was depicted in markedly different ways than her heterosexual tennis peer, Chris Evert, and other featured women athletes. Therefore, there exists a lack of diverse representations in CN/WS&F, and a disparity in the ways that minority women are depicted. Such findings have been identified in previous studies as either explicitly or implicitly supporting representations considered racist, ableist, ageist, and heterosexist. Recognizing the lack and quality of minority representations in women's sports, supports the work of feminist theorists such as Spelman (1988) and Grillo and Wildman (1997) who insist that multiple layers of experiences and oppressions exist and that to ignore these elements can lead to an assumption that all women share similar experiences and concerns.

The trivialization of women's sports and women athletes is well documented in research studies focused on male sport magazines or other mass media outlets that traditionally focus attention on men's sports (Daddario, 1994; Davis, 1997; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Salwen & Wood, 1994). These researchers have found that the mass media often depict women's sports as being inferior to men's

sports, and women athletes are often portrayed in stereotypically feminine ways. Interestingly, despite the fact that CN/WS&F is a women's sports magazine, the trivialization of women's sports and women athletes also exists in CN/WS&F. As found throughout the sports articles, photographs, and the editor's letter, the focus on sport as a means to burn calories; the presence of nonathletes on the magazine covers; the amount of coverage given to individual sports that are traditionally associated with women; the correlation of fitness activities with competitive sport; the weakness/emotional descriptors used to portray the women athletes; the focus on the athlete's personal lives as drama rather than on their athleticism; the stigmatizing of the term "jock" to describe athleticism, and; the emphasis on the athlete's clothing, body type, and hair all contributed to the trivialization of women's sports and women athletes.

What makes this finding particularly problematic is the fact that CN/WS&F is a women's sports magazine with a woman editor and that this trivialization of women athletes and women's sports is documented in two earlier studies that focused on the older version of Women's Sports &

Fitness (Endel, 1991; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992). Similar to the findings in the previous studies, the contents of the current version of CN/WS&F suggest that women are more "interested in personal fitness and fun than in competitive sports" (Leath & Lumpkin, 1992, p. 124) and the "weak character portraits characterized women as dependent and emotional and served to trivialize their athletic accomplishments" (Endel, 1991, p. 184). Consequently, such a long-standing theme in women's sports magazines of women's sports being less competitive and synonymous with fitness makes it much more difficult to challenge the images and accuse a male-created sport medium of subverting women's efforts in sport. The trivialized images of women's sports appearing in CN/WS&F infer that the damaging images that have been criticized in other sport media are sustained and accepted by the women's sport media - rather than serving as a point of resistance to dominant patriarchal ideology.

Similar implications of the representations in CN/WS&F exist for active women interested in fitness. Duncan (1994) likened the effect of a women's fitness magazine on the "continual self-conscious body monitoring in women" (p. 48)

to Foucault's notion of a particular prison structure, called the panopticon. By promoting fitness as a way to transform a less-than-perfect body into the feminine ideal, the women's magazines encourage women to monitor their bodies and engage in diet and exercise regimes in order to "fix the problem" (Duncan, 1994, p. 61). And, rationale given by women's fitness magazines for women to engage in fitness has disregarded health benefits for the sake of beauty (Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998). The images and messages found in CN/WS&F are not unlike the ones presented in women's fitness magazines, whereby the fitness articles mostly focus on segmenting the body in order to transform its look while neglecting women's health issues. The photographs and text in CN/WS&F collude to inspire fitness activity for the sake of beauty and to attain the perfect body that is toned and slim. In fact, the visual images in CN/WS&F create a homogenized look (White, toned, thin) for readers to compare and "against which the self continually measures, judges, 'disciplines,' and 'corrects' itself" (Bordo, 1993, p. 25). Consequently, women may be led to believe that the images in CN/WS&F, and reinforced in various mass media, are the natural, and "right" way for

women to look which further bind women's esteem and body image to their physical appearance.

Implications from this study's findings also extend to feminist sport researchers. Generally, most feminist sport researchers have focused on differences between men and women while overlooking possible differences between women. As Lorde described, "women have been encouraged to recognize only one area of human difference as legitimate, those differences that exist between women and men" (p. 122). Thus, an assumption of a universal woman's (white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, and young) experience in sport has been used to theorize about all women in sport (Dewar, 1993; Hall, 1996). The fact that different women's bodies may experience different influences has rarely been explored (Hall, 1996). The current study is one example of how re-theorizing about women's bodies can address the multiple layers of oppression and subordination experienced by minority women in sport and fitness.

In addition to the lack of minority women and their particular concerns present in CN/WS&F, the representations of those marginalized women (based on either race,

sexuality, age, or dis/ability) contribute to stereotypes rather than serving as points of resistance and transformation. For example, Lorde (1985) proposed that change can only occur when women recognize that "old patterns" (p. 123) of dealing with difference do not work and that "all women [need] to identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across differences" (p. 123). By taking a feminist cultural approach to this research as advocated by Cole (1994), Hall (1996), Hargreaves (1986), and Theberge (1985), I was able to explore how WS&F contributes to the hierarchy of privilege between women and the implications that this may have on minority women in sport and fitness. Thus, by paying attention to difference, this research shed light on how multiple layers of oppression, that are existent in our culture at-large, are manifest within a cultural text and the ramifications that this may have on a particular population of women. Because, as described by Spelman (1988), "the claim that all women are oppressed is fully compatible with. . .the many varieties of oppression that different populations of women have been subject to" (p. 132)

## Conclusions

The findings of this study support and further the existing research with regard to mass media representations of women athletes, women's sports, and active women (Daddario, 1994; Duncan, 1990, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Endel, 1991; Eskes, Duncan, & Miller, 1998; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Hilliard, 1984; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Pirinen, 1997). Specifically, based on the results, CN/WS&F contributes to what I have termed as, "Socially constructing the female athlete: A monolithic media representation of active women." This theme emerged as something not unlike what Spradley (1980) termed a cultural theme, which is "any principle recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (p. 141). Thus, the connections between the identified domains within the magazine provide a more complete, or "holistic view" (p. 140) of the magazine's meaning as a cultural text. Identifying the cultural theme is important because it serves as a reflection of the values and ideologies of the larger culture which, in the case of this research, may provide insight into the ways individuals within the

culture perceive women's sports, women athletes, and active women.

Constructing this monolithic representation in the magazine involves textual and photographic emphasis on women's physical appearance, personal character, gender difference, and trivializing athleticism and team. Minority women and women who do not resemble the homogenized images present in the magazine are not represented, thus their concerns with regard to sport and fitness are silenced. Because these images appear in a women's sports magazine, it may be more difficult to challenge the representations as it may be inferred that women agree with and support stereotypical notions of women's sports, women athletes, and active women.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, I offer the following suggestions for future research endeavors:

1. Conduct a similar study to compare the representations of CN/WS&F with the latest women's sports magazines appearing on the market, Sports Illustrated for Women and Real Sports. The information gathered would serve as a comparison between women's sports magazines that



are owned by different companies and would allow exploration of the possibilities of differing representations of women's sports, women athletes, and active women.

2. In addition to a more thorough analysis of all components within CN/WS&F, conduct in-depth interviews with people of varying ages, sexual identities, dis/abilities, classes, and races in order to obtain readers responses to images and text. Also, interview the editorial staff of CN/WS&F to understand the editorial intent and determine the power structure within the publishing company. Through the interviews, information regarding editorial decision-making may shed light on why and where certain representations appear in the magazine.

3. Compare results from findings prior to and following each of the magazine's name change from Sports for Women, Conde Nast Sports for Women, and Women's Sports & Fitness. This research would illustrate any changes or consistencies that may have occurred within the magazine as they relate to the magazine's title.

4. As more editions of CN/WS&F become available, increase the number of magazines and the amount of content

to be analyzed. This research would explore whether or not the representations are consistent throughout the entire magazine and over an extended period of time.

5. Conduct content analysis on the advertisements that appear in women's sports magazines. Such research may provide insight into editorial decisions for the magazines' contents based on companies who purchase advertising space in the magazine.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Cover Pictures Worksheet

<u>Cover</u>	<u># in picture</u>	<u>activity</u>	<u>female</u> 1=yes 0=no	<u>Young</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>hair: longer than</u> <u>shoulder length</u>	<u>able-body</u>
<u>pictures</u>							
<u>Oct. 97</u>							
<u>Nov. 97</u>							
<u>Dec. 97</u>							
<u>Jan. 98</u>							
<u>Feb. 98</u>							
<u>Mar. 98</u>							
<u>Aprl. 98</u>							
<u>May-98</u>							
<u>Jun. 98</u>							
<u>July/Aug</u>							
<u>Sep/Oct</u>							
<u>Nov/Dec</u>							
<u>Jan/Feb</u>							







<u>touching</u> self	<u>touching</u> others	<u>submissive</u> pose	<u>standing</u> upright	<u>sitting</u>	<u>kneeling/ crouching</u>	<u>on all 4s/ laying</u>	<u>crying</u>
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37
38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42
43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53
54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
59	59	59	59	59	59	59	59
60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67
68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
72	72	72	72	72	72	72	72
73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73
74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78
79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84
85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87
88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88
89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89
90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91
92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92
93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93
94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98
99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

hand covers	camera shot at	camera	camera	camera	outdoors
mouth/face	eye-level	below-eye	above-eye		
1	1				
2	2				
3	3				
4	4				
5	5				
6	6				
7	7				
8	8				
9	9				
10	10				
11	11				
12	12				
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89	89				
90	90				
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92	92				
93	93				
94	94				
95	95				
96	96				
97	97				
98	98				
99	99				
100	100				



## Appendix B: Feature Pictures Worksheet

<i>Issue feature</i>	<i>fitness or, #_in_picture</i>	<i>sport feature</i>			<i>#_females</i>	<i>#_males</i>	<i>#_Young adult</i>
		<i>size</i>	<i>activity</i>				
<i>pictures</i>				<b>1=yes 0=no</b>			
picture 1							
picture 2							
picture 3							
picture 4							
picture 5							
picture 6							
picture 7							
picture 8							
picture 9							
picture 10							
picture 11							
picture 12							
picture 13							









[illegible]

## Appendix C: Sports Articles Worksheet





ablebody	personal	athletic	political/gender	personal/family	emotional status	discussed	appear./clothing
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37
38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42
43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47
48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53
54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56
57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
59	59	59	59	59	59	59	59
60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64
65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67
68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
72	72	72	72	72	72	72	72
73	73	73	73	73	73	73	73
74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78
79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
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86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86
87	87	87	87	87	87	87	87
88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88
89	89	89	89	89	89	89	89
90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91
92	92	92	92	92	92	92	92
93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93
94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95
96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98
99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100



## Appendix D: Fitness Article Worksheet

Issue	activity	article length	# of photos	female author	picture was on cover	ablebody assumed	summer activity	winter activity
fitness				yes = 1 no = 0				
Oct. 97								
Nov. 97								
Dec. 97								
Jan. 98								
Feb. 98								
Mar. 98								
Aprl. 98								
May-98								
Jun. 98								
Jly/Aug								
Sep/Oct								
Nov/Dec								
Jan/Feb								

[illegible]

[illegible]





## Appendix E: Editor's Letter Worksheet

<u>Ed. letter</u>	<u>Length of letter</u>	<u># of pictures</u>	<u>picture size</u>	<u>current women's issue</u> <u>yes = 1</u> <u>no = 0</u>	<u>political focus/</u> <u>gender equity</u>	<u>call for</u> <u>collective (we)</u>
<u>Oct. 97</u>						
<u>Nov. 97</u>						
<u>Dec. 97</u>						
<u>Jan. 98</u>						
<u>Feb. 98</u>						
<u>Mar. 98</u>						
<u>Aprl. 98</u>						
<u>May-98</u>						
<u>Jun. 98</u>						
<u>July/Aug</u>						
<u>Sep/Oct</u>						
<u>Nov/Dec</u>						
<u>Jan/Feb</u>						





APPENDIX F:

List of Women's Sports & Fitness articles that were  
analyzed for this study

## Fitness Articles Analyzed

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Title:</u>
Oct., 1997	"Body by sport"
Nov., 1997	"Sweat equity"
Dec., 1997	"E=mc <sup>2</sup> "
Jan., 1997	"Body: Burn, baby, burn"
Feb., 1998	"Fitness our way: Inside out"
March, 1998	"Performance: What counts as exercise?"
April, 1998	"Cover story: 5 body fixes"
May, 1998	"Jump to it!"
June, 1998	"Cover story: Back in shape in 4 weeks"
July/Aug., 1998	"The quickie workout"
Sept./Oct., 1998	"Sweat it off!" [titled in text as "Get on track"]
Nov./Dec., 1998	"Get-in-shape shortcut" [titled in text as "The strength workout"]
Jan./Feb., 1999	"The perfect 10"

## Sports Articles Analyzed

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Title:</u>
Oct., 1997	"Freedom's child" (Tennis player, Martina Hingis)
Nov., 1997	"Leagues apart" (WNBA players)
Dec., 1997	"Sailor of the century" (Sailor, Dawn Riley)
Jan., 1998	"The 1997 sports stars" (various athletes)
Feb., 1998.	"Ice breakers" (USA Women's Hockey)
March, 1998	"Athlete: Re-inventing Oksana" (Figure skater, Oksana Baul)
April, 1998	"Athlete: Girl over board" (Skateboarder, Cara Burnside)
May, 1998	"Chris Evert lets loose" (Tennis player, Chris Evert)
June, 1998	"Athlete: Too sexy for her game?" (Tennis Player, Anna Kornikova)
July/Aug, 1998	"Soccer idols" (USA Women's soccer)
Sept/Oct, 1998	"The battles of Billie Jean King" (Tennis player, Billie Jean King)
Nov/Dec, 1998	"Double trouble" (Tennis players, Venus and Serena Williams)
Jan/Feb, 1999	"Extreme women" (extreme athletes)

#### APPENDIX G:

Range of magazine editions evident within the four  
subthemes: The qualitative data



The following is a list of magazine editions that provided the qualitative data within the taxonomy. The list represents the range of articles that were evident within the subthemes. Only those data (editions) that were mentioned in the dissertation are listed.

### Socially Constructing the Female Athlete: A Monolithic Media Representation of Active Women

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#### **Physical appearance**

##### Homogenized image

Editor's letters: Oct. 1997; Feb. 1998; June 1998

Sports articles: Nov. 1997; Jan. 1998; May, 1998; Sept/Oct. 1998; Nov/Dec. 1998

##### Able bodied

Editor's letters: Oct. 1997; June 1998; Feb. 1998; May 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

Fitness articles: Dec. 1997; Feb. 1998; March 1998; June 1998

##### Feminine ideal body

Sports articles: Nov. 1997; March 1998; May 1998; July/Aug. 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

Fitness Articles: Oct. 1997; Jan. 1998; Feb. 1998; April 1998; June 1998; Sept/Oct. 1998

##### Clothing

Sports articles: Oct. 1997; Nov. 1997; March 1998; June 1998

##### Physical size

Sports articles: Nov. 1997; Dec. 1997; Jan/Feb. 1999

**Personal character**Material focus

Editor's letters: Oct. 1997

Sports articles: Oct. 1997; Nov. 1997; Feb. 1998; March 1998; April 1998; June 1998; July/Aug. 1998; Nov/Dec. 1998

Emotional state

Sports articles: Oct. 1997; Nov. 1997; Jan. 1998; Feb. 1998; March 1998; April 1998; May 1998; July/Aug. 1998; Sept/Oct. 1998

Bad Girl Athlete

Sports articles: Oct. 1997; Jan. 1998; March 1998; June 1998; Nov/Dec. 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

**Gender difference**Feminine sexualization

Fitness articles: Nov. 1997; March 1998; April 1998

Body segmentation

Fitness articles: Oct. 1997; March 1998; April 1998; May 1998; June 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

Body exposure and feminine pose

Fitness article: June 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

Assumption of heterosexuality

Editor's letters: Nov. 1997; April 1998; June 1998; July/Aug. 1998; Nov/Dec. 1998

Reduces gender differences

Sports articles: Nov. 1997; Jan. 1998; Feb. 1998

Fitness articles: Oct. 1997

**Trivialization of athleticism and team**Denial of team

Sport articles: Nov. 1997; Feb. 1998; July/Aug. 1998

Anti-jock

Editor's letters: Oct. 1997; Nov. 1997; Feb. 1998; June 1998; Jan/Feb. 1999

Fitness articles: June 1998; July/Aug. 1998

Sport as calorie burn

Fitness articles: Dec. 1997; March 1998; April 1998; May 1998; June 1998; Sept/Oct. 1998; Nov/Dec. 1998

Rejection of the women's game

Sport articles: 1997

#### APPENDIX H:

Existence of physical appearance sub-themes  
within magazine components under analysis

Existence of physical appearance sub-themes within magazine components under analysis.

<u>Categories</u>				
	Homogenized image	Able bodied	Feminine ideal	Clothing Physical size
Covers	*	*	*	*
Editor's letter	*	*	*	
Sports articles	*	*	*	*
Sports photographs	*	*	*	
Fitness articles	*	*	*	
Fitness photographs	*	*	*	*

Note. \* means that the subtheme was mentioned, or evident at least one time in an article or photograph. No \* means that the sub-theme was never mentioned/present.

APPENDIX I:

Parts of magazine that contributes to gender difference

Parts of magazine that contributes to gender difference.

	Feminine sexualization	Body segmentation	Body exposure	Assumption of heterosexuality
Covers	*		*	*
Editor's letter	*			*
Sport articles	*			*
Sport photographs	*		*	*
Fitness articles	*	*	*	*
Fitness photographs	*	*	*	*

Note. \* means that the subtheme was mentioned, or evident at least one time in an article or photograph. No \* means that the sub-theme was never mentioned/present.

## APPENDIX J

Trivialization of athleticism and team subthemes  
that exist in magazine



Trivialization of athleticism and team subthemes that exist in magazine.

	Denial of	Anti-jock	Sport as	Rejection
	game		calorie burn	of women's game
Covers	*			
Editor's letter	*	*	*	*
Sport articles	*			*
Sport photographs	*			
Fitness articles	*	*	*	
Fitness photographs	*	*	*	

Note. \* means that the subtheme was mentioned, or evident at least one time in an article or photograph. No \* means that the sub-theme was never mentioned/present.