

Where Have All the Post-Title IX Mothers Gone?: Exploring the Scarcity of Female Coaches in Youth Sport

A large majority of youth sport coaches are parent-volunteers with little-to-no coaching experience, and variant levels of playing experience. It is estimated that less than 10% of youth sport coaches are female, and this number over the last decade has counterintuitively *decreased* (Messner, 2006). The scarcity of female coaches at all levels of sport is well documented, but little research has examined this phenomena at the youth level. Given that female participation in sports across competitive level has reached an all time high (Ascota & Carpenter, 2006; NFHS, 2006), it is disconcerting that more females are not entering the ranks of youth sport coaching. The lack of coaches includes former female collegiate athletes who clearly have vast experiences and expertise to offer youth athletes but are failing to enter the coaching ranks in proportion to their sport participation numbers. When females are involved in youth sport, it is in primarily gendered ways— with males predominately in coaching positions and females in 'helping' positions such as 'Team Mom' (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1999; Messner, 2006; Thompson, 1999). While the gendered division of labor in youth sports is documented, rarely have mother-former collegiate athletes been asked directly about their choices and negotiations in arriving at the decision to coach or not to coach at the youth level. From a grounded theory perspective, employing semi-structured interviews, we will explore the thoughts and family negotiations surrounding coaching youth sports of former female collegiate athletes who currently have at least one child participating in organized youth sports. *Dr. Nicole LaVoi (PI), Dr. Diane Wiese-Bjornstal (PI), Chelsey Rodd*