

Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

University of Minnesota

Spring 2004

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the Tucker Center! As spring approaches, we find ourselves engaged in a variety of exciting and groundbreaking activities. We're conducting research projects that range from an innovative examination of Title IX, to a longitudinal study on gender differences in the media's treatment of intercollegiate athletes. We also continue our tradition of honoring individuals who have devoted themselves to women's sports in the state of Minnesota and beyond, and profiling our ever-growing base of Tucker Center donors.

A central component of our mission is to address significant issues that impact women's involvement in sport and physical activity. One way we accomplish this is through our annual Distinguished Lecture Series. In its ninth season, the series provides a forum for nationally known scholars and educators to share their latest work on critical topics in their respective fields of study. Few topics are as important as debilitating physical injuries and the psychological impact that such injuries often have. One injury that has received a great deal of public attention—and has a great impact in the world of women's sports—is ACL (knee) injuries. We are pleased to announce that our spring Distinguished Lecture will feature three prominent individuals from the University of Minnesota with a range and depth of experience on this emerging topic. On April 19th, in partnership with Intercollegiate Athletics, we will host a panel presentation entitled "Shattering Myths About ACL Injuries in Female Athletes: Risk Factors, Intervention and Recovery." Panelists include: Elizabeth Arendt, faculty member in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery and one of the premier scholars in the nation on ACL injuries; Diane Wiese-Bjornstal, Sports Psychologist in the School of Kinesiology, who has published extensively in the area of psychological recovery from injury; and Sara Wiley, Associate Director of Strength and Conditioning for U of M athletics (see the enclosed flyer for more information about this event).

As mentioned, we are undertaking groundbreaking research related to Title IX. Many critics of Title IX argue that schools are forced to drop men's sports in order to comply with this law. Not surprisingly, such assertions are rarely supported by solid empirical evidence. Our investigation seeks to remedy this situation. We are gathering data from all Division I-A schools since the

passage of Title IX in 1972 through the 2003-04 season. This allows us to track participation patterns in specific sports at specific institutions in the wake of Title IX. It also allows us to determine if the elimination of men's sports is correlated with Title IX complaints (and lawsuits) against the very institutions that dropped those sports. Further discussion of this issue, as well as information about the media study we are conducting, can be found in the section on Research Updates and Community Outreach.



Mary Jo Kane

In "Learning Our Legacy," we profile women's sports pioneer and Minnesota native, Lynnette Sjoquist. Many of you may know Sjoquist as the voice of Gopher women's basketball on WMNN radio. But did you know that, among other accomplishments, she was a professional basketball player for the All-American Red Heads in the 1970s? The All-American Red Heads, you ask? Find the answer to that question, and learn much more about Sjoquist's many contributions to women's sports, on page 4.

Our Donor Profile column highlights the passions and commitments of Kathleen Maloy. A life-long sports participant and enthusiast, Maloy reveals how challenges such as running a marathon helped to instill the discipline and endurance that serve her well as a college professor. Her involvement in sports also nourished a feeling that she can do anything if she decides to. This can-do attitude—as well as a desire to financially contribute to organizations that support women's efforts—comes through loud and clear on page 3.

As you will see throughout this newsletter, we are having another busy and productive year. As always, our success depends on a partnership with thousands of individuals throughout the state of Minnesota and around the country. Through our efforts, and your ongoing support, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of girls and women, their families and communities.

DONOR PROFILE: KATHLEEN MALOY

Growing up in rural New Hampshire in the 1950s, Kathleen Maloy was a classic pre-Title IX tomboy: “I went to a small, relatively rural high school, so sports were a big deal for boys, but only [somewhat] acceptable for girls.” For high-school boys, basketball was king of the hill. And for high-school girls?: “We had field hockey, but the real show in town was boys’ basketball. I was a cheerleader so I could go to the games.” This doesn’t mean Maloy didn’t play any organized sports: “I played softball and was pretty good. My position was catcher so I could be in charge [of everything].” Call it oldest-child syndrome, but playing sports as a way to “be in charge” becomes a theme that is central to life after New Hampshire.

In the early 1970s, Maloy attended Wellesley College. Sports, or being physically active, wasn’t much of a priority: “Perhaps it was the times [the Civil Rights Movement, the war in Vietnam] and being at an all-woman’s college. My friends and I just were not focused on physical activity.” After graduating from Wellesley, Maloy went to law school at Boston College. She played pick-up basketball with her classmates, but she was mostly focused on individual sports, especially running. She ran competitively in the 1970s, competing in the Bonnie Bell Classic, a 6K run held in Boston and, at the time, one of the largest sporting events for women. Maloy finished 30th overall and proceeded to run in the New York City Marathon where she finished 50th among all women runners.

Maloy expanded her repertoire and played tennis throughout the 1980s. Perhaps this is why she cites two tennis greats as her sports heroes: “I liked Martina Navratilova because she was strong and not afraid to be different. I also think Billie Jean King was very political about sports. She was a great advocate for equal treatment.” Maloy also noted that both women took charge of their lives and didn’t let the stereotypes of that era define who they were. Though she would never make the comparison herself, Maloy has much in common with those two sport legends. She has devoted her professional career to speaking out on women’s issues ranging from breast cancer research to homelessness. The role of sports in such seemingly unrelated issues?: “Sports gives you the confidence and courage to stand up for justice. It can also immunize you from being intimidated so that other people’s opinions do not limit your actions.”

Maloy’s ability to “take charge of the situation” is currently on display at George Washington University where

she is the Director of the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Program. She joined GW after receiving her Ph.D. from Boston University. In addition to her academic duties, Maloy concentrates on issues related to the physical and mental health of women: “Public health policy should always be concerned about vulnerable populations and how to level the playing field.” She also cites evidence that sports for girls means they are less likely to get pregnant and use drugs, and more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem: “Being able to make good/healthy choices is a key underpinning of public health policy.”



Kathleen Maloy, Friend of the Tucker Center

Away from work, Maloy takes charge of her physical and mental health—cycling and roller blading around Washington, D.C., hiking and backpacking in the mountains of Peru. She also enjoys

cheering for her home team, the Washington Mystics of the WNBA: “I have experienced those thrilling moments that only sport seems to offer. It is truly fabulous having women’s professional basketball for a wide range of people.”

You may have guessed by now, but Maloy does much more than participate (and spectate) in sports. She is also a budding philanthropist: “It is critical that women support non-profit efforts to promote public health issues. Many people, especially women, think they don’t have enough money to give. But even a little bit can make a big difference. Giving back helps people take charge of their lives.”

For the past decade, Maloy has been giving back to a cause near and dear to her heart—the *Mautner Project*, a national women’s health organization with a particular focus on cancer. Serving as Chair of the Board of Directors, Maloy volunteers many hours for a group that specializes in cancer research and training for health-care providers. When asked why, among her many causes, she decided to contribute financially to the Tucker Center, Maloy didn’t skip a beat: “Keeping accurate information available to policymakers, keeping the focus on inequities, keeping women’s sports from the excesses of men’s sports, are critical for our future. I am especially heartened to know that the Tucker Center is located in an institution of higher education. For too long, issues related to women—and especially issues like women’s sports—have been relegated to the sidelines. I hope the University [of Minnesota] and Dorothy Tucker understand how their respective visions have changed the landscape forever.” We would add that support from individuals like Kathleen Maloy has done so as well.

RESEARCH UPDATE & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

“30 Years After Title IX: What’s Fact vs. Fiction Got To Do With It?”

Critics of Title IX have long complained that compliance with this federal law forces colleges and universities to drop men’s sports, particularly non-revenue sports such as wrestling. Advocates of Title IX say that decisions to eliminate men’s (as well as women’s) programs are a result of the arms race in big-time college sports. The purpose of our study is to test these two assertions. In short, we are examining the relationship between sponsorship (i.e., offering) women’s and men’s sports and lawsuits/complaints brought under Title IX.

Currently, we are gathering data from the NCAA and the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the former governing body in women’s athletics. This allows us to create a profile of every Division I-A program in terms of the sports they offered for men in the early years of Title IX through 2004. In effect, we will create a DNA participation profile for all Division I-A program in the country. We will then compare those participation patterns to three other variables: 1) sports offered for women; 2) compliance complaints against a school filed with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR); and 3) Title IX lawsuits. This particular methodology enables us to examine a central and unanswered question about Title IX: If a school drops a men’s sport, was it during a timeframe when women’s sports were added and/or a school was under an OCR complaint or lawsuit?

This innovative and much-needed study is an enormous undertaking for the Tucker Center. But in spite of the challenge of collecting and analyzing 30 years of data, we believe our efforts will allow us to sort fact from fiction in the on-going debate over Title IX. We hope to report preliminary results from this study in our next newsletter, Fall, 2004.

“Representations of Intercollegiate Female Athletes: A Longitudinal Analysis of Media Guide Covers”

Three decades of sport media scholarship have demonstrated that sportswomen are portrayed in ways that emphasize their femininity and sexuality far more than their accomplishments as outstanding athletes. Scholars have argued that this pattern of portrayal trivializes and undermines women’s sports. Though a great deal of research has been conducted on mainstream media outlets such as *Sports Illustrated* and *ESPN*, there is a dearth of information on how those who promote women’s sports (e.g., sports information directors) portray male and female athletes. To address this issue, we are examining media guide covers from all major intercollegiate athletic conferences such as the Big 10, Big 12 and ACC.

Media guide covers were chosen because they convey carefully constructed images—and messages—about a particular sport at a particular institution. Such messages can go a long way toward shaping values and attitudes about women’s sports. Why? Because media guides are distributed to sports journalists, and are also used as recruiting tools for prospective student-athletes and their parents.

If one compares images of male and female athletes from the same sport in the same year at the same institution, what does that reveal? Two earlier studies (1990 and 1997) by Tucker Center affiliate, Jo Buysse, found that compared to their male counterparts, female athletes were significantly less likely to be portrayed as active sport participants, and significantly more likely to be portrayed in traditionally feminine, sexually provocative poses. Somewhat surprisingly, Dr. Buysse also discovered that there were few differences between the two time periods under consideration. However, recent developments suggest that women’s sports may be gaining widespread social acceptance, meaning females are being taken more seriously *as athletes*. If this is the case, we would expect to see athletic females portrayed on the court, in action and athletically competent far more often than when they are presented as passive, sexual objects. We are therefore replicating the two previous studies by examining media guide covers from the 2003–04 seasons. We are also collecting data to determine who is in charge of producing these images (e.g., the coach, director of marketing, etc.). Like the Title IX study, preliminary results will be reported in our next newsletter.

An Update on Melpomene Institute

In the last few months, our friends at Melpomene have made changes in their leadership and organizational structure. This non-profit agency, with a mission of helping women and girls link health to physical activity, has recently hired Rachel F. Seidman as its new director: “Rachel brings vision and practical experience at an exciting and crucial time in Melpomene’s history,” says Judy Mahle Lutter, Melpomene’s founder.

Melpomene will now focus on three roles: Advisor, Advocate, and Community Builder. A revamped web site (www.melpomene.org) will be central to their new goal of serving as a trusted advisor to women and girls. This web site will be a rich source of information on physical activity and health and will include original commentary; book reviews; current news stories; inspiring features on active women; archived articles from the *Melpomene Journal*; and updated links to relevant organizations’ web sites.

LEARNING OUR LEGACY: A PROFILE OF LYNNETTE SJOQUIST

Lynnette Sjoquist learned the value of teamwork growing up on the family farm in Cannon Falls. She also learned something else. Teamwork counts in all walks of life, but especially on the ball courts and playing fields: “When people depend on me and I depend on others, the comfort level enhances your play and makes you even greater.”

Sjoquist was involved in sports from her earliest years. Her family had a softball diamond in the front yard, and a basketball hoop on the granary wall *and* inside the calf barn: “When we weren’t working we would pick up our equipment and play.” With three brothers and a twin sister, there was plenty of play, not to mention competition and camaraderie. Sjoquist’s first sporting influence—her mother—played basketball in the late 1930s. With this type of family legacy, she was a natural. She pitched for a boys’ team in 4-H Softball and won the county championship. At 16, she qualified for the National Jaycee Track Meet in the shot put and high jump. Sjoquist also remembers her first athletic injury: At three years old, just days before being a flower girl in a wedding, she stepped in front of a bat while playing softball. She had a swollen cheek and some colorful bruising but she still carried the flowers.

If you think that left an impression, Sjoquist was just getting started. She attended Golden Valley Lutheran College where she competed in basketball, volleyball and yes, even softball. But it was basketball where she began to shine. She saw a poster for the All-American Red Heads Women’s Basketball Team, a touring squad that barnstormed across the country competing against men’s teams. From 1936 to 1986, the Red Heads educated and entertained audiences while promoting women’s sports. The Red Heads were coming to Cannon Falls and she and her sister, Lynnea, had no intention of missing the game. The contest inspired them, but it also did much more—they were determined to become part of the team: “My sister and I watched the Red Heads [and thought] this is what we want to do. Not knowing you can’t just walk up to a coach and say ‘I want to play on your team,’ we proceeded to do exactly that. I guess when you’re looking at two six foot blonde twins it makes an impact.” They certainly made an impact on team owner, Orwell Moore, because he invited them for a tryout and soon thereafter they made the team.

In 1973, the first year Sjoquist was with the Red Heads, they played 203 games. “We played seven days a week for seven straight months. We traveled to a different town every night... We played against men and every night we faced a different caliber team.” They were role models who felt a great deal of responsibility: “We had to establish that women could play basketball.” But playing with the Red Heads was about more than playing basketball: “We had a half time show (while the men rested), sold programs before the game, and signed autographs after.” Sjoquist was also the spokesperson at local radio stations. Now a color commentator for U of M women’s basketball, she fondly remembers those days when she got her first taste of broadcasting.



After four years on the road, Sjoquist thought it was a good time to transition into “real” life. But in 1978, she saw an article on the Women’s Basketball League (WBL) and noticed that the Minnesota Fillies would be in town for tryouts: “I needed to give it one more whirl. Plus this was women against women and I wanted to be among the better players in the country. I didn’t get that in my collegiate career. I knew I was pretty good [with the Red Heads], but this time I wanted to make sure.” Sjoquist had nothing to worry about. She soon became team captain and was able to play with and against women with storied collegiate careers and Olympic experience.

After one year with the Fillies (1978–79), Sjoquist was placed on waivers. But a week later the front office asked if she wanted a job. To no one’s surprise, she ended up doing everything from “hounding people for tickets” to “doing tons of personal appearances” with organizations such as the Jaycees: “I carried the banner for the Fillies. When there was a team walkout for non-payment, I suited up and played the last two games of the final WBL year.”

The WBL may have folded, but it didn’t end Sjoquist’s dedication to—and involvement in—women’s sports. She has been particularly involved with U of M athletics: “I’d always followed [Gophers] sports. But when (former AD) Chris Voelz came to town and I heard her speaking on the radio, I felt truly inspired and compelled to take a big step to support women’s athletics.” Sjoquist first met Voelz at a softball game and offered whatever help was needed. Soon thereafter, she joined the Women’s Advisory Council where she remained for the next nine years.

When asked how things have changed in women’s sports, Sjoquist highlights many positive developments. She notes the tremendous increase in the general caliber of athletic ability: “It’s so exciting to see [Lindsay] Whalen out on the court. Her ability is outstanding; her strength, her jumping ability—it send chills up and down your spine. And that goes for each of the players on the team... Your are seeing great performances under great pressure.”

Sjoquist is quick to point out that these women are not just great athletes but great *student*-athletes: “I want athletes to get a good education so they can be part of a productive society... We need athletes who are prepared for life... I’m so glad the Tucker Center is telling all about it. It’s vital that we have someone—especially a higher education institution—really putting forth the effort to research, record and report women’s sports and women’s progress.”

Lynnette Sjoquist and the Tucker Center share a common dream for the future: “I want the integrity of sport to remain. I want people to know the rush of winning and competing, and the great feeling of being part of a team working seamlessly together... We should not lose track of spontaneity, like when I was shooting baskets while feeding calves.” Sjoquist’s inspiring career, and her ongoing support for all female athletes, help to make that dream come true.

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tucker Center affiliate, **Jo Buysse**, published “Constructions of Gender in Sport: An Analysis of Intercollegiate Media Guide Cover Photographs,” *Gender & Society*, (18), 66-81 (2004). Buysse’s co-author is Melissa Embser-Herbert from Hamline University.

Tucker Center affiliate, **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal**, completed a book chapter, “Psychological responses to injury and illness.” The publication will appear in G.S. Kolt & M.B. Andersen (Eds.), *Psychology in the physical and manual therapies*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 2004.

Wiese-Bjornstal also supervised the research of two graduate students whose work relates to women’s sports:

- **Julie Eibensteiner**, M.A. student in Kinesiology, defended her M.A. project, “Competitiveness and Perceived Competence in NCAA Division I Female Soccer Players.”
- **Angela Hartman**, Ph.D. student in Kinesiology, was elected by the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology to fill the Student Representative position on the Executive Board for 2003–04.

Keynote Addresses & Presentations

Mary Jo Kane will present: “Media Representations of 21st Century Female Athletes: The Best of Times & the

Worst of Times.” State-wide AAUW Conference, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, April, 2004.

Dr. Kane also delivered two keynotes:

- “Women’s Sports 30 Years After Title IX: What’s Fact vs. Fiction Got to Do With It?” at the Western Society of College Women, Monterey, CA, 2003.
- “The History and Impact of Title IX: A 30-Year Review.” Indiana University Law School, Bloomington, IN, 2004. The presentation was part of a forum honoring former Indiana Senator Birch Bayh, principle author of the original Title IX legislation.

Dr. Buysse delivered the presentation “Title IX: Sport Management and Fiscal Responsibility” to the North East Metro AAUW (White Bear Lake) Chapter in Feb., 2004.

Dr. Wiese-Bjornstal will present the Research Consortium Scholar Lecture “Triumph or Tragedy?: The Mental Pain of Sport Injury” at the AAHPERD Convention in New Orleans, on April 1.

Honors & Awards

Mary Jo Kane has received the 2004 Darlene A. Kluka Women’s Sports & Physical Activity Research Award for her achievements on research in women’s sports. She will receive the award at the AAHPERD National Convention, New Orleans, April 4th.

STAFF UPDATES

We welcome back to the fold an original Tucker Team member, **Jonathan Sweet**, long-time Executive Assistant in the Tucker Center. Eighteen months ago, Jonathan moved to Seattle to support his partner’s quest to complete her degree in Herbal Sciences. While in Seattle, he worked in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington. Using many of the skills he mastered at the Tucker Center, Jonathan provided general technical support, maintained the departmental web site, and produced their newsletter.

Jonathan resumes his previous role at the Tucker Center but adds some new responsibilities as a Program Associate. He will provide creative and technical support on various research projects, as well as be centrally involved in grant preparation: “As a small [staff-wise] Center with a broad mandate, I often find myself juggling a lot of things simultaneously. I look forward to this style of work as each new task allows me to test new skills against new challenges.”

Phil Esten, former Tucker Center affiliate, completed his dissertation and is now working as a Special Assistant to the University of Minnesota’s Athletic Director. Dr. Esten’s focus is on the U of M stadium project.

Friend of the Tucker Center

After 30 years coaching the University of Minnesota’s women’s swim team, **Jean Freeman** may be retiring, but she is by no means finished with her ongoing legacy: “The University has been a great place to work, not only in athletics, but also side by side with innovative organizations like the Tucker Center. Now I’ll have more time to broaden my scope, and to bridge the gap between groups and individuals inside and outside the University communities. By this I mean not only between faculty and athletics, but also between the campus and those community services where our student-athletes are engaged.

Read more about this pioneering figure and coach at mndaily.com/articles/2004/03/03/8606.





***Tucker Center for Research on Girls
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