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CHANGING THE GAME: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN WOMEN'S  
PROFESSIONAL SPORT

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration at Virginia Commonwealth  
University

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHANGING THE GAME: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL SPORT**

Lorie Coker, MEd

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration at Virginia Commonwealth  
University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2012

Director: Dr. Janet R. Hutchinson  
Professor, Public Policy and Administration  
Chair, Department Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Research indicates that female athletes have long occupied marginal and sometimes invisible positions in sport settings and mainstream media. The focus of this study is on understanding and analyzing how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression shape women's professional sport using as the focal point, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the type of mainstream media coverage it receives. The researcher believes that a better understanding of these varied experiences would add depth and knowledge to research on CSR in sport, women and sport research, as well as

allow professional leagues and teams to move forward with a more informed perspective regarding design, delivery, and overall purpose of CSR in women's professional sport.

The purposefully selected sample includes six semi-structured interviews with league and team executives from the Women's Tennis Association, Ladies Professional Golf, Women's National Basketball Association, and Women's Professional Soccer. Additionally, this study includes content analysis of 218 public organizational documents and a content analysis of the *New York Times* Sports sections. The data was coded and organized according to the research questions. Analysis and interpretation of findings were organized by way of two analytic categories that were based on the study's conceptual framework: (a) Intersectionality and sport, and (b) How and why women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR. Ultimately, this study is important because CSR initiatives often serve as a way to connect with the community, bring attention to socially relevant issues, and highlight athletes who serve as positive role models for youth. Race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR. As a result of discriminatory practices, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened.

Recommendations are offered for future research possibilities. Given that there are multiple factors that affect CSR in women's professional sport and the type of mainstream media coverage leagues and teams receive, the recommendations generated by this research should be considered for their appropriateness on an individual basis.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### Overview

This study explores intersectionality theory and uses corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport as the vehicle to explore and analyze this theory. Over the past 20 years, the concept of "intersectionality" has emerged as an influential approach to understanding the complex facets of discrimination and exclusion in a society whose members—who have complex racial, gender, or sexual identities—can experience bias in multiple ways (Crenshaw, 2012). Intersectionality adherents claim that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape women's experiences, and, in turn, are shaped by women (Collins, 2000). Originally coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality was intended to address the fact that the experiences and struggles of women of color fell between the cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourse. Further, Crenshaw (1991) documented the ways in which both the law and broader social movements typically theorized gender apart from race thus ignoring women of color's experiences as worthy of interrogation. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) argued that theorists should take both gender and race into consideration and show

how they interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's experiences. In contrast, the importance of intersectionality is the recognition that powerful forces such as sexism, racism, and classism are not independent of one another but are interacting forces (Crenshaw, 1989, 1990; Collins, 1990; 2000). This notion of gender within a matrix of social relations accounts for a complex, shifting social order that impacts people's experiences within and beyond sport (and life) in divergent ways.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport is examined to demonstrate the importance and relevance of using intersectionality theory in sport. Corporate social responsibility is an important area of study because of its ability to improve lives and bring awareness to social issues locally and globally. Over the past decade, the idea of philanthropy and social responsibility has grown exponentially across the business community. Corporations have increased charitable activities to help local communities while improving their public image and bottom line. However, CSR in the professional sport industry has an even greater potential to influence lives on a local, national, and international level (McGowan & Mahon, 2009). Playing a sport gives sportswomen an uncommon ability to unite diverse groups of people and the status of athletics in popular culture enables athletes and franchises to bring awareness to a range of social issues (McGowan & Mahon, 2009; Babiak & Wolfe, 2009).

Corporate social responsibility in professional sport, women's and men's, will continue to have positive and lasting impact on communities, especially as the presence and popularity of women's sports continues to grow. However, it is not well documented how women's professional sport leagues participate in CSR. This study uses the intersectionality theoretical framework, which was developed by black and multicultural

feminists, and seeks to examine how race, class, gender, and other dynamics of oppression are interrelated and impact the design and delivery of CSR in women's professional sport as well as influence the media coverage the women's leagues and teams receive for their CSR efforts.

### The Concept of Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality, a feminist theory, occurred as an interplay between Black Feminism, feminist theory, and post-colonial theory in the late 1990s and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Interest in intersectionality largely grew from the critique of gender and race-based research, which failed to account for the complexity of the lived experiences of people who identify as, or are labeled with, specific identity categorizations (Collins, 2000; McCall, 2005). In feminist studies women and men were analyzed as different and heterogeneous across and within the female and male categories (Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005). However, when it came to the question of race, the race-based critics argued that women and men were all white and of the same Western background (Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005). The original concept of intersectionality focused on race and gender. Though the studies mainly concentrated on the poor and marginalized minority population, the class dimension was often implied in the theoretical reflections and analysis (Crenshaw, 1995). Disability and sexualities have also been integrated in the theory of intersectionality (Meyer, 2000; Lykke, 2005). As a result, it is argued that ignoring one mode of oppression weakens an analysis because an integral stratifying force is overlooked. The concept of intersectionality highlights that there are many modes of oppression that structure an individual's identity, and that these ordering principles are mutually reinforcing.

Further, intersectionality has since been recognized as the “most important contribution that women’s studies has made so far” (McCall, 2005, p. 1771). Feminist scholars from different disciplines (i.e., philosophy, social sciences, humanities, economy, and law), theoretical perspectives (e.g., phenomenology, structuralist sociology, and psychoanalysis) and political persuasion (e.g., feminism, anti-racism, multiculturalism, queer studies, disability studies) all seem to be convinced that intersectionality is exactly what is needed to address unique needs, identities, and experiences of subordination and marginalized populations.

At the theoretical level, intersectionality has transformed how gender is discussed. Feminist theorists reveal and challenge the assumptions about gender that underlie conventional theoretical and methodological approaches to empirical research as, for example, sport’s homogenization of that category of gender. The intersectionality perspective further reveals that the individual’s social identities profoundly influence one’s beliefs about and experience of gender (Collins, 1990; 2000). As a result, feminist researchers have come to understand that the individual’s social locations as reflected in intersecting identities must be at the forefront in any investigation of gender. Specifically, gender must be understood in the context of power relations embedded in social identities (Collins, 1990; 2000). For example, a Black lesbian athlete is at a different social location than a Black heterosexual athlete because heterosexuality is considered the norm, which places an individual at a higher position within the matrix of domination, ultimately giving the Black heterosexual athlete advantages not experienced by the Black lesbian athlete.

Moreover, a double bind often exists for a Caucasian lesbian athlete because one form of oppression stems from gender (woman) and the second form of oppression stems from sexuality (lesbian). Similarly, lesbian or bisexual minority women face discrimination in multiple ways because of their sexual orientation, race, and gender, creating a “triple jeopardy” effect (King, 1988) or a “multiple jeopardy” effect (Collins, 2000). This triple bind and multiple jeopardy suggests that minority lesbian athletes may experience a different and more intense kind of oppression from that of heterosexual women, Black or White, because it goes against what is considered the norm in society. This notion indicates the importance of using intersectionality to critically examine issues in women’s sport, specifically, corporate social responsibility in women’s professional sport.

#### Importance of Intersectionality

Intersectionality addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within feminist scholarship: specifically, the acknowledgement of differences among women. The fact of differences among women has become the leading subject of feminist theories in recent years is important to consider and address because it touches on the most pressing problem facing contemporary feminists—the long and painful legacy of exclusions (Zack, 2007). Further, intersectionality addresses the issue of differences among women by providing a “handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it” (Phoenix, 2006, p. 187). At the same time, it promises to address the exclusions, which have played a disturbing role in feminist scholarship through the deceptively easy procedure of “asking the other questions” (Matsuda, 1991):

The way I try to understand the interconnections of all forms of subordination is through a method I call ‘ask the other question.’ When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where are the class interests in this?’ (Matsuda, 1991: 1189).

Intersectionality brings together two of the most important strands of contemporary feminist thought that have been concerned with the issue of difference. The first strand has been devoted to understanding the effects of race, class, and gender on women’s identities, experiences, and struggles of empowerment (Davis, 2008). Intersectionality has been deeply concerned with the marginalization of poor women and women of color within white, Western feminist theory. Initially, this strand of feminist theory adopted a “triple jeopardy” approach to class, race, and gender (King, 1988) by exploring how, with the addition of each new category of inequality, the individual becomes more vulnerable, more marginalized, and more subordinate. Over time, however, the focus shifts to how race, class, and gender interact in the social and material realities of women’s lives to produce and transform relations of power (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Anthias, 1998; Collins, 1990; 2000). Intersectionality is an appropriate theory for exploring how categories of race, class, and gender are intertwined and mutually constitutive, giving centrality to questions like how race is ‘gendered’ and how gender is ‘racialized’, and how both are linked to the continuities and transformations of social class (Davis, 2008).

While intersectionality is most often associated with US Black feminist theory and the political project of theorizing the relationships between gender, class, and race, it has also been taken up and elaborated by a second important strand within feminist theory (Davis, 2008). Feminist theorists inspired by postmodern theoretical perspectives



viewed intersectionality as a way to advance the goal of deconstructing binary oppositions (e.g., male/female; White/Black; heterosexual/homosexual) and universalism inherent in the modernist paradigms of Western philosophy and science (Phoenix, 2006; Brah and Phoenix, 2004). Critical perspectives inspired by postcolonial theory (Mohanty, 1988; Mani, 1989), diaspora studies (Brah, 1996), and queer theory (Butler, 1989)—were all in search of alternatives to static conceptualization of identity (Davis, 2008). Intersectionality incorporated the postmodern ideas of conceptualizing multiple and shifting identities. Further, it coincided with Foucauldian perspectives on power that focused on dynamic processes and the deconstruction of normalizing and homogenizing categories (Staunaes, 2003; Knudsen, 2006).

### Intersectionality and Sport

Competitive sport has long been discussed as reinforcing society's gender values, myths, and prejudices by emphasizing women as either hypersexualized or critiquing female athletes as too masculine (Britton & Williams, 1995; Messner, 1992, 2010). It can be added that sport is also a space that reinforces and emphasizes White, heterosexual, middle-upper class values (Anderson, 2005; Messner, 1992, 2010). While intersectionality has been used to study and demonstrate the discrepancies in media coverage of women's professional sport, there is no research on the impact of race, class, gender, and other forms of differences on CSR in women's professional sport.

The voices of women of color have often been absent from sport and from the broader feminist movement, although scholarship and popular accounts often have made their contributions and achievements invisible by placing gender at the center of the discussion. This is problematic as “gender is only one part of an interconnected matrix of

domination of power relations which also included relations of class, race, sexuality, religion, age, etc” (Birrell, 2000, p.65). Therefore, “neatly separating gender out of the matrix can happen only theoretically, and, through ignorance and neglect, this strategy does violence to those other oppressive relationships, such as race and class” (Birrell, 2000, p.65).

Scholars are increasingly addressing these omissions by focusing on the impact of ideologies of race, gender, class, and sexuality (among other relations) on the experiences of Black female college athletes in the United States (Corbett and Johnson, 1993); discourses of the WNBA (Banet-Weiser, 1999); soccer in Britain (Scruton et al., 2005); Latina softball players (Jamieson, 2005); use of city spaces by runners (van Ingen, 2003); and representations of iconic athletes such as LPGA golfer Nancy Lopez (Jamieson, 1998) and tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams (Douglas, 2005). An emerging component of the intersectional focus centers on theorizing the experiences of Muslim women in sport (Hargreaves, 2000; Kay, 2006; Palmer, 2009; Walseth, 2006). The relationship between gender and disability is receiving increased attention as well (Anderson, 2009; Lindermann and Cherney, 2008). Several scholars have also used key concepts of theorists Pierre Bourdieu to demonstrate the complicated ways in which race, class, gender, and other social characteristics are related to social position or acts of social positioning within particular cultural fields or institutions including that of snowboarding (Thorpe, 2009) and adventure racing (Kay and Laberge, 2004).

Moreover, it is widely agreed that intersections create both oppression and opportunity (Zinn and Dill, 1996) and this is why it is critical to examine how these intersections impact the design, delivery, and opportunities in corporate social

responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport. Stated differently, being on the advantaged side offers more than oppression by actually opening up access to rewards, status, and opportunities unavailable to other intersections (Collins, 1990; 2000). Further, an intersectional position may be disadvantaged relative to one group, but advantaged relative to another. For example, the white female athlete may be disadvantaged because of divergence from the heterosexual norm and standard, but relative to an African-American or Asian (or other racial minority) lesbian, she enjoys racial privilege. Finally, identities exemplify social stratification. That is, identity, such as gender or social class, may be experienced as a feature of individual selves, but it also reflects the existence and operation of power relations among groups that include that identity characteristic.

This study seeks to expand boundaries of the sport and intersectionality literature by examining how race, class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of oppression shape corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport. Focusing on intersectionality and CSR in women's sport contributes, at least theoretically, to the scant literature concerning how race, class, gender, and other forms of differences impact opportunities for corporate social responsibility in professional sport.

Further, intersectionality is also an appropriate theory to examine other issues in women's sport such as media coverage, coaching opportunities, front-office positions, salaries, college scholarships, facilities, among other issues. Intersectionality theory seeks to examine how race, class, gender, sexuality, and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality, and this can not be ignored any longer in women's sport and society (McCall, 2005).

### Matrix of Domination

While intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions (e.g., race and gender), the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic domains of power are consistent across different forms of oppression. According to Collins (2000), matrix of domination is defined as:

The overall organization of hierarchical power relations for any society. Any specific matrix of domination has (1) a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of oppression (i.e., race, class, gender, sexuality); and (2) a particular organization of its domains of power (i.e., structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic).

This study examines how race, class, gender, and other forms of difference can become tools of oppression that work together in specific ways to produce a distinctive matrix of domination in women's professional sport. For example, race, class, gender, sexual preference, age and other forms of oppression, may affect an individual differently depending on various factors such as geographic location, socioeconomic status, level of education, or sexual preference. Ultimately, by acknowledging and then addressing intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression in sport (e.g., ethnicity, sexuality, religion), the social practices that characterize the matrix of domination in the industry, including corporate social responsibility, can be combated.

### Policy and Intersectionality

On a broader scale, this study demonstrates the importance of intersectionality when creating, implementing, and analyzing public policies. The goal of intersectionality policy analysis as a method is to identify and address “the way specific acts and policies

address the inequalities experienced by various social groups” (Bishwakarma, Hunt, and Zajicek, 2007, p. 9), taking into account that social identities such as race, class, and gender interact to form unique and complex experiences between and within groups in society. Moreover, these are further affected by multiple systems of power and oppression, which Collins (1990) refers to as the “matrix of domination” and the change over time, place, and in different institutional domains.

This study supports the notion that traditional forms of creating, implementing, and analyzing public policy often has limitations and are exclusionary in nature. Intersectionality recognizes that to address complex inequities, a one-size-fits all approach does not work (Parken and Young, 2007). Further, intersectionality reveals that policy is not neutral, as all populations do not experience policies in the same way and the important differences have to be taken into consideration when developing, implementing, and evaluating public policy.

#### Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Sport

This study uses Kotler and Lee’s (2005) definition of corporate social responsibility: “Corporate social responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and resources” (p. 3). Further, Kotler and Lee (2007) claim, “Corporate social initiatives are major activities undertaken by a corporation to support social causes and to fulfill commitments to corporate social responsibility” (p. 3). Kotler and Lee (2005) identify six options for corporate social responsibility:

- (1) Corporate Cause Promotions: Increasing awareness and concern for social issues
- (2) Cause-Related Marketing: Making contributions to causes based on product sale

- (3) Corporate Social Marketing: Supporting behavior change campaigns
- (4) Corporate Philanthropy: Making a direct contribution to a cause
- (5) Community Volunteering: Employees donating their time and talents
- (6) Socially Responsible Business Practices: Discretionary business practices and investments to support causes

Although most professional sport teams participate in corporate social responsibility (CSR), little empirical research has been completed on CSR in professional sport (Babiak & Wolfe, 2007; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Irwin et al., 2003).

Specifically, research on the subject thus far has mainly focused on men's professional sports including the NBA, NFL, NHL, and MLB (Smith & Westerbreek, 2007; Babiak & Wolfe, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010; McGowan & Mahon, 2009; Sheth & Babiak, 2010), and the women's professional sport leagues have not been addressed. Professional sport leagues, corporations, teams, and athletes are all influential agents in our society when considered from both economic and cultural perspectives (Kern, 2000). It is important for these agents to maintain a positive image and good relationships with the communities in which they operate and they often do this through CSR.

Professional sport franchises have many ways to use CSR as outlined by Kotler and Lee (2005) including: cause promotions, cause-related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices. Further, the unique position of professional athletes in today's culture provides sport organizations with distinctive features that allow them to utilize CSR more effectively than traditional corporations. Some of these features include (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007): Mass media distribution and communication power; youth appeal; social interaction; positive health impacts; cultural understanding and integration; and immediate gratification benefits. Babiak and Wolfe (2009) identified additional unique

elements of professional sport that may also contribute to CSR efforts including: passion and interest of the product generated among fans/consumers; the economic structure; transparency where player, team, and management decisions are often well known; and stakeholder management where relationships with stakeholders can benefit from CSR activities. Because of these factors, sport franchises are arguably in the best position to serve as a facilitator of CSR throughout the world (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007).

However, women's professional sport leagues are not included in the conversation, which suggests that their efforts are insignificant and marginalized.

The fact that female athletes are less well represented in research and media, or not represented at all, is not unique to sport. Sport, feminists argue, has been socially constructed as hypermasculine, and as a result, access to this world has been more or less limited to men (Hattery, 2011). Further, contemporary feminist theorists such as Joan Acker (2006), Judith Lober (1995; 2011), and Cynthia Fuchs Epstein (2007) argue that patriarchy, the system of power that privileges men and male activities and qualities over women and their activities and qualities, both creates and requires gender difference. A key question, then, is this: If corporate social responsibility in sport is good for men and their leagues, why is there resistance to offering all that is good in corporate social responsibility in sport to women and their leagues? Perhaps the more access women have to sport participation, media coverage, and CSR initiatives, the more important it becomes for men and society to remind women *that they are still just women (italics are my own)* (Hattery, 2011).

One way to articulate gender and undermine female athletes is to focus on gender differences: Women can't dunk the basketball. Women's sports are less interesting to

watch. And one way to enforce gender boundaries is to offer media coverage for sporting events and CSR initiatives according to power rather than interest or need. In other words, the researcher suspects that since the passage of Title IX (discussed later), as women's athletics has encroached on the territory previously reserved solely for men, corporate social responsibility and media coverage for these initiatives at the professional level varies not only by gender, but also by race, class, and sport. This is because sports-media scholars over the last 30 years have gathered a large body of empirical evidence demonstrating that print and television media coverage routinely and systematically focuses on the athletic exploits of male athletes while offering hypersexualized images of their female counterparts, specifically highlighting Caucasian, heterosexual athletes who play individual sports such as tennis and golf (Messner et al., 2006, 2010; Messner, 1988; Kane, 2011, 1996; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998).

Intersectionality theory seeks to examine how various socially and culturally constructed categories such as race, class, gender, and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality. Taking a multicultural feminist approach and using intersectionality, the lack of support and research on CSR in women's professional sport suggests women's professional sport leagues are missing an opportunity to reach young female athletes because of the lack of positive attention drawn to their sport. CSR in women's professional sport is one avenue to gain positive attention for their sport, leagues, teams, athletes, and communities, by bringing awareness to social issues within their sport (e.g., fitness, nutrition, concussions), the community (e.g., childhood obesity, literacy), and highlighting positive role models for young girls and women of all races, classes, and sexual orientation (e.g.,



Serena Williams, Abby Wambach, Sheryl Swoopes, Yani Tseng).

### Title IX, the Benefits of Sport for Females, and CSR

June 23, 2012 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance (Education Amendments, 1972).

Implementation of this policy continues to be debated, but has undeniably opened doors for women not only in sports, but education and employment. In the United States, Title IX became the legal benchmark for women's push for equity with men. It has played an important role in creating more sport opportunities for girls and women, both directly and indirectly (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). Title IX has helped reshape and redefine how girls and women participate in sport as well as the cultural expectations of athletics, femininity, and female athletes.

Although great strides have been made for equity in sport, there is still a long way to go. Most estimates are that 80 to 90 percent of all educational institutions are not in compliance with Title IX as it applies to athletics

(<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/home/advocate/title-ix-and-issues/what-is-title-ix/title-ix-primer>, September 1, 2012, 6:10am). The penalty for non-compliance with Title IX is withdrawal of federal funds, yet this penalty has never been implemented. Rather, when institutions are found to be out of compliance with the Title IX, the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) finds them "in compliance conditioned on remedying identified problems"

(<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/home/advocate/title-ix-and-issues/what-is-title-ix/title-ix-primer>, September 1, 2012, 6:12am).

Nonetheless, Title IX is a game-changer for women in many realms, but particularly sport. Research shows that participation in sport and physical activity can enhance the physical competence, health and well-being of girls (Bowker, 2006; Gill, 2004; Greenberg & Oglesby, 1997; Pederson & Seidman, 2004; Richman & Shaffer, 2000; Wiese-Bjornstal, 1997). For example, girls who participate in sport and physical activity report positive feelings about body image and increased self-confidence, motivation and mood states (Wiese-Bjornstal, 1997), as well as reduced symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression (Greenberg & Oglesby, 1997). Moreover, girls who participate in sport are more likely to graduate and go to college (Melnick, Vanfossen & Sabo, 1988; Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo, 2005). Specifically, sport participation has been associated with lower dropout rates, particularly for low-income or at-risk youth (Fredericks & Eccles, 2006), white females in suburban and rural schools, and Latina athletes in rural schools (Sabo, Melnick & Vanfossen, 1989). Because sport participation has the potential to provide many benefits, it is important that young women and girls are given opportunities to participate as well as have access to collegiate and professional female athletes who may serve as role models. Further, it is important to acknowledge the importance of Title IX in women's professional sports and the doors that were opened for women to play professionally.

The fact that women are able to play professional sports should not be overlooked. Since Title IX legislation passed four decades ago, female professional athletes have made great strides both on and off the court, field, and course. Moreover,

interest in women's professional sport is gaining momentum. For example, according to ESPN, the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup Finals between the United States and Japan was seen by an average 13.458 million viewers, making it the most-watched and highest-rated soccer telecast on an ESPN network. The USA-Japan women's championship match beats the USA-Algeria men's match (June 23, 2010) from last summer's FIFA World Cup, which set the previous ESPN records for both ratings and viewership. Additionally, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), which receives some financial backing from the NBA, celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> season in 2011, and is broadcast in more than 200 countries and territories and on ABC and ESPN2 domestically, which suggests a strong presence domestically and globally.

The CSR efforts of female professional sport leagues and teams should be acknowledged, researched, and praised because they often engage in CSR initiatives with fewer financial resources, fan support, and media coverage than male sport leagues and teams. Although women have made great advances in education, sports, and employment, there are still obstacles such as fighting for equal pay in most fields. Moreover, after an extensive review of the literature on CSR in professional sport, there is little to no mention of women's professional sport teams or female athletes and their philanthropic efforts. In light of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of Title IX, it is time to consider women's professional sport leagues when considering CSR efforts in professional sport. This is because women's leagues and teams are making valuable contributions both on and off the court, field, and course.

Women's sport and female athletes are often treated as second class citizens in one of the most powerful economic, social, and political institutions in the world because

of media's tendency to sexualize women's athletic accomplishments rather than focusing on their true athletic ability and contributions to their sport (Kane, 2011). Women's sport needs quality media attention that focuses on women's leadership, work ethic, and contributions on the playing field and in the community, because the leagues, teams, athletes and the fans, especially the young girls looking for role models, deserve it. Women's professional sport leagues and teams have lived in the shadows long enough and their CSR efforts need to be considered, recognized, and researched.

### Gap in Literature

Research indicates that many professional sport leagues and teams engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts for many reasons including economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, and sometimes to help boost a poor image (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Irwin et al., 2003; Robinson, 2005; Sheth & Babiak, 2010; Cole, 2001; Smart & Rechnter, 2007; McGowan & Mahon, 2009; Sports Philanthropy Project, 2011).

Although many of these areas have been addressed in the literature, there has been little, if any, focus on women's professional sport leagues and teams. Understanding how race, class, gender, and other forms of differences impact the design and delivery of CSR in professional women's sport is critical because CSR is a way to reach a larger audience and create positive change in the community. Simply, race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively affects the level of interest in women's professional sport, which, in turn, affects a league or teams ability to effectively engage in a CSR. As a result of this discrimination, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are undermined.

An example of how intersectionality impacts opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to women and girls is undermined in how media, marketing agencies, and the golf community failed to capitalize on Taiwanese golfer Yani Tseng's accomplishment of being the youngest player to win five majors in professional golf, female or male, and as a result, missed an opportunity to introduce and open golf to a broader viewing and playing audience. This study explores how race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives in four women's professional sport leagues (Women's National Basketball Association-WNBA, Women's Tennis Association-WTA, Ladies Professional Golf Association- LPGA, and Women's Professional Soccer-WPS) by analyzing and understanding 218 public documents from the above mentioned leagues, a content analysis of the *New York Times* Sports sections between 2009-2012, and interviewing executives in league offices and individual teams. Ultimately, the broader question is, "How are women's professional sport leagues using CSR as a promotional tool for their sport, while simultaneously addressing social issues that are relevant to young girls and the community (e.g., self-esteem, childhood obesity, lesbian gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues, positive role-models)?" Intersectionality theory is used in this study to demonstrate that powerful forces such as sexism, racism, and classism are not independent of one another but are interacting forces, which impacts a person's experiences within and beyond sport in multiple ways.

### Rationale for Study

Intersectionality is a powerful theory that explores and examines how systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape women's experiences, and, in turn are

shaped by women (Collins, 2000). This theory is a powerful way to explore the complexity of race, class, gender, and other differences in sport, specifically as it relates to opportunities in CSR. Given the distinctive and unique factors, the study of CSR in professional sport warrants further investigation, particularly in women's professional sport. Although intersectionality theory has been used to study other areas of women in sport such as media coverage, there has been no published empirical research on the subject of intersectionality and CSR in women's professional sport.

Studying and exploring CSR in women's professional sport not only adds to literature in CSR, but also to feminist literature, and gender and sport literature. It is important to research how race, class, and gender are markers of a relationship of power, and to ask how race, class, and gender relations are produced and being reproduced through sport. For example, it is well documented that women's professional sport receives less media coverage (Messner, 2006, 2010) and other opportunities to promote social causes through CSR efforts (i.e., sponsorships), but how women's leagues engage in CSR efforts and what issues do they address (i.e., diversity, childhood obesity, girls in sports)? Although women receive less media coverage and overall support from the sporting public, do leagues and specific sports receive more coverage because the majority of the female athletes are perceived to be Caucasian, heterosexual, and play an individual higher-class or "country club" sport such as tennis and golf?

### Objective of Study

This study aims to analyze and understand how race, class, and gender shape CSR initiatives in women's professional sport. Through content analysis of public organizational documents from four mainstream leagues analyzed in this study (Women's

National Basketball Association, Women's Professional Soccer, Women's Tennis Association, and Ladies Professional Golf Association), content analysis of the *New York Times* Sports sections, and interviews with senior executives from the above mentioned leagues, this study aims to understand how race, class, and gender of the target audience effects the design and delivery of CSR initiatives in women's professional sport, if leagues use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression facing young women and girls, and the meaning or level of importance executives assign to CSR initiatives and what they hope to gain.

It is important to note that while it would have been very important to include the perspective and input of female professional athletes from each league, this was not within the scope of this study. Similarly, it would be important to research and acknowledge individual professional female athletes who have their own CSR initiatives or foundations. However, neither is within the scope of this study. This is because the majority of the data collection stage did not coincide with team in-season schedules and this study focused solely on league CSR initiatives. In addition, many of the professional female athletes have second jobs during the off-season or play their sport overseas so they were not accessible for interviews for this particular study.

There is no apparent research that explores the intersections of gender, sport, and CSR as a way to get at the contemporary problems of race, class, and gender that affect the CSR initiatives and type of media coverage a league or team receives. Researchers to this point have neglected studying CSR in women's professional sport and, as a result, have failed to consider the importance of CSR in women's sport not only from a business perspective, but also a societal perspective regarding empowering girls and women.

### Statement of the Problem

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in professional sport has picked up momentum in research over the last decade; however, there are no published empirical studies on CSR in women's professional sport. Given that June 23, 2012 marked the 40th anniversary of Title IX, and women have been successfully playing in professional sport as well as participating in CSR, it is important to conduct a study that explores how race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives in women's professional sport. The literature suggests that female athletes often receive less media coverage and endorsement deals. However, if the athlete is white, heterosexual female, and/or plays an individual sport, then she may have more opportunities for media coverage and endorsements than her minority, homosexual female, or team-sport athlete counterpart.

This study is important because CSR initiatives often serve as a way to connect with the community, bring attention to socially relevant issues, and highlight athletes who serve as positive role models for youth. Race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR. As a result of the discrimination, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened.

### Research Questions

The central research question that this study aimed to answer is: Do race, class, and gender impact corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in women's professional sport? This study also addresses the following research sub-questions:



- (1) Do women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR?
- (2) Do race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the professional athlete who is selected to engage in the CSR initiative?
- (3) Do leagues and teams use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to women, specifically female athletes of all ages?
- (4) What meanings or level of importance do league and team executives assign to CSR initiatives and what do they hope to gain?

### Conclusion

In summary, I have sought to give a brief overview explaining the importance of using intersectionality theory as an appropriate theory for which to study CSR in women's professional sport, the research objective and research questions that were developed to explore how race, class, and gender shape the landscape of CSR initiatives in women's professional sport. This study is broadly about conducting research that employs intersectionality theory in women's professional sport by focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR). By examining CSR in women's professional sport, using intersectionality theory, or what Collins (1991, 2000) calls the perspective of the "outside within," may offer a less partial view of the social world and perhaps a more accurate picture of what is shaping sport (Collins, 1990; 1991). Anzaldua (1987) suggests that those persons who are most marginalized in any society have the potential to offer a more accurate view of the power structure and hierarchies that operate within the social system. This notion can be taken one step further by applying it to sport. Further, using the intersectionality framework demonstrates how systems of race, class, and gender act as "structuring forces" affecting how people act, the opportunities that are available to them, and the way in which their behavior is socially defined (Lynch, 1996).

I employed intersectionality theory as it is often used in feminist studies to examine the topic using qualitative research methods; conduct interviews and analyze

public documents to determine if race, class, and gender impact CSR initiatives in women's professional sport. Specifically, I attempted to use the intersectionality framework to analyze whether specific women's professional leagues and teams engage in CSR differently to each other and if the media coverage a league or team received is influenced by factors of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or other forms of discrimination.

Chapter 2 discusses the relevant literature in gender and sport that shapes how race, class, gender, and media coverage impact women's sport. Each subtopic (race, class, gender, and media) is discussed independently and then is discussed as a whole using the intersectionality theoretical framework. I speculate that based on the literature, women's professional sport teams receive more quality media coverage, which leads to better opportunities, for their CSR efforts if the league or team is an individual sport, such as golf or tennis, which is often considered to be played by "higher class" women, who are (or appear to be) predominantly heterosexual and Caucasian. However, it turns out that the answer is not so simple.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology for this study. Research methods that are discussed include how the participants were selected, the forms of data collection, how the data was analyzed, validation strategies used to increase the validity and reliability of the study, potential ethical issues, and the role and background of the researcher.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings uncovered through this study. This chapter presents four key findings obtained from document analysis of 218 public organizational documents (websites, newsletters, newspaper articles, social media), content analysis of

the *New York Times* sport sections during four in-season schedules, and six conversational interviews with league and team executives from Women's Professional Basketball Association (WNBA), Women's Professional Soccer (WPS), Women's Tennis Association (WTA), and Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA).

Chapter 5 analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes the findings discussed in Chapter 4. Although the questions are geared toward exploring corporate social responsibility in women's professional sports, the responses and analysis suggest that what is perceivably occurring within CSR is a microcosm of what is occurring within women's professional sport at-large. This chapter is organized by the following analytic categories:

1. Intersectionality and Sport  
(Research Questions 2 and 3)
2. How and why women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR  
(Research Questions 1, 3, and 4)

Chapter 6 summarizes the major findings and conclusions drawn from this research. This discussion is followed by the researcher's recommendations and a final reflection from this study.

I now turn toward the next section in which I discuss the relevant literature in gender and sport research pertaining to race, class, gender, and media in women's sport. This literature adds depth to the topic of corporate social responsibility in professional sport, feminist literature, and gender and sport literature by focusing on women's professional sport and using the intersectionality theoretical framework that is often used in feminist research.

## **Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on race, class, gender, and media coverage in women's sport. This study builds on the literature by applying intersectionality as the theoretical framework, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport as the point of analysis. As a framework for this study, intersectionality is useful for two main reasons. First, intersectionality provides a framework for understanding systematic differences in the treatment of women in professional sport. Second, the theory examines power, privilege, and oppression by race, class, and gender to complete a matrix of domination. The aim is to analyze and understand how race, class, gender, and other forms of difference impacted corporate social responsibility, and form axes of oppression that circulate within a matrix of domination of which athletes, leagues, and teams are a part.

I speculate that based on the literature in gender and sport, women's professional sport teams receive more quality media coverage for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts when the league is an individual sport, which is often considered to be played by "higher class" women, who are (or appear to be) predominantly heterosexual and Caucasian (Kane, 1996; Duncan, 1990; Messner, et al., 1993; Smith, 2006).

### Intersectionality: Race, Class, and Gender

Intersectionality theory was largely developed and introduced by black and multicultural feminists (Anderson, 2001; Davis, 1983; Collins, 1994, 2004; King, 1988; Zinn & Dill, 2006), as a methodology of studying “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations” (McCall, 2005). Intersectionality is a prism through which to analyze a broad range of social issues in a more dynamic, multidimensional, and inclusive manner and looks beyond separating social problems into distinct challenges facing specific groups. The theory suggests and seeks to examine how various cultural, social, and biological categories (e.g., race, class, gender) and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, ultimately contributing to systematic social inequality (Crenshaw, 1989). This theoretical paradigm assumes that systems of oppression and domination (e.g., patriarchy, capitalism, and racial superiority) do not act independently of one another and are woven together in what Zinn and Dill (2006) call a “matrix of domination.”

According to Gramsci (1971), social order is maintained through a dynamic process of coercion and consent whereby dominant groups produce dominant cultural beliefs, called hegemonic ideologies, and subordinated groups’ consent to structural conditions that may be oppressive given the power of hegemonic ideologies. For Gramsci, consent is secured through the “cultural leadership of the dominant grouping” (Curran, 2006, p. 132). In the United States, the media operate as a part of this grouping, particularly when the lines between the corporate elite and the media elite are increasingly blurred (Curran, 2006). However, Gramsci recognized that subordinated

groups can choose to oppose hegemonic dominance by creating alternative understandings of society that connect to people's social experiences and identities (Curran, 2006).

Patricia Hill Collins built on Gramscian (1971) theories on the dynamics of domination and power in societies. Collins (1990) argues that dominant groups control social institutions in society, such as schools, the media and popular culture, which produce controlling images that are widespread with stereotypes about subordinated groups. These controlling images are not passively accepted by marginalized populations, as there are cultures of resistance within subordinated communities (Cooky, Wachs, Messner, & Dworkins, 2010). Collins (1990) explains: "Subjugated knowledges...develop in cultural contexts controlled by oppressed groups. Dominant groups aim to replace subjugated knowledges with their own specialized thought because they realize that gaining control over this dimension of subordinate groups' lives amplifies control" (p. 228). At the same time, Collins recognized there are segments of subordinated communities that internalize and perpetuate dominant ideologies. Therefore, the process of domination and oppression are complex. The result is, "African-American women find themselves in a web of cross-cutting relationships, each presenting varying combinations of controlling images and women's self-definitions" (Collins, 1990, p. 96). Similarly, it can be argued that other oppressed groups find themselves in a "web of cross-cutting relationships."

Intersectionality can be expanded beyond race, class, and gender to include other systems of power, privilege, and oppression, including sexuality, religion, age, ability status, and geographical region of the world (Smith & Cooper, 2010). As a framework

for this study, the intersectionality theory is useful for two main reasons. First, intersectionality theory provides a framework for understanding systematic differences in the treatment of men and women in professional sport; specifically, it allows a researcher to hypothesize reasons for differential treatment. In this study, comparisons are being made within corporate social responsibility initiatives among four women's professional sport leagues. Second, this theory focuses on ways in which power, privilege, and oppression are organized by race, class, gender, and other systems of domination: it lends itself well to analyzing phenomena such as media coverage in professional sport. For this study, intersectionality and its relation to media coverage is used as the framework for analyzing women's professional sport generally, and CSR in particular.

One of the important contributions of intersectionality theory is that it illuminates the ways in which privilege and oppression are institutionalized. This invisibility often results in the belief that widespread discrimination and oppression have ceased to exist in contemporary America. Intersectionality theory allows one to see the ways in which institutionalized privilege continues.

Simply, the concept of intersectionality (Collins, 1990) refers to a “web of cross-cutting relationships” taking into account how various forms of oppression (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality) interlock with one another. Therefore, CSR in women's professional sport is analyzed using the intersectionality framework. This study critically analyzes the construction of CSR by examining documents (print media, annual reports, websites etc.) and by interviewing league and team executives to understand the “complex interrelated and fluid character of power relations” as they are constructed along axes of difference (McDonald & Birrell, 1999, p. 284).

### Matrix of Domination

While intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions (e.g. race), the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic domains of power are consistent across different forms of oppression. According to Collins (2000), matrix of domination is defined as:

The overall organization of hierarchical power relations for any society. Any specific matrix of domination has (1) a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of oppression (i.e., race, class, gender, sexuality); and (2) a particular organization of its domains of power (i.e., structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic).

This study examines how race, class, gender, and other forms of difference can become tools of oppression that work together in specific ways to produce a distinctive matrix of domination in women's professional sport. The matrix of domination is a scheme for examining how oppressions are organized through the structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic domains of power. For example, the structural domain organizes oppression, whereas the disciplinary domain manages it. The interpersonal domain influences everyday lived experiences and the individual consciousness that follows, while the hegemonic domain is the area within which oppression is justified (Collins, 2000). Ultimately, by acknowledging and addressing intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression in sport, the social practices that characterize the matrix of domination in the industry, including CSR, can be combated.

### Gender Discrimination

Gender relations worldwide are structured by patriarchy (Acker, 2006), which dictates ideologies, beliefs, behaviors, roles, and relations between women and men



(Epstein, 2007; Lorber, 1995). As a system of power and oppression, it dictates a set of inequalities based on gender. Gender ideologies are predicated primarily on the belief that there are inherent biological differences between men and women, and men, as a class, are superior to women (Epstein, 2007). The differences that are most frequently cited are those related to women's reproduction (pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation), and to men's greater strength and purported superiority of intellect (Acker, 2006). Patriarchy infuses both individual men and institutions with power and privilege. This is certainly the case in sport where men make up most of the positions in sports administration and sports reporting. For example, Lapchick, Brender, and Wright (2006) surveyed more than 300 daily newspapers, finding women comprised 12.6% of newspaper sport staff employees. However, women made up 24% of the support staff and clerks, while men made up for 95% of sports editors, 87% of assistant sport editors, 93% of columnist, 93% of reporters, and 87% copy editors/designers in U.S. newspaper sports departments (Lapchick et al., 2006). Additionally, it has been estimated that in sports journalism, women make up only 13 percent of the workforce (Hardin, 2005; Hardin & Shain, 2005; Hardina & Shain, 2006).

Title IX has significantly increased the number of sport opportunities for girls and women in educational institutions as well as the progress indirectly related to Title IX through women's professional sport. Undeniably, the visibility and excellence of female athletes and women's sport, amateur, collegiate, and professional, have helped create a broader cultural context in which female athleticism has become "normalized," and in many cases, celebrated (Cooky, 2012).

For example, when Congress passed Title IX in 1972, fewer than 32,000 women competed in intercollegiate athletics ([www.NCAA.com](http://www.NCAA.com), June 28, 2012, 7:03am).

Women received only 2 percent of schools' athletic budgets, and athletic scholarships for women were nonexistent ([www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org), June 28, 2012, 8:18am). Title IX has made a difference in female participation in intercollegiate athletics, as the number of college women participating in competitive athletics is now nearly five times the pre-Title IX rate ([www.wsf.org](http://www.wsf.org), June 29, 2012, 6:33am).

However, despite the progress, there remains a considerable gap in gender equality in American sport. Women face major inequities in media attention, coaching positions, distribution of institutional resources, decision-making positions, endorsement deals, professional sport opportunities, salary, and other facets of sport (Cooky, 2012). Unfortunately, the under-representation of women in positions of power and overall inaccessibility to high-quality and high-paying opportunities is not unique to sport. Sport has tremendous potential to increase the quality of life of girls and women around the world, yet the discrimination of women from diverse backgrounds, highlights the persistence of sexism, male dominance, and the challenges involved in making social change and an equitable playing field for women in all aspects of society.

### Racial Discrimination

The United States has been a society shaped by racial conflict and ruled by a system of racial domination from its inception. As soon as Europeans arrived in the New World, they defined Native Americans as "savages" and less than human. Within the first years of settling Jamestown, European settlers, who had already begun the systematic genocide of Native Americans, began to import slaves from Africa. African

slaves and their descendents were also defined as less than human, which is evident by the “one-drop rule” and other demeaning and degrading laws and norms. Their status as chattel was codified in the 1858 Supreme Court decision in the case of Dred Scott (Hattery & Smith, 2007b, 2011). The end of the formal Jim Crow laws did not mean that race had become a non-existent issue in the United States. Marx (1998, p.271) states, “Racial identities, ingrained through painful experience and embedded in everyday life, do not quickly fade even if the institutions that reinforced them change.” The racial classification systems were used to justify colonization, conversion, and slavery. According to these systems, white skin was the standard, and dark skin was associated with inferiority. Moreover, our society is not always inclusive nor does it ensure that interests of all will be met. America has built a nation-state on exclusion of people, the “others”, and the result has been institutionalized reinforcement of discrimination even after laws are established against it.

In the world of sport, race discrimination is still a factor. According to Butler and Lopiano (2003), if female athletes of color were only experiencing discrimination based on their gender, their participation rate would be 19.2 percent instead of 14.8 percent. Thus, while sex discrimination continues to affect both white female athletes and female athletes of color, female athletes of color face additional racial inequalities. Butler et al. (2003) argues, unlike female athletes of color, male athletes of color in NCAA varsity sports (22.1%) are proportionally represented compared to their presence in the student body (22%).

Butler and Lopiano (2003), suggest that there is a pattern of racial inequality in most NCAA men’s sports (14 of 25) and NCAA women’s sports (20 of 25) that appears

to be related to continuing racial discrimination and the disparate impacts of economic inequality on populations of color. Historically, the clustering of male and female athletes of color into certain sports and not others has been influenced by economic inequalities and institutional disadvantages that exist in many communities of color and poverty. In order to restore the inequalities evident in the clustering of athletic opportunities in college athletics, substantial reforms need to be made at the lower levels of the social and athletic pyramid, such as youth sports and K-12 sports (Butler et al., 2003).

Another example of the impact of race in sport is the media coverage, or impact on, Asian and Asian American athletes. There have been several studies suggesting that sports fans and sports media do not treat Asian and Asian American athletes fairly or accurately (Creff, 2004; Franks, 2000; Hanson, 2005; King, 2006; Mayeda, 1999). For example, when Jeremy Lin, an Asian American NBA player who had a breakout season in 2011, did not play as well as in previous games and his team lost to the Charlotte Hornets, the ESPN's website used the headline a "Chink in the Armor" to describe his play. Although some say ESPN has used the term "chink in the armor" over 3,000 times on ESPN.com and has no racial connotations, responsible media writers, editors, and producers should have more cultural sensitivity and respect not to use the word "chink" underneath or associated with Lin's name

(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/gregorymcneal/2012/02/18/espn-uses-chink-in-the-armor-line-twice-did-linsanity-just-go-racist/>, February 18, 2012, 3:17pm). Ultimately, race is still a factor in sports.

As with many institutions in society, people of color are underrepresented in decision-making positions in sport. Although minority athletes are overrepresented in sports such as football and basketball as amateur, college, and professional athletes, people of color are underrepresented as coaches, managers, presidents, commissioners, and owners (Smith, 2007). At both the individual and institutional levels, the system of racial domination shapes race relations so as to reinforce racial inequalities.

### Class Discrimination

Class privilege occurs in many ways but is often harder to identify. Americans are often hesitant to talk about income inequality even though the income gap continues to widen between the rich and the poor (hooks, 2000). While some argue that education and increased demand for skilled labor leads to increased inequality, others argue that inequality exists because of those who are in power and make policies (Bartels 2008; Smeeding, 2005). Power is “generated in and through the reproduction of structures” (Giddens 1984, 258). Power also means “the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others” (Wrong, 1995). This definition is used when broadly considering the various forms of power, including economic power, political power, ideological power, and media power. According to G. William Domhoff (2011), there are three primary indicators of power, which can be summarized as: (1) Who benefits? (2) Who governs? (3) Who wins? Those who benefit the most, by inference, are powerful because it is assumed they are on the winning side of these factors. In America, wealth and well-being are highly valued.

Tennis and golf are viewed as semi-elitist sports, played mostly by upper-class individuals. Throughout most of the twentieth century, golf was played on private

country club courses, which were generally restricted to upper-class, white, male clientele (Delaney & Madigan, 2009b). Although women's professional golf and tennis are viewed as sports played and watched by upper-class individuals, research shows that across the board, women's sports and women in sports are generally treated as second-class citizens (Kane, 1996; 1998). In most cases, women have fewer sports participation and career opportunities, fewer resources devoted to their programs, and they are given less media attention than men (Eitzen, 1987; Staurowsky, 2011). Kane (2000) argued:

Sport is one of the most powerful institutions in this culture, because of its status and economic and political clout. There's a great deal at stake in sports participation, and the group that has monopolized sport doesn't want to give that up. They know the best way to maintain control is to trivialize or marginalize [women's] accomplishments... After all, if females are great athletes, then it's harder to say as a society that they shouldn't get press coverage, money, or scholarships. But if they are portrayed as people who do sports in their spare time, or as merely pretty girls, it's much easier to deny them access and to maintain the status quo..."

Moreover, it is imperative to give more attention to females in sport, their access to opportunities or lack of, and the oppression that exists on all levels in sport because it is often an institution that maintains the status quo and perpetuates stereotypes. Kane (1996) claims that we should not underestimate how much sport reinforces fundamental assumptions underlying patriarchal conceptions of gender and perpetuates beliefs about male superiority and female inferiority.

### Media Discrimination

Media has the power to shape and influence public opinion. Several researchers demonstrate that although the media appear to "report what happened," in reality, they actively shape how people and situations are perceived and interpreted. The media has been an important institution for reinforcing dominant ideologies and power structures.

Historically, “dominant values and ideas” about sport revolved around traditional notions of gender—males were athletes, females were not (Kane, 1996; 2011). However, modern day female athletes, post Title IX, pose a threat to traditional ideas about gender. Specifically, sport has been a central arena for the ideological production and validation of male supremacy.

Dominant ideologies are privileged on the whole over other more marginalized sets of belief systems (Kane, 1996; 2011). This idea is clearly demonstrated in mainstream media outlets. According to several sport sociologists, one way to determine which ideologies are emphasized over others is to examine the “preferred readings” of sport media texts in a variety of written (i.e., newspaper), oral (i.e., television), and visual (i.e., photographs) formats (Duncan, 1990; Messner, et al., 1993, 2006, 2010; Smith, 2006). Producers of oral, written, and visual texts, either consciously or unconsciously, create and articulate one set of “preferred readings” over another, which tells a specific story in and of itself (e.g., what sport receives media coverage, which athlete receives coverage).

Further, there is overwhelming evidence of differential patterns of media coverage of female and male athletes. Sport sociologists and other researchers conclude that this difference in coverage exists based on two observations. First, in spite of the tremendous increases in participation rates for a wide variety of women across an array of activities, sportswomen have been grossly underrepresented in overall media coverage (Kane, 1996). Second, males are consistently presented in images that emphasize their athletic strength and competence, whereas females are often presented in ways that link them to oppressive stereotypes of women’s so-called frailty, sexuality, and limited

physical capacity (Kane, 1996). Therefore, female athletes are much more likely than male athletes to be portrayed off the court, out of uniform, and in highly passive and sexualized poses. According to Duncan and Hasbrook (1988), these patterns of exclusion and asymmetry constitute a denial of power for sportswomen. By creating the impression that females are largely absent from the sporting scene, and by treating the female athletes whom we do see, read and hear about in ways that denigrate them and their athletic endeavors, the media marginalize and trivialize women's sport involvement (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988).

One of the most persistent and universal findings is that the activities and accomplishments of female athletes are grossly underreported in mass media sport coverage. This is true whether researchers examine time periods in relationship to Title IX, the age of the athlete, her race, or the type of sport in which she is involved (Kane, 1996). Messner, Carlisle, and Willms (2006) argue that nearly all of the sports anchors and ancillary reporters, in the weeks of sports news and highlights shows they studied were men. These men use a steady stream of verbal reports and visual images that focus on men's sports and largely ignore women's sports. They argue that the media's continued marginalization of women's sports maintains the myth that sports are exclusively by, about, and for men.

On the rare occasions when women do appear on sports news and highlights shows, they are often trivialized and sexualized. Sports news and highlights shows commonly devote much of their scanty coverage of women's sports to individual athletes presented as icons of white, heterosexual, feminine attractiveness. Further, reports on women's sports are not only less frequent, but less varied. Messner, Duncan, and Willms



(2006) found that when the media covered women's sports, 42 percent of them were about tennis. Track and field stories were a distant second accounting for 16 percent of all women's sports stories (Messner et al., 2006). Women's sports are booming as never before; yet, this cultural shift is not being covered and reported by the media. Amazingly, in the 15 years that they studied media coverage of women's sports, they found almost no increase in the media coverage (Messner et. al., 2006; 2010).

### Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, and Media in Women's Professional Sport

It is critical to understand the concept of intersectionality in sport: the acknowledgment that racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression are not independent systems of domination, but are instead powerful, interacting forces both within and outside of sport. Further, intersectionality proposes that groups (e.g., women) are not homogeneous. From this perspective it is evident that "everyone is positioned at the intersections of a cluster of identity categories that together interact and produce an effect that is different from the sum of its parts" (Duncan, 2007, p. 69). Moreover, systems of race, class, and gender domination can be intertwined in mutually reinforcing ways that make them more potent (Hattery & Smith, 2011).

The lack of media coverage on women's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts and female athletes in general, highlights how women's sports are "contested ideological terrain" (Messner, 1988). Sociologists of sport have noted the lack of coverage of women's sport in mainstream news media, more importantly the lack of respectful, serious coverage of women's sport, especially for female athletes of color (Douglas, 2005; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Lansbury, 2001; McKay & Johnson, 2008; Schultz, 2005) in mainstream print media (Bishop, 2003; Christopherson, Janning, &

McConnell, 2002; Eastman & Billings, 2000; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Pratt, Gappendorf, Grundvig, & LeBlanc, 2008; Vincent, 2004; Vincent & Crossman, 2008; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999) and in mainstream televised media (Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Messner, et al., 2006).

Although Title IX opened doors for an explosion in the number of girls and women who participate in sport and changed the culture in a way that the female athlete is often considered a “cultural icon” (Heywood & Dworkin 2003); cultural anxieties about female athleticism, strength, and power persist. Today, girls and women in sport occupy a preliminary cultural space, wherein their participation is simultaneously positioned as empowering while at the same time devalued and trivialized (Cooky & McDonald, 2005; Shakib & Dunbar, 2002). For example, the media coverage of women’s sports are broadcast on television more so than in the past because of ESPN and Comcast Sports Television which is available only to those with top-tier cable subscriptions. Women’s sports fans can watch televised coverage of women’s collegiate softball, soccer, volleyball, and field hockey, women’s professional basketball, tennis, and golf. However, despite the increase in broadcasts of women’s sport competition, the coverage of women’s sports, in both mainstream televised and print sport media is still lacking (Smith, 2006). Specifically, research has found that the amount of coverage in local news and national sports highlight programs, approximately 2 percent of the coverage is on women’s sport (Messner, et al., 2010).

Many media studies have shown that women athletes and women’s sports are underrepresented in magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003; Wade, 2008), newspapers (McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003);

and television (Messner et al., 2006, 2010). Print media coverage has been consistent with the broadcast media coverage even in national daily newspapers, as reporting in the *New York Times* and *USA Today* suggests favoritism towards men's sports and male athletes (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003; Wade, 2008). Fink and Kensicki (2002) conducted a content analysis on *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Women* magazines to see if the marketing techniques used feminize female athletes in male-specific magazines would cross over in the female-specific magazine (2002, p.319). They found that women continue to be underrepresented, portrayed in traditionally feminine sports, or shown in non sport-related scenery in both magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). Wade (2008) conducted a content analysis of the representation of white and black female athletes in 92 magazines. Representations of black female and white female athletes in *Sports Illustrated*, *Sports Illustrated for Women*, and *Her Sports* from 2000-2002 and 2004-2008. The results revealed that the race of a female athlete and the gender of the reading audience affect the depiction of the athlete as primarily athletic or feminine (Wade, 2008).

Further, even though many attempts have been made to educate the U.S. mainstream news media regarding stereotypical coverage of women's sport, there are consistent patterns that persist over time. When media do cover women's sport, the coverage often trivializes women's athleticism and "hetero-sexualizes" female athletes (Heywood & Dworkin, 2003; Christopherson, et al., 2002; Messner, 2002). Moreover, media images of female athletes are increasingly photographed in what Pat Griffin calls "hyper-sexualized poses." Griffin notes, "When it was once enough to feminize women athletes, now it is necessary to sexualize them for men. Instead of hearing, 'I am woman,

hear me roar,' we are hearing "I am hetero-sexy, watch me strip.'" Further, Jayda Evans of *The Seattle Times* suggests that marketing campaigns that focus on glamorizing female athletes and "sexualizing" the sport are attempts to disassociate female athletic achievement from being a lesbian (Evans, November 11, 2009).

Research on the coverage of the Wimbledon championships in 2000 found that while the amount of coverage of the men's and women's events was relatively equal, the quality of coverage differed: the mostly male journalists who covered the tournaments devalued the athletic accomplishments of female tennis players by using cultural and racial stereotypes, trivialization, and sexual innuendo (Vincent, 2004). These trends in the coverage of women's sport, and specifically of African-American female athletes, are not new to the post-Title IX generation. Lansbury (2001) analyzed the print news media coverage from the 1940's and 1950's of Alice Coachman and Althea Gibson and found that white newspapers trivialized African-American women's participation in sport, either by failing to cover the accomplishments of the athletes or by framing the athletes as masculine. Additionally, Lansbury (2001) argued that this demonstrated that the lack of coverage of female sports, particularly minority athletes, means that female athletes are being lost from public memory. Unfortunately, this is not a trend of the past, as media coverage of women, particularly women of color, is still underrepresented and often sexist and racist.

Similarly, research on contemporary media representations of African-American female athletes has focused on African-American women's participation in individual sport like tennis, especially mediated representations of Venus and Serena Williams (Douglas, 2005). This is not surprising given the American public's fascination with

female athletes in individual sports, and focusing more on their feminine beauty and fashion choices, rather than athletic skills (Banet-Weiser, 1999a). This enthrallment is constructed, in some ways, by the media coverage of women's sport (Cooky et al., 2010). Although research suggests that white, attractive, heterosexual female athletes who play individual sports receive the most media coverage, the Williams sisters are often the exceptions when it comes to race and media coverage. This is because the Williams sisters have dominated women's tennis for over a decade and have capitalized on their stardom by creating a fashion line and benefit from athlete and celebrity status. Although this is true, the Williams sisters have cited numerous occasions where they experienced discrimination in tennis. Douglas' (2005) analysis of the media coverage of the 2001 Indian Wells tennis tournament and the 2003 French Open, found that the media's "raceless" explanations for the hostile reception of the Williams' sisters made race and white privilege invisible and upheld the marking of tennis as a "white" sport, rather than directly addressing the fact that their reception was hostile because of their race, African-American, in a traditionally "white" sport (Cooky et al., 2010).

More recently, McKay and Johnson's (2008) study on mainstream media suggests that women are "othered" and often viewed as "objects of ridicule, inferiority and weakness...but currently is searching for new ways to disparage the powerful and therefore 'uppity' African-American sportswomen" (p.492). Historically, black womanhood has been viewed differently than white femininity (Carty, 2005). "Black women athletes are seen as more athletic than white women so their femininity is discounted as irrelevant" (Carty, 2005, p. 140). The belief is that black female athletes are more apt to cross the gender barrier of sport and standard femininity, because "they

have never been fully included in the stringent ideals of femininity and heterosexuality to begin with” (Carty, 2005, p.152). For example, despite Venus and Serna Williams’ unprecedented success in professional tennis, the mainstream sport media has described them as “masculine,” “aggressive,” “pummeling,” “overwhelming,” “overpowering,” and “predator one and predator two” (Carty, 2005). Further, the mainstream sport media discursively positioned their bodies as simultaneously sexually grotesque and pornographically erotic by claiming that they are too muscular and masculine (Cooky et al., 2010). These descriptions and portrayals accentuate the fact that African-American athletes are rarely characterized as both feminine and strong; “their muscles supersede their beauty and sex appeal” (Carty, 2005, p. 147).

Female athletes in basketball, and presumably other team sports, have to negotiate a contradictory set of cultural images (Banet-Weiser, 1999a). Research suggests that women’s participation in sport, particularly team sport, is frequently accompanied by a questioning of the (hetero) sexuality of athletes (Cahn, 1994; Griffin, 1998). This is partly due to the fact that, unlike individual sports such as tennis and golf, participation in a team contact sport like basketball and soccer is viewed in the U.S. culture as a “masculine” endeavor (Banet-Weiser, 1999a). Therefore, female athletes are confronted with cultural assumptions regarding their lack of femininity, and thus their lack of heterosexuality (Banet-Weiser, 1999a). These cultural assumptions regarding women’s sport participation contribute to particular arbitrated representations of female athletes. For example, the Women’s National Basketball Association’s (WNBA) marketing strategy revolved around highlighting the heterosexual, emphasized femininity of WNBA

players as models, mothers, or the girl-next-door (Banet-Weiser, 1999a; McPherson, 2000).

Further, McPherson's (2000) analysis of the WNBA web site, found that the players' familial relationships, ties, and responsibilities were highlighted. She argues this is not about rearticulating female athleticism within the domestic context; rather it produces racialized narratives of black femininity. Thus, the negotiation of the contradictions in women's sport participation differs quantitatively for African-American female athletes given the ways in which African-American women have been portrayed in the media, and specifically in sports media, as both hyper-sexualized and less feminine (Cooky et al., 2010). As a result, African-American female athletes are subject to particularly "controlling images" in the media (Cahn, 1994; Collins, 1990).

Yani Tseng of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) is an example of intersecting oppressions impacting the quality and quantity of media coverage women's sport receives. Although she accomplished something no other professional golfer, female or male, has accomplished by being the youngest player to win five major championships, she received very insignificant media coverage. Research suggests that popular accounts of sports have difficulty treating Asians or Asian Americans fairly or accurately (Creff, 2004; Franks, 2000; Hanson, 2005; King, 2006; Mayeda, 1999), much less Asian athletes who dominate their sport globally and in the United States, such as Tseng. Similarly, the American fan base does not fully accept Asian American athletes or Asian born athletes who are at the top of their sport because they are often portrayed as un-American, physically incapable of being "All-American" (Creff, 2004; Franks, 2000; Hanson, 2005; King, 2006; Mayeda, 1999).

### Intersectionality, CSR, and Women's Professional Sport

Although researchers and business executives recognize and acknowledge the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in professional sport, there has been little empirical research on CSR in women's professional sport. Therefore, the research does not capture the experiences, struggles, and vision of all sports because women's sport leagues are not a part of the discussion. There is a single representation of CSR in professional sport and that includes the National Football League, National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, and National Hockey League. The images of NBA Cares and the NFL's Play 60 along with other league initiatives have often been the only representation of CSR in professional sport made visible in popular culture. Focusing solely on men's professional CSR efforts in sport may lead one to assume that women do not participate in CSR initiatives or are not doing as much in and for the community.

As a result, it is imperative to gain a better understanding of race, class, gender and other forms of differences shape CSR in women's professional sport and answer questions such as: "Do different women's leagues receive more CSR support and coverage based on race, class, sexuality, type of sport, or another form of oppression?" For example, does tennis receive more CSR support and coverage because of the race of the athletes (mainly white) and their perceived sexuality (portrayed as attractive, feminine, and heterosexual females) compared to league sports such as the basketball, which is often portrayed as having a more diverse group based on race, class, gender, and sexuality? These important questions highlight the relevance of intersectionality in women's professional sport and CSR initiatives.



The contradictions between the public celebration of female athletes and the lack of quality and equal media coverage of women's sports raise important questions regarding the potential for sport to empower girls and women. Further, the lack of empirical research on CSR efforts in women's professional sport, it could be argued, is a reflection of the attitudes of greater society and the lack of respect and appreciation for women in sport (and attitudes of women in general). Not only are women in sport often treated as second class and inferior athletes to their male counterparts, they are often polarized either as sex objects or lesbian (Kane, 2011).

It is at the intersections of race, class, gender, and media that the complications and tensions in women's professional sport become significant. This study uses structures of domination that continue to marginalize women of all backgrounds by examining corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding systematic differences in the treatment of women in sports and examines power, privilege, and oppression by race, class, and gender to form axes of oppression that circulate within a matrix of domination of which athletes, leagues, and teams are a part.

The central research question asks whether race, class, and gender effect corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport? This study will also address the following related questions:

- (1) Do women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR?
- (2) Do race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the professional athlete who is selected to engage in the CSR initiative?
- (3) Do leagues and teams use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to women, specifically female athletes of all ages?
- (4) What meanings or level of importance do league and team executives assign to CSR initiatives and what do they hope to gain?

This study is important because corporate social responsibility initiatives often serve as a way to connect with the community, bring attention to socially relevant issues, and highlight athletes who serve as positive role models for youth. Race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR. As a result of the discrimination, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### Introduction and Purpose of Study

Intersectionality is a feminist theoretical approach and has been used to examine many aspects of women's sport, particularly media coverage and sexuality. In light of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX, this study employs intersectionality to analyze corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport because it is an appropriate method that allows one to study "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formation" (McCall, 2005). Further, It is critical to understand the concept of intersectionality in sport: the acknowledgment that racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression are not independent systems of domination, but are instead powerful, interacting forces both within and outside of sport.

The purpose of this study was on analyzing and understanding the consequences of interlocking inequities of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation by examining CSR in women's professional sport. Specifically, this study aimed to understand how race, class, gender, sexual preference, and other forms of oppression shape the design and delivery of CSR initiatives; how leagues use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to women; and the significance league executives assign to CSR initiatives and

what they hope to gain. In order to accomplish these objectives, this study employed a mixed-methods approach including interviews with 6 league and team executives and content analysis of public league and team documents and the *New York Times* sport sections from 2009-2012.

### Research Design

This study used a mixed methods design, which is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study, to understand a research problem more completely (Creswell, 2002). The rationale for mixing data is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Creswell, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddie, 1998).

In quantitative research, a researcher relies on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002). Quantitative research is used when testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true (Creswell, 2002). A researcher isolates variables and relates them to determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships. Additionally, the researcher determines which variables to investigate and chooses instruments, which will yield highly reliable and valid scores.

Alternatively, qualitative research is “an inquiry process of understanding” where the researcher develops a “complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15; Creswell, 2002; 2008). Generally, qualitative research is used when the researcher is

exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem by providing rich, in-depth descriptions of the issue (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data analysis is based on the values that the participants perceive for their world, ultimately producing “an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors” (Miller, 2000).

This study used interviews and content analysis as forms of data collection. It is important to note that quantitative and qualitative content analyses are used in this study. Quantitative content analysis is used widely in mass communication as a way to count manifest textual elements. It is deductive, intended to test hypothesis or address questions generated from theories or previous empirical research (Neuendorf, 2002). The data sampling in quantitative content analysis requires that data are selected using random sampling or other probabilistic approaches, so as to ensure the validity of statistical inference (Krippendorff, 2004). Finally, quantitative content analysis produces numbers that can be manipulated with various statistical methods. In this study, quantitative content analysis was used when examining the *New York Times* (NYT) sports sections to determine the quality and quantity of media coverage in women’s professional sport.

Qualitative content analysis was developed primarily in anthropology, qualitative sociology, and psychology, in order to explore the meaning underlying physical messages. It is mainly inductive, grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as the inferences drawn from them in the data. Qualitative content analysis usually consists of purposively selected texts, which can inform the research questions being investigated (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Finally, it usually produces descriptions or

typologies, along with expressions from subjects reflecting how they feel in the social world (Patton, 2002). By this means, the perspectives of the producers of the text can be better understood by the researcher as well as the readers of the study's results (Berg, 2001). Qualitative content analysis pays attention to unique themes that illustrate the range of meaning of the phenomenon rather than the statistical significance of the occurrence of particular texts or concepts. In this study, qualitative content analysis was used when analyzing public league and team documents to analyze and understand how and why women's professional sport leagues engage in CSR.

This study used a sequential mixed methods procedure. Sequential mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand on the findings of one method with another method (Krippendorff, 2004). For this study, the first phase of the research included personal interviews and analysis of the public organizational documents such as league and team annual reports and CSR initiative descriptions as well as six conversational interviews with league and team CSR executives. The second phase of this research included the quantitative content analysis of the *New York Times* (NYT) sport sections to determine the quality and quantity of media coverage in a daily national newspaper. The *New York Times* New York local editions were selected because it offered a local and national perspective and the NYT has a male and female readership. Although the target audience of the NYT is male and female, the sports writers and editors are most often men and bring their own male perspective to reporting.

The quantitative content analysis was a critical aspect of the study as it validates the statements by league and team executives regarding the lack of coverage of women's

professional sport. To ensure coding was reliable, the researcher trained a volunteer graduate student on how to use the codebook (Appendix F), which describes the categories that the content covered. The researcher and the volunteer graduate student coded five *New York Times* sport sections to ensure intercoder and intracoder reliability. Further, this study combined qualitative and quantitative content analysis because the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and ultimately strengthen the results of the study.

The priority in this design was given to the qualitative method, because the qualitative research represents the major aspect of data collection and analysis in the study, focusing on league and team organizational documents and interviews with league and team executives. The qualitative results were substantiated by the quantitative content analysis of the *New York Times* sport sections. The results of the two phases are integrated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 during the discussion of the outcomes of the study.

#### Qualitative Method: Interviews and Content Analysis of Organizational Documents

Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data such as interviews, observations, and documents rather than depend on a single data source (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). For this study, the researcher performed a content analysis on 218 public organizational documents such as annual reports, websites, newsletters, and newspaper articles. To triangulate the data, the researcher interviewed league and team executives from Women's Professional Basketball Association (WNBA), Women's Professional Soccer (WPS), Women's Tennis Association (WTA), and Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and used member checking. Additionally, a content analysis was conducted on the *New York Times* sport sections to analyze quantity and quality of media coverage. Finally, the data was reviewed, organized by theme, and analyzed.

Qualitative research uses inductive data analysis building patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, by organizing information into increasingly more abstract units of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This inductive process is one that involves the researcher working back and forth among the emerging themes until the researcher has established a comprehensive set of patterns. In addition, it may also involve collaborating with the participants interactively, so they have a chance to shape the themes that emerge from the process (Maxwell, 1992). In the entire qualitative research process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue; not the meaning that the writers express in the literature or the researcher brings to the research (Creswell, 2009).

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which the researcher interprets what she sees, hears, and understands. The researcher's interpretation cannot be separated from her background, history, context, and prior understanding. Once the research is reported, its readers further interpret its content as the interpretive process continues. With the readers, the participants, and the researcher all making interpretations, it is obvious how multiple views of a problem can emerge. Further, qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally creating the larger picture that emerges.

#### Data Collection and Data Analysis Strategies

This study included two primary forms of data collection: (1) content analysis and (2) semi-structured interviews using a list of prompts. The data was collected from October 30, 2011 through September 1, 2012.



## Qualitative Methods

### Content Analysis: Public Organizational Documents

The first form of data collection was content analysis of 218 league and team documents. Public organizational documents from the Women's National Basketball Association, Women's Professional Soccer, Women's Tennis Association, and Ladies Professional Golf Association were reviewed and analyzed from 2009 through 2012, which consists of four in-season schedules. These public documents included: press releases; newsletters; web page descriptions; Facebook pages; twitter accounts; newspaper and magazine articles; CSR mission and vision statements; and annual reports. Public organizational documents also provided background information, to substantiate and illustrate findings, and to supplement information gathered from the interviews.

The researcher gathered and analyzed public documents dated from April 1, 2009 through September 1, 2012. In total, 489 documents were collected and reviewed. Of these, 218 (e.g., program descriptions, annual reports, newsletters, twitter feeds, mission statements) were included in the analysis because of their direct relevance to this study on corporate social responsibility including but not limited to CSR initiatives, target audience of CSR initiatives, and athlete selected to engage in CSR initiatives.

The relevant documents were coded and analyzed in the same manner as the interview transcripts (discussed in *Data Analysis Procedures*). The codes and categories were reviewed, revised as necessary, and confirmed based on CSR, feminist, and gender and sport literature. The interviews and organizational documents were reanalyzed with updated codes by the researcher and confirmed for consistency, accuracy, and to ensure

the information was meaningfully organized for further analysis. This also allowed the researcher to search for different themes across individual interviews and leagues.

### Interviews

The second technique was conducting semi-structured interviews using a list of prompts (see Appendix B) with 6 purposefully selected participants who are league and team executives from the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), Women's Professional Soccer (WPS), Women's Tennis Association (WTA), and Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA). The participants were selected based on their extensive knowledge and familiarity of their league or team's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. League offices for the above mentioned leagues were contacted and asked to participate. Women's Professional Soccer does not have league-wide initiatives, so the researcher interviewed a team executive within a five-hour radius. All of the participants volunteered and gave permission to participate in this study. Table 1 provides an overview of the executives who participated in this study and their organization.

The sample was purposefully selected and small because the focus of the study is on corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport, which focused on national leagues in mainstream sport. As a result, there are only a small number of front office executives from each league who focus on corporate social responsibility. Interviews were conducted using prompts to ensure the same questions were asked of each respondent (Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S., 2009). Each interview ranged between 60 minutes – 90 minutes and was either an in-person interview or telephone interview depending on the scheduling, availability, and travel expense. Face-to-face interviews

were conducted with three WNBA representatives and phone conversations were held with Women's Professional Soccer, Ladies Professional Golf, and Women's Tennis Association representatives.

The researcher conducted all interviews. Each interview had a protocol for questions that were both specific and open-ended, based on the seminal question of this research: "Do race, class, and gender shape your corporate social responsibility initiatives?" The researcher followed-up with additional questions concerning how participants engage in CSR; how participants engage in CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to female athletes; and understanding the level of importance that league/team executives assign to CSR initiatives and what they hope to gain (see Appendix B). Participants were encouraged to discuss the benefits, challenges, and barriers they face regarding their organization's involvement in CSR. The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and reviewed by the researcher, and each participant was given the opportunity to review the information for accuracy and clarity. The researcher made follow-up e-mails or phone calls if information was unclear or if she needed further explanation on a specific question or response. All participants were willing to answer follow-up questions.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis typically classifies things, persons, events, and the properties, which characterize them (Schatzman et al., 1973). Typically throughout the data analysis process, the researcher will code or index their data using as many categories as possible (Jacob, 1987). She seeks to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the participants, and then attempt to understand and

explain these patterns and themes (Jacob, 1987). During data analysis, the data was organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The researcher used document summary forms, participant summary forms, and data summary charts in order to organize and categorize information, which were adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994). A template for each of the above-mentioned documents is located in Appendix C, D, and E, respectively. The data summary table was developed in the same way for each category of the conceptual framework. This allowed the researcher to have a consistent record of findings regarding all of the participants' responses across all of the categories. The categories are directly tied to the research questions. The public organizational documents and the interview transcriptions helped categorize different themes. A list of major themes and ideas that surfaced were maintained for each interview then cross-referenced across all interviews and organizational documents for overall themes (See Appendix C, D, and E for categories and data collection forms). All interviews were audio recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. The researcher's field notes and reflective journal were reviewed regularly (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Moreover, all relevant public organizational document passages and interview transcripts were manually coded. The process gave the researcher an opportunity to think about the responses and to identify patterns across interviews and organizations. The researcher created Microsoft Word files for the interviews, observations, documents, and journal entries. All files were password protected and all files were saved in the researcher's laptop computer to which only she has access. The researcher used the

meaning of analysis context as the unit of analysis for coding and also look for description. This means that the data was not coded sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, but coded for meaning. For the thematic analysis, the researcher followed Braun and Clarke (2006) step-by-step guidelines. The authors used the word guidelines to highlight the flexibility of this qualitative analytic method. These guidelines are (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) reading throughout each transcript to immerse one's self in the data, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

The researcher conducted the coding with codes derived from the corporate social responsibility (CSR), feminist, and gender and sport literature. Additionally, the researcher created a conceptual framework, which helped with managing and reducing the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The categories that comprised the conceptual framework essentially led to a coding scheme by assigning codes to each category and subcategory. Recurring categories identifying how organizations engage in CSR, how organizations develop and deliver their CSR initiatives, and the rationale for CSR efforts were identified.

Similarly, recurring categories identifying forms of oppression such as race, class, and gender themes were also identified. The codes and categories were reviewed, confirmed, and if necessary revised. The CSR, feminist, and gender and sport literature was reviewed again to confirm that the methodological and theoretical frameworks proposed by Oliver (1991), Kotler and Lee (2005), and Collins (1990; 2000) were relevant to this aspect of the data. The interview transcripts and organizational documents were reanalyzed with updated codes by the researcher and reviewed for

consistency, accuracy, and to ensure the information was meaningfully organized for further analysis. This also allowed the researcher to search for different themes across individual interviews and leagues.

The final form of qualitative data analysis was a reflective journal with field notes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The reflective journal allowed the researcher to describe her personal observations and emotions about conducting the research in this area of study. According to Morrow and Smith (2000, 2005), the use of a reflective journal adds rigor to qualitative inquiry, as the investigator is able to record her reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. The field notes provided additional data for analysis including my own thoughts and interpretations.

### Quantitative Method

#### Content Analysis: New York Times Sport Sections

A content analysis on *The New York Times* (NYT), a national daily newspaper, was conducted to determine the quality and quantity of coverage the women's professional leagues received during their in-season schedule. The *New York Times* New York local editions were selected because it offered a local and national perspective and the NYT has a female and male readership in general. Although the target audience of the NYT is female and male, the sports writers and editors are most often men and bring their own male perspective to reporting. Further, intersectionality was tested in the content analysis to determine if race affects the quality and quantity of coverage an athlete or sport receives, as described in the literature review. Kane (1996, 2010, 2011), Messner and Cooky (2006, 2010), Wade (2008), Fink and Kensicki (2002), and other

researchers have conducted studies about the media coverage of women's sports; however, none of these studies targeted this sample's in-season schedule, which is predominately limited to the six months between April 1 and September 1. A stratified random sample was taken from each yearly grouping between 2009 and 2012 to test the validity of complaints by executive respondents about the lack of media coverage for women's professional sport, and ultimately, CSR.

The researcher randomly selected and analyzed 75 sport sections of the *New York Times* from April 1, 2009 through September 1, 2009; April 1, 2010 through September 1, 2010; April 1, 2011 through September 1, 2011; and April 1, 2012 through September 1, 2012. During these periods of in-season play, the following events occurred: Women's Professional Soccer had its inaugural season (2009), Serena Williams' injury prohibiting her to play at the US Open (2010), Li Na won the French Open singles title becoming the first player from China to win a Grand Slam in singles (2011), the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WNBA (2011), Yani Tseng becoming the youngest player in golf to win five majors (2011), and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX (2012), among other notable storylines. The Women's World Cup in 2011 and the 2012 Summer Olympics were not included in this study because these events happen every four years, the Olympics include more women's sports than the scope of this study, and including these non-typical events could have skewed the results.

Using a random sample number generator, 300 *New York Times* sport sections (75 per year during the designated time frame) were selected and analyzed for content (Reinard, 2008). A number was assigned to each edition of the NYT, which included all issues from April 1, 2009 through September 1, 2009; April 1, 2010 through September

1, 2010; April 1, 2011 through September 1, 2011; and April 1, 2012 through September 1, 2012. Covering 20 months of in-season sports for the four leagues studied, the NYT sent out 612 editions. Within the 300 NYT editions, all articles describing female athletes from the WTA, LPGA, WNBA, and WPS were analyzed for content along with the photograph that accompanied the article, when applicable.

### Coding

To ensure objectivity within the content analysis of photographic material, a coding method first established by Kane (1998) was used and one category was added based on the pilot. Each picture was placed in one of the five categories: athletic action, dressed but poised and pretty, non-sport setting, pornographic/sexually suggestive as well as one category, non-athletic sport setting, which was added after the instrument pilot. This coding strategy has been used in several studies focusing on active or non-active poses and competitive and non-competitive scenes (Duncan, 1990; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Salwen & Wood, 1994; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). It also enabled the researcher to objectively determine whether the picture of the female athlete served to challenge dominant ideologies by showing women in athletic in-action poses or market female athletes participation in sport as noncontroversial, stereotypical feminine coverage.

To ensure that the content coding was reliable, this study employed intercoder reliability, which determines “the consistency of different raters who respond to the same events by using some sort of a check list” (Reinard, 2008, p. 120). Prior to conducting the study, a volunteer graduate student was trained on how to use the content codebook (Appendix F), which describes the categories that the content covered. Once the volunteer graduate student was trained, the researcher and the volunteer graduate student



coder tested for reliability by comparing results of their separate analyses of the same five NYT editions. After analyzing the same content, the coders discussed the coding of the content to see if there were areas of disagreement. If it was determined that there was an error in the description of a category within the content codebook, the category was edited so both coders agreed on the terminology. The intercoder reliability was 88%.

Intracoder reliability was also tested for both coders. To test for intracoder reliability, both coders analyzed the same five NYT editions for content separately, and then a week later they analyzed the same newspaper articles for content to see how consistent their coding methods were based on the content codebook. Coder one, the researcher, had 95% intracoder reliability. Coder two, the volunteer graduate student, had 91% intracoder reliability. Both coder one and coder two were well above the 70% reliability needed to conduct a reliable analysis of content (Reinard, 2008). To be clear, the researcher was the only individual who completed the content analysis for this study. The researcher wanted to ensure reliability of the codes and coding, which is why she conducted a pilot with the volunteer graduate student prior to beginning the content analysis of the NYT sport sections.

For this study, female athletes were classified as sport figures, in uniform or out of uniform, and participating or not participating in their sport. In an attempt to apply intersectionality to this element, the athletes were coded for race: Caucasian, African-American, or Asian. A pre-test was conducted to establish the racial categories. The sport depicted was coded as basketball, soccer, tennis, or golf to correspond with the leagues and teams analyzed for this study. These definitions were used for both the article and photograph, when applicable.

The operational definitions of these categories were:

- Athletic action*- Athlete(s) actively engaging in a sport and dressed in athletic uniform (e.g., photo of athlete in game action).
- Dressed but poised and pretty*- Athlete(s) dressed in athletic uniform but posed for photo. Athlete(s) is not engaged in athletic activity (e.g., athlete posed and not engaged in sporting activity; posed studio shot; group shot of team; holding trophy).
- Non-sport setting*- Athlete(s) dressed in non-athletic uniform and pictured in non-athletic setting (e.g., photo of athlete at home with family; in a non-sport location such as restaurant).
- Pornographic/ Sexually suggestive*- Athlete(s) dressed provocatively or pictured in a way that focuses solely on sexual attributes (e.g., photograph framed on athlete's buttock, athlete posed with a sexual gaze, or athlete posed in a sexual position)
- Non-athletic sport setting*: Athlete(s) not dressed in athletic uniform but is in a sport setting (e.g., photo of an athlete in a dress on a basketball court).

A pilot consisting of five *New York Times* editions was conducted. The content coded was valid, meaning it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain to be measured, and all images within the print media were covered within only one single category. The pilot also confirmed that the coding categories for the article could be addressed using Fink and Kensicki (2002) categories as well as one additional category, *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*, to ensure the research questions could be properly addressed. As stated by Fink and Kensicki (2002), “an article could feasibly address many issues throughout a story, [therefore] written content was coded according to one overall narrative theme” (p. 326).

The operational definitions of article content were constructed as:

- Personal*- Content describing the non-athletic portion of an athlete(s) life (e.g., story of athlete being a mother).
- Victim*- Content describing an athlete(s) struggle against adversity (e.g., story of an athlete's drug addiction).
- Sport related*- Content describing an athlete(s) ability as an athlete (e.g., story of an athlete's sporting accomplishment).
- System critique*- Content critiquing a sporting institution (e.g., story investigating media attention of women's sporting events as compared to men's sporting events).

*Sport struggle*- Content describing difficulties of a sport achieving popularity or content describing continued low awareness of sport.

*Sport victories*- Content describing triumphs of sport achieving popularity or content describing continued management or good behavior of athletes (e.g., story detailing rise of sport popularity).

*Health-Personal*- Content describing activities or products that improve a person(s) non-athletic health (e.g., story describing suntan lotions).

*Health-Sport*- Content describing activities or products that improve a person's athletic health (e.g., story describing workout routines for sport-specific improvement).

*Fashion*- Content detailing clothing or makeup (i.e., story describing new line of jogging attire).

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*- Content describing activities that improve greater society, CSR (e.g., story describing athlete's charitable efforts or book drive).

Based on both sets of categories, the researcher analyzed the articles and photos accompanying them. After all 300 editions were coded for content the data were analyzed using software. Descriptive statistics were used to address the quantity and quality of media coverage the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), and Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) received during four in-season time periods received in the *New York Times* sport sections. The results confirm that the WTA, LPGA, WNBA, and WPS receive very little mainstream media coverage, which ultimately impacts their CSR initiatives.

#### Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers utilize trustworthiness features to make their studies credible and rigorous (Cresswell & Miller, 2000). In seeking to establish the trustworthiness, Guba and Lincoln (1998) use terms such as credibility, dependability, and transferability, arguing that trustworthiness of qualitative research should be addressed differently from quantitative research.

## Credibility

The criterion of credibility or validity suggests whether the findings are accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. This criterion becomes a key component of the research design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The idea is not to verify conclusions, but to test the validity of conclusions reached thereby achieving methodological and interpretive validity (Mason, 1996).

Methodological validity involves asking how well matched the logic of the method is to the kinds of research questions that are being posed and the kind of explanation that the researcher is attempting to develop. This type of validity involves consideration of the interrelationships between the research design components—the study's purpose, conceptual framework, research questions, and methods (Mason, 1996). Interpretive validity involves asking how valid the data analysis is and the interpretation on which it is based. This step goes further by assessing the quality and rigor with which the researcher interprets and analyzes data in relation to the research design (Mason, 1996).

To enhance the methodological validity of the study, the researcher triangulated the data sources as data-collection methods. Gathering data from multiple sources and by multiple methods yields a richer and fuller picture of the phenomenon under review. First, the researcher clarified her assumptions up front, and the steps through which interpretations were made also were documented through journaling. Second, the researcher used various participatory and collaborative modes of research, including the search for discrepant evidence and peer review, which has been discussed at length by

Lincoln and Guba (1985). This includes looking for variation in the understanding of the phenomenon and seeking instances that might challenge the researcher's expectations or emergent findings. Reviewing and discussing findings with professional colleagues was a further way of ensuring that the reality of the participants was adequately reflected in the findings.

### Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) states that it is important to ensure the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected. Further, in qualitative research, the goal is not to eliminate inconsistencies but to ensure that the researcher understands when they occur. Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to document the procedures and demonstrate that coding schemes and categories have been used consistently. Moreover, inter-rater reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was established by asking the volunteer graduate student to code a small sample of interviews. The coding was generally consistent and the differences were reconciled. Additionally, the charts and document and participant summary form were established as part of the audit trail, which is necessary for establishing the study's validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This audit trail offered transparency of method and included the researcher keeping a journal as well as record of memos that included detailed accounts of how all the data were analyzed and interpreted (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

### Transferability

Although generalizability is not the intended goal of this study, the issue of transferability was addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is the way in which the reader determines whether and to what extent this particular phenomenon can transfer to

another particular context. Patton (1990) states that it is important to think about “speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical, conditions” (p. 489). The researcher attempted to address this issue of transferability by way of thick, rich full description of the participants and the context. Depth, richness, and detailed description provide the basis for a qualitative account’s claim to relevance in some broader context (Schram, 2003).

### Reporting the Findings

The results of this study are reported in descriptive narrative rather than as a scientific report with the intent of presenting rich, thick, and clear descriptions as the way to communicate the patterns across leagues, desires of leagues and league executives, and barriers for women’s sport and female athletes, all of which affects CSR initiatives. This study is a construction of the participants’ thoughts and suggestions regarding CSR in women’s professional sports. It takes the voice of CSR executives in women’s professional sport, as well as the planning, research, and deliberation of the researcher and proposed recommended actions to engage future research in CSR in women’s professional sport. Additionally, through reading the findings and analysis of findings, the hope is that communities, sponsors and marketers, policy makers, researchers, and sport executives will think about the intended and unintended consequences of intersectionality and the matrix of domination when designing and delivering CSR initiatives in women’s professional sport.

### Ethical Considerations

The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants. All of the participants were consenting adults. The Virginia

Commonwealth University Institutional Review Board (VCU IRB) approved a waiver of documentation of consent; however, all participants were notified verbally or in writing of the consent form content, which provided the following: (1) the purpose for the study, (2) procedures clearly defined, (3) possible risks and discomforts discussed, (4) potential benefits provided, (5) confidentiality provisions detailed, (6) note the research is voluntary, and (7) provide contact information. The VCU IRB reviewed and approved the study prior to beginning the study.

Further, the following safeguards were used to protect the participants' rights: (1) the research objectives will be clearly understood by the participants, (2) an expedited review form was filed with the VCU IRB, (3) the participants were informed of all data collection devices and activities, (4) written interpretations and reports were made available to the participants at the conclusion of the study, (5) the participants' rights, interests and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding reporting the data, and (6) the final decisions regarding informant anonymity rested with the participant and confidentiality has been maintained.

### The Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument calls for the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher's contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental (Locke et al., 2007). The researcher's perception of CSR efforts in professional sport has been shaped by personal experiences. From June 2004 to August 2007, the researcher worked for a professional National Football League team and was actively involved in their community relations' efforts.

From 2008-2009, the researcher served as Program Coordinator for an after-school program focusing on sport and life-skills. Professional tennis players, Olympic athletes, and college athletes volunteered with the program. Through the researcher's experience and conversations with various athletes, coaches, nonprofit organizations, youth, and parents, she learned that sport is a universal language and has the ability to impact people from different backgrounds unlike any other phenomenon.

The researcher believes her understanding and experience with sport and CSR within professional sport enhances her awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to many of the challenges and decisions encountered as CSR initiators is advantageous. Further, her background and experience in the field assisted her in working with the participants in this study. Due to previous experiences working in professional sport and with professional athletes, the researcher brings certain biases to this study. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way the researcher viewed and understood the data collected and the way she interpreted her experiences. The researcher began this study with the perspective that CSR in professional sport is vitally important for the leagues, franchises, athletes, and communities.

The researcher believes the corporate social responsibility efforts by women's professional sport leagues and athletes are often overlooked and not properly recognized. Further, CSR initiatives in women's professional sport could offer a way to connect with a broader audience, specifically young women and girls, and could serve as a vehicle to address the needs of this population. With all of the known benefits for young women and girls who participate in sport (i.e., perform better in school, lower early pregnancy rates, learn goal-setting, health benefits, greater self-confidence), the researcher feels it is



a disservice to not only young women and girls, but also to the leagues and teams who could gain more support and a stronger fan base for their sport by capitalizing on all facets of corporate social responsibility.

Additionally, it is important to hear and acknowledge the perspectives and voices of executives in women's professional sports to better understand their efforts, needs, interests, and perspectives. In short, the researcher believes corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport is an untapped market for community outreach, addressing relevant social issues, and highlighting positive role models for young women and girls of different races, classes, and sexual preferences.

#### Possible Limitations of the Methodology

A major limitation of qualitative research is the inductive nature of the methodology. In addition, qualitative content analysis is a subjective method, as it describes what is there as the researchers interpret it, but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern. The analysis is limited by the availability of the material. However, the same process was repeated for each league represented in this study, so there was the opportunity to compare information across similar groups.

In addition to the content analysis of this research, the interviewing techniques could be challenged. The bias introduced by the researcher in the collection and analysis of the data remained a constant threat. However, the researcher crosschecked her journal for evidence of skewed explanations. Also, the researcher's presence during the data gathering stage, could affect the subjects' responses. Further, it was difficult to generalize findings from conversational interviews and other qualitative research; however that was not the intent. Although generalizeability is not the intended goal of

this study, what addressed was the issue of transferability, which is the ways in which the reader determines whether and to what extent this particular phenomenon in this particular context can transfer to another particular context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Further, it is important to note that a possible limitation may be the lack of voice from the female professional athletes in addressing corporate social responsibility (CSR) and specifically media coverage. While it would be very important to include the perspective and input of female professional athletes from each league, this is not within the scope of the study since the data collection did not coincide with team in-season schedules. In addition, many of the professional female athletes have second jobs during the off-season or play their sport overseas, so they are not easily accessible for interviews. This issue in and of itself is another indication of gender inequality in professional sport and could be an independent research area.

Finally, another limitation of this study could be that only one national daily newspaper was analyzed to determine the quality and quantity of media coverage in women's professional sport. It would be useful to include at least one other national daily newspaper such as the *USA Today* to compare and contrast media coverage in women's professional sport. Additionally, it would be useful to analyze newspapers in areas that have women's professional sport teams such as the *Washington Post* (Washington Mystics- WNBA) and the *Seattle Times* (Seattle Storm- WNBA) to analyze the quality and quantity of media coverage in women's professional sport. However, the overarching focus of this study is on understanding of CSR in women's professional sport through understanding and analyzing public league and team documents and interviews with league and team executives.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### Introduction

Viewed through a feminist lens, intersectionality, the focus of this study is on analyzing and understanding how race, class, and gender shape corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport. To be clear, gender is based on the social factors such as social roles, values, perceptions, beliefs, positions, behaviors, identity, and attitudes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender and sex are not considered to be synonymous, as sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. The league executive participants in this study used gender as synonymous with sex.

This study uses Kotler and Lee's (2005) definition of corporate social responsibility: "Corporate social responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and resources (3)." They identify six options for corporate social responsibility:

- (1) Corporate Cause Promotions: Increasing awareness and concern for social issues
- (2) Cause-Related Marketing: Making contributions to causes based on product sale
- (3) Corporate Social Marketing: Supporting behavior change campaigns
- (4) Corporate Philanthropy: Making a direct contribution to a cause
- (5) Community Volunteering: Employees donating their time and talents

- (6) Socially Responsible Business Practices: Discretionary business practices and investments to support causes

The central research question of this study aims to answer: Do race, class, and gender impact corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in women's professional sport? Based on the literature, the researcher believes that by examining CSR in women's professional sport, using intersectionality theory, a more accurate picture of the factors (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) shaping corporate social responsibility will surface. The purpose of this study is to add depth and knowledge to research on CSR in sport, women and sport research, and will allow professional leagues and teams to move forward with a more informed perspective regarding design, delivery, and overall purpose of CSR in women's professional sport.

This chapter presents key findings grounded in the analysis of content analysis of 218 public organizational documents (e.g., program descriptions, annual reports, newsletters, twitter feeds, league websites and mission statements), a content analysis of 300 *New York Times* sport sections during four in-seasons, and six conversational interviews with league and team executives. Triangulation, the public organizational documents, *New York Times* sport sections, and the executive interviews, increased the validity of the data and the results for this study.

Five major findings emerged from this study and correspond with the research questions:

1. Women's professional sport leagues and teams analyzed in this study engage in corporate social responsibility.
2. Race, class, and gender do impact the design and delivery of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives pertaining to the target audience, the professional athlete selected to engage in CSR, or both.

3. Corporate social responsibility is used to combat stereotypes or oppression pertaining to female athletes from all backgrounds.
4. Corporate social responsibility is important to the success and sustainability of their league and is the socially responsible thing to do.
5. The challenges faced in CSR in women's sport are a microcosm of the challenges faced in women's sport in general.

This chapter discusses the findings, which is an objective exercise, and Chapter 5 presents the analysis and synthesis of the findings, which is a subjective exercise. By way of rich and thick description, the researcher set out to document a range of experiences in women's professional sport, and thereby provide an opportunity for the reader to enter into this study and better understand the reality of the research participants. The emphasis throughout is on giving the participants a voice and using their words. Illustrative quotations taken from interview transcripts and secondary data attempt to portray multiple participant perspectives and capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter. Where appropriate, the researcher has included critical incident data with interview data to augment and solidify the discussion. Following is a discussion of the findings with details that support and explain each finding.

**Finding 1: Women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in corporate social responsibility.**

One of the more obvious findings from this study is women's professional sport leagues do engage in CSR. This finding is highly significant because women's professional sport leagues and teams are rarely, if ever, addressed in the literature on CSR and sport. Based on the participant descriptions and document analysis, all the leagues

and teams engaged in all six ways of participating in CSR according to Kotler and Lee's (2005) definition of CSR.

Table 1 presents the results organized by CSR categories: corporate cause promotion, cause-related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices. Table 1 also provides definitions of the categories, data on the frequency of mention of each category, and the percentage of interviewees that mentioned the category. To substantiate these findings, representative quotations from the interviewees are provided. Further, Tables 2-5, located in the Appendix provide a more detailed description of each league's CSR initiatives. Data in Tables 2-5, CSR initiatives for each league (team in the case of the WPS), was collected from both official league and team websites and the interviews. Although all examples of CSR initiatives may not be represented in the tables, this information confirms that women's professional sport leagues and teams do engage in CSR.

Table 1 demonstrates that corporate social marketing, supporting behavior change campaigns, was mentioned most frequently, 536 times in the data. Community volunteering, employees donating their time and talents, was mentioned the second most frequently with 501 mentions in the data. Corporate philanthropy, making a direct contribution to a cause, was mentioned 382 times. Corporate cause promotions, increasing awareness and concern for a social cause was mentioned 309 times. Cause-related marketing, making a contribution to causes based on product sales, was mentioned 252 times. Socially responsible business practices, which are discretionary business practices and investments to support causes, are mentioned 131 times.

**Table 1 CSR in Women's Professional Sport: Categories & Frequencies**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Corporate Cause Promotions	Increasing Awareness and Concern for Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring Canned Food to Donate to Shelter</li> <li>• PSA's for diabetes</li> <li>• Wearing Pink: Breast Cancer Awareness</li> </ul>	309	100
Cause-Related Marketing	Making Contributions to Causes Based on Product Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy Shirt with Breast Cancer logo &amp; percentage of proceeds donated</li> <li>• Buy a ball, we will donate ball</li> <li>• Percentage of Ticket Sales go to Tsunami Victims</li> </ul>	252	100
Corporate Social Marketing	Supporting Behavior Change Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read To Achieve</li> <li>• WNBA Fit</li> <li>• Breast Health Awareness</li> <li>• Strong Is Beautiful</li> <li>• Dribble to Stop Diabetes</li> </ul>	536	100
Corporate Philanthropy	Making a Direct Contribution to a Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan G. Komen for the Cure</li> <li>• American Red Cross</li> <li>• Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• UNICEF</li> </ul>	382	100
Community Volunteering	Employees Donating Their Time and Talents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees Volunteer</li> <li>• Serve Meals at Homeless Shelter</li> <li>• Refurbish Classrooms</li> </ul>	501	100
Socially Responsible Business Practices	Discretionary Business Practices & Investments to Support Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WNBA Green Week</li> <li>• Recycling Cans at Events</li> <li>• Plant Trees at Event</li> </ul>	131	100

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category = Percentage of interviewees who mentioned a specific theme

Participants expressed how their league or team engages in CSR in the following ways:

#### *Women's Tennis Association*

The WTA participates in CSR in several ways. This past year, for example, we donated money to rebuilding efforts from Tokyo and Turkey's earthquake and Japan's tsunami as well... For the Haiti disaster, we donated money, but we specifically earmarked it for Habitat for Humanity. We have a good relationship with them and positive experiences and our funds were used to build temporary houses for families who had lost homes... We have the UNESCO global initiative pertaining to gender equality. We also have the Strong is Beautiful campaign, which presents, what we think, are the world's best athletes as strong, good role models, and global citizens. Our strategy is deciding if there is a way to partner with our players, our tournaments, or our sponsors who are often involved in promoting gender equality, natural disasters, and healthy lifestyles.

#### *Ladies Professional Golf*

The LPGA engages in CSR through our foundation, tournaments, and encouraging our players to engage in community relations and giving back in addition to our LPGA foundation and tournament efforts. The foundation has three pillars, which include the following: (1) the Girls Golf Program; (2) Scholarships; (3) and the Financial Assistance Fund. Our Founders Cup Tournament last year, not only celebrated the founders of the LPGA, but it was the only tournament that was ever played without a purse. It was one million dollars, \$500,000 went to the top 20 finishers' player charities and the other half-million went to our Girls Golf initiative, which focuses on empowering girls and women through the game of golf. Each one of our events is played for charity and all of our players through that event are encouraged to identify a player charity. We partner with the United Way, Komen Foundation, and other local organizations and nonprofits. Giving back is one of the core values of the LPGA.

#### *Women's National Basketball Association*

Our most consistent platform, and breast cancer falls under that, is healthy living. We focus on healthy living for girls, boys, and women. We do a series of programs for heart health, cancer awareness, getting kids active. We have partnered with the First Lady's "Let's Move Campaign." We have a campaign that to raise awareness about diabetes, which is very prevalent in the African-American community. So, we have the healthy living bucket as the sweet spot for the WNBA. We tell all of our leagues and teams, that philanthropy in and of itself is important, but by itself is



not as impactful as the combination of your money and time. Another focus we have is the creation of legacy projects. How can we create things in communities to give kids access to these places where they can learn or play that they would not otherwise have. They go beyond the one-day event. We talk about philanthropy, service, and legacy projects as our programming and what we believe in and what we share with our athletes. We think CSR should be more than just about writing checks.

### *Women's Professional Soccer*

Our team engages in CSR in several ways. Our employees engage in CSR participate community volunteering. For example, we have a representative going to the Girls On The Run 5k, we engage in cause-related awareness for things like healthy-lifestyles and partner with our jersey sponsor who also focuses on this topic. We donate all sorts of merchandise, ticketing vouchers, posters, autographed balls and jerseys, as well as school fundraisers for educational purposes and nonprofits that request merchandise to raffle off at their auction. We offer soccer camps and programs to promote education and an overall healthy lifestyle. Our players make player appearances and volunteer at local nonprofits, so engaging in CSR is important to our team and the WPS.

Although all of the participants in this study indicate their league or team engages in CSR, all six participants in this study also suggest their league or team has obstacles to overcome for the success of their CSR initiatives. All of the participants cited lack of financial resources and sponsorship opportunities as a major obstacle for their CSR initiatives and their sport. The participants described the obstacles in the following ways:

### *Women's Tennis Association*

Like any company in the world during a worldwide recession, we are facing sponsorship challenges. We have had a fantastic 18-month run, we had 60 percent increase in sponsorship, but you have partners who are going through their own financial turmoil, will they renew or won't they? So, I think that is our biggest challenge when I look out at 2013, 2014, and 2015.

### *Ladies Professional Golf*

Probably our biggest obstacle is when we say we are from the LPGA Foundation, immediately they [the individual being asked for a donation] think wealthy athletes. There are so many causes out there that are

knocking on doors or have a health and wellness component along with it that a lot of times that ask tends to be a bit more compelling. Our ‘ask’ is to get girls in the game, which is great, but certainly can’t compete with children’s diabetes or cancer. So our biggest challenge, even the fact that we are around golf, which tends to be viewed as an elitist sport, is the ‘ask’ and commitment of a financial donation. It is a very challenging ‘ask’.

### *Women’s National Basketball Association*

We need more people to give their money, to buy tickets, to make time to watch the games, we need companies to sponsor the teams and lend the marketing heft that they do to men’s sport leagues. The bigger the enterprise, the more impact you can have on the community because more people are aware of it, you can reach more people and do more things.

### *Women’s Professional Soccer*

Over the last year the league has faced significant challenges, including a lengthy and expensive legal battle with a former owner. The litigation has diverted resources from investment in the league and has forced the Board to take action, suspending the 2012 season in order to address the legal issues head-on before moving forward with competition (2012 Women’s Professional Soccer Press Release Statement, February 1, 2012, 10:17am).

Further, all participants except the Women’s Tennis Association executive cited lack of mainstream media coverage of their sport, which ultimately impacts the mainstream media coverage of their CSR efforts, as a major obstacle. While lack of mainstream media was mentioned as a common obstacle, all of the executives stated that lack of mainstream media for their CSR initiatives is not only a problem for women’s sports, but also male sports. Among the comments cited were those by the WNBA (WNBA 2), who said:

We don’t receive a lot of mainstream media coverage for our sport in general, so we definitely don’t receive a lot, if any coverage, for our CSR efforts. I don’t think any league or team, male or female, receives enough media coverage for their CSR efforts. Professional female athletes work hard... We want and deserve respect. We don’t want to be compared to the men’s league or men’s professional sport, we want to be appreciated

and respected for our game and how we play. The media sometimes does not get that.

Similarly, four of six participants cited a short season as a major obstacle that impacts sponsorship and marketing opportunities as well as CSR efforts. A WNBA team executive (WNBA 3) expressed it the following way:

One of our biggest challenges, and I assume for other women's professional leagues, is recognition. We have a short season and play for such a brief time-- basically it is a cost benefit analysis from the league. They have to consider sponsorship deals or lack of, low attendance, paying the players, and other financial factors. We have a very narrow window of opportunity to capitalize on CSR efforts, sponsorship opportunities, partnerships, in an effort to increase recognition and extend our brand. During the off-season, many of our players play overseas or go back to their permanent home to train and get ready for the next season. Our short season means that we have accomplish a lot, including CSR, in a short amount of time.

Moreover, four of six executives discussed how their league or team has to produce revenue-generating CSR initiatives such as team camps to help add depth and financial support to their CSR efforts. The executives discussed how revenue-generating initiatives are also an opportunity to gain a stronger fan base through personal interactions with athletes, coaches, and staff. WNBA 3 said their team uses CSR as a way for an athlete to "be an ambassador for her sport, team, or league."

While all six participants participated in CSR, all participants described future goals to increase the success of their CSR efforts and sport in general. The responses also indicate that leagues and teams future goals include overcoming some of the previously described obstacles, such as sponsorship opportunities and growing the sport. Two participants conveyed this when they said:

Girls Golf has been stagnant in terms of the number of sites and the number of girls. However, since our Founders' Cup initiative, which was held last year, brought in half a million dollars for our Girls Golf Program, we hope to double or triple in the next 3-5 years. We want to align with other girls organizations like Girls In The Game, where we can touch really successful programs and introduce the golf component to them because that is such a good way to reach girls easier and make a difference faster (LPGA).

We hope the WNBA is increasingly successful, that our buildings sell out, that more people watch us on TV, that more corporations sponsor our league and teams, and I hope that we have competition in the women's teams sports. I would love to see women's professional soccer be successful. High tide raises all boats. I don't see that as competition. It would be ideal to have great choices for the athletes and great opportunities for fans to see them play their sport at the highest levels. Again, the bigger the enterprise, the more impact you can have on the community because more people are aware of it, you can reach more people and do more things (WNBA 1).

**Finding 2: Race, class, and gender do impact the design and delivery of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives pertaining to the target audience, the professional athlete selected to engage in CSR, or both.**

This study uses corporate social responsibility as a vehicle to discuss the importance of intersectionality theory in sport. It is evident that although this study examines CSR to test intersectionality, many of the participants discussed how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression impact the overall experience in sport, therefore, impacting the design and delivery of the CSR initiatives for a women's professional sport league. Through the interview process, participants cast a wide net when discussing race, class, and gender in professional sport and then narrowed the conversation by offering specific examples about how race, class, and gender shape their CSR efforts because of prompts that were specific to CSR. In an attempt to understand how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression affect the design and delivery of CSR initiatives for women's professional sport leagues, the findings are broken down

into categories (e.g., Gender and Race/Ethnicity) and by league. Media is discussed at the end of this section, as all executives discussed the role of media in propelling or perpetuating their sport and therefore, their league's CSR initiatives.

Table 6 presents the results of the data collection, content analysis and interviews, for this research question. The results are organized by major categories of oppression: race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. It also provides frequency of mention in data for each category and how many interviewees specifically mentioned the category, which is noted in the percentages column.

For example, six of six (100 percent) of the executives interviewed for this study discussed gender as one category that shapes the design and delivery of their CSR initiatives. Gender is mentioned in the data, content analysis and interviews, 628 times, which is the form of oppression most discussed in the data. Below, as each theme is discussed, representative quotations from both the interviews and document sources are presented to substantiate this finding.

**Table 6 Factors Shaping CSR Initiatives: Categories & Frequencies**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF Partnership</li> <li>• Clinics and Camps for Girls</li> <li>• Foundation focusing on Girls and Soccer</li> </ul>	628	100
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with underserved population</li> <li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> <li>• Refurbish Playgrounds</li> </ul>	321	67
Race / Ethnicity / Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Golf / Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> <li>• SportsUnited Program (International Programs)</li> <li>• Ethnic Hairstyles</li> </ul>	184	50
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NBA Anti-Gay Slur Wordplay PSA</li> <li>• Makeup and Fashion Lessons</li> <li>• Sheryl Swoopes coming out</li> </ul>	17	0

\*Frequency of times category appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category=Percentage of interviewees who mentioned category

## Gender

Although the questions aim at gaining a better understanding of how race, class, and gender affect the design and delivery of a league's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, gender, used in the context as the female sex, is the main topic that is mentioned for both the design and delivery of CSR initiatives for the target audience and the athlete selected to engage in CSR.

### *Women's Tennis Association*

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) serves as one of the best, if not the best, example of what all women's professional sport leagues strive. The executive from the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) summed it up well when she said:

Tennis is really the only sport where women and men play the same sport, in the same venue, for the same amount of money. We really strive to get to that level to be on the same stage as the PGA.

The executive from the WTA credited gender equity in their sport with history. In 2013, the WTA will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization. The executive also cited iconic leadership over the years. Billie Jean King, a tennis legend and pioneering advocate for social change and equity in tennis and society at-large, is the most prominent and vocal leaders for the WTA. Further, the executive credits corporate partners who not only financially support the WTA, but who have supported the advancement of women. This is clearly stated when the executive outlined the role of partnerships in gaining equality in tennis:

We have had great corporate partnerships. Whether it be Sony Erickson helping us with equal prize money, Virginia Slims being at the outset of building a commercially viable women's tour, and we have had excellent promoters who have transformed their businesses from past tournaments to entertainment extravaganzas that are culturally relevant... Commercially viable franchises obviously generate more prize money...

Many of the other sports are separated- the logistics. You don't have guys playing with girls in golf, basketball, or baseball etc. It is totally separate. So we have this uniqueness of being on the same stage.

Additionally, the WTA executive articulated that the WTA has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination. UNESCO, the partnership for gender equality, and Sony Erickson, the partnership for equal prize money, are two examples demonstrating their fight for and dedication to equality in their sport, which is critical for the success of women's sport. Moreover, they use campaigns such as the Strong is Beautiful campaign to demonstrate the strength and beauty of women's sport. The WTA executive described the campaign in the following way:

The [Strong is Beautiful] campaign captures how strong and beautiful these women are with grace, with elegance, with movement, with flow, their artistry, their balance, contrasted with an explosion of energy, strength, and force, which is what our sport is about. As one of the best athletes in the world, you need all of that to be successful.

Moreover, when asked if the WTA's Strong is Beautiful campaign, ESPN *Body issue*, and other pictures of WTA athletes in non-athletic poses, clothes, and sexually suggestive positions (e.g., Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova), was playing into media stereotypes of female athletes as sex symbols rather than world-class professional athletes (see Appendix F for pictures), she responded:

The [Strong is Beautiful] campaign is not about creating sex symbols. Certainly, the end result of the campaign portrays these world-class athletes as strong both in their character, determination, tenacity, the obstacles they have overcome to become the best athletes in the world. You know, all of their personal characteristics are beautiful. Being tough and being strong is beautiful. I think the campaign has done a nice job of presenting, what we think, are the world's best athletes as strong, good role models, and global citizens.

I think in general, from the WTA perspective, the images you are referencing are all professional, artistic, and some of them are glamorous. The ESPN Body issue has several male and female athletes being shown.

So, we are in the entertainment and sport industry and we cross into lifestyle, more so with the female side of our sport, fashion, art, music, and the athletes enjoy the red carpet... It is entertainment... There is a line that we will not cross as the governing body. The construction of our organization is that the athletes are independent contractors, they make their own decisions, they manage their brand the way they want to, and if an athlete wants to be pretty, guarded, quiet, that is ultimately their choice.

The WTA executive answered the question posed by Rohrbaugh (1979) and Brownmiller (1984), “Can a women be strong, aggressive, competitive, and still be considered feminine?” and the answer is yes, which is what the Strong is Beautiful campaign demonstrates. The WTA athletes participating in the Strong is Beautiful campaign are selected based on rank in their sport. Many of the other CSR initiatives offer the WTA athletes the opportunity to engage in CSR if the individual expresses interests in the initiative due to a personal or cultural connection.

For example, WTA athletes such as Japan’s Kei Nishikori, Kimiko Date-Krum, and Ayumi Mortia, as well as Kim Clijsters, Vera Zvoneareve, and Robin Soderling, helped initiate and support a special fundraising event at the Sony Ericsson Open, dubbed “Tennis for Japan.” This event raised money for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami disaster featuring stars of the WTA and the ATP World Tour. Vera Zvonareva, the WTA World No. 3 player at the time said:

“All of us have been deeply touched by the terrible disaster in Japan and I am glad that the tennis family was able to come together to organize this very important event so quickly, giving us the opportunity to raise money for the victims. As tennis players, we travel the world and play in Japan each year, so the disaster has touched all of us on a personal level. I hope that the fundraiser is only a start and the players and the public will continue donating and help the victims in every way possible” ([www.americannewsreport.com](http://www.americannewsreport.com), December 5, 2011, 8:35am).

The “Tennis for Japan” special fundraiser raised over \$300,000, which was donated to the Red Cross and other relief organizations to aid the victims of the disaster.



Contributions were given from the WTA, ATP World Tour, the Grand Slams (Australian Open, Roland Garros, Wimbledon, US Open), Sony Ericsson, ITF, IMG, SAP, Itau, FILA, adidas, and the fans ([www.americannewsreport.com](http://www.americannewsreport.com), December 5, 2011, 9:17am).

### *Ladies Professional Golf Association*

The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) has the strongest and most concentrated focus on empowering girls and women through sport, specifically golf. Their core programs focus on the LPGA and its golfers empowering girls and women, whether through their Girls Golf Program, providing scholarships to young women, or financial assistance for individuals in the golf industry who need financial assistance. The LPGA is the most explicit and strategic league in terms of designing and delivering CSR initiatives created for girls and women by girls and women. This is an example of women with influence, both professionally and financially, leveraging their resources to assist other women.

The LPGA offers solid CSR initiatives, which have a strategic and organized plan of action for sustainability and growth. For example, the LPGA has a Founders Cup Tournament, which not only celebrates the founders of the LPGA, but it is the only tournament played without a purse. As a result, \$500,000 went to their Girls Golf initiative and the other \$500,000 went to the top 20 finishers' player charities. The LPGA executive discussed the importance of empowering girls and women through sport in the following way:

The LPGA Foundation's mission statement is "Empowering and supporting girls and women through developmental and humanitarian golf initiatives." Additionally, through programs like our Girls Golf Program, we have basically created a girls only environment where girls can thrive, be confident, and be empowered, while learning a sport they can play for a

lifetime, golf. We also provide scholarships and have a financial assistance fund that was established to basically assist members of the LPGA and others from the golf industry who are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of serious illness, injury, or other hardship.

Additionally, the LPGA uses corporate social responsibility (CSR) to combat stereotypes pertaining to female athletes by offering a girls-only environment for many of their initiatives, specifically the Girls Golf Program. This is strategically done in an effort to ensure that girls get a chance to learn and play golf in a safe all girls environment. The purpose of this program is empowering girls through the game of golf. Moreover, the LPGA is starting a new initiative this year, 2012, called SNAG, which stands for “Starting New At Golf.” The focus of this initiative is making golf more accessible to girls from diverse backgrounds by offering golf through the National Parks and Recreation Association. The LPGA is making it a priority and leading the way in ensuring their sport is accessible to girls from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. They also offer their sport in a girls-only environment to encourage girls to stay with the sport.

The SNAG initiative is an influential way of demonstrating the LPGA’s commitment to diversity and making golf accessible to all girls regardless of racial background and socio-economic status. It is important to offer these opportunities to girls from diverse backgrounds because there is a gender gap in involvement in sport and physical activity exists between boys and girls (Sabo & Veliz, 2008), and the gap is not consistent among all girls. Variations appear to be driven by economic disparities, race, ethnicity, and family characteristics, and suggest that participation is shaped by access and opportunity. Urban girls of color have the narrowest window of opportunity to participate in sports. First, girls enter sport later than boys (7.4 years old to 6.8 for boys),

and tend to drop out earlier and in greater numbers than boys (Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Further, children from low-income backgrounds, particularly in urban areas, participate less in sport (Simpkins, Riple, Huston, & Eccles, 2005).

Moreover, the LPGA executive offered another powerful example of how the LPGA is trying to reach girls from diverse backgrounds who are not as likely to participate in golf by saying:

The other thing we are doing next year (2012) is partnering with organizations that focus on empowering girls through sport. We are partnering with Girls In The Game, which is based in the Chicago area and deals with inner-city kids... There are 5,000 girls that participate in that program, so we are bringing some of our teachers in the Chicago area and we are training some of their trainers on golf and helping them with funding for equipment and other things. The girls in Chicago do not live in the safest neighborhoods, which means many of those girls tend to be inside sitting in front of the TV and not practicing healthy lifestyles. This is a way for girls to get out in a safe environment and get moving while bringing golf to the component of the program. We look forward to establishing more partnerships with this type of organization.

Finally, the LPGA athletes selected to engage in CSR depends on the initiative. For example, if the LPGA is promoting the Girls Golf program, they use professional golfers who have benefited from the program and can speak first-hand on the importance of the program. Additionally, LPGA golfers may ask to be a part of specific CSR initiatives based on personal or cultural connections. For example, Cristie Kerr won the LPGA Komen Award for donating more than \$250,000 through her Birdies for Breast Cancer program toward breast cancer research ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), December 21, 2011, 7:17am). Similarly, since 2000 LPGA Tour veteran Val Skinner has hosted the LIFE Event- a program within the Val Skinner Foundation, which has raised more than \$3 million for breast cancer research and education. Participants play in one round of golf, one day a year, and make history by being part of an event that has distinguished itself by

donating \$500,000 annually, the largest sum of money donated to fight breast cancer through a single-day golf event ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), December 21, 2011, 7:27am). The proceeds from the LIFE Event continue to benefit the LPGA's official national charity, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, and The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ), a national cancer institute and designated clinical care center located in New Brunswick, NJ ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), December 21, 2011, 8:23am).

### *Women's National Basketball Association*

The 2011 Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) season marked the 15-year anniversary of the WNBA. One way the WNBA engages in corporate social responsibility (CSR) is through their Breast Cancer Awareness programs, which falls within their healthy lifestyle programming. One of the WNBA executives (WNBA 1) stated "Breast Cancer Awareness has been our first out-of-the gate program before the NFL had its players wearing pink everything and anything they could sell." The league executive (WNBA 1) also discussed how many of the CSR initiatives are applicable to many of their players. For example, Edna Campbell, who is a former player from Sacramento, was and still is very involved in the Breast Cancer Awareness initiatives because she is a breast cancer survivor. The WNBA executive (WNBA 1) emphasizes this point in the following way:

Unlike the NFL, we obviously have players who have been impacted by breast cancer not only within their families, but have also had breast cancer themselves... It is a pretty unique space, so we have raised awareness and worked with local organizations and national organizations, and obviously raised money for research... We have had a pretty robust breast cancer program and are very proud of the work we have done.

This is another example of a women's professional sport league is using its position and influence to address social issues that are relevant to their communities and their players. Players who have been directly or indirectly impacted by breast cancer often volunteer to engage in this CSR initiative. This also holds true for initiatives such as Diabetes Awareness and Heart Health Awareness campaigns.

Further, the WNBA executive (WNBA 1) discussed how gender impacts the design and delivery more broadly by saying:

We think young girls are more engaged with our players, but our efforts are not just for young girls. It is certainly for people who love the game of basketball, love the game the way the WNBA is played, and holds true for boys as well. Certainly, there is a unique connection that our players have with young girls, so we spend more of our time focused on that connection and try to grow that connection and deepen its impact, but it is not just for that space. We focus on healthy-lifestyles for all.

The lack of mainstream media coverage was an issue that was discussed as relating to a gender issue in sport. As a result of the lack of mainstream media coverage for their games, many of the leagues and teams' CSR initiatives are also not well covered. The WNBA executive (WNBA 1) stated:

No, I do not believe that the WNBA gets similar media coverage that the NBA gets for its CSR initiatives, but they don't get similar coverage in general. It is not the same; it does not get the same attention in the "earned" media world. We [WNBA] just came off a terrific finals (2011). A great story in Minnesota of a team that could not win a couple of years ago and now it has a championship. You never read anything about it in the *New York Times*, had some coverage in USA Today. Obviously the games were on ESPN, so there was some coverage there, but not dramatically. That is a frustration that we don't, we have not given into, but that is a fact of life. That said, I don't think any of our sport leagues get the coverage they deserve for the work they do in the CSR world.

The WNBA executive (WNBA 1) offered a story from the finals as an example of the lack of mainstream media coverage:

The morning after Game 3 of Minnesota versus Atlanta series, after Atlanta lost, those players came back the next morning for a clinic we did that was previously scheduled for 100 girls from a local organization in Atlanta. It was a terrific event! The kids had a great time, the players had a great time, and there was no media there. The media just does not come. Of course, we called them [the media], and they just don't come. I think if we had done a similar event in the same setting, like if after Miami lost to Dallas, those guys actually got up and went and did an event, I am sure there would have been media there.

However, the WNBA executive (WNBA 1) also pointed out that she does not “think any of the sport leagues, men’s or women’s, get the credit they deserve for the work they do in the CSR world.”

Two executives from the WNBA (WNBA 2 and WNBA 3) discussed the impact of a short season on their CSR initiatives. One WNBA executive (WNBA 2) said, “We have a short season, so we have to pack a lot in a short amount of time. Our players know they are the best ambassadors of the game and take their role seriously.” Another WNBA executive (WNBA 3) echoed this statement, when she described the impact of a short season in the following way:

It is difficult to do year-around initiatives because the season is so short. The WNBA players play in the United States for four (4) months and then many of the players go overseas for eight (8) months. This presents challenges on how to stay involved in the community and actively engaged in CSR. Our WNBA players do not make anywhere near the salary of our NBA players, so they have to go overseas or find other employment in the off-season. We also have to have revenue-generating programs such as camps, which is different than the NBA. The female athletes understand the discrepancies between leagues, for example the pay, and if they want to keep the league going, then they have to actively engage and carry their load by helping promote the league.

One executive from the WNBA (WNBA 2) discussed the age and education policy in the WNBA. This policy was also discussed in several articles both scholarly

and mainstream. As currently written, Article XIII, Section 1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which is entitled “Player Eligibility,” states the following:

[An American] player is eligible to be selected in the WNBA Draft [only] if she: (i) will be at least twenty-two (22) years old during the calendar year in which such Draft is held; (ii) has graduated from a four-year college or university, or is to graduate from such college or university during the calendar year in which such Draft is held; or (iii) attended a four-year college or university, her original class in such college or university has already been graduated or is to graduate during the calendar year in which such Draft is held, and she either has no remaining intercollegiate eligibility or renounces her remaining intercollegiate eligibility by written notice to the WNBA at least ten (10) days prior to such Draft ([http://www.wnbpba.com/downloads/WNBA\\_CBA.pdf](http://www.wnbpba.com/downloads/WNBA_CBA.pdf)).

Although there may be a limited number of female athletes who would like to leave college early to play in the WNBA, research suggests that women should at least have the option to leave early (Granderson, 2010; Edelman, 2008). The WNBA’s Player Eligibility policy negatively impacts the opportunities afforded to female athletes and is higher than any of the male professional sport leagues, which includes the NBA and the NFL. Additionally, this negatively impacts the financial earnings of the female athletes who would receive a salary from the WNBA as well as possibly endorsement deals. For example, Candace Parker is reportedly making \$3 million from Adidas and Gatorade and Maya Moore was signed as the first female basketball signee to the Jordan brand, which suggests that there are sponsorship opportunities available for elite players who may like to consider leaving early to play professional basketball (Granderson, 2010; Jordan Brand Press Release, 2011).

The WNBA executive (WNBA 2) said that while she understands the purpose of this policy, she feels being a female should not dictate opportunity. She said:

I understand that for most people getting an education is the reason they go to college. However, college is supposed to prepare an individual for a

career. In an athlete's case, sport is potentially their career. If an athlete, male or female, is ready to pursue his or her profession full-time, then she should have that opportunity.

Simply, sex should not be the deciding factor if a talented basketball player can leave college early to play professional basketball, talent should (Granderson, 2010). Further, this is an example of how policies have unintended consequences and an intersectionality framework for creating, implementing, and analyzing policies should be used to address these inequalities in CSR and sport.

### *Women's Professional Soccer*

On January 30, 2012, Women's Professional Soccer made the difficult decision to suspend the 2012 season. The interview for this study was conducted prior to this decision and remains a part of this study because it is an indication of the challenges many women's professional leagues go through before reaching and maintaining a sustainable league. Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) did not have league-wide CSR initiatives, so the individual teams created their own CSR programs. The WPS team executive with whom the researcher spoke said their CSR initiatives do not focus solely on helping young girls and women because their fan base is 51 percent female and 49 percent male gender split, so they approach CSR and the community broadly. However, this team is unique in that they have a foundation, which focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles for young girls.

Similar to the WNBA, the WPS also has a short season, which makes it difficult to engage in CSR year-around. The WPS team executive stated:

Unfortunately, I would agree that we struggle with engaging in the community year-around because of our short schedule and other issues... Some of our players do pursue second jobs either in-season or off-season... We don't have players in the market during the off-season



because they are pursuing another league, another job, coaching, or some kind of leadership role in the community. They are working on their own professional abilities and growing their brand; however, we are putting revenues to what we can do without players.

The WPS league executive cited media coverage as something she wished her team had more of to increase fan support and sport coverage for their CSR initiatives. Although this is a common issue for many women's sports, the WPS executive added that she is sure the local NFL team wishes they had more media coverage for their CSR efforts. Further, the executive described how the WPS hopes to capitalize on the success of the 2011 Women's World Cup. She stated:

We hope to carry over that momentum of the Women's World Cup by coverage of the Olympics in 2012 and we hope to have player representatives on the U.S. National Team. Going into 2013, which will be the league's 5<sup>th</sup> year, which is a big sports year, which is more of a stability year. So we had the World Cup focus for 2011 and now in 2012 we have the Olympics for focus. We hope to see a spike in interest in women's soccer and hope to sustain that interest. Of course, positive mainstream media attention helps build interest, fan base, and opportunities.

Further, when asked about media images of female athletes, soccer players in this instance, being portrayed more as sex symbols, in non-athletic clothes, and in sexually suggestive positions, the WPS executive indicated that this was not the case for the athletes on her team, as sponsors prefer to have in-game photos. She addressed the question in the following way:

Our sponsors want the players to be athletes, not the mother or feminine role. We generally focus on game photos and in uniform. When we represent a player, we usually use an in-game photo and sponsors love it! They are sponsoring athletes; they are not sponsoring the mom's that are coming to the games. Our sponsors appreciate the athletic ability of our players and want to portray that... Our sponsors love the sport and the community, and realize that both impact each other. They do not care about external characteristics such as race and gender; they love the game and want to support it through sponsorships.

All of the participants indicated gender, mostly used in the context for the female sex, does impact the design and delivery of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives pertaining to the target audience, the professional athlete selected to engage in CSR, or both. All leagues enlist athletes to promote CSR initiatives that empower women through sport.

### **Class**

The notion of class was discussed mainly in terms of the target audience and mentioned by four executives (LPGA, WNBA 1, WNBA 2, WNBA 3) from two different leagues (LPGA and WNBA).

#### *Ladies Professional Golf Association*

As described above, the LPGA is aware that golf is often perceived as an elitist sport played at the country club and as a result excludes a large population that does not have access to country clubs or equipment such as golf clubs. Therefore, the LPGA has decided to face this notion head on by ensuring their CSR efforts include girls and women from all backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, location (e.g., rural, inner-city, and suburban) and socio-economic status. For example, underserved girls are able to participate in the Girls Golf Program through grants and other fund raising efforts. Additionally, through partnerships with nonprofits such as Girls In the Game, which serves inner-city girls, and other populations who may not have access to golf and country clubs. SNAG, Starting New At Golf, is another initiative that is an attempt to make golf more accessible and fun for girls of all backgrounds by partnering with the National Parks and Recreation Association.

#### *Women's National Basketball Association*

One WNBA executive (WNBA 2) addressed the impact of class on the design and delivery on CSR initiatives in the following ways:

Many of our programs are helping inner-city schools and organizations such as reading to a class, making an appearance at an event, or helping build a playground. This usually means we are helping lower-class minority groups because we focus more on local groups who do not have access to programs, playgrounds, and other resources.

This suggests that class is an indicator that influences the design and delivery of the team's CSR initiatives because they often target specific groups that are underserved and have fewer resources by making appearances to local schools or community organizations, participating in service projects for those organizations, or raising money for organizations that assist underserved people.

Although the WNBA executive (WNBA 2) references afro-puffs and cornrows when discussing the overall impact of race on various opportunities such as sponsorship deals, it seems that afro-puffs and cornrows could also be an indication of class in the sense that teams and leagues may be more apt not to select a player to engage in CSR if her hair is in done in an Afro-centric style. Specifically, the WNBA executive (WNBA 2) references hairstyles that are mostly worn by African-American players and uses it in the context that suggests the public may view the players as "lacking class" given their unwillingness, resistance, or inability to accept or adopt middle-class standards of emphasized beauty and femininity (Cooky, 2010).

### **Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality**

#### *Women's Tennis Association*

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) is a global organization. They have 53 events in 33 countries, and have over 2,000 players. The researcher asked the WTA

executive specific questions about racism in tennis. For example, the WTA executive was asked about several occasions when Venus and Serena Williams reported the racism they faced at various tennis venues, especially early in their careers. Richard Williams, their father, described two incidents of specific racism they experienced:

In the semi-finals of the US Open last year [2002], the American crowd supported Amelie Mauresmo of France rather than Venus: for the overwhelmingly white, middle-class crowd, the bond of color clearly counted for more than the bond of nation”  
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2003/jun/25/wimbledon2003.tennis11>, 12/22/11 10:25am).

He also described an incident at the Indian Wells (California) final in 2001 saying:

Serena was jeered the moment she appeared on court and was booed throughout. Venus and I were walking down the stairs to our seats and people kept calling me nigger. One guy said, ‘I wish it was ’75 [alluding to the Los Angeles race riots]; we’d skin you alive  
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2003/jun/25/wimbledon2003.tennis11>, 12/22/11 10:33am).

Although the WTA executive did not address specific questions on racism in tennis, she broadened the conversation by elaborating on the notion of political discrimination and nationalism in tennis. The WTA executive described political discrimination and nationalism in the following way:

I think it goes back to zero tolerance. I think we had issues with political discrimination and religious discrimination where Sahar Perr was denied access to Dubi because Israel and Dubi do not have diplomatic relations. So we assigned the largest fine in the history of the WTA. We fined the Dubi government \$300,000, put the Dubi tournament on probation that if Sahar did not get in the following year, then it would lose its membership. A membership of that size is worth \$8-10 million, so it is a very strong penalty. We have not had issues with Sahar playing in Dubi since then... Sport is about emotion and connection with your athlete. You connect with an athlete a variety of ways. Whether it is country of origin, style of play, their personality, so I don’t think there is a blanket statement about nationalism. I think it would be completely natural for the China Open and the fans of China, to get pretty darn excited when Li Na is on the court

compared to Andrea Petkovic. But at the same time, Andrea Petkovic has a great personality and Chinese fans enjoy her. I think this is where the promoters have done a good job taking the players of non-origin or original origin and promoting them and creating engagement. The US Open has few Americans in it, but it is the largest sporting event over two weeks in the world and there are a lot more non-Americans in it than Americans.

### *Ladies Professional Golf Association*

The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) has 27 official money events in 11 countries. Of the more than 460 LPGA Tour members, approximately 230 are active competitors throughout the season and 128 of the active players are international members representing 27 different countries ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), November 29, 2011, 7:30am). Further, 30 of the top 50 players come from South Korea or Japan, while Yani Tseng from Taiwan holds the top spot ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), November 29, 2011, 7:35am). When asked if Yani Tseng received adequate media coverage for becoming the youngest golfer ever, female or male, to win five major championships, the LPGA executive responded:

She certainly did not receive adequate coverage for her accomplishments. It is certainly a gender issue and obviously Yani is from Taiwan. We have over 45 players who are Korean on our tour and one of the challenges is getting American fans to relate to Asian players. Even though Yani lives in Orlando, has a great personality, and speaks English better than she has in years previous, it is always a challenge to tell the stories of our players, not only the Asian players, but players from other countries as well, even the U.S. Yani did not receive the media attention she should have in the U.S. Having said that, our event we had this year in Malaysia, it was our largest attendance and we had to stop selling tickets. We are a global property based on the international nature of our tour, so even our TV rights and our viewership in countries like Japan and China are huge.

She continued by adding:

It is unfortunate Yani did not receive more coverage not only for the game of golf, but women's sports as a whole. There is also no doubt that some of the upcoming American players, someone like Lexi Thompson, who is

considered attractive, American, white, very personable, very marketable, who already has won an event at 16, which is unbelievably incredible, if some like Lexi Thompson had accomplished what Yani did, or does, say next year she goes out and wins 5 tournaments, there is no doubt she would receive more coverage and would help women's golf, women's sports, and LPGA golf in the U.S.

Similarly, when reporters asked Angela Stanford, an American LPGA golfer, about what she makes of the Asian LPGA golfers dominating the majority of the tournaments, she replied:

I don't make anything of it. I think you guys make a lot of it. I've always said they're players, just like the Europeans and the Americans. Do I think an American probably needs to be number 1? Yes, that would probably help sponsorship. I mean, everybody knows it, but that doesn't mean the Americans are trying any less. They're just—the Koreans are solid players  
([http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?_r=0), January 10, 2012, 6:45am).

Something the LPGA league executive did not discuss, but was mentioned in the literature, was a 2008 policy that was proposed, but never enacted, by the former LPGA Commissioner Carolyn Bivens. This proposed policy required “English-only” during interviews and other PR events. Although this policy was never instituted formally, many of the Asian golfers are studying hard to master the English language by taking private tutoring lessons among other ways. The Asian players understand that it is in their best interest to interact with sponsors in Pro-Amateur tours, give post-win interviews in English, and to communicate effectively with fans (Wei, 2009). Moreover, the LPGA executive suggests the importance of learning English by pointing out that Yani Tseng's English has improved over the years and that she is trying to connect with fans on a personal level through interviews and social media. This is another example of

how race, ethnicity, and nationalism impact golf and the opportunities for a player to engage in CSR and sponsorship opportunities.

### *Women's National Basketball Association*

The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) is a team sport that has a majority of African-American players. The percentage of African-American players increased from 69 percent to 74 percent in 2012 while Caucasian players decreased five percentage points from 21 percent to 16 percent and nine percent of the players were international ([www.tides.org](http://www.tides.org), September 5, 2012, 9:05pm). When asked if race, class, and gender impact the CSR initiatives individually or collectively, the former player-turned executive (WNBA 2) offered one of the most candid and straightforward responses. Her comments represent what the majority of the participants suggested and were confirmed based on the team's website and the owner's biography and board recognition:

Race, class, and gender definitely impact our CSR initiatives both in terms of our target audience and our opportunities as a team and league. For example, many of our efforts focus on women and girls, particularly healthy lifestyle initiatives. Most of our programs are helping inner-city youth, schools, and organizations by reading to a class, making an appearance or helping build a playground, which because of our location, is usually lower-class minority groups. We focus on youth and organizations that do not have access to programs, playgrounds, and resources. That being said, I do think our ownership and sponsorships do influence the organizations we partner with throughout the year. For example, if the owner of our team is on the board of an organization that serves underserved people and is in line with our mission, we will be more inclined to help that organization rather than say an organization that is not connected to our team or league in some form or fashion. I guess that right there is an example of class, like it is all who you know, connections to some degree, the partnership is already established.

Another WNBA executive (WNBA 1) discussed how some of the CSR initiatives such as their campaign to raise awareness about diabetes, which is very prevalent in the

African-American community, serves as an example of how race may impact the target audience, whether this is an intentional decision or not. She emphasized that their overall umbrella for CSR initiatives is healthy life-style and some of their initiatives such as education on diabetes may impact some groups more than others, but it still falls under the umbrella. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, of all minority groups, African-Americans have the most, and many times largest, differences in health risks when compared to other minority groups. Type 2 diabetes, the most common type of diabetes, is one of the biggest health challenges facing African-Americans, and especially African-American women ([www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov), January 3, 2012, 12:02pm).

The WNBA player turned executive (WNBA 2) also candidly discussed how race, class, and gender influence how their league or teams in their league select a spokesperson for their initiatives. She emphasized that race, class, and gender were factors when she played and this still holds true today. She described this phenomenon in the following way:

Yes, I think race, class, and gender do impact who a team or league selects to be a spokesperson. I would also argue, to some degree, sexual preference. They are hard to separate. For example, if you have cornrows, are tatted up, and have a hat cocked to the side, you probably will not be selected to be the face of the franchise or get sponsorship opportunities because you appear to masculine, too 'butch'. As a mentor to some of the younger players, I tell them not to be their own worst enemy. This is a business and I tell them they need to present themselves in a way that helps them get sponsorship opportunities, which is to appeal to the masses. It is an unfair stereotype, but it is a business and a game you have to play, if you want endorsement deals and other sponsorship opportunities. It has been my experience that race, class, gender, and sexual preference impact or influence the type of opportunities a player or team receives, but these factors do not have to be limiting. These days, people want to act as if these factors don't matter, they are silent, but still prevalent. I would argue that gender is the obvious difference because all women can be clumped into that category. However, when you really start looking at it, people say 'don't wear



cornrows or afro puffs, baggy pants, tattoos, hats, etc., if you want endorsement deals and media coverage.’ Well, who is wearing this stuff? Not many white players are wearing their hair in cornrows or afro puffs. Not many white players are tattooed on their arms. So we are talking about black players in the WNBA. So yes, race and class are factors. Some say it is ‘cultural’ but it is race, class, and gender.

Ultimately, this WNBA executive and former player (WNBA 2) understands first-hand the conflict in sport as being both a business and allowing players to be who they are without being stigmatized based on race, class, gender, or sexuality.

### *Women’s Professional Soccer*

The WPS executive articulated that race is not a factor in the design and delivery of their team’s CSR initiatives. Further, the executive broadened her statement by discussing the impact of race, class, and gender in the following way:

No, I don’t think that race, class, and gender impact corporate sponsorship opportunities. I think it is the game that impacts their level of interest that impacts their decision to invest and support the league. Sponsors want to see their ROI [return on investment] and race, class, and gender do not come into play when they are making their decision to invest with us.

When asked if she felt that race was less of an issue or not an issue at all in WPS because the majority of the WPS appear to be Caucasian, the executive replied, “I can’t offer a comment on that because I do not know the demographics of our league.” The researcher contacted the league office, but did not receive a response. This is most likely because the WPS decided to cancel their 2012 season and had other priorities to address.

### **Sexual Preference**

When asked whether an athlete’s sexual preference affects a league or team’s decision to have them engage in CSR and impact their ability to be the face of the league or team, five of six of the participants indicated that they had zero tolerance for any

discrimination. Similarly, no league or team indicated that they had any CSR initiatives that directly addressed homophobia in sports. However, one of the participants (WNBA 2) who is a former WNBA player-turned executive indicated that she thought sexual preference may impact sponsorship and CSR opportunities. Specifically, when asked if Sheryl Swoopes, who was the face of the WNBA when the league first started 15 years ago (she was married and expecting a child), then came out as a lesbian after winning the MVP in 2005, impacted her marketing and endorsement opportunities, the WNBA executive (WNBA 1) responded in the following way:

Sheryl is an interesting example because she is now engaged to a man. I will say that I do think that race is a factor in connection that people have to athletes. There are some athletes that transcend race, Michael Jordan was one, Tiger [Woods] for a long time was, I am not sure if he does any more, so it is also about talent, talent does win out in the end. These two male athletes I just mentioned are two extraordinary talents, so it doesn't mean there are other extraordinary talents that have risen to that. There are some people who don't like how they have conducted themselves, how they look... We look at the research all the time on our players and I don't think there is any question that race, culture, has some influence there. People like what they know, generally, so they are uncomfortable sometimes as either owing to the culture or owing to race... Do some people not go to the WNBA games because they think there are going to be lesbians either on the court or in the crowd, sure, and that is their loss because they miss out on a great experience, they will miss great basketball. Do some people dismiss the NBA because there are too many black superstars, sure, and that is their loss as well... You can't say [whispers for emphasis] 'we don't want anyone to know our fan base in the W includes lesbians.' That would be ridiculous. We embrace that fully.

However, another executive and former WNBA (WNBA 2) player responded more directly:

Yes, I think when Sheryl [Swoopes] came out she shot herself in the foot. She limited her sponsorship opportunities, her ability to be the "face" of the WNBA. Who you sleep with does not impact how you play. It does not matter. I mean, we don't talk about what male professional athletes are doing behind closed doors, or politicians for that matter. It should be a

moot point. However, Sheryl took a stand, and it negatively impacted her opportunities, in my opinion. It is important to appeal to the masses in this business. I received an email from a fan that said something like: 'I am not interested in season tickets to the WNBA because I don't want to watch basketball with tykes and dykes.' That is an example of some of the ridiculous and belittling comments I receive about the WNBA. It is disheartening because this is such a generalization and often an unfair stereotype.

Further, through content analysis, it was discovered that some WNBA teams opted not to have a KissCam, which is commonly used for crowd engagement during NBA games and other sporting events. Former WNBA President Donna Orender put out a statement stating, "The league leaves KissCam-type decisions to individual arenas and franchises" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/26/AR2009072602357.html>, November 6, 2011, 5:35am). For example, when Sheila Johnson, the Washington Mystics' managing partner, was asked why her team has a KissCam at the Washington Wizards games (NBA), but not at the Washington Mystics games (WNBA), she said, "We got a lot of kids here. We just don't find it appropriate" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/26/AR2009072602357.html>, November 6, 2011, 5:40am). It has been reported that some WNBA teams do not have a KissCam at WNBA games because they understand that their two major fan bases are dads and daughters, and lesbians. Washington Mystics rookie Marissa Coleman was asked for her thoughts on not having a KissCam at the Mystics games and responded, "The truth is that I don't think the things that might happen could be accepted by a lot of people" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/26/AR2009072602357.html>, November 6, 2011, 5:45am).

League executive, WNBA 2, summed it up well when she said:

All things being said, race, class, gender, and sexual preference do impact who receives sponsorship opportunities, who receives media coverage for their sport and CSR efforts, who gets different opportunities from a league and team. The media and society like what they know and are familiar with. The WNBA is a business and a game. We all need to be strategic, if we want opportunities. It is not necessarily right or ethical, but it is the world we live in.

To the WNBA executive's (WNBA 2) point, in 2008, as part of the rookies' orientation into life as a professional athlete in the WNBA, the league for the first time formally offered the athletes hour-long makeup, hair, and fashion tips. Additional seminars included financial advice, media training, fitness and nutrition; however, the makeup, hair, and fashion training made up about a third of the two-day orientation ([http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-05-04/sports/0805030427\\_1\\_wnba-female-athletes-orientation](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-05-04/sports/0805030427_1_wnba-female-athletes-orientation). 12/15/11, 3:18pm). Alexis Hornbuckle, a rookie guard at the time, said that she "rarely wears makeup but will start thinking about it more now. Appearance is important, whether you're an athlete or not. Hey, you've got to play the game-- that's life" ([www.wnba.com/media/fever/080503\\_TCT\\_WNBAadvice.pdf](http://www.wnba.com/media/fever/080503_TCT_WNBAadvice.pdf). 12/15/11, 3:25pm). This suggests that the WNBA continues to put a strong emphasis on the feminine side of these athletes, arguably to feminize and heterosexualize the league and combat homophobic stereotypes, which are often associated with female team sports (Messner, 2009).

The sexualization of women within basketball is easy to see as one looks at the way female athletes are often portrayed by the media. Patricia Hill Collins (2004, p. 136) notes how contemporary sports cultures works to "simultaneously celebrate and 'feminize' their athleticism by showing women in action and showing their navels." Collins (2004) argues that WNBA "ads all shared another feature—unlike their

basketball uniforms that provide more than adequate coverage for their breasts and buttocks, each women was dressed in fitted sweat pants and in a form-fitting top that, for some exposed a hint of their midriffs, an occasional naval (p. 136).”

Mary Jo Kane’s (2011) “Sex Sells Sex, Not Women’s Sports” links the marginalization of female athletes to the hegemony of sex within sports. She convincingly debunks the claim that sex sells women’s sports: “Sex sells sex, not women’s sports.” Kane (2011) also argues: “Millions of fans around the globe just witnessed such media images and narratives during coverage of the Women’s World Cup in Germany. Perhaps such coverage will start a trend whereby those who cover women’s sports will simply turn on the camera and let us see the reality—not the sexualized caricature—of today’s female athletes. If and when that happens, sportswomen will receive the respect and admiration they so richly deserve” ([www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com), November 3, 2011, 6:45am).

As the WNBA executive (WNBA 2) described, the WNBA is a business and needs to appeal to the masses; however, emphasizing make-up and femininity appears to be a bit out-dated and more in-line with the “League of Their Own” era rather than 40 years after the passing of Title IX. Moreover, as the WNBA executive (WNBA 2) and former WNBA player discussed, sports fans, the media, and the league should be more concerned with “how the athletes play the game of basketball, rather than how they look and if their makeup is applied correctly. We are athletes not beauty queens.”

### **Media Coverage**

Media is a key factor in promoting and perpetuating women’s sport. The interviewees and many of the documents analyzed for this study suggest that sports

media journalist rarely cover women's professional sport (Messner & Cooky, 2010; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Smith, 2006; Thomsen, Bower & Barnes, 2004). Ultimately, the lack of media coverage, both print and television, negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in corporate social responsibility. As a result of the discriminatory practices, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened.

There have been many studies demonstrating that female athletes and women's sports are often presented in hypersexual ways and in non-athletic poses in mainstream media, not covered at all in media, and portrayed differently when considering target audience of reader, male or female audience (Messner et al., 2006, 2010; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; McGinnis, Chun, and McQuillan, 2003; Wade, 2008).

### **New York Times: Content Analysis**

This study focuses on a national daily newspaper, the *New York Times*, which targets both males and females. This study focuses on the in-season schedule of the four leagues analyzed in this study in order to target the quality and quantity of coverage during their playing seasons, which would, in theory, increase the likelihood of media coverage.

Table 7 presents the results of the data collection for this research question. The results are organized by women's professional sport leagues analyzed in this study: Women's Tennis Association (WTA), Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), and Women's Professional Soccer (WPS). This table provides the total number of articles in the *New York Times* Sports

sections from April 1 – September 1 for years 2009-2012 and total number of NYT articles about the women’s professional leagues in this study in randomly sampled sections.

**Table 7            NYT Media Coverage of Women’s Professional Sport**

	Total Articles in NYT Sports Section	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Women’s Tennis Association (WTA)	Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)	Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA)	Women’s Professional Soccer (WPS)
2009	1542	25	16	5	3	1
2010	1567	23	15	4	4	0
2011	1582	26	14	5	5	2
2012	1613	23	16	5	2	0
Total	6,304	97	61	19	14	3
%	100	1.54	62.90	19.59	14.43	3.09

The results suggest that women’s professional sport leagues analyzed in this study (WTA, LPGA, WNBA, and WPS) receive only 1.54 percent of the coverage in the *New York Times* Sports sections. Further, the results indicate the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) received 62.90 percent (61 out of 97 articles) of the media coverage off all women’s sports analyzed for this study. Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) received 19.59 percent (19 out of 97 articles) of the media coverage of all women’s sports. Women’s National Basketball Association received 14.43 percent (14 out of 97 articles) of the media coverage. Women’s Professional Soccer received the least amount of coverage with only 3.09 percent (3 out of 97 articles) of the media coverage of all women’s sports analyzed for this study.

## Article Type

For this study, the researcher analyzed photographic images that accompanied articles discussing women's professional sport. Table 8 presents the results from the data collection for the research questions. The operational definitions of the categories can be found on page 213. The results are organized by coding categories used to analyze the data. Although no articles discussed corporate social responsibility (CSR), the category remains in Table 4 to demonstrate that CSR in women's sports is not discussed in the *New York Times*, which supports the claims made by the executives interviewed for this study that their league or team rarely, if ever, receives mainstream media coverage for their CSR initiatives.

**Table 8** NYT Article Type of Women's Professional Sport

	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Personal	Victim	Sport Related	Sport Struggle	Sport Victories	Health- Sport	Fashion	CSR
2009	25	9	0	8	3	1	2	2	0
2010	23	3	1	15	1	0	1	2	0
2011	26	3	0	20	3	0	0	0	0
2012	23	5	0	16	1	1	0	0	0
Total	97	20	1	59	8	2	3	4	0
%	100	20.62	1.03	60.82	8.25	2.06	3.09	4.12	0

The results indicate that 60.82 percent (59 out of 97) of the articles are sport related. Personal stories about the female athlete accounted for 20.62 percent (20 out of 97) of the media coverage. Sport struggle stories account for 8.25 percent (8 out of 97) of the coverage in the *New York Times*. Articles that describe the female athlete and



fashion such as clothing and make-up both account for 4.12 percent of the articles in the *New York Times*. Articles that describe activities that improve an athlete's athletic health (sport-health) accounted for 3.09 percent of the articles.

### **Photographic Images**

The researcher analyzed photographic images that accompanied articles discussing women's professional sport. Table 9 presents the results from the data collection for the research questions. The results are organized by coding categories used to analyze the data. The operational definitions for each category can be found on page 212.

**Table 9          NYT Photo Type of Women's Professional Sport**

	Total NYT Opportunities for Pictures with WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Athletic Action	Dressed but Poised & Pretty	Non-Sport Setting	Pornographic & Sexually Suggestive	Non-athletic Sport Setting	No Photo
2009	25	13	6	1	0	4	1
2010	23	12	8	0	0	3	0
2011	26	16	6	0	0	0	4
2012	23	11	6	0	0	2	4
Total	97	52	26	1	0	9	9
%	100	53.60	26.80	1.03	0	9.28	9.28

The results indicate that 53.60 percent of the photographic images of female athletes are action shots. Female athletes are portrayed in athletic clothes and in an athletic setting, but poised and often smiling (e.g., receiving an award, congratulating an opponent, waving to the crowd) in 26.80 percent of the photographic images. Female athletes are portrayed in a non-athletic sport setting (e.g., at a fashion show) in 9.28 percent of the photos. Similarly, photos of female athletes are not included with articles

9.28 percent of the time. Female athletes are portrayed in ways other than athletic action and competition 46.39 percent ( $26.80+1.03+9.28+9.28= 46.93$ ) of the time based on this sample, which confirms the lack of overall media coverage of female athletes *competing* in their sport. Although past studies suggest that female athletes are frequently portrayed in sexually suggestive poses, this study found no images that supported this claim. One sports editor from a national daily newspaper noted that daily newspapers have to appeal to male and female audiences, unlike a weekly or monthly magazine caters mainly to male audiences.

### **Race and Media Coverage**

This study also analyzed race and media coverage. Table 10 presents the results from the data collection for the research questions. The results are organized by coding categories used to analyze the data including photograph or article subject (e.g., Serena Williams) when a photograph was not available. In some cases, the article was describing a team effort or team uniform, which was classified as no picture.

**Table 10      NYT Coverage: Race of Individual in Photo or Described in Article**

	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Caucasian	African American	Asian	No Picture
2009	25	13	10	1	1
2010	23	12	7	4	0
2011	26	7	11	5	3
2012	23	8	7	7	1
Total	97	40	35	17	5
%	100	41.24	36.08	17.53	5.15

The results suggested that 41.24 percent of the photographic images of female athletes or article subjects were Caucasian. African American female athletes were represented 36.08 percent of the time. Asian female athletes were represented 17.53 percent of the time. In most cases, the article subjects reflected the tournament leader or rising star in the sport rather than focusing on race. For example, Li Na received media coverage when she won the 2011 French Open singles title, becoming the first player from China to win a Grand Slam in singles.

In many ways, media leads public opinion on issues and focusing on women's sports might deliver more viewers when discussing sport. For example, when Title IX was passed in 1972, only 295,000 girls competed in high school sports in the United States, compared with 3.67 million boys. During the 2010-11 school year, 3.2 million girls played high school sports, as did 4.5 million boys. Similarly, there were almost no scholarships for women 40 years ago. Now, almost 200,000 women play college sports, and many of those athletes get scholarships.

Although there is a dramatic increase in the number of females participating in sport, the media coverage of women's sport is declining. Producers, commentators, and editors at two conferences in 2011 argued that media coverage is about giving the audience "what they want." For example, one producer from a nationally televised sports station claims that "the coverage of sports is often based on the market, and we have to respond to the market reality and give the viewers what they want to see." Another editor for a nationally televised sports network says, "We try to give the viewers the highlights from the day. We want to deliver great sports, but it is also about numbers and viewer preferences. We need viewers." Perhaps if media focuses on women's sport by covering

their athletic ability and contributions on and off the field, as they do male sport, then they may be able to reach a broader audience, ultimately improving their ratings.

At one conference focusing on Title IX issues, an audience member asks the media panelist about the role and responsibility they have to portray female athletes in ways that highlight their athletic ability and competencies versus in hypersexual poses and emphasizing their femininity. One female reporter from a national network simply responds:

These female athletes do not have to agree to these positions and clothing choices, or lack of. They can say ‘no’. Is this a problem the media should address or is this a problem that female athletes, teams, and leagues need to address? When do we hold the athlete accountable for her actions and choices about how to be represented in the media? By the way, what is wrong if a female athlete wants to ‘show off’ her body that she has worked so hard to achieve? Someone like Serena Williams may want to transcend into pop culture, show off her body, display her clothing line, and she can back it up by her winning performances. These pictures can be tasteful. An athlete like Alex Morgan or Hope Solo can make more money with endorsement deals than playing professional soccer. We should be looking at the deeper societal issues of why this is the case rather than just how the media portrays the female athletes.

These valid and straightforward questions are rarely asked and researched by media and sport scholars. Hope Solo, the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team goalie, shed light on why she posed naked for the *ESPN the Magazine: Body Issue* during an interview with ESPNW (<http://espn.go.com/espnw/body-issue/6974155/hope-solo>, January 7, 2012, 4:30pm) by saying:

Growing up, I felt insecure about my build. I didn’t feel very feminine. But as time went on, I learned to completely embrace my body. It’s helped me attain all of my dreams and goals. I didn’t have an issue posing nude, because now I see my body as empowering. In 2008, I was maybe the fittest I had ever been, and we won the gold medal. I started to see the connection between my body and my accomplishments. I couldn’t have been a great goalkeeper without power, agility and quickness... I still don’t buy the idea that I’m a ‘sex symbol.’ It’s amazing that there are so

many beautiful bodies out there on the female athletic side, and it's great that they are starting to get attention. But *sex symbol*? I don't know where that came from. My entire purpose is trying to be the best in the game, and if that exudes beauty too, that's pretty powerful. It means the image of the typical female body type is finally evolving.

More research needs to be completed on the female athlete's perspective of gender, sport, and media. Researchers need to ask female athletes about their media experiences, print and television, and learn about the input of the athlete in the clothes selection and poses. Researchers need to ask questions such as: Why would a female athlete choose to let herself to be portrayed in provocative, suggestive, or positions that do not showcase her athleticism? Do female athletes feel pressure to pose in sexually suggestive poses? Does being featured in ways that downplay an athlete's physical and athletic ability pave the way for future female athletes to be perceived as hardworking, competent, athletic, and credible or does it undermine her credibility and ability as an athlete? These are possible questions media and sport scholars should consider researching, as these questions are rarely addressed in research and it is critical that the voice of the female athletes be considered, acknowledged, and heard.

The media is a significant player in shaping the public's perceptions of the accomplishments of female athletes and women's sports. As the content analysis documents and the interviewees suggest, media is a critical component for the success of professional women's sports and competitive professional sport salaries and purses. Currently, media coverage of women's sports is inconsistent and non-existent most of the time. When the media does cover women's sports, it is often presented as a separate segment from the sport highlights. For example, specials stories may be shown leading up to the anniversary of Title IX or ESPN's *SportsCenter*'s devoted a short series during

March, “Celebrating women’s History Month: Her Triumph, Her Story.” Messner and Cooky (2010) found that these special features had high technical quality, and were delivered in a respectful tone, but were cordoned off from the regular *SportsCenter* highlights and presented as something separate and different.

Additionally, research suggests that sports media is male-dominated and male-centric. Sport media is a masculine hegemonic institution (Hardin, 2005; Pedersen, Whisenant, & Schneider, 2003; Trujillo, 1991), which is evident by the lack of women in the sports media profession, particularly in positions of decision-making power, such as editors, producers, and managers. Lapchick, Brender, and Wright (2006) surveyed more than 300 daily newspapers, finding women comprised 12.6% of newspaper sport staff employees. However, women made up 24% of the support staff and clerks, while men made up for 95% of sports editors, 87% of assistant sport editors, 93% of columnist, 93% of reporters, and 87% copy editors/designers in U.S. newspaper sports departments (Lapchick et al., 2006). It is important to note, Hardin (2005) found female sports editors may be slightly more likely to include coverage of women’s sports in daily newspapers, although the sample size of five female editors out of 283 responding sports editors was too low to generalize. Although this is true, the WNBA has been the top professional sports league in hiring women and minorities to management positions (Lapchick, 2012). Lapchick (2012) credited the WNBA’s diversity in ownership, with 10 women and seven African-Americans holding at least minor stakes, as one reason the WNBA strives for more diversity.

In short, the quality and quantity of media coverage for women’s sports today needs to be critically analyzed and all parties need to be held accountable for how women

are portrayed including female athletes, editors, producers, agents, and other influencers and decision makers. As Diana Nyad, former commentator with Fox Sports News and ABC Sports, said, “The coverage today misrepresents both the participation and interest in women’s sports across our population at large” (Messner et al., 2010, p. 3). As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX is celebrated, it is time for a drastic improvement on how female athletes and women’s sports are represented in the media with equal and quality coverage.

**Finding 3: Corporate social responsibility is used to combat stereotypes or oppression pertaining to females, specifically female athletes, from diverse backgrounds.**

Content analysis and all participants in this study suggested they use CSR as an external indicator of their fight for equality, specifically gender equality. The WNBA, LPGA, and WTA strongly discussed the importance of using CSR as an external indicator for gender equality. The WPS, WNBA 2, and WNBA 3 offered examples of how they use CSR for empowering girls, but admitted that they rarely thought of it as an external indicator, rather part of their core values.

Table 11 presents the results of how leagues use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression organized by category—race, class, gender, or sexual orientation. It also provides information on the frequency of mention of the category in the data and the percentage each category is mentioned by the executive interviewees. For example, six of six (100 percent) league executives interviewed for this study discussed how gender affects CSR initiatives for their team or league. Gender or gender related initiatives (e.g., Girls Golf) were mentioned 356 times in the data. Although sexual orientation was in the

data two times with examples of how this category affects CSR, no executive explicitly mentioned it as a category that shapes their CSR initiatives.

**Table 11 Combating Oppression with CSR in Women's Sport: Categories & Frequencies**

Category	Examples	Frequency*	Percentage**
Race / Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	63	16
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	112	16
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF Partnership</li> <li>• Clinics and Camps</li> <li>• Foundation focusing on Girls and Soccer</li> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> <li>• Supporting charities that focus on women</li> </ul>	356	100
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NBA Anti-Gay Slurs Wordplay PSA (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0</a>)</li> </ul>	2	0

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\*Percentage of interviewees represented in category=Percentage of interviewees who mentioned a category

The use of CSR to combat stereotypes or oppression pertaining to female athletes is illustrated by the following participant comments:

*Ladies Professional Golf*

We have 240 Girls Golf sites throughout the country. Our program is a little bit different in that not only do we teach the girls the game of golf, but we also teach them what we call "The 5 E's." Which means we empower, enrich, engage, exercise, and energize. So the whole purpose is not only to teach the girls the game, but also to empower girls in a girls-only learning environment. As you may know, golf is predominately male dominated, so in most cases when you are doing a junior program, there could be 18 boys and 2 poor little girls. So, if the girls are really confident, they may try to compete and beat the boys, but if they are not, then they tend to drop out very quickly. So we have basically created a girls only environment where girls can thrive and be confident and be



empowered, they can do it and basically learn a sport they can play for a lifetime.

#### *Women's Tennis Association*

It is pretty simple; we have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination on the WTA. Our partnership with UNESCO for gender equality and our fight for equal prize money at the grand slams now having tournaments with equal prize money is our external message that men and women are equal.

#### *Women's National Basketball Association*

We have 14 offices around the globe, so we try to grow and celebrate the game of basketball; we try to also make sure we are engaged in the community, which are hallmarks of our international programming. Whether or not we have formal [CSR] programs or not in those places depends. We have a youth basketball program in India, South Africa, and we have done programs in the Middle East and the UK. It is all about trying to reach girls. It is not necessarily trying to develop WNBA talent, but it leans more toward the active healthy lifestyle... People know that when we talk about the NBA, we are not just talking about the men's game. We are always trying to find ways to empower and reach girls domestically and internationally.

#### *Women's National Basketball Association 2*

We do hold basketball camps and clinics for girls to inspire and empower them to play basketball and be proud that they are athletes. For example, we held a clinic in honor of Title IX's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We had girls from the local community come to our clinic, practice basketball, and hear from our players about the importance of Title IX and how it has helped them play at the professional level. Most of the time we hold clinics, we always try to incorporate life-skills or other important information as a way to empower girls.

Gender, used in the context of female sex, was the main focus on how leagues used CSR to fight stereotypes and oppression. However, the LPGA was the only league that made a point to discuss how they are also using CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression when discussing race, ethnicity, and class.

The goal of Girls Golf and SNAG is to make golf accessible and fun for girls from diverse backgrounds, regardless of race or class. The LPGA executive said:

Kids who are underserved have a chance to participate in our Girls Golf program. We give out grants through our partnership with the USGA and through some of our fundraising efforts... We are starting a new initiative next year, which if it works out, could be huge for girls of all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and golf. We are partnering with the National Parks and Recreation Association. We are going to do about 10 test sites through a program called SNAG, which stands for “Starting New At Golf.” This can be done in a field and makes it very fun and interactive for kids to play... We are hoping if that works, we are going to be able to expand our presence into the parks throughout the U.S., which will make golf accessible to all kids, and would be something that would be golf because with SNAG, even though it is not at a country club, it gives them the play aspect of golf and they can just play, be as loud as they want, and it just makes golf fun. I think that is one of the components of golf that is missing for young people. A lot of times, you start at a country club and there are so many rules, different things that make golf not as fun.

**Finding 4: Corporate social responsibility is important to the success and sustainability of their league or team and is the socially responsible thing to do.**

All participants expressed the importance of CSR for the growth, popularity, and sustainability of their league as well as it being responsible business practice. All of the participants talked about how CSR was a core value for their league or team as well as the owner and commissioner or president of their league. They all indicated that being able to connect with the community was a way to gain more support from the community through establishing personal connections with the hope of making a positive impact on the community while increasing the fan base and gaining positive public relations media coverage. There is a cyclical relationship between increasing fan support, higher demand for the sport, increasing marketing opportunities, and increasing marketing dollars, as all components are needed to grow the sport and in turn, increasing a league’s ability to actively engage in CSR and have a greater presence in the community.

Table 12 presents the results of the purpose of leagues and teams engaging in CSR. The categories are organized by major reasons for engaging in CSR: positive public relations, increase fan base, socially responsible practice, increase marketing and sponsorship opportunities, and access to sport for girls and women. It also provides data on the frequency of mention of each theme and the percentage of participants that mentioned theme.

**Table 12 Purposes for Engaging in CSR: Themes & Frequencies**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Positive Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Service Announcements</li> <li>• Donating to Local Charities</li> <li>• Building a Playground</li> <li>• Employee &amp; Team Volunteering</li> </ul>	502	100
Increase Fan Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Sponsor Theme Night</li> <li>• Offer fee-based and free clinics</li> <li>• Partner with other organizations</li> <li>• Social Media Presence</li> </ul>	423	100
Socially Responsible Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Value</li> <li>• Recycling at Events</li> <li>• Empowering women and girls</li> </ul>	435	100
Increase Marketing and Sponsorship Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Sponsor Theme Nights</li> <li>• Health &amp; Fashion Magazines</li> <li>• Social Media Presence</li> <li>• Team Up with Male Leagues</li> </ul>	353	100
Access to Sport for Girls & Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create accessible courses</li> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• International basketball leagues for women and girls</li> <li>• Partnerships with State Department</li> <li>• Partnering with Grassroots Organizations</li> </ul>	367	83

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category/theme = Percentage of interview respondents who mentioned a specific theme

Below, representative quotes from the interviews are presented to add meaning to the content analysis.

### *Women's Tennis Association*

CSR is a fundamental responsibility, a fundamental social responsibility, of the WTA and our players and tournaments to give back. Billie Jean King often meets with our athletes once a year and she reminds them about how fortunate they are to play a sport they love and to be highly paid for it. She has this great line, she says to them, "It is not what you get, it is what you give." I think what we gain is athletes who care and give back to society, which is a fundamental value of our organization. We want positive PR for our athletes, our tournaments, and our sport.

### *Ladies Professional Golf Association*

Giving back to our community, empowering girls through golf, and engaging in CSR is part of our core values. One of our main goals is empowering girls through golf, basically changing their lives through sport or golf. We try to do this through our Girls Golf Program, scholarships, the financial assistance fund, or through other CSR initiatives. We hope to do the right thing and gain fan support and other opportunities along the way. CSR is about connections with fans, sponsors, players, and the community. Ultimately we are focusing on empowering girls and women through the game of golf and growing the LPGA.

### *Women's Basketball Association*

Giving back and engaging in CSR is one of our core values. Through the WNBA Cares, which is part of NBA Cares, we [the leagues, players, and teams] raise and donate \$100 million for charity, and donate more than 1 million hours of hands-on volunteer service to communities worldwide, and build more than 100 places where kids can learn and play over the next five years. The more we do, the bigger our businesses get, the bigger our fan bases get, the more we can reach people with messages about breast cancer, anti-bullying, or healthy lifestyles, whatever the case may be. We can have a greater impact in the community.

### *Women's Professional Soccer*

It is important for our team to engage in CSR and community relations because it is connecting with the community. The community is what is going to support and grow this franchise. If you make a personal connection out in the community with someone, then they are going to remember that more than a radio commercial. Our goal is to engage fans and gain their support to support our team... We want our community to learn about our players and interact with them and come support and help grow soccer!

**Finding 5: The challenges faced in CSR in women's professional sport are a microcosm of the challenges faced in women's sport in general.**

The final finding in this study suggests that the challenges, obstacles, and future goals for CSR in women's professional sport are parallel to those in women's sports in general. As a result, the results from this study would be similar, if not the same, if CSR was taken out of this study as the medium upon which all questions were based. Moreover, if women's professional sport executives were interviewed and asked about the issues analyzed in this study more generally, not taking a perspective of CSR, the responses and content analysis would most likely have been similar. For example, the lack of quality media coverage, lack of financial resources, a short season lessening the impact to connect with fans and establish a strong fan base, and lack of sponsorship and marketing opportunities, would most likely also be mentioned by any executive in women's professional sport, as these issues are not unique to CSR. In short, it is not necessarily CSR that is being overlooked by mainstream media and fans, but women's sport in general.

### **Summary of Findings**

This chapter presents five findings uncovered by this study. Findings are organized according to research questions. Data from 218 public organizational documents, 300 editions of *New York Times*, and six individual interviews with CSR executives revealed research participants' understanding of how their league or team engages in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and how race, class, and gender shapes the development and delivery of these initiatives. As is typical of qualitative research,

extensive quotations from participants are included in the chapter, which gives a voice to the participants and builds confidence of readers by accurately representing the reality of the participants and situations studied.

The primary finding of this study is all women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR. This finding indicates that as a whole, all leagues participating in this study engage in Corporate Cause Promotions, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsible Business Practices.

The second finding is that race, class, and gender do affect the development and delivery of the CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the athlete selected to participate in CSR. Although all categories are mentioned and discussed, gender is unanimously cited as the largest factor impacting the design and delivery of initiatives. Additionally, four of six interviewees suggest that race and class directly or indirectly impact the marketing and sponsorship opportunities for their team, league, and players.

The third finding is that corporate social responsibility is used to combat stereotypes or oppression pertaining to female athletes from diverse backgrounds. Gender equality is the most frequently cited example in terms of creating equal opportunities in their sport for women and girls. The LPGA executive did indicate they use CSR to make golf more accessible to girls from diverse backgrounds, racially and socioeconomically, by creating a partnership with the National Parks and Recreation Association.

The fourth finding is that corporate social responsibility is important to the success and sustainability of their league or team and is the socially responsible thing to

do. All participants indicate that it is important to connect with the community and gain support for their sport and team. Overall, the content analysis and participant interviews suggest that CSR is a core value for their league, with the hope of gaining positive PR, increasing fan base, increasing sponsorship opportunities, and gaining more positive mainstream media coverage.

The fifth finding is that the challenges, obstacles, and future goals for CSR in women's professional sport are parallel to those in women's sports in general. As a result, the results from this study would be similar, if not the same, if CSR was taken out of this study as the medium upon which all questions were based. Ultimately, CSR in women's sport is a microcosm of what is occurring in women's sport in general. For example, the lack of quality media coverage, lack of financial resources, a short season lessening the impact to connect with fans and establish a strong fan base, and lack of sponsorship and marketing opportunities, would most likely also be mentioned by any executive in women's professional sport, as these issues are not unique to CSR.

It is important to recognize that qualitative methods were given priority in this study, and as a result, data collection and data analysis were intimately interconnected processes. For this study, the findings (an objective exercise) and the analysis of the findings (a subjective exercise) are presented as two separate chapters. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will analyze, interpret, and synthesize the findings that are discussed in this chapter as well as present recommendations for further research. Chapter 5 will essentially present a well-thought-out conversation that integrates the findings of this study with the literature, research, and practice.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis, Synthesis, and Discussion of Findings**

### Overview

The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression shape corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport. Specifically, CSR in women's professional sport is examined to test intersectionality theory and confirm that this theory is an appropriate theory to use when analyzing sport. The researcher believes that a better understanding of the landscape of CSR in women's professional sport provides critical insight on how to encourage and support women's professional sport leagues and teams to successfully engage in CSR in an effort to broaden their fan base through positive PR and empower young girls and women of all backgrounds.

This study employs intersectionality using content analysis of public organizational documents including but not limited to websites, newsletters, mission statements, annual reports, and social media. Additionally, a content analysis of the *New York Times* sport sections is conducted to analyze and understand the quality and quantity of mainstream media coverage of women's professional sport in a national daily newspaper. Finally, this study includes conversational interviews with six league and team executives who are responsible for their organizations CSR initiatives. The



researcher used an interview protocol to ensure that the same information was elicited from each interviewee. The data was coded, analyzed, and organized first by research question and then by categories and subcategories guided by the conceptual framework, as depicted in Chapter 3. The study was based on the following four research questions:

- (1) Do women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR?
- (2) Do race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the professional athlete who is selected to engage in the CSR initiative?
- (3) Do leagues and teams use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to women, specifically female athletes of all ages?
- (4) What meanings or level of importance do league and team executives assign to CSR initiatives and what do they hope to gain?

These four research questions were largely satisfied by the findings presented in Chapter 4. The overriding finding in this study revealed that race, class, and gender do affect the design and delivery of their corporate social responsibility initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the professional athlete selected to engage in corporate social responsibility. Additionally, content analysis suggests and executives confirm that a lack of mainstream media coverage negatively impacts the overall support of women's professional sport, and in turn, their CSR initiatives. Ultimately, race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR.

This chapter analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes the findings discussed in Chapter 4. Although the questions were geared toward exploring intersectionality theory by examining corporate social responsibility in women's professional sports, the responses and analysis suggest that what is occurring within CSR in women's

professional sport is a microcosm of what is occurring within women's professional sport at-large. This chapter is organized by the following analytic categories:

1. Intersectionality and Sport  
(Research Questions 2 and 3)
2. How and why women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR  
(Research Questions 1, 3, and 4)

The prior analytic categories are directly aligned with each of this study's research questions. These same analytic categories were used to code the data and present the findings in the previous chapter. In the analysis, the researcher searches primarily for connecting patterns within the analytic categories, as well as the connections or themes that may emerge among various categories. As a secondary level of analysis, the relevant theory and research is discussed within the chapter, as these themes are compared and contrasted with issues raised in the literature.

The previous chapter presented the findings of this study by organizing data from various sources into categories to produce a readable narrative. The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretive insights into these findings. Whereas Chapter 4, the findings chapter, split apart chunks of data to tell the "story of the research," this chapter attempts to reconstruct a more holistic understanding. Analysis is intended to depict a more integrated picture, and what emerges is layered synthesis. Throughout the process, the elements that continued to frame the analysis were (a) connective threads among the experiences of the participants from various leagues and teams, (b) ways in which the participants understand and explain these connections, (c) consistency or inconsistency, and (d) ways in which the data go beyond the literature.

The discussion takes into consideration the literature on intersectionality theory, feminist theory, corporate social responsibility in sport, gender and sport, and media and sport. The implications of these findings are intended to augment the understanding of how intersectionality theory can be used to study sport by examining how race, class, gender, and other forms of difference impact the design and delivery of CSR in women's professional sport. Although both analytic categories are important, the more interesting discussion is intersectionality and sport because of the depth that stems from the content analysis and conversational interviews. Hence, the majority of the discussion will focus on intersectionality in sport. The chapter concludes with a summary of the interpretations of the findings.

### **Analytic Category 1: Intersectionality and Sport**

This study uses corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a vehicle by which to test the use of intersectionality theory in sport. Content analysis of public organizational documents and the *New York Times* sport sections, and six interviews with executives uncovered how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression impact the overall experience in sport; therefore, impacting the design and delivery of the CSR initiatives for a women's professional sport team or league. Through the interview process, participants cast a wide net when discussing race, class, and gender in professional sport and then narrowed the conversation by offering specific examples of how race, class, and gender shaped their CSR efforts because of prompts that were specific to CSR. The analysis below is an attempt to capture the whole picture that was uncovered through document analysis and described by participants, which includes the state of women's

sport and the state of CSR in professional sport as it pertains to race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression.

The interpretation and synthesis of the findings from this study uses Patricia Hill Collins' (1990, 2000) intersectionality and matrix of domination theoretical framework. For this study, intersectionality is a specific way of understanding social location in terms of crisscross systems of oppression (Collins, 1990; 2009). Intersectionality is an “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization” (Collins, 2000, p. 299). Similarly, this study uses intersectionality as an analysis for understanding how race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nation form mutually constructing features of social organizations, which shape female athletes' and leagues' experiences and in turn, are shaped by female athletes and leagues.

Additionally, this study borrows the theoretical framework of matrix of domination, which refers to the overall organization of power in society (Collins, 2000). There are two features to any matrix. First, any specific matrix has a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of oppression. What and how these systems merge together is historically and socially specific. Second, intersecting systems of oppression are specifically organized through four interrelated domains of power: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal.

### Intersectionality and Sport

Intersectionality theory is a prism through which to analyze a broad range of social issues in a more dynamic, multidimensional, and inclusive manner and looks beyond separating social problems into distinct challenges facing specific groups. It

starts from a premise that people have multiple identities, and being members of one “group,” they can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege. Further, the theory examines how various social, cultural, and biological categories such as race, class, and gender, form axes of identity, which interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels creating systematic social inequality.

Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 2000, 2009) discusses the various intersections of social inequality as the matrix of domination. This concept explains issues of oppression that deal with race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other forms of oppression as all interconnected. For example, some aspects of one’s identity are sometimes privileged over others depending on the situation, gender over race or sexual orientation over class. Collins (2000, 2009) argues that any particular matrix of domination is organized via four interrelated domains of power, namely, the structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic domains. Each domain serves a particular purpose as described below.

The structural domain organizes oppression, whereas the disciplinary domain manages it. The interpersonal domain influences everyday lived experiences and the individual consciousness that follows, while the hegemonic domain justifies the oppression (Collins, 2000). Further, the particular contours of each domain of power illustrate how intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, national identity, and other reasons of oppression are organized in unique ways.

Female athletes are incorporated in each domain of power in particular ways that while exhibiting patterns of common differences with women of different backgrounds, they remain typically oppressed as a collective whole. This study aims to gain a deeper insight into how race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression work together to

produce a distinctive matrix of domination within women's sport, and by extension, corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport. Each domain serves a specific and important purpose as part of the matrix of domination to organize oppression and each of these power domains and its relevance in women's professional sport are described in more detail below.

### Structural Domain

The structural domain consists of social structures such as laws, polity, religion, and the economy (Collins, 2000). This domain sets structural parameters that organize power relations and is often considered to institutionalize oppression, such as racism and sexism. For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was written in order to end discrimination based on religion, race, color, or national origin, but not sex. As a result, the exclusion of women revamped the women's right movement, and women and some men were demanding equal rights for women. Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana was the first person to introduce Title IX in Congress in 1972, as he was working on numerous constitutional issues related to women's rights, including the Equal Rights Amendment, to build "a powerful constitutional base from which to move forward in abolishing discriminatory differential treatment based on sex" (Cruikshank, 2007, p.43). Title IX is a portion of the Education Amendments of 1972, which states that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Title IX requires all universities receiving federal funding to perform self-evaluations of whether they offer equal opportunities based on sex and to provide written assurances to the Department of Education that the institution is in compliance for the

period that the federal funded equipment or facilities remain in use (US Department of Education, January 1, 2012, 6:35am). In order to comply with the regulations, institutions must pass one of these three tests:

- a) Proportionality- male and female participate in athletics in numbers substantially proportional to their respective enrollments in school, or
- b) History and Continued Practice of Program Expansion- the institution shows a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of members of underrepresented sex, or
- c) Full Accommodation of Interests and Abilities- the institution demonstrates that the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex (females) are full and effectively accommodated by the existing programs.

Although the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX was on June 23, 2012, most estimates are that 80 to 90 percent of all educational institutions are not in compliance with Title IX as it applies to athletics (<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/home/advocate/title-ix-and-issues/what-is-title-ix/title-ix-primer>, September 1, 2012, 6:10am). The penalty for non-compliance with Title IX is withdrawal of federal funds, yet this penalty has never been implemented. Rather, when institutions are determined to be out of compliance with the Title IX, the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) finds them “in compliance conditioned on remedying identified problems” (<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/home/advocate/title-ix-and-issues/what-is-title-ix/title-ix-primer>, September 1, 2012, 6:12am).

For example, there are more than 17 times the number of varsity female high school athletes than female college athletes, which suggests that a significant number of female athletes may be denied access to participation opportunities on the college level simply because too few opportunities for female athletes have been created even now with the highest participation levels in history (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008; 2012).

Females comprise 57 percent of college student population but only receive 44 percent of all college athletic participation opportunities (<http://www.titleix.info/10-key-areas-of-title-ix/athletics.aspx>, September 1, 2012, 7:15am). The point here is that Title IX is an example of the structural domain in sports. The structural domain sets the overall organization of power within a matrix of domination and that the structure is slow to change because the many forms of oppression within the structure are institutionalized such as sexism, racism, and classism.

One of the overarching themes of this study is the impact of intersectionality on women's sport, which in turn impacts how CSR is designed and delivered. Women's quest for equality in society has had its counterpart in the sports world. Since the 1972 passage of Title IX, women in the United States have had a legal basis from which to push for greater equity in high school and college athletics which ultimately creates a solid foundation and interest in women's professional sports. Although equality in terms of opportunities, funding, programs, facilities, and media coverage for women's sports are still goals, substantial gains have been made in the past 40 years, indicated by increasing numerical participation as well as by expanding peer and self-acceptance of female athleticism (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008; Lopiano, 2006).

Organized sport has long been a space that is often associated with male-dominance and important as "primary masculinity-validating experience" (Dubbett, 1979, 164). In Mariah Burton Nelson book, *The Stronger Women Get, The More Men Love Football*, she acknowledges that women are also part of the discussion and articulates what many feminist, believe:

Sports contests, so often described as battles between men, in fact reflect an essential struggle between men and women, especially when women



are excluded from the actual play. Be defining sports as male, and by linking maleness to muscular might, men attempt to erect a seemingly biologically determined supremacy... We [women] want men to relinquish their tree house mentality—No Girls Allowed—but also want them to stop using sports to justify brutish behavior. To stop using sports to define maleness and thus femaleness (p. 12-13).

Further, most sport sociologists have addressed the scope and function of sport with an increasingly sophisticated feminist analysis of the interconnections among sport, gender, and relational issues of power and domination (Kane, 1995; 2011). Delineating these connections, sport sociologists argue that more than any other social institution, sport reflects, constructs, and perpetuates beliefs about male superiority and female inferiority (Birrell & Cole, 1990; Messner, 2010). Further, it should not be underestimated how much sport reinforces fundamental assumptions underlying patriarchal conceptions of gender.

The findings from this study are grounded in a structural domain that describe women's sport not only in relation to one another, but in a context that has long been defined by and for men. Essentially, sport is a space that is still contested terrain for women regarding dominant ideologies including race, class, gender, and sexuality, which are perpetuated as well as challenged in this domain. Like all structural domains, sport is a structural domain that is based on power. However, since the passage of Title IX in 1972, there are clear and sustainable challenges to the assumption that sport is exclusive to males and should remain a "man's world." The passing of Title IX serves as an example of a large-scale sociopolitical movement aimed at establishing the equitable distribution of funds and access to women's sports.

Although sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia are still relevant in women's sports (e.g., media coverage and executive positions), Title IX has opened doors and

created opportunities for women to have more access to sport albeit at a slow and discouraging pace considering it has been 40 years since this legislation passed. As with all forms of oppression, it is not enough to have incremental change over an extended period of time, as these small changes often masque deeper societal issues such as institutionalized discrimination, limiting and prohibiting the success and opportunities for oppressed groups.

### Disciplinary Domain

The disciplinary domain manages oppression and consists of bureaucratic organizations whose task it is to control and organize human behavior through routines, rationalization, and surveillance, ultimately contributing to the matrix of domination. The findings from this study suggest that the structural domain of sport often maintains its male-dominated and discriminatory structure through the disciplinary domain, which often wears the efficiency and equality mask to hide discrimination and oppression of female athletes and women's sports. This section discusses the main findings that can be categorized as creating the disciplinary domain in women's sport.

### *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: Title IX and Leadership in Women's Professional Sport*

Although Title IX applies to colleges and does not directly apply to professional sport, it is important to recognize the doors Title IX has opened for women's professional sport. Without successful amateur and college programs for women, professional sport for women would be less of an option, particularly for team sports such as basketball. Document analysis and all league executives interviewed for this study acknowledge that their league or team will recognize the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX in ways such as clinics

and postings on websites and social media. However, all executives stated that their league would not have a league-wide event or celebration to recognize this legislation as Title IX focuses on education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance, so it would be more appropriate for colleges to have a large celebration.

Although some WNBA teams and other women's sports leagues acknowledged the Anniversary of Title IX through clinics and sharing personal stories about the importance of this legislation for personal and professional success of women, it is unfortunate that women's professional sport leagues are not recognizing the anniversary in a collective way on a grand scale. This is unfortunate because this year in women's professional sport is a big year for many of the leagues and teams. The opportunity to celebrate a unifying and monumental policy focused on equal access and opportunity for women does not come around often and would be a tremendous stage to capture the attention of young female athletes as well as sport fans across the globe. These milestones should not be taken lightly. If the world of women's sport does not take time to address the accomplishments of female athletes, teams, and sports, why should they expect others to address these issues? If women's teams and leagues do not seize this important opportunity and fully appreciate this milestone, then the sports world is missing a monumental learning opportunity to address the successes, trials, tribulations, and opportunities for growth of sport in areas such as race, class, gender, sexual preference, and media coverage.

Moreover, one of the essential conclusions of this study is the importance of leadership in women's sport. All of the participants cited the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) as an exemplar of equity and equality in sport because of the equal

prize money and playing on the same stage as their male counterparts. Articles discussed the importance of strong leadership in women's sport as well as social media sites acknowledging Title IX and the importance of equal prize money for women and men. The executives cite Billie Jean King, as the trailblazer who offers stable leadership and advocacy for equality in women's sport, as an important leader in the WTA's success both on and off the court. King speaks to the importance of equal prize money at Wimbledon in 2007 by stating:

I think it was definitely hard for them to change because of the culture and the psyche behind it, but I'm relieved that they finally got there. But remember, it's not about the money; it's about the message it sends to women and girls around the world. Every time we change a benchmark like this, it helps people ask in their daily life, 'Are we insisting on equality for our sons and daughters?' So that makes it a very important moment in history... That is where the power, opportunity, and choice come from—when you have money. Money equals opportunity. There is no question (<http://espn.go.com/sportscapital/features/00016060.html>, June 25, 2012, 10:50am).

Billie Jean King is the epitome of leadership in women's sport. She played professional tennis and won 12 Grand Slam singles titles, 16 Grand Slam women's titles, and 11 Grand Slam mixed doubles titles. Additionally, she won "The Battle of the Sexes" tennis competition in 1973 against Bobby Riggs, which is an event that is still discussed today. She is an advocate for sexual equality for women, lesbians, gays, and other oppressed groups in women's sports and society at-large.

Barrow (1977) defined leadership as "the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals" (p.232). This definition is important because it places emphasis on the vision of the leader while also highlighting the necessary interaction between the leader and group members. Further, leadership requires an understanding and respect for the power dynamic between the influencer and the

follower. The relationship recognizes that every act between the two parties is a ‘political act’ with potential for coercion (Miller, 1985). King states that leadership has many “looks and frequently leaders emerge in response to specific situations. But, in every case, leaders lead, guide, and inspire and that’s what sets them apart”

(<http://www.hws.edu/centennial/king.asp>, June 25, 2012, 12:17pm). She also argues that leaders are often “chosen to lead and true leaders accept the challenge”

(<http://www.hws.edu/centennial/king.asp>, June 25, 2012, 12:33pm).

Moreover, although many champions and great athletes, female or male, often fade away in time, believing their best years are behind them, King manages to use her notoriety to stay relevant in the discussion of equality for all in sport. She seems to understand that with power comes responsibility. She has been a constant and sustainable support for women’s tennis and women’s sport as a whole. King fits the description of what James Citrin (2009) identifies as the “dynamic path” of leadership, which describes how an individual starts out as a contributor and moves into a leadership role, specifically in sport. Citrin’s dynamic path has three stages:

1. Champion in their chosen sport. Here, their focus is on individual results
2. Effective leader, where they shift their focus to collective results
3. Leaving a legacy that benefits others through enduring results

The participants in this study highlighted Billie Jean King as a great leader and advocate for equality in women’s sport, the importance of solid, respectable, and influential leadership is imperative for the success of women’s sport. For example, Women’s Professional Soccer (WPS) decided to suspend their 2012 season arguably because of lack of leadership, financial difficulties, and legal trouble. Women’s sport needs sustainable, respectable, and influential leadership on all levels to continue what

Title IX has helped offer to women's sport—opportunity, access, success, and a chance to play on all levels. Leadership is critical for the success of any sport and ultimately leadership helps shape the CSR initiatives for leagues and teams.

*More than What Meets the Eye: Media Coverage in Women's Professional Sport*

Five of six participants, all except Women's Tennis Association, indicate that their league or team does not receive adequate mainstream media coverage for their sport, ultimately impacting the mainstream media coverage of their CSR initiatives. The results from this study found that during four in-season playing schedules (2009-2012), the four leagues analyzed for this study only received 1.54 percent media coverage in the *New York Times*, a national daily newspaper. Further, the results from this study suggest that Women's Tennis Association received 62.90 percent of all media coverage on women's sports in the *New York Times* Sports section, which supports that the WTA executives feels they receive adequate coverage for their sport, acknowledging that more mainstream media coverage is always better. This finding is not surprising, as tennis is considered an "appropriate" sport for women, as it is considered a country club sport and does not include face-to-face contact, meaning a sport that involves body contact between opposing players. Further, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has been in existence for over 30 years and it is the only sport where female professional athletes receive equal prize money as their male counterparts and play on the same stage. The finding of women's sports and female athletes as underrepresented in mainstream media sport coverage is consistent with the literature on gender, sport, and media coverage (Messner et al., 2006, 2010; Messner, 1998, 2006; Kane, 1996, 2011).

The stratified sample in this study focuses on four years (2009-2012) of in-season media coverage (April 1- September 1) of women's professional sport leagues analyzed in this study. This timeframe provided ample opportunity to have mainstream media coverage of important events, games, and milestones in sports history, yet these leagues only received 1.54 percent of the coverage in the *New York Times* Sports section. For example, 2009 was the inaugural season of Women's Professional Soccer and many WPS soccer players played in the 2011 World Cup, yet the WPS received only 3.09 percent of the media coverage during this time frame. The WNBA's conference semifinals games are during this time period, the WNBA celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011, and Maya Moore became the first female basketball player to sign with the Brand Jordan (Michael Jordan's Brand), yet they only received 14.43 percent of the coverage. The LPGA had several highlights, but the one that stands out the most is Yani Tseng becoming the youngest player, female or male, to win five major championships, yet they received 19.59 percent coverage. Perhaps one of the most important milestones that occurred during this timeframe was the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title IX, which received essentially no coverage.

The findings from this study are consistent with the research on gender, media, and sport. For example, research suggests that media coverage for women's sports commonly devote much of their scanty coverage to women's sports to individual athletes such as tennis (Messner et al., 2006, 2010). Similarly, this study found that 62.47 percent of the stories were about tennis. In comparison, team sports such as the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) discussed the lack of media coverage for their sport and as a result, the lack of coverage for their corporate social responsibility

initiatives. The results from this study suggest that the WNBA received 14.43 percent of the media coverage, which is consistent with the literature on gender, sport, and media by supporting the claim that women's team sports receive less media coverage than individual sports (Messner et al., 2006, 2010; Messner, 1988; Kane, 2011, 1996; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998).

Furthermore, content analysis and a candid conversation with a WNBA executive and former player (WNBA 2) suggest that team sports may receive less mainstream media coverage than individual sports because of homophobia (discussed further below). This is consistent with the research, as sport sociologists are increasingly aware of the degree to which the fear of lesbians' presence in sport, which is reflected in and perpetuated by homophobia, which serves to deny recognition, respect, and status in sport to all female athletes (Messner et al., 2008, 2011; Kane, 2006; Griffin, 1992, 2008; Pharr, 1988). Female athletes "step out of role" as traditional women by playing sports and demanding greater equality in sport is sometimes viewed as challenging the notion that sport is a space for men.

Further, content analysis and conversational interviews with league and team executives suggest that homophobia is often the elephant in the room. Although only one executive (WNBA 2) interviewed for this study addressed the question of homophobia directly, analysis of the league and team documents suggests that leagues often use campaigns to highlight beauty and strength, such as the WTA's Strong Is Beautiful campaign, or the WNBA providing make-up lessons and fashion advice at the Rookie Symposium. Additionally, when WNBA teams decide not to have a KissCam at WNBA games because they want a "family-friendly" environment and fear that two women



kissing would be offensive, whether stated directly or not, indicates that homophobia exists in the WNBA. In short, the findings suggest that image matters to women's professional sport leagues, like all sports, and heterosexuality and beauty are two aspects some leagues are advocating implicitly.

As the research suggests, the beauty campaigns used in women's sport leagues are strategies often used to counter the perceived threat posed by women playing sports and demanding equality in sport by portraying female athletes in ways that reinforce traditional notions of femininity and sexuality, rather than emphasize their athletic ability and accomplishments (Kane, 1996, 2006, 2011; Messner et al., 2006, 2010).

Research suggests that female athletes are often portrayed in hypersexualized poses or in nonathletic uniforms to emphasize their femininity and remind them and the readers that these professional athletes are women first and athletes second, while trying to negate the stereotype that female athletes are lesbians (Griffin, 1998; Kane, 1996, 2006, 2011; Messner et al., 2006). However, the results from this study suggest that the *New York Times Sports* section did not portray female athletes in hyper-sexualized poses (0 percent). Female athletes were portrayed in athletic action in 53.60 percent of the coverage and dressed in athletic clothes, and poised and pretty (e.g., smiling and waving to the crowd) in 26.80 percent of the coverage. It is important to note that the readership and target audience, female and male, of the NYT may have influenced the editor's decisions to include more photos of female athletes in athletic action rather than portrayed women in sexualized positions. Similar to the findings by Messner and Cooky (2010), the results from this study suggest that there has been a decline in disrespectful or insulting treatment of female athletes and women's sports as compared to previous years;

it is unclear if the decline is because there is less coverage or women's sports in mainstream media or an improvement in coverage.

Although female athletes are most often portrayed in athletic poses in the *New York Times* Sports section, league campaigns and other documents analyzed for this study suggest that women are portrayed in ways that highlight their beauty and femininity (See Appendix F, e.g., Strong Is Beautiful and ESPN the Magazine). It seems that some leagues have bought into the idea that sex sells women's sports by using campaigns and marketing strategies the focus on heterosexuality, fashion, and beauty, rather than promoting their sport and athletes in ways that demonstrate their athletic gifts, as professional athletes, ultimately perpetuating stereotypes and maintaining the status quo.

While it would be simplistic and misguided to suggest that female athletes and women's sports are never portrayed in a positive light, the findings from this study indicate that women's sports analyzed in this study received 1.54 percent of the coverage in the *New York Times Sports* section with 53.60 percent of the images were athletic action. These findings indicate that there is ambivalence in media reporting of female athletes and women's professional sport. Ambivalence is an insidious process whereby media give out conflicting messages about female athletes, female athleticism, and women's sports. As Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) describe ambivalence as, "positive portrayals of sportswomen are combined with subtly negative suggestions that trivialize or undercut the women and their efforts. Such trivialization is a way of denying power to women (p. 38)."

As Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) and Kane (2006; 2011) point out, there is a sense that media outlets that cover women's sport want to create interest in the sporting

event as well as reinforce the position that men remain the most important athletes by way of overwhelmingly discussing and highlighting male sports. Further, coverage that is ambivalent reveals the mixed set of goals underestimating these competing forces when it praises women's abilities and accomplishments, and thus the significance of the event, while reminding viewers that women are either not as exciting to watch as their male counterparts or that they are women first and athletes second (Kane, 1996, 2006, 2011).

While this is true, some members of the media suggested through document analysis and at conferences on Title IX, that female athletes and women's sport leagues need to take ownership and accountability of how they are posing and playing into the negative stereotypes of the media. As one female reporter stated, "they can say no." Every decision that is made by the athlete and media influences future generations of women; therefore, it is imperative that all female athletes are demanding respect for themselves and their sport. As with Title IX, women need to take the lead on this issue and demand more from themselves, media and sports viewing public. Simply, female athletes and women's sports should not settle for anything but the upmost respect and quality media coverage they deserve.

The results from this study suggest that mainstream media fails to adequately cover women's professional sport, thus failing to adequately cover corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport (0 percent coverage in NYT). Additionally, the findings indicate that while mainstream media rarely, if ever, covers CSR in women's professional sport, leagues and teams are engaging in CSR and succeeding on and off the court. For example, this study found all sport leagues and teams analyzed for this study

participate in all six forms of CSR as defined by Kotler and Lee (2005), including: corporate cause promotions, cause related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices. Moreover, all leagues are using CSR to combat gender oppression in women's sports and all leagues analyzed for this study are using CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression in at least one of the following categories: race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation. There is more to women's professional sport and their CSR efforts than what meets the eye in newspapers, magazines, television, and other forms of mainstream media.

#### *Modern Day Prostitution?: Sexualization in Women's Professional Sport*

Research on gender, sport, and media have long acknowledged that males are consistently presented in images that emphasize their athletic strength and competence, whereas females are often presented in ways that link them to oppressive stereotypes of a women's so-called frailty, sexuality, and limited physical capacity (Kane, 1996, 2011; Messner et al., 2006, 2010). Therefore, female athletes are much more likely than male athletes to be portrayed off the court, out of uniform, and in highly passive and sexualized poses.

The results from this study suggest that women were portrayed in athletic action pictures in 53.60 percent of the coverage. Female athletes were portrayed as dressed in athletic clothes, but poised and pretty (e.g., shaking hands with opponent, waving to the crowd, or posing on the court) in 26.80 percent of the coverage. Women were pictured in nonathletic clothes in a sport setting in 9.28 percent of the coverage and 9.28 percent of the articles were not accompanied by a photo. It is important to note that there were no

(0 percent) sexually suggestive pictures in the sample analyzed for this study. Although 53.60 percent of the photographs analyzed in this study portray female athletes in athletic action, it is important to remember that the total coverage for women's sports is 1.54 percent. Therefore, omission is the most telling story, as these patterns of exclusion and asymmetry constitute a denial of power for sportswomen (Duncan & Hansbrook, 1988) and negatively impacts the support of women's sports and female athletes, as they often remain invisible in mainstream media coverage.

Additionally, sociologists of sport have noted the lack of coverage of women's sport in mainstream news media, more importantly the lack of respectful, serious coverage of women's sport, especially for female athletes of Color (Douglas, 2005; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Lansbury, 2001; McKay & Johnson, 2008; Schultz, 2005) in mainstream print media (Bishop, 2003; Christopherson, Janning, & McConnell, 2002; Eastman & Billings, 2000; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Pratt, Gappendorf, Grundvig, & LeBlanc, 2008; Vincent, 2004; Vincent & Crossman, 2008; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999) and in mainstream televised media (Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Messner, et al., 2006, 2010).

However, the results from the NYT content analysis suggest that gender is the most important factor for lack of coverage, as 50.60 percent of media coverage focused on minorities (African American: 33.73 percent; Asian: 16.87) and 41.24 percent of the media coverage focused on Caucasian athletes, including international players. When the article was describing a team effort or a team uniform, rather than a specific athlete's performance, it was classified as no picture, which occurred in 5.15 percent of the coverage. The race or ethnicity of an athlete was consistent with the leaders and winners

of specific tournament or highlighting a rising American star in a sport. Gender was the biggest factor for lack of receiving mainstream media coverage, as women athletes only received 1.54 percent of media coverage in the NYT sport sections.

The findings from this study are consistent with the research. Mariah Burton Nelson described the issue in the following way:

Women have always been degraded by being disrobed and that option I think will always be open to women and women will be offered a lot of money to take their clothes off. But what happens when they do is they lose respect. It's a mistake for female athletes to go ahead and agree to do that and it can be damaging to all women's sports when female athletes are seen as sex objects rather than as athletes ([www.abcnews.com](http://www.abcnews.com), January 10, 2012 7:53am).

All professional female athletes need to recognize the marketing trend in women's sports and should strive for balance. There seems to be a fine line between classy and trashy. Julie Foudy, former soccer star and current analyst for ESPN, argues, "Corporate sponsors and marketers need to be more creative than sex sells" ([www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com), June 26, 2012, 7:17am). Professional athletes, teams, and leagues need think about the intended and unintended consequences of playing into the stereotype of hyper-sexualizing professional female athletes.

While there are individual voices raising objections to this sexualization of women's sports, some of the leagues are arguably playing into the stereotype and misconception that sex sells sports. For example, the WTA's Strong Is Beautiful campaign highlights their players in feminine ways including flowing hair, make-up, and tennis outfits that appear a bit more risqué. A former WTA executive said, "We don't apologize for, I think, the marketability of our players off the court. You know, they're attractive. They're fit. They're recognized as great athletes, which they are—some of

the greatest athletes in the world”

(<http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=128546&page=1#.T0FaaMyGbR1>,

November 8, 2011, 8:34am).

Similarly, a current WTA executive defended the Strong Is Beautiful campaign by saying:

The [Strong is Beautiful] campaign is not about creating sex symbols. Certainly, the end result of the campaign portrays these world-class athletes as strong both in their character, determination, tenacity, the obstacles they have overcome to become the best athletes in the world. You know, all of their personal characteristics are beautiful. Being tough and being strong is beautiful. I think the campaign has done a nice job of presenting, what we think, are the world’s best athletes as strong, good role models, and global citizens.

However, study after study has revealed that newspaper and television coverage around the globe routinely and systematically focuses on the athletic exploits of male athletes while offering hyper-sexualized images of their female counterparts (Kane, 2006, 2011; Messner, 2006; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). Moreover, the findings from this study are consistent with past studies suggesting that a major consequence of the media’s tendency to sexualize women’s athletic accomplishments is the reinforcement of their status as second-class citizens. Kane (2011) states a key takeaway from her study of whether sex truly sells women’s sports is simple, “sex sells sex, not women’s sports.” Further, Kane’s (2011) study suggests that while the sexualization of female athletes may make them desirable to men, but it does not make men or women more interested in the sports they play. Additionally, such marketing actually alienates other fan bases including women, young girls, and older men who have daughters (Kane, 2011).

Similarly, when one considers professional female athletes posing naked or scantily clad for magazines, it can be argued that the female athlete is perpetuating

stereotypes of female athletes as being a woman first and an athlete second. For example, when Hope Solo posed naked in the ESPN Body Magazine in 2011 and her United States National Team teammate, Alex Morgan, posed in body-paint for the 2012 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition, it demonstrates that they are receiving more attention for their body than their athleticism and contributions to soccer and women's sports as professional athletes.

Further, it is no surprise that on average most female athletes get paid far less than male athletes, considering this is a trend that is dealt with across most fields in the United States. The average salary of a WPS player in 2010 was about \$27,000 ([http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2010/writers/jeff\\_kassouf/12/06/wps.salary/index.html](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2010/writers/jeff_kassouf/12/06/wps.salary/index.html), December 5, 2011, 6:36pm). However, since the 2011 Women's World Cup, Solo signed an endorsement deal with Gatorade worth \$100,000 annually and it seems likely that she was paid very well for her spread in ESPN Body Issue. Some may argue this as good financial security for her and for female athletes in general. However, with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX in June, it seems that leagues, teams, and marketing specialists should advance their strategies and promote the athlete for what she contributes on the field rather than perpetuate the stereotypes. Specifically, female athletes should be properly paid as professional athletes and for their athletic ability and accomplishments rather than for their bodies.

The content analysis and conversational interviews produced themes and findings, which indicate that race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, media coverage, length of season, and hypersexualization in women's sports perpetuates stereotypes and impacts the sponsorship, marketing, and CSR opportunities in women's sport. However, in this



disciplinary domain, which manages oppression, change can come through insider resistance. The analogy of a mosaic is a visual image of this notion. From a distance, a mosaic looks like smooth and seamless piece of artwork. In the interest of social justice and expanding opportunity for all in sport, working in sport is like working in the open spaces of the mosaic, finding cracks and unique spaces to work and expand. Again, change is often incremental. Hopefully, in years to come, women and men will focus their efforts and work in the cracks to expand opportunity for all regardless of race, class, gender, and sexual preference.

*The New Scarlet Letter-- L: Homophobia in Women's Professional Sport*

Although several newspaper articles and social media posts discussed the stigma and stereotypes of homophobia in women's sports, the executives' often skimmed over the issue and redirected the conversation when questions were asked about homophobia in women's sport. Although a common response was "we have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination," the response seemed calculated, politically correct, and awkward. To say that the perception of homophobia is not an issue in sport, specifically women's sport, is naive and unrealistic. However, when the participants were asked specific questions about specific players (e.g., Sheryl Swoopes), specific marketing strategies (e.g., Strong Is Beautiful) to perhaps soften the image of female athletes by putting them in more feminine dresses with professionally done hair and make-up, the discussion became more candid by sticking to their point, but explaining the situation in a less calculated and scripted manner.

While Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova are well-known professional athletes who are also lesbian, they appear to be the exception to the rule in a sport that

typically receives a majority of the media coverage for women's sports both on and off the court, by focusing dually on their heterosexual appeal. For example, Maria Sharapova, Venus and Serena Williams, and Anna Kournikova are tennis players who are often highlighted for their attractiveness, fashion choices, and who they are dating, which suggests that tennis is an individual sport with attractive heterosexual players. King and Navratilova were fierce competitors and very successful on the court, which may have helped ease the tension of their lesbian status. King is arguably the most famous and reputable advocate for equality for all in sports, so perhaps her tremendous and groundbreaking success in an individual sport, which is equally known for its attractive heterosexual players, outweighs her sexual preference.

However, regardless of Sheryl Swoopes' success on the court, the findings in this study suggest that she was negatively impacted by coming out in 2005 after winning the MVP award, which arguably prevented her from being the face of the WNBA and perhaps losing sponsorship opportunities. Perhaps this is because the "rule" or stereotype for the WNBA is that many of the players are lesbians. Mariah Burton Nelson (1991, 1995, 1998, 2010) suggests that homophobia in sports serves as a way to control women, both gay and straight. Whether a woman is a lesbian or straight, homophobia in sports and society at-large tends to discourage girls and women from pursuing traditionally "masculine" activities such as contact sports and team sports for fear of being labeled a lesbian. Further, Nelson (1995, 2010) suggests, female athletes in traditionally masculine sports challenge the social dictates about proper behavior for females; therefore, the reasoning goes, there must be something wrong with them.

Swoopes is an interesting case because she was the first player drafted in the WNBA and was the face of the WNBA not only for her stellar game, but also because she was married and expecting a child. The WNBA wanted to target family audiences while showing the world that the WNBA was not acknowledging their strong lesbian fan base. Simply, women in the WNBA were heterosexual, nurturing, mothers, and by the way, professional athletes. However, Swoopes came out in 2005, and one WNBA executive (WNBA 2) argued that the decision to publicly come out ultimately impacted her corporate sponsorship opportunities and marketing ability for the league. Swoopes stated that her reason for coming out was not “to be some sort of hero. It’s not something that I wanted to throw in people’s faces. I’m just at a point in my life where I’m tired of having to pretend I am somebody I’m not”

(<http://sports.espn.go.com/wnba/news/story?id=2204322>). Swoopes discussed her biggest concern by saying:

My biggest concern is that people are going to look at my homosexuality and say to little girls—whether they’re white, black, Hispanic—that I can’t be their role model anymore. I don’t want that to happen. Being gay has nothing to do with the three gold medals or the three MVPs or the four championships I’ve won. I’m still the same person. I’m still Sheryl (<http://sports.espn.go.com/wnba/news/story?id=2204322>).

This concern is important to acknowledge because it addresses that notion that stereotypes and stigmas do exist. The WNBA missed a tremendous opportunity to use CSR as way to combat stereotypes and oppression in sport, specifically homophobia. There are many young women and women who can identify with Swoopes and her fear of not being a role model. This should have been addressed to discuss how sexuality does not impact play and we all should be accepted for who we are on and off the court.

Swoopes is now engaged to a man again, which makes her story even more unique. Her story speaks to the idea of the fluidity of sexuality (Broad, 2001; Caudwell, 2003; Sykes, 2006). Sexuality not only exists on a continuum, but some people move on that continuum across the lifespan, including bisexuality. Research has shown that sexual fluidity is common and is found more often in women than men (Diamond, 2009). While Swoopes' story is interesting on many levels, her sexual orientation (straight, bisexual, or lesbian) should not be the headline for stories. Rather, headlines should focus on her contributions to women's sports, specifically basketball, as one of the all-time greatest players in basketball.

Similarly, the idea of homophobia in women's sports is not a new phenomenon. However, incidents like the not having a KissCam at a game for fear of two lesbians kissing, offering players make-up and fashion lessons as part of the rookies' orientation, or portraying female athletes in flowing gowns with a face full of make up and styled hair with a wind-blowing machine as if they were models, demonstrates that many leagues and teams are putting a strong emphasis on the feminine side of athletes in hopes of negating homophobic stereotypes often affiliated with women's sport.

Focusing on sexual preference unfairly denies women opportunities in sports on the basis of personal preferences irrelevant to athletic abilities and takes away from their accomplishments in sport. As the results from this study suggest, many lesbian athletes are afraid to go public with their sexual orientation for fear of losing the rare opportunities for corporate sponsorships. Homophobia in sport not only causes discrimination against lesbians; but it also negatively impacts all women by perpetuating the stereotype that sports are not feminine, thus preventing some girls and women from

enjoying athletic participation and successful careers in athletics. Homophobia in sport serves as a scarlet letter used to stigmatize all women by serving as a potential badge of shame and an effort to reinforce the notion that women are second-class citizens and inadequate in a world that is dominated by men. This ultimately leads to women's sports, especially team sports, receiving less media attention, corporate sponsorship, and marketing opportunities; thus, impacting not only women's sport, but also CSR in women's professional sport.

### *Getting Lost in the Cornrows: Race and Class in Women's Professional Sport*

The WNBA and LPGA interviewees discussed how race and class are intertwined in their CSR initiatives. Based on interviews and document analysis, the design and delivery of the WNBA and the LPGA indicated that they target populations that have fewer opportunities to access sports and other resources such as educational resources. The WNBA acknowledges targeting lower-income groups who are often minorities. Similarly, the LPGA discusses initiatives that target populations that do not traditionally have access to golf, which is typically played at a private country club. Race and class pertaining to CSR is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, Chapter 4. This section will focus on how race and class impacts opportunities for female athletes to engage in CSR.

When the former player-turned WNBA executive (WNBA 2) discussed the impact of race, class, and gender on sponsorship, marketing, and CSR opportunities, she described it in the following way:

If you have cornrows, are tatted up, and have a hat cocked to the side, you probably will not be selected to be the face of the franchise or get sponsorship opportunities because you appear to masculine, too 'butch'.

As a mentor to some of the younger players, I tell them not to be their own worst enemy. This is a business and I tell them they need to present themselves in a way that helps them get sponsorship opportunities, which is to appeal to the masses. It is an unfair stereotype, but it is a business and a game you have to play, if you want endorsement deals and other sponsorship opportunities.

Essentially, it is her experience that race, class, gender, and sexual preference do impact sponsorship, marketing, and CSR opportunities depending on where an athlete is positioned on the matrix of domination.

Similar to Cooky's (2010) analysis of Don Imus' insult of Rutgers University women's basketball team as "nappy-headed hoes," the use of encouraging WNBA players not to wear Afro-Puffs and cornrows suggests they "lack class" given their unwillingness, resistance or inability to accept or adopt white, middle-class standards of emphasized femininity. Although some may argue that the encouragement of a player wearing her hair in styles other than afro-puffs and cornrows is not a race or class issue, but rather smart business because it is about "who can 'pass' as part of the mainstream culture" (Knapp, 2007, p. B1), falls short because the disproportionate number of players who wear cornrows and afro-puffs directly impacts African-American players. Ultimately, when female athletes transgress gender norms and boundaries, even in a "Post-Title IX" period, they are still held to antiquated societal standards of emphasized femininity and feminine appearance by the mainstream news media and often times fans and organizational leadership.

Although sport is a business, it is imperative to critically analyze policies and procedures to determine who is impacted by these decisions. Research suggests that white males predominately call the shots on nearly every level in sports ([www.tidesport.org](http://www.tidesport.org), December 12, 2012, 10:01am). It is critical that decision makers in

sport establish more inclusive policies and procedures that do not single out players or groups of players based on race, class, gender, nationality, sexual preference or any other form of oppression. For example, the LPGA attempted and failed to implement a policy that mandated all players speak English, demonstrating how this policy would have disproportionately impacted Asian players, who are among the strongest players in women's professional golf. Informal and formal policies that indirectly and directly discriminate should not be tolerated in sport, or society, as this perpetuates the status quo, which negatively impacts female athletes and women of all backgrounds. In turn, this negatively impacts the ability for women's professional sport leagues and teams to have a deeper impact through CSR.

*This Land is Your Land, This Land Is My Land: Nationalism in Women's Professional Sport*

Nationalism in sport is not a new phenomenon. For this study, nationalism is defined as a person's feeling about an imagined community (the nation) and sport, then through the fielding of a national team for example, is able to provide more concrete evidence that this imagined community does in fact exist (Bairner, 1996). Research suggests that close association with nationalism is what gives sport its power and marketability (Rowe, McKay, and Miller, 2002). Additionally, sport is "deeply dependent on the production of difference," which is why it is dependent on nationalism (Rowe et al., 2002, p. 282)." Although there are a very small number of studies that focus on gender, sport, and nationalism (Chisholm, 1999; Stevenson, 2002; Jinxia, 2003), this idea of nationalism and nationality impacting CSR opportunities in women's professional sport is an important finding.

Content analysis and responses from the LPGA and the WTA executives suggest that nationalism is a factor in their corporate social responsibility initiatives, as both are global sports. The WNBA and WPS are played in the United States and therefore did not address the impact of nationalism on their CSR efforts. The WTA executive described an isolated incident of political discrimination between Israel and Dubai when she discussed when Sahar Perr (Israel) was denied access to Dubai and the WTA fined the Dubai government \$300,000 and put the Dubai tournament on probation. Similarly, the WTA executive discussed the importance of an athlete connecting with fans from all nations, as Andrea Perkovic has done with the Chinese fans at the Chinese Open (see Chapter 4, p. 96-98). She emphasizes the importance of an athlete connecting with fans as one way of overcoming nationalism in sport, although it is natural to cheer for one's home team or national player representative. She clarified her statement by saying that rather than fans being hostile toward a player from another country, connecting with fans through corporate social responsibility initiatives makes for a more welcoming environment when playing a match between players from politically contentious countries.

The LPGA executive discussed the impact of nationality when an athlete is not playing in her native country. For example, she talks about how some American fans feel disconnected from Yani Tseng, the Taiwanese great and youngest player, female or male, to win five major tournaments, because of the language barrier, even though Tseng is improving her English. The LPGA executive cites Tseng's nationality, language barrier, and possibly appearance (not looking American) as possible roadblocks for her lack of mainstream media coverage and her inability to connect with American fans. As mentioned above, she also described the likelihood of Lexi Thompson receiving much



more mainstream media coverage if she was to accomplish what Tseng did, because she is an attractive, white, American female with tremendous marketability.

LPGA golfer Angela Stanford responded to a reporter's question regarding Asian players' domination of golf and the impact it has on sponsorship for the LPGA by stating:

I don't make anything of it. I think you guys make a lot of it. I've always said they're players, just like the Europeans and the Americans. Do I think an American probably needs to be number 1? Yes, that would probably help sponsorship. I mean, everybody knows it, but that doesn't mean the Americans are trying any less. They're just—the Koreans are solid players

([http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?_r=0), January 10, 2012, 6:45am).

Moreover, a recent ESPN article echoed these sentiments by describing that Tseng wants what Thompson already has achieved: recognition, admiration, and glamour appeal (<http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/espnw-yani-tseng-wants-lexi-thompson-has>, February 16, 2012, 8:17am). However, Judy Rankin, a respected golf commentator said, “not everybody who is extremely successful travels the same road or ends up with the same kind of star.” She also noted, “there are just some extraordinarily good players who are never going to get the public attention that another player of exactly the same talent will get” <http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/espnw-yani-tseng-wants-lexi-thompson-has>, February 16, 2012, 8:17am). Although Tseng is trying to gain a more sustainable and mainstream fan base in America, she is very popular in her native Taiwan, a celebrity who, upon flying home last year, required the same security forces that accompanied Lady Gaga when the pop star arrived there for a concert performance (<http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/espnw-yani-tseng-wants-lexi-thompson-has>, February 16, 2012, 8:21am). Tseng described her celebrity status in Taiwan the following way:

It is incredible. I feel really appreciated and supported. It does not matter where in the world I am. They wake up at midnight to watch me on television and cheer for me. That is huge for me and gives me lots of motivation to become better and not just to play for myself. I play for my country, and I play for my fans (<http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/espnw-yani-tseng-wants-lexi-thompson-has>, February 16, 2012, 8:25am).

Although a large majority of the LPGA schedule is abroad and 65 of the 100 top players are Asians ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), November 29, 2011, 7:35am), the LPGA is based in America. It can be argued that receiving the fan support in the United States has proved to be more difficult for Tseng and other Asian players, as many of the fans seem to be nationalistic when it comes to adopting heroes. Further, Michelle Wie, an Asian American golfer, has been more well-received by the LPGA viewing public in the United States based on marketing opportunities and media coverage, since she identifies as American and is an American LPGA golfer. The LPGA executive noted that in an attempt to be more widely accepted in the United States and across the globe, Tseng is working hard to master English while also diligently trying to be accessible to fans and the media and always smiling. Tseng described her feelings about giving back and being the top player in the LPGA who happens to be Asian by stating the following:

I love America... I know I am not American. I'm Asian. But I feel I want to help Asian and American golf. It's more than just helping golf. The kids. Help maybe kids who do not have enough money to go to school. I love kids. I just feel like I play golf here, I want to give back to America. That's how I feel ([www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com), February 16, 2012, 8:40am).

Although Tseng is doing her best to connect with a wider fan base, specifically in America by mastering her English, living in Florida, and being accessible to fans through social media and interviews, Judy Rankin addressed the question of can an Asian player ever be truly accepted by American fans by responding in the following way:

If you are asking, can an Asian player become the darling of American golf, I'm going to say, probably not. That's not to say she has not captured the imagination of a lot of people, simply by a beginning of dominance. She is such a physically strong player. She looks like she's the one player out there who is giving every indication she could be a dominant player like Annika was. The American fan who is paying attention has kind embraced how this girl has tried so hard to do all the right things and make herself available and accessible and try to draw people in. That's not the most common thing among successful athletes (<http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/print>, February 16, 2012, 8:33am).

This finding is consistent with findings in previous studies that have suggested that popular accounts of sports have great difficulty treating Asian Americans fairly or accurately (Creff, 2004; Franks, 2000; Hanson, 2005; King, 2006). On the other hand, such accounts hide Asian Americans from view (Hanson, 2005), recycling a discourse that is either unable or unwilling to discuss their identities, histories, or athleticism (King, 2006). On the other hand, sport media rely on stereotypes in their coverage of Asian American athletes, often preferring clichés and jokes to grounded coverage of individuals and their achievements (King, 2006).

Further, Asian Americans are often portrayed as un-American, physically incapable of being "All-American" and the same can be said for Asian born players trying to establish themselves in America. As Henry Yu (2001) powerfully summarizes:

Americans are constantly convincing themselves that the United States has already become a place where race does not matter, and they are simply wrong... Asians are exotic, still bearers of an authentic otherness they cannot shake. Like other non-whites, Asian Americans remain both Americans and examples through their existence of non-America. (p. 203).

As long as this pattern of expectations and misrecognitions persists, it is doubtful that most Americans will fully appreciate the accomplishments of Asian American and

Asian athletes or strive to include them as equals on and off the playing field (C. Richard King, 2011).

### *Length Matters: Playing Season in Women's Professional Sport*

One finding from this study that is not empirically well researched is the length of the playing season in women's professional sport. Document analysis and four of six participants indicated that a short season was a major obstacle that impacted their league or team's CSR efforts and sponsorship and marketing opportunities.

Although season length has not been directly discussed in research on CSR and sport literature, it is a unique finding that impacts most women's professional sport and would add depth to the literature on CSR in sport. Perhaps this issue has not been discussed in the research because the overwhelming majority of research in CSR and sport discusses men's sport. Season length, specifically in team sports, is an interesting finding because it supports the notion that women are asked to do more with fewer resources and in this case, it is time ultimately impacting financial stability and CSR. The short season also impacts a team's or league's sponsorship, marketing, and CSR opportunities, which transcends to financial backing, positive PR, and sustainability for the sport, league, and team.

### Interpersonal Domain

The interpersonal domain influences everyday life. It is made up of the personal relationships one maintains as well as the different interactions that make up daily life. Collins (2000) emphasizes that it is important to understand how an individual sees and understands her own self and experiences. In general, people, women in this case, do not have a problem identifying ways in which they have been victimized. However, the first

step in changing interpersonal domain of the matrix of domination is seeing how one's own "thoughts and actions uphold someone else's subordination" (Collins, 2000, p. 287). Simply, the interpersonal domain is highly influenced by the intrapersonal domain because individual actions impact the collective whole, in this case, women's professional sport.

Part of the first step is seeing that people have a tendency to identify with an oppression, most likely the one they have experienced, and consider all other oppressions as being of less importance. Further, this type of thought may lead to a kind of contradiction where the oppressed becomes the oppressor in certain situations. For example, an Asian heterosexual woman may discriminate against an African-American lesbian without thinking twice about her role reversal of oppressed to oppressor. Collins (2000, p. 287) argues, "Oppression is filled with such contradictions because these approaches fail to recognize that a matrix of domination contains few pure victims or oppressors."

Findings from this study suggest that while most leagues in women's professional sport consider themselves governing bodies that help shape CSR initiatives, sponsorship opportunities, and overall brand for their sport. However, only the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) representative discussed in detail how their players are considered individual contractors, thus responsible for creating and shaping their own branding. This is not to say that the WTA does not create CSR and marketing opportunities using their players, which is evident by their Strong Is Beautiful campaign.

However, most female athletes have a choice about how they want to be portrayed. It is critical that professional athletes and leagues think about the message

they are sending and the brand they are creating when they engage in various sponsorship opportunities and CSR initiatives. When female athletes, teams, and leagues engage in hyper-sexualized marketing, posing naked for a magazine, or creating campaigns that run the risk of supporting the idea that “sex sells,” they run the risk of diverting the conversation away from what all female athletes and women’s sports want, respect for the sport they play. When the conversation gets swayed to the side that fans and media are talking about a female athlete’s sex appeal and not sports, then the athlete and league do a disservice to all of women’s sports. Female athletes and women’s sports leagues need to think critically about their campaigns, marketing, and branding are adding value to their sport and legacy, rather than cheapening and degrading their brand and women’s sport.

Another example that applies to the interpersonal domain is fighting oppression through CSR. Although few participants directly discussed how they use CSR to combat stereotypes that directly or indirectly impact their sport, an example could be using CSR to address homophobia. For example, Billie Jean King has discussed the importance of leadership, especially from within sport, to combat homophobia in sports by stating:

We need straight people, particularly in the male arena, to support the gay guys. They have to. And if they stand up for us, that’s how we gain acceptance. We need our friends, or brothers and sisters, especially if they have influence. Federer and Nadal and those guys have to say we don’t care. Once the influence starts to talk like that, it makes a huge difference. It’s got to be the top players. [They] have influence where the tour goes. That’s part of the responsibility of being in the Top 10, Top 5 in the world. That goes hand in hand with making the big bucks, getting the most exposure, getting the most endorsements. That’s part of the deal, I think, if you’re going to be in that position. And our job in that position is to stick up for whoever is getting a bad deal ([www.tennis.com](http://www.tennis.com)).

Additionally, the quotation above is another example of the existence of a matrix of domination in sport. Players need to realize that their actions or inactions carry a lot of weight. Top players, players with tremendous power, should be aware that they may become the oppressor if issues are not addressed, such as homophobia, discrimination, racism, and media discrimination. It is important to understand gender liberation struggle, racial liberation struggle, and gay liberation struggle are all undermined when these divisions are promoted and encouraged (Hooks, 1989; 2000). For example, both gay and straight black people must work to resist the politics of domination as expressed in sexism and racism that lead people to think that supporting one liberation struggle diminishes one's support for another or stands one in opposition to another (Hooks, 1989; 2000). As part education for critical consciousness in sport, it must be continually stressed that the struggle against racism and sexism, the struggle to recover from oppression and exploitation are inextricably linked to all struggles to resist domination.

As Collins (2000, 2005, 2009) points out, there are few pure victims or oppressors, as individuals can move along the continuum depending on where they are located in reference to someone else. Female athletes and women's professional sport executives need to think critically about the messages they are sending either directly or indirectly. For example, if magazines and other mainstream media do not include female athletes who do not fit the ideal image for mainstream media, such as a WNBA player with afro-puffs and tattoos or an Asian champion, then the message is clear that these players are perceived as inadequate for mainstream media and will remain invisible by the lack of coverage. In short, the oppressed can become the oppressor, so individuals who are fighting for respect, in this case female athletes and leagues, need to be aware of

the way they are marketing their sport and CSR initiatives so that they do not become the oppressor and their own worst enemy.

### Hegemonic Domain

According to Collins (1990; 2000; 2005; 2009), the hegemonic domain legitimates oppression. This is the critical sphere of influence where ideology and consciousness come together. The hegemonic domain links structural, disciplinary, and interpersonal domains and is made up of the language one uses, the images to which one responds, the values one holds, and the ideas one entertains. Further, it is produced through the messages sent through mass media images (or absence of), religious teachings, political teachings, community cultures, and family histories.

The priority for creating change for women's sport and female athletes is self-definition and critical, reflective education, which are important stepping-stones to deconstructing and dissuading the hegemonic domain. As Collins (2000, p. 284) states, "Racist and sexist ideologies, if they are disbelieved, lose their impact." Therefore leagues and teams need to be strategic in their CSR initiatives and equally as important, how they market their CSR efforts, to ensure they are not perpetuating stereotypes and misconceptions of female athletes. Rather, findings from the document analysis suggest leagues and teams should strategically market their players and sport in ways that empower their players, contribute to the progression of their sport, and breakdown stereotypes, which perpetuate racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic ideologies. Document analysis and league executives support suggest that CSR is a terrific way to combat stereotypes that plague women's sports. At best, CSR serves as an outlet to create a new reality of how female athletes and women's sports are portrayed by the



sporting public while at the same time sending a positive and empowering message to young girls and other fans.

The findings in this study are consistent with other key findings in gender and sport literature that female athletes are more likely to receive less media coverage based on gender and sport (Kane, 1996, 2011; Messner et al., 2006, 2010). Additionally, women are more likely than men to be portrayed in ways that emphasize their femininity rather than their athleticism (Kane, 1996, 2011; Messner et al., 2006, 2011). It is imperative that female athletes and sport executives take a stand against the misconception that sex sells, because there is no empirical evidence that supports this notion. In fact, Kane (2011) found that sex sells sex, not women's sports.

Organized sport, as a cultural sphere defined largely by patriarchal priorities, will continue to be an important arena in which emerging images of active, fit, and muscular women are forged, interpreted, contested, and incorporated. The larger socioeconomic and political context will continue to shape and constrain the extent to which women can wage fundamental challenges to the ways that organized sport continues providing ideological legitimacy for male dominance and second-class status for women. The media's framing of male and female athletes will continue to present major obstacles for any fundamental challenge to the present commercialized and male-dominated structure of organized sport. It remains for a sport feminist theory to recognize the emergent contradictions in this system in order to inform a liberating social practice.

Although some women internalize the (white, middle-class, and heterosexual) standards of beauty in the United States, which leads to devaluation of the skin color and hair textures of many African-Americans and other minorities, there is still a long

standing tradition of a Black women's culture of resistance (Collins, 1990; 2000; 2005). This idea can be expanded to address other minorities in sport as well as all female athletes. Further, this resistance demonstrates that "hegemonic dominance is never totalizing or complete" and that the cultural context is a "fundamental site of resistance" (Collins, 1990, p. 227). In the case of CSR in women's professional sport, resistant voices are allowed minimal space in mainstream media and are ultimately framed to suggest that race, class, gender, and sexuality impact the sponsorship opportunities an athlete and team receives, ultimately influencing the CSR efforts of a team or league and the impact that organization can have on a community, specifically female youth.

Furthermore, as individuals and as part of a group who oppose U.S. social injustices, female athletes', leagues', and teams' resistance strategies reflect their placement both within each domain and within the U.S. matrix of domination. For example, through its resistance on rules, the disciplinary domain manages domination. Female athletes or leagues who challenge the status quo and resist buying into stereotypes of the hyper-sexualized female athlete, as well as female athletes or leagues who may capture positions of authority so that they can change the rules themselves become empowered within the disciplinary domain (Collins, 2000). Thus, female athletes', leagues', and teams' experiences and ideas illustrate how these four domains of power shape domination. But they also show how these domains have been and can be used as sites of female athletes' and league's empowerment (Collins, 2000).

### **Analytic Category 2: How and Why Women's Professional Sport Leagues and Teams Engage in CSR**

The first, third, and fourth research questions sought to determine how and why women's professional sport leagues and teams engaged in CSR. Participants indicated

that they all engaged in at least four of the six ways of participating in CSR according to Kotler and Lee's (2005) definition of CSR. Content analysis and supplementary interviews with executives in women's professional sport, suggest that leagues and teams engage in Corporate Social Marketing, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsible Business Practices. Additionally, four of six participants suggest that their league or team engages in Corporate Cause Promotions, Corporate Philanthropy, and Cause-Related Marketing. Five of six league and team executives interviewed for this study suggest that their CSR platform focuses on healthy lifestyles (i.e., breast cancer awareness, and exercise through sport), specifically for women and children, and education initiatives. Further, not only do the leagues and teams hope to gain positive PR, increase fan base and community support, and increase in sponsorship opportunities, but all of the participants expressed that engaging in CSR was one of their core values and simply the right thing to do.

This finding is consistent with the research, which suggests CSR is used as a necessary business function (Kinard et al., 2003; Carroll, 1999; Heath & Ryan, 1989), public relations or marketing function (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Chahal & Sharma, 2006; Clark, 2000), or combination of altruistic, strategic, legal, financial, and discretionary responsibility (Carroll, 1999; Heath & Ryan, 1989). As Table 12 (p. 121) demonstrates, the document analysis and participants in this study suggest their league or team engages in CSR because it is positive public relations (frequency 502), socially responsible business practice (frequency 435), increase fan base (frequency 423), increase access to sport for women and girls (frequency 367), and increase marketing and sponsorship opportunities (frequency 353).

The results from this study are similar to other findings from sport and CSR literature, which suggest teams engage in CSR to further social good, going beyond profit maximization (Carrol, 1979; Heath & Ryan, 1989; Sheth & Babiak, 2009), because their organization has an essential responsibility to act in a manner that positively contributes to their stakeholders and the communities in which they live and work (Sagawa et al., 2000). Moreover, the results from this study indicate that a team or league can further its strategic interests while expanding resources without showing a direct, correlative monetary gain (Babiak, 2010), can generate intangible strategic assets such as reputational capital (Fombrun et al., 2000; Lewis, 2003), employee commitment (Turban et al., 1997; Vogel, 2005), acquiescence among key regulatory institutions or legislative bodies (Campbell, 2007; Dubbink et al., 2008), the development of the organizations business and institutional environments (Porter et al., 2002), and help alleviate negative scrutiny (Alsop, 2002).

This study sheds light on something that is rarely, if ever, addressed in the CSR literature, which is the fact that many women's teams and leagues have to create opportunities to produce revenue generating CSR initiatives such as team camps to help add depth and financial support to their CSR efforts. Additionally, not only do CSR initiatives offer a chance for employee commitment (Turban et al., 1997; Vogel, 2005), but also for fan commitment by creating opportunities for fans to engage with professional athletes and teams, which often creates a unique bond and connection which strengthens fan commitment ultimately leading to financial security for the league or team. Finally, using CSR as a way to be an ambassador for an athlete's sport, team, or league is another unique finding that stems from this study. Document analysis and six

of six interviewees suggest that professional female athletes from each league and team recognize and understand their vital role as ambassador of their sport and use CSR as a way to execute that role.

As Table 1 (p. 77) demonstrates, all six leagues engage in CSR as defined by Kotler and Lee (2005). However, five of six of participants suggest that their league, team, and professional athletes engage in CSR differently compared to their male counterpart. Specifically, five of six participants suggest that their teams and leagues often donate time through community volunteering and merchandise (e.g., signed jerseys, signed basketballs) rather than donate money to organizations because their team or league does not bring in enough revenue to financially contribute to their CSR efforts. This is one indication as to why many of the women's professional team and leagues have to create revenue producing events rather than strictly charitable events because they do not have the same financial security, sponsorship opportunities, and marketing dollars that male professional sport leagues and teams have in order to generate and donate financial capital. Moreover, the wage gap, with men earning more regardless of education and experience, is an issue in most professions and sports is no exception. In fact, with the exception of tennis and sometimes golf, professional sport offers an extreme example of the wage gap between women and men.

Further, it would be misguided to not address the fact that the longevity of a team or league also impacts how and why a team or league contributes to their CSR initiatives. Not only is this a gender issue, women give differently than men, but also one about history of the organization, sponsorship opportunities, and prize money, which favors individual sports such as tennis and golf. The Ladies Professional Golf Association

(LPGA) was founded in 1905 and is the longest-running women's professional sports associations in the world. The LPGA tour features the most talented global group of professional athletes, who, in 2012, will compete in 27 official money events in 11 countries. Of the more than 460 LPGA Tour members, approximately 230 are active competitors throughout the season and 128 of the active players are international members representing 27 different countries ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com), December 1, 2011, 4:17pm).

According to the executive from the LPGA, "when you look at the WNBA, WPS, and even the WTA, they are all kind of relatively new compared to golf. We have kind of been the mainstay for a long time, in terms of the sports world in women's sports." The WTA was founded in 1973 and claims to be the world's leading professional sport for women with over 2,400 players representing 99 nations competing for over \$90 million in prize money at 53 events and four Grand Slams in 33 countries ([www.wtatennis.com](http://www.wtatennis.com), December 1, 2011, 5:02pm). This is in comparison to the WNBA who in 2011 celebrated their 15<sup>th</sup> season and the WPS who in 2012 will celebrate their 5<sup>th</sup> season. As the participants in this study indicated, this suggests that the more established leagues, the LPGA and WTA, often have more sponsorship opportunities, more funding sources, a higher purse or winnings, more media coverage, and as a result, more exposure and opportunities for engaging in CSR. This suggests that many of the issues the newer organizations such as WPS and the WNBA may be dealing with issues such as credibility and sustainability that the LPGA and WTA have already dealt with in their earlier years. This may also impact the opportunities for professional female athletes in terms of sponsorship opportunities, pay, and ultimately the impact of their CSR initiatives.

Finally, the executives from this study approach CSR in a community-oriented, collaborative, and strategic manner in order to achieve what many of the executives described as their ethical, moral, and philanthropic responsibilities. These results are similar to Sheth and Babiak's (2010) findings, although the executives in this current study did not articulate legal responsibility, as was reported by Sheth and Babiak (2010) when they interviewed executives in men's professional sports, specifically, the National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL), and Major League Baseball (MLB).

Although the finding that women's professional sport leagues engage in CSR as defined by Kotler and Lee (2005) and engage in CSR for many of the same reasons as the research states for CSR in professional sport (i.e., altruistic, strategic, ethical), there has been no published empirical research to date on CSR in women's professional sport. It is important to consider the unique experiences of all professional sport leagues and teams when examining CSR, but specifically female professional sport leagues and teams, as their efforts and accomplishments not only in CSR, but also in sport, have often been overlooked and underappreciated.

### **Summary of Interpretation of Findings**

The findings from this study suggest that intersectionality theory is an appropriate theory by which to study women's sport, as indicated by studying CSR in women's professional sport. Moreover, it is critical to understand how the matrix of domination is structured along axes—race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and media—as well as how it operates through interconnected domains of power—structural, disciplinary, interpersonal, and hegemonic (Collins, 2000), which impacts CSR in women's

professional sport. This inclusive perspective enables female athletes, leagues, and teams to avoid labeling one form of oppression as more or less important than others.

Ultimately, the matrix of domination and the domains of power impact the design and delivery of CSR in women's professional sport.

Further, the findings from this study suggest women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR for a variety of reasons including: increase fan base, positive PR, socially responsible thing to do. Factors such as an organization's history (e.g., WTA vs. WPS), leadership, length of season, equal pay for equal play, and sponsorship also impact CSR initiatives. As a result of this discrimination, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are undermined.

Moreover, mainstream media and the stories they publish, creates a dominant understanding of how race, class, gender, and sexuality are portrayed in the media and the public at-large. It is important to understand how intersectionality operates in contemporary sport contexts in the United States. Given the overall silence of women, particularly women of Color, in the mainstream media (e.g., Yani Tseng), the dominant media frame of sexism and racism in society demonstrates the mainstream media's power to construct ideologies, maintain the status quo, and determine who and what receives coverage and how the information is displayed and conveyed. This creates a story of who and what is "worthy" of coverage Hope Solo watering her lawn naked, and who and what is not, Yani Tseng becoming the youngest player, female or male, to win five major championships.

The timing of this dissertation coincides with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Title IX. This historical event is significant due to the way it has served as an



important symbol for Women's Rights and the Civil Rights Movement, and since has come to represent racial, class, and gender equality not only in sport but also in broader society. The contradiction between the anniversary and the lack of mass media coverage of women's sports, specifically CSR in women's professional sport, illustrates how "controlling images" of female athletes and leagues as well as the silencing and invisibility of female athletes and leagues and their contribution to sport and society are part of the matrix of domination. Intersectionality theory illustrates how race, class, gender, and sexuality shape CSR in sport. Similarly, it highlights how female athletes and women's professional sport leagues can demonstrate moments of resistance against race, class, and gender domination that are mobilized around hegemonic middle class values, by defusing a broader critical analysis of ways that power works in the sport arena.

The endeavor of analyzing the findings was to produce a nuanced and multilayered, but holistic and integrated, synthesis. The challenge throughout data collection and data analysis, which were interlocking phases of this research, was to make sense of large amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal given the purpose of this study.

Presenting an analysis of the findings uncovered in this study warrants a degree of caution regarding the limitations of this study. First, although document analysis contains hundreds of pieces of data, the research sample for interviewees was small, comprising of six 60 minute to 90 minute conversational interviews with league and team executives who were responsible in guiding, developing, and delivering CSR in women's

professional sport. Therefore, it is important to realize that the implications that can be drawn are specific to the experiences and perceptions of the sample group under study.

Finally, remembering that the human factor is both the greatest strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis; the researcher recognizes the subjective nature of the claims she makes regarding the meaning of the data. Aside from the potential biases involved in researchers as instrument, the researcher acknowledges possible additional bias in analyzing the findings because she was an amateur and collegiate athlete, worked in professional sports, and values CSR in professional sport. Toward this end, and to help minimize this limitation, throughout the process of data collection and data analysis, the researcher engaged in journaling and discussions with critical colleagues. Remaining open to the possibility that other might have a different story, this chapter is essentially, and ultimately, a presentation of how this researcher understands and makes meaning of the material and the connections she sees in it.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this study is on analyzing and understanding how the intersections of race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression shape corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's professional sport. The conclusions from this study follow the research questions and the findings and therefore address four areas: (a) Do women's professional sport leagues and teams engage in CSR; (b) Do race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the professional athlete who is selected to engage in the CSR initiatives; (c) Do leagues and teams use CSR to combat stereotypes and oppression pertaining to women, specifically female athletes of all ages ; and (d) What meanings or level of importance do league and team executives assign to CSR initiatives and what do they hope to gain. Following is a discussion of the major findings and conclusions drawn from this research. This discussion is followed by the researcher's recommendations and a final reflection from this study.

### **Engaging in CSR**

The preliminary finding of this study is women's professional sport leagues and teams do engage in CSR. This finding indicates that as a whole, the participants engage in Corporate Cause Promotions, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsible Business

Practices. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that women receive less mainstream media coverage for their efforts and contributions on and off the field or court, thus appearing invisible in the work and coverage of CSR in professional sport.

This study adds one more dimension to how women, specifically female athletes, are often excluded from the overall conversation of CSR in sport and rarely recognized for their contributions on and off the field, court, or course. Although, in most cases, women receive unequal coverage for their sport and CSR efforts, professional sport league and teams should continue to engage in CSR for the benefits that do come through Corporate Cause Promotions, Cause-Related Marketing, Corporate Social Marketing, Corporate Philanthropy, Community Volunteering, and Socially Responsibly Business Practices, and positively impact the community, especially young female athletes.

#### Race, Class, Gender and CSR in Women's Professional Sport

The second finding of this study was that all participants indicated that race, class, gender and other forms of difference do impact the design and delivery of the CSR initiatives pertaining to the target audience and the athlete selected to participate in CSR. Although gender, used by interviewees in the context of female sex, was unanimously cited as the largest factor impacting the design and delivery of initiatives, with all participants citing healthy lifestyles, especially for females, as a core initiative.

Additionally, some participants indicated that race and class impacted the marketing and sponsorship opportunities for their team, league, and players. The primary conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that, while Title IX is in effect for sports in K-20 education settings, race, class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of

oppression do impact opportunities for both professional athletes and target audiences who benefit from CSR in women's professional sport.

Further, media is also a key factor in how women's sport is perceived. The findings from this study are consistent with the literature on sport, gender and media coverage. They also suggest that discrimination by the media impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR. As a result of discriminatory practices, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened. Although many organizations including sports, will argue that race, class, gender, and sexual preferences do not impact opportunity, this study suggests that these interesting points of axes do just that depending on where one falls in the matrix of domination.

### Combating Stereotypes and Oppression

The third finding was that corporate social responsibility is used to combat stereotypes or oppression pertaining to female athletes from all backgrounds. Gender equality is the most commonly cited example combating stereotypes and oppression. For example, leagues and teams focus on creating equal opportunities in their sport for women and girls by offering camps and creating other initiatives for girls. The LPGA did indicate they also wanted to make golf more accessible to girls from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds by creating a partnership with the National Parks and Recreation Association.

There are two primary conclusions from this finding. First, some leagues and teams feel that in order to advance the cause for women of all backgrounds, it is important for their organization to focus solely on young women and girls through their

CSR initiatives. The LPGA is the best example of how CSR in women's professional sport is used to combat stereotypes of female athletes because they are strategic in creating a safe space to empower girls and women through the game of golf. Their overall strategic approach seems to be access and equity through golf by creating a girls only space where girls can feel confident as young women and golfers. Second, other leagues and teams feel it is more effective to have a more inclusive target audience, male and female, for their CSR efforts. It seems that leagues and teams that select this approach focus more on increasing fan support from a broader audience as well as use their partnership with their male counterpart team or league to address specific issues and offer a unified message to all.

#### Meanings and Importance of CSR

The fourth finding is that corporate social responsibility is important to the success and sustainability of their league or team and is the socially responsible thing to do. Data indicates CSR is important because it helps leagues and teams connect with local communities and gain support for their sport and team. Overall, CSR is a core value for all leagues and teams while hoping to gain positive PR, increased fan base, increased sponsorship opportunities, and more positive mainstream media coverage. A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that engaging in CSR is one avenue teams, leagues, and sponsors can implement to market and increase the sustainability of their league, while do the socially responsible thing. Sport is a multi-billion dollar industry and with power comes responsibility. Therefore, sport leagues and teams need to lead the way in not only creating a sustainable league, but also serving as a role model

for other industries and individuals by not focusing solely on the bottom dollar, but the ultimate impact the industry can have on local and global communities.

#### CSR in Women's Sports is a Microcosm of Women's Sports in General

The fifth finding suggests that the challenges, obstacles, and future goals for CSR in women's professional sport are parallel to those in women's sports in general. As a result, the results from this study would be similar, if not the same, if CSR was taken out of this study as the medium upon which all questions were based. Moreover, if women's professional sport executives were interviewed and asked about the issues analyzed in this study more generally, not taking a perspective of CSR, the responses and content analysis would most likely have been similar. For example, the lack of quality media coverage, lack of financial resources, a short season lessening the impact to connect with fans and establish a strong fan base, and lack of sponsorship and marketing opportunities, would most likely also be mentioned by any executive in women's professional sport, as these issues are not unique to CSR. In short, it is not necessarily CSR that is being overlooked by mainstream media and fans, but women's sport in general.

#### Study Limitations

A possible limitation of this study may be the lack of voice from the female professional athletes in addressing corporate social responsibility (CSR) and specifically media coverage. While it would be very important to include the perspective and input of female professional athletes from each league, this is not within the scope of the study since the data collection did not coincide with team in-season schedules. In addition, many of the professional female athletes have second jobs during the off-season or play their sport overseas, so they are not easily accessible for interviews. This issue in and of

itself is another indication of gender inequality in professional sport and could be an independent research area.

Another limitation of this study could be that only one national daily newspaper is analyzed to determine the quality and quantity of media coverage in women's professional sport. It would be useful to include at least one other national daily newspaper such as the *USA Today* to compare and contrast media coverage in women's professional sport. Additionally, it would be useful to analyze newspapers in areas that have women's professional sport teams such as the *Washington Post* (Washington Mystics- WNBA) and the *Seattle Times* (Seattle Storm- WNBA) to analyze the quality and quantity of media coverage in women's professional sport. The *New York Times* is used in this study because it is important to see how a national daily newspaper covers women's professional sport, as it is a respected newspaper that has both a male and female reading audience. It would be important to conduct an analysis of local newspapers to help broaden the scope of the study and gain a better understanding of how women's professional sport and female athletes are covered in the media in smaller towns and in local newspapers across the United States. Comparing and contrasting the results would add depth and substance to this study. However, the overarching focus of this study is on understanding of CSR in women's professional sport through understanding and analyzing public league documents and interviews with league and team executives.

#### Concluding Statement

After completing this study, the researcher believes corporate social responsibility in women's professional sport is an untapped market for community outreach, addressing relevant social issues, and highlighting positive role models for young women and girls



of different races, classes, and sexual preferences. After completing this study, the findings are consistent with the research on gender and sport which are that race, class, gender, and sexuality coupled with the type of sport one plays (i.e., individual vs. team), does impact the type of mainstream media coverage an athlete, team, or league receives. However, the findings of this study add to the literature by identifying other factors that may impact the type of mainstream media coverage and overall attention a team or league receives for their sport and CSR initiatives including: lack of financial resources; lack of mainstream media coverage for sport and CSR efforts- for both male and female leagues; and short seasons for most women's team sports.

Ultimately, this study is important because CSR initiatives by professional sport leagues and teams are often influential ways to positively impact the sport and community. Race, class, and gender discrimination by the sporting public negatively impacts the level of interest in women's sport, which, in turn affects the ability of women's professional sport leagues and teams to effectively engage in CSR. As a result of the discrimination, opportunities to conduct meaningful outreach to young women and girls are weakened.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher offers recommendations based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study. Although intersectionality theory has been used to study some aspects of sport (i.e., media coverage), this theory should be used in more studies in sport to help expand the relevance and importance of understanding how all of these intersecting facets impact the experiences and opportunities of sport both for the athletes and the CSR opportunities. Additionally, the researcher recommends further studies be

conducted to develop a larger pool of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of CSR in women's professional sport. Given that there are multiple factors that affect CSR in women's professional sport and acknowledging that these vary across sport, the recommendations should be considered for their appropriateness on an individual basis. At the same time, it should be noted that there are many excellent examples of CSR in women's professional sport where different forms of oppression (i.e., gender, class, race) are less of a factor (i.e., Girls Golf). Therefore, some of the following recommendations may already be in place. In light of this, the following should be considered:

1. A study comparing and analyzing multiple daily national newspapers and daily local newspapers would add depth and insight to the quality and quantity of media coverage in women's professional sport and CSR in women's professional sport.
2. Based on the limitations and scope of this study, female athletes' perspective on how teams and leagues engage in CSR should be included to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be discovered.
3. A content analysis comparing the mainstream media coverage of CSR in men's professional sport and women's professional sport would add depth to the literature. This would shed light on if CSR coverage is getting shafted, or whether it's women's sports instead.
4. A comparison and analysis of research should be undertaken to assess the impact of CSR initiatives that focus solely on girls and women (e.g., LPGA) versus a more inclusive approach including males and females (e.g., WNBA). This research should be undertaken to uncover similarities and differences in perspectives as well as implications for success or failure in CSR initiatives.
5. A qualitative study on female athletes' perspective of gender, sport, and media. The study should focus on their perspective of their media experiences and their input on the overall message of the shoot, selected poses, and clothes selection. It is critical to include the female athletes' voice when discussing how they are portrayed in the media and how they take accountability for how they are portrayed.

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/26/AR2009072602357.html>, November 6, 2011, 5:35am

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<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/home/advocate/title-ix-and-issues/what-is-title-ix/title-ix-primer>, September 1, 2012, 6:12am

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<http://espn.go.com/espnw/more-sports/7551789/espnw-yani-tseng-wants-lexi-thompson-has>, February 16, 2012, 8:21am

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/sports/golf/24lpga.html?_r=0), January 10, 2012, 6:45am

<http://sports.espn.go.com/wnba/news/story?id=2204322>, November 17, 2011, 7:33am

<http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=128546&page=1#.T0FaaMyGbR1>, November 8, 2011, 8:34am)

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<http://www.hws.edu/centennial/king.asp>, June 25, 2012, 12:33pm

<http://espn.go.com/sportscntury/features/00016060.html>, June 25, 2012, 10:50am

<http://www.hws.edu/centennial/king.asp>, June 25, 2012, 12:17pm

<http://www.hws.edu/centennial/king.asp>, June 25, 2012, 12:17pm

## Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Dear Community Relations Director,

My name is Lorie Coker and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in Public Policy and Administration. I would like to invite you to participate in an exploratory research project. The purpose of this research project is to better understand the landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility in women's professional sport by interviewing executives who develop and implement these initiatives.

I would like to schedule a time to meet with you in a face-to-face interview (approximately 60 minutes) and I would like to audio record the interview. The data collected from this interview will be confidential and your name and team/league affiliation will not be publically identified.

If you have any questions about this project you can contact me via e-mail, [cokerlc@vcu.edu](mailto:cokerlc@vcu.edu), or phone, XXX-XXX-XXXX. My advising professor for my dissertation is Dr. Janet Hutchinson, and she can be reached via e-mail, [jhutch@vcu.edu](mailto:jhutch@vcu.edu), or phone, 804-828-8041.

Your signature indicates that you have read the information in this letter and have decided to participate in this study. You may withdraw from this study at any time. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Lorie

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

League or Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Interview Protocol**

- Background Questions
  - Tell me a little about your background in corporate social responsibility?
    - How long have you been with \_\_\_\_\_?
    - What is your primary role?
- CSR Initiatives for League or Team
  - How does your organization engage in CSR (i.e., Donating funds to nonprofit organizations, supporting a cause, employee volunteering, making a profit, etc.)?
  - What are the main areas for your corporate social responsibility initiatives (i.e., youth sport programs, ecological/environmental initiatives, educational initiatives, economic development, contributions to charitable foundations, health programs, etc.)?
  - What is the significance of CSR for your league or team?
  - Why does your organization participate in CSR (i.e., legal, ethical, philanthropic, economic)?
  - How does your organization prioritize your CSR efforts?
  - How do you evaluate/track whether your efforts are making a difference to those they were meant to affect?
  - What is it about CSR in your league that makes it unique- different than CSR practiced by companies in other sport leagues?
  - What role do partnerships and alliances play in the development and distribution of your CSR efforts?
    - Would your organization consider partnering with male counterpart to strengthen a CSR initiative?
  - How has CSR evolved in your league from its beginning to today? What has changed? What forces have influenced that change?
  - Does the public expect women's professional sport teams to be socially responsible?
- Race, Class, and Gender
  - How do race, class, and gender shape the development and delivery of CSR initiatives for your organization (i.e., Support programs for girls, programs for inner-city/rural youth, ad campaigns etc.)?
  - What is your organization doing to ensure young women and girls remain interested and active in sport?
  - With the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX around the corner, how do you plan to celebrate the contributions of past, present, and future female athletes?
  - Is it the responsibility of your organization to develop ways through programs or marketing to combat stereotypes pertaining to females in sport?
    - Why or Why not? How do you do this?

- How are athletes selected to represent your organization's CSR efforts (i.e., spokesperson for campaign)?
  - Does race, class, gender, sexual preference impact decision? Why or why not?
- Is your organization using CSR to improve your public image?
  - If so, what "negative" image are you trying to overshadow?
- CSR Efforts and Media Coverage
  - What type of media coverage does your league/team receive for your CSR efforts?
  - How does your organization market CSR efforts?
    - Can this be improved and if so, how?
  - When there is a negative issue or event surrounding your sport or athletes, how does this affect your role and CSR?
    - What are examples of negative issues or events surrounding your league or team?
  - How are players selected to engage in CSR or market CSR initiatives for your team/sport?
  - Do you think that women's professional sport receives the same or similar coverage for the CSR efforts as men's professional sport?
    - Why or why not and is this an issue?
- The Future of CSR in Women's Professional Sport
  - What challenges might women's sport leagues face in the area of CSR?
  - How do you see CSR in women's professional sport developing over the next 10 years?
  - What do you think the main drivers of that effort will be?

### Appendix C: Document Summary Form

Name or Type of Document:

Document Number/Letter:

Date Received:

Date of Document:

Event or Contact with which Document is Associated:

- ☐ Descriptive
- ☐ Evaluative
- ☐ Other

Page #	Key Words / Concepts	Comments: Relationship to Research Questions

Brief Summary of Contents:

- 
- 

Significance or Purpose of Document:

- 
- 

Is There Anything Contradictory About the Document?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Salient Questions / Issues to Consider:

- 
- 

Additional Comments/ Reflections / Issues:

- 
-

## **Appendix D: Participant Summary Form**

Participant ID Number:

Type of Contact:

Contact Date:

Today's Date:

- ☐ Face to Face
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Internet / E-mail

Summary of Information for Each Research Question:

Research Question 1

Research Question 2

Research Question 3

Research Question 4

Additional Information Needed:

- 
- 

Questions, Concerns, Implications, Issues Still to be Addressed:

- 
-

## Appendix E: Data Summary Charts

**Data Summary Chart 1: CSR in Women's Professional Sport**

	Corporate Cause Promotions	Cause-Related Marketing	Corporate Social Marketing	Corporate Philanthropy	Community Volunteering	Socially Responsible Business Practices
WNBA 1						
WNBA 2						
WNBA 3						
WPS						
LPGA						
WTA						



**Data Summary Chart 2: CSR Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives**

	Breast Cancer Awareness	Heart Health	Diabetes	HIV/ AIDS	Childhood Obesity	Women's Health	Education	Access to Sports for Girls & Women	As a Whole: R,C,G, S.P., Nat. impact design/ delivery of CSR
WNBA 1									
WNBA 2									
WNBA 3									
WPS									
LPGA									
WTA									

**Data Summary Chart 3: Factors Shaping CSR in Women's Professional Sport**

	Race	Class	Gender	Sexual Preference	Nationality	As a Whole: R, C, G, S.P, Nat. impact design/ delivery of CSR
WNBA 1						
WNBA 2						
WNBA 3						
WPS						
LPGA						
WTA						

**Data Summary Chart 4: Media Coverage in Women's Professional Sport**

	Media Coverage of Sport	Media Coverage of CSR	Stereotypes / Discrimination	As a Whole: Race, Class, Gender Impact Media Coverage & Opportunities
WNBA 1				
WNBA 2				
WNBA 3				
WPS				
LPGA				
WTA				

**Data Summary Chart 5: Obstacles in CSR in Women's Professional Sport**

	Short Season	Lack of Resources /\$	Lack of Sponsorship Opportunities	Lack of Marketing Opportunities	Stereotypes (Negative/Degrading)	Lack of Media Coverage	Leadership	As a Whole: R,C,G, S.P. Nat. can be obstacle for CSR and League
WNBA 1								
WNBA 2								
WNBA 3								
WPS								
LPGA								
WTA								

**Data Summary Chart 6: Purposes and Future Goals of CSR in Women's Professional Sport**

	More Money/ More Resources (for contracts, Sponsors/ CSR)	More Sponsors	Increase Fan Base	More Media Coverage	More CSR Opportunities	More Women's Professional Sports	More Collaboration with Men's & Women's Leagues/Sports	More Access to sports for Girls from all backgrounds
WNBA 1								
WNBA 2								
WNBA 3								
WPS								
LPGA								
WTA								

## Appendix F: Content Code Book

The following guidelines are to ensure the content analysis for the *New York Times* articles is conducted in an organized and systematic manner.

Column A: Name of Media Source:	1. The New York Times (NYT)
Column B: Date Issued:	Input date: month/date/year
Column C: Photo Type	1. Athletic Action 2. Dressed but poised and pretty 3. Non-sport Setting 4. Pornographic/Sexually suggestive 5. Non-athletic sport setting 6. No Photo

Operational definitions of the categories are as follows:

- *Athletic action*- Athlete(s) actively engaging in a sport and dressed in athletic uniform (e.g., photo of athlete in game action).
- *Dressed but poised and pretty*- Athlete(s) dressed in athletic uniform but posed for photo. Athlete(s) is not engaged in athletic activity (e.g., athlete posed and not engaged in sporting activity; posed studio shot; group shot of team; holding trophy).
- *Non-sport setting*- Athlete(s) dressed in non-athletic uniform and pictured in non-athletic setting (e.g., photo of athlete at home with family; in a non-sport location such as restaurant).
- *Pornographic/ Sexually suggestive*- Athlete(s) dressed provocatively or pictured in a way that focuses solely on sexual attributes (e.g., photograph framed on athlete's buttock, athlete posed with a sexual gaze, or athlete posed in a sexual position)
- *Non-athletic sport setting*: Athlete(s) not dressed in athletic uniform but is in a sport setting (e.g., photo of an athlete in a dress on a basketball court).
- *No Photo*- No photo accompanied the article

Column D: Article Type	1. Personal 2. Victim 3. Sport related 4. System critique 5. Sport struggle 6. Sport victories 7. Health-Personal 8. Health-Sport 9. Fashion 10. Corporate Social Responsibility
------------------------	---

Operational definitions of the article content categories are as follows:

- *Personal*- Content describing the non-athletic portion of an athlete(s) life (e.g., story of athlete being a mother).
- *Victim*- Content describing an athlete(s) struggle against adversity (e.g., story of an athlete's drug addiction).
- *Sport related*- Content describing an athlete(s) ability as an athlete (e.g., story of an athlete's sporting accomplishment).
- *System critique*- Content critiquing a sporting institution (i.e., story investigating media attention of women's sporting events as compared to men's sporting events).
- *Sport struggle*- Content describing difficulties of a sport achieving popularity or content describing continued low awareness of sport).
- *Sport victories*- Content describing triumphs of sport achieving popularity or content describing continued management or good behavior of athletes (e.g., story detailing rise of sport popularity).
- *Health-Personal*- Content describing activities or products that improve a person(s) non-athletic health (e.g., story describing suntan lotions).
- *Health-Sport*- Content describing activities or products that improve a person's) athletic health (e.g., story describing workout routines for sport-specific improvement).
- *Fashion*- Content detailing clothing or makeup (e.g., story describing new line of jogging attire).
- *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*- Content describing activities that improve greater society (e.g., story describing athlete's charitable efforts or book drive).

Column E: Race

- 1) Caucasian
- 2) African American
- 3) Asian

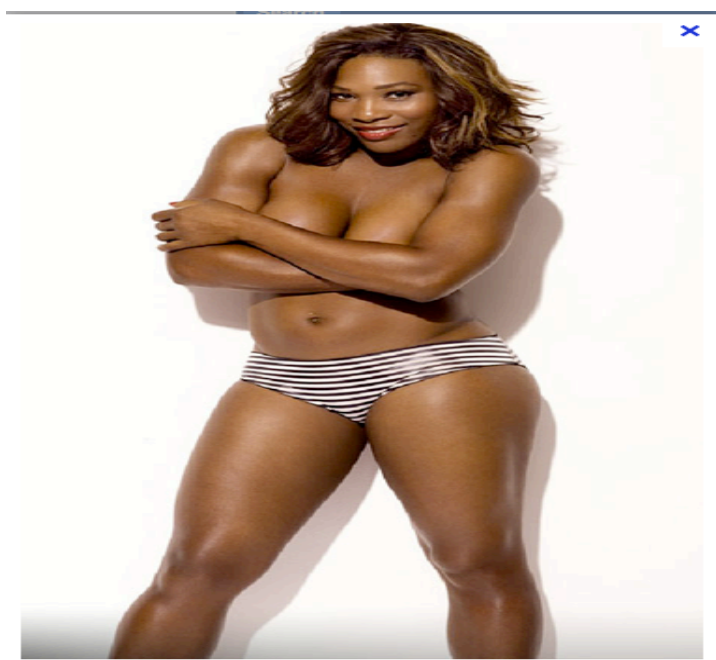
Column F: Sport

- 1) Tennis
- 2) Golf
- 3) Basketball
- 4) Soccer

## Appendix G: Images

### Women's Tennis Association

*Serena Williams: ESPN The Magazine 2010 Body Issue*





*Strong Is Beautiful Campaign*

*Serena Williams:*



*Daniela Hantuchova*



## Ladies Professional Golf

*Belen Mozo: ESPN The Magazine 2011 Body Issue*



*Natalie Gulbis: Sports Illustrated 2012 Swimsuit Edition (Body Paint)*





*Yani Tseng & Lexi Thompson: Thompson has what Tseng Wants- Marketability in the US*



*Yani Tseng*



*Lexi Thompson*

*Yani Tseng and Lexi Thompson: Demonstrating Marketability in United States*



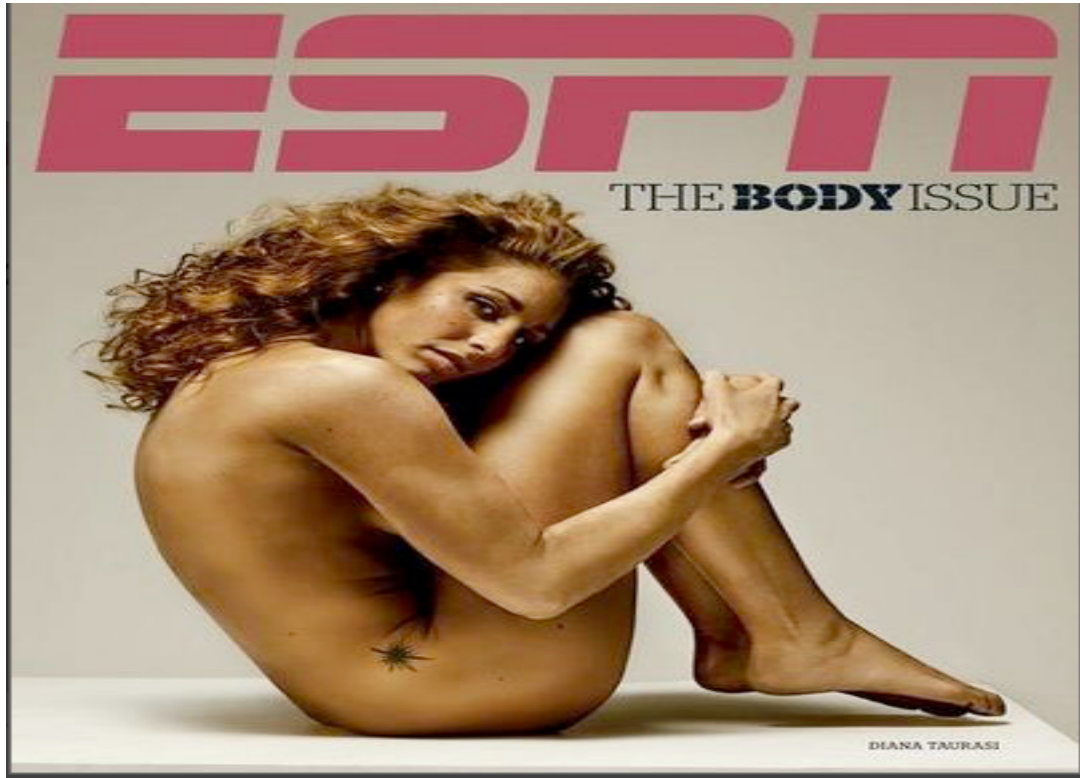
*Yani Tseng*



*Lexi Thompson*

**Women's National Basketball Association**

*Diana Taurasi: ESPN The Magazine 2010 Body Issue*





*Sylvia Fowles: ESPN The Magazine 2011 Body Issue*



## Women's National Basketball Association

*Honoring Motherhood or Marginalizing Female Athleticism?*



*Sheryl Swoopes: Spring 1997*



*Candace Parker: Spring 2009*



## Women's Professional Soccer

*Hope Solo: ESPN The Magazine 2011 Body Issue*



*Alex Morgan: Sports Illustrated 2012 Swimsuit Edition (Body Paint)*



## TABLES

**Table 1      CSR in Women's Professional Sport: Categories & Frequencies**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Corporate Cause Promotions	Increasing Awareness and Concern for Social Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring Canned Food to Donate to Homeless Shelter</li> <li>• PSA's for diabetes</li> <li>• Wearing Pink: Breast Cancer Awareness</li> </ul>	309	100
Cause-Related Marketing	Making Contributions to Causes Based on Product Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy Shirt with Breast Cancer logo &amp; percentage of proceeds donated</li> <li>• Buy a ball, we will donate ball</li> <li>• Nothing But Nets</li> <li>• Percentage of Ticket Sales go to Tsunami Victims</li> </ul>	252	100
Corporate Social Marketing	Supporting Behavior Change Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read To Achieve</li> <li>• WNBA Fit</li> <li>• Breast Health Awareness</li> <li>• Strong Is Beautiful</li> <li>• Dribble to Stop Diabetes</li> </ul>	536	100
Corporate Philanthropy	Making a Direct Contribution to a Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan G. Komen for the Cure</li> <li>• American Red Cross</li> <li>• Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• UNICEF</li> </ul>	382	100
Community Volunteering	Employees Donating Their Time and Talents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees Volunteer</li> <li>• Serve Meals at Homeless Shelter</li> <li>• Refurbish Classrooms</li> <li>• Build Playgrounds</li> </ul>	501	100
Socially Responsible Business Practices	Discretionary Business Practices & Investments to Support Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WNBA Green Week</li> <li>• Recycling Cans at Events</li> <li>• Plant Trees at Event</li> </ul>	131	100

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category = Percentage of interviewees who mentioned a specific theme

**Table 2          Women's Tennis Association CSR Initiatives**

<b>Program Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mission Focus	The social responsibility programs focus on fighting for equality by raising awareness of gender equality issues and advance opportunities for women, focusing on natural disasters, and women's health, among other issues.
Strong Is Beautiful	The Strong is Beautiful campaign features 38 current and next generation stars of the sport. Drawing upon athleticism and grace - a unique combination that has turned the stars of the WTA into the most recognizable and followed female athletes on the planet - the campaign places the personal stories, pressures and dreams of the players front of stage. The creative is designed to support the WTA's efforts to establish a deeper engagement with fans around the world and to promote both the sport's next generation of players along with current established names.
Strong Is Beautiful Celebrity Campaign	The WTA Strong Is Beautiful Celebrity Campaign features celebrities from entertainment, music, business, film and sport speaking of their love of women's tennis. The new campaign aims to tap into these celebrities' fan bases and powerful personal brands to help stretch the boundaries of the sport even further and attract a new generation of fans to women's tennis
UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	<b>UNESCO</b> and the WTA have a global partnership to further gender equality and promote women's leadership in all spheres of society.
Habitat for Humanity	Charity dedicated to eliminating poverty housing worldwide in the belief that simple decent shelter is a basic human right. The WTA began its partnership with Habitat in 2007 as part of the Tsunami relief efforts in which they teamed together to build new homes and better the living conditions for families in the affected regions.
Make-A-Wish Foundation	Grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions.
Tennis Against Breast Cancer (TABC)	Formed to expand awareness of breast cancer and raise funds to find a cure.
First Serve	Empowering young people by providing local tennis facilities and schools with a life skills program.

Source: The Official Website of the Women's Tennis Association ([www.wtatennis.com](http://www.wtatennis.com))

**Table 3        Ladies Professional Golf Association CSR Initiatives**

<b>Program Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mission Statement	Empowering and supporting girls and women through developmental and humanitarian golf initiatives.
Girls Golf	Girls Golf is a program that reaches 8,000 girls 7-17 and teaches them not only how to play the game of golf, but life lessons that will help them to face their future as confident and empowered individuals.
The Dinah Shore Scholarship	The Dinah Shore Scholarship is granted annually to a female high school senior who is pursuing a college education, but will not be playing collegiate golf. The Dinah Shore Scholarship receives tremendous support from Kraft Foods, Inc., the Fund's largest corporate donor, and the Kraft Nabisco Championship, one of the LGPA Tour's four major championships.
The Marilynn Smith Scholarship	Provides a scholarship to a female high school senior who has played golf in high school or in her community, and is planning to play golf at an accredited college or university in the United States.
The Phyllis G. Meekins Scholarship	The Phyllis G. Meekins Scholarship provides a need-based scholarship to a female high school senior from a recognized minority background who will be pursuing a full-time course of study and playing collegiate golf at an accredited college or university in the United States.
Dolores Hope LPGA Financial Assistance Initiative	The fund assists members of the LPGA and others from the golf industry who are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of serious illness, injury, or other significant hardship.
Susan G. Komen For The Cure	The LPGA named the Susan G. Komen For The Cure as its official national charity. Several LPGA sponsors and tournaments have incorporated the Komen For The Cure and the fight against breast cancer into their LPGA and sports marketing programs, helping to both educate consumers about the importance of early detection and to raise funds for research and community programs.
World Golf Foundation	Develops and supports initiatives that positively impact lives through the game of golf and its traditional values.

Source: The Official Website of the Ladies Professional Golf Association ([www.lpga.com](http://www.lpga.com))

**Table 4      Women's National Basketball Association CSR Initiatives**

<b>Program Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mission Statement	The WNBA is deeply committed to WNBA CARES programs that improve the quality of life for all people, with a special emphasis on promoting health and fitness, breast health awareness, reading and youth basketball programs.
Team Community Efforts	WNBA teams maintain a range of creative programs geared to give back to their communities. Whether it's engaging youth in various Read to Achieve incentive platforms or fun fitness programs, coordinating environmentally friendly projects, or providing memorable in-arena experiences to deserving local heroes, WNBA teams actively participate in local community outreach.
Measles Initiative	Represents one of the world's most successful partnerships in public health, aiming to reduce global measles mortality through mass vaccination campaigns and by strengthening routine immunization overseas.
Breast Health Awareness	The WNBA Breast Health Awareness program focuses on generating awareness and educating women about breast cancer in addition to raising funds for the initiative. More than \$2 million has been raised by the WNBA, its players and teams to help fight breast cancer through this program.
WNBA Fit	Encourages girls and women of all ages to learn more about their bodies and the importance of physical fitness through programs related to health, fitness, nutrition and self-esteem.
Read to Achieve	A year-round, league-wide initiative that promotes the values of reading and on-line literacy and encourages families and adults to read regularly with young children. The program includes special reading time-outs, the donation of books and literacy materials to schools and community organizations, and the creation of Reading and Learning Centers and Reading Corners throughout the world.
WNBA Encourages Fans to Go Green	In collaboration with the NRDC the WNBA purchased Renewable Energy Credits to off-set energy used at all WNBA arenas hosting games throughout WNBA Green Week.

Source: The Official Website of the Women's National Basketball Association  
([www.http://www.wnba.com/cares/](http://www.wnba.com/cares/))

**Table 5        Women’s Professional Soccer Team CSR Initiatives**

<b>Program Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Mission Focus	Focus on CSR initiatives on health, wellness, and education.
March of Dimes	Partner with March of Dimes whose mission is to help moms have full-term pregnancies and research the problems that threaten the health of babies.
Girls on the Run	Partner with Girls on the Run whose mission is to inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running.
Employee Volunteer Days	Employee, staff, and player volunteer days are a way for the organization to give back to their community. They partner with local schools, food banks, hospitals, and other organizations that focus on health, wellness, and education.
Soccer Camps	They offer soccer camps for individual girls and teams. This is a great way to give back to the community as well as gain new fans for their team and sport.
Support local nonprofits who focus on health, wellness, or education	This team looks for new community partners as a way to give back to the community. They can donate their time, resources, memorabilia, tickets etc. The focus is on partnering with organizations that focus on health, wellness, and education.

Source: The Official Website of the Women’s Professional Soccer team interviewed for this study and an interview with a team executive from that team.

**Table 6 Factors Shaping CSR Initiatives: Categories & Frequencies**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UNICEF Partnership</li><li>• Clinics and Camps for Girls</li><li>• Foundation focusing on Girls and Soccer</li></ul>	628	100
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with underserved population</li><li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li><li>• Scholarships</li><li>• Refurbish Playgrounds</li></ul>	321	67
Race / Ethnicity / Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Girls Golf / Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li><li>• Scholarships</li><li>• SportsUnited Program (International Programs)</li><li>• Ethnic Hairstyles</li></ul>	184	50
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NBA Anti-Gay Slur Wordplay PSA (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0</a>)</li><li>• Makeup and Fashion Lessons</li><li>• Sheryl Swoopes coming out</li></ul>	17	0

\*Frequency of times category appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category=Percentage of interviewees who mentioned category



**Table 7        NYT Media Coverage of Women's Professional Sport**

	Total Articles in NYT Sports Section	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Women's Tennis Association (WTA)	Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)	Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)	Women's Professional Soccer (WPS)
2009	1542	25	16	5	3	1
2010	1567	23	15	4	4	0
2011	1582	26	14	5	5	2
2012	1613	23	16	5	2	0
Total	6,304	97	61	19	14	3
%	100	1.54	62.90	19.59	14.43	3.09

**Table 8      NYT Article Type of Women's Professional Sport**

	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Personal	Victim	Sport Related	Sport Struggle	Sport Victories	Health- Sport	Fashion	CSR
2009	25	9	0	8	3	1	2	2	0
2010	23	3	1	15	1	0	1	2	0
2011	26	3	0	20	3	0	0	0	0
2012	23	5	0	16	1	1	0	0	0
Total	97	20	1	59	8	2	3	4	0
%	100	20.62	1.03	60.82	8.25	2.06	3.09	4.12	0

**Table 9        NYT Photo Type of Women's Professional Sport**

	Total NYT Opportunities for Pictures with WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Athletic Action	Dressed but Poised & Pretty	Non-Sport Setting	Pornographic & Sexually Suggestive	Non-athletic Sport Setting	No Photo
2009	25	13	6	1	0	4	1
2010	23	12	8	0	0	3	0
2011	26	16	6	0	0	0	4
2012	23	11	6	0	0	2	4
Total	97	52	26	1	0	9	9
%	100	53.60	26.80	1.03	0	9.28	9.28

**Table 10      NYT Coverage: Race of Individual in Photo or Described in Article**

	Total NYT Articles about WTA, LPGA, WNBA & WPS	Caucasian	African American	Asian	No Picture
2009	25	13	10	1	1
2010	23	12	7	4	0
2011	26	7	11	5	3
2012	23	8	7	7	1
Total	97	40	35	17	5
%	100	41.24	36.08	17.53	5.15

**Table 11 Combating Oppression with CSR in Women's Sport: Categories & Frequencies**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Race / Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	63	16
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Starting New At Golf (SNAG)</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	112	16
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF Partnership</li> <li>• Clinics and Camps</li> <li>• Foundation focusing on Girls and Soccer</li> <li>• Girls Golf</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> <li>• Supporting charities that focus on women</li> </ul>	356	100
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NBA Anti-Gay Slurs Wordplay PSA (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z7EOG8z_e0</a>)</li> </ul>	2	0

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category/theme = Percentage of interview respondents who mentioned a specific theme

**Table 12 Purposes for Engaging in CSR: Themes & Frequencies**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Frequency*</b>	<b>Percentage**</b>
Positive Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Service Announcements</li><li>• Donating to Local Charities</li><li>• Building a Playground</li><li>• Employee &amp; Team Volunteering</li></ul>	502	100
Increase Fan Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Sponsor Theme Night</li><li>• Offer fee-based and free clinics</li><li>• Partner with other organizations</li><li>• Social Media Presence</li></ul>	423	100
Socially Responsible Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core Value</li><li>• Recycling at Events</li><li>• Empowering women and girls</li></ul>	435	100
Increase Marketing and Sponsorship Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Sponsor Theme Nights</li><li>• Health &amp; Fashion Magazines</li><li>• Social Media Presence</li><li>• Team Up with Male Leagues</li></ul>	353	100
Access to Sport for Girls & Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create accessible courses</li><li>• Girls Golf</li><li>• International basketball leagues for women and girls</li><li>• Partnerships with State Department</li><li>• Partnering with Grassroots Organizations</li></ul>	367	83

\* Frequency of times category/theme appears in data = Number of total quotations/document passages

\*\* Percentage of interviewees represented in category/theme = Percentage of interview respondents who mentioned a specific theme