

Intercollegiate Athletics and Sexual Aggression
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Intercollegiate Athletics and Sexual Aggression

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Abstract

The following seminar paper is an extensive literature review focused on whether or not there is a link between participation in intercollegiate athletics, specifically football, and an increased likelihood to commit an act of sexual aggression. With increased media coverage of college athletics, more news stories have surfaced about several instances of sexual assault involving college football players which is now creating a narrative that all football players may be potential sexual offenders. While there is no one study that specifically states this is the case, many factors of simply being a college football player put an individual into many demographics that contain high-risk individuals. We examine past scandals in college athletics that are driving this narrative, current campus culture including the high number of reported sexual assaults, and the social influences around a college football player both as a member of the team and as an individual. The overall focus of this seminar paper is to find if there is a link between football and sexual assault. Furthermore, if there is an established link – what can be done as a coach or campus faculty member to help stop future acts from being carried out by their student-athletes?

In recent headline news there is an increasing number of cases of sexual aggression committed by college student-athletes. Famous national news stories such as Stanford University swimmer, Brock Turner (Dockterman, 2016) and major Baylor University sexual assault cases (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017) have highlighted the prevalence of a widespread culture in collegiate athletics, specifically in males, that may lead to acts of sexual aggression. This seminar paper will analyze the existence of a relationship between participation in intercollegiate athletics and an increased likelihood of committing an act of sexual aggression. Furthermore, if such a relationship does exist, what are the contributing factors and how can the NCAA/Universities act accordingly to counteract this behavior. In a four-year study of undergraduate men, Swartout, Swartout, Brennan, and White (2015) found that 31% of the men engaged in at least one act of sexual aggression during college. Murnen and Kohlman (2007) found similar results with intercollegiate athletes – the preliminary data seems to show a distinct link within their smaller study samples between participation in athletics and sexual aggression. It seems however, that all undergraduate men are at a high risk of committing an act of sexual aggression compared to women, not just student-athletes. In a similar study Gidycz et al. (2011) measured the perceived likelihood of committing a sexually aggressive act prior to the first semester of an undergraduate male's college experience against a later survey of acts committed. After a four-month period they found that, for both men who perceived themselves as likely to commit an act of sexual aggression and men who did not, numbers of reported acts of sexual aggression increased after the four-month period of attending higher education versus prior. (Gidycz et al., 2011).

One factor that could lead to a decrease in the number of acts committed is a proper understanding of consent. Warren, Swan, and Allen (2015) identified several indicators that

predicted an individual's lack of comprehension of sexual consent: greater acceptance of rape myth, more conformity to masculine norms, and greater peer support of abuse. Warren et al. (2015) show a direct correlation between understanding consent and perpetration of sexual aggression. Therefore, the more an individual understands consent in a sexual relationship, the less likely he or she is to commit an act of sexual aggression. This link between consent, rape myth, and athletics was further explored by Sawyer, Thompson, and Chicorelli (2002) who attempted to find links between college athletes and acceptance of rape myths. They identified a few key differences in responses between men and women. For instance, when asked whether athletes were more likely than non-athletes to be involved in date rape, only 13% of the population agreed but female participants were significantly more likely to agree with this statement than men. Alternatively, when asked if they felt that athletes were unfairly targeted as perpetrators in sexual assault and date rape incidents, male athletes were significantly more likely to agree. Sawyer et al. (2002) most shocking finding were that respondents, especially males, felt that about 50% of reported rapes were invented by women or that women lied about being raped about half the time.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, an estimated 25% of females and 3% of male students will be sexually assaulted on college campuses during their time as an undergraduate. The physical and psychological effects of sexual assault are devastating, students who are sexually assaulted may face hardships in achieving their personal and academic goals. (Rothman & Silverman, 2007). If student-athletes, football players, in particular, are at a higher risk of committing sexual assault, universities must target these individuals for prevention education programs.

Significance of the Study

This study examines what role male student-athletes play in this problem, what prevention programs are currently in place, and what can be done in the future to decrease this problem across the United States. More specifically, this study will take a closer look at collegiate football players due to the aggressive and violent nature of the sport to investigate if these men are at a higher risk than other students to commit an act of sexual aggression.

Purpose of the Study

This seminar paper will focus on the perpetration of sexual aggression by undergraduate males only, not females. An examination of what can be done to fix this problem, if it exists according to the research, will also be explored. Many researchers stress the need for prevention education starting in high school, (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Sawyer et al., 2002; Swartout et al., 2015). Prevention education could help to decrease the number of undergraduate men who believe certain rape myths which may ultimately help reduce the amount of sexual aggression on college campuses throughout the United States, (Sawyer et al. 2002).

Definition of Terms

Sexual Aggression - sexual activity, including petting, oral sex, anal intercourse, and vaginal intercourse, performed against a person's will through the use of force, argument, alcohol, drugs or authority

Binge Drinking – consumption of a large quantity of alcohol in a short period of time, typically in one sitting/event.

Hyper-masculinity - a sociological term denoting exaggerated forms of masculinity, virility, and physicality.

Bystander Approach - a promising approach to sexual violence prevention as it encourages the community to take ownership of sexual violence as a problem and speak up when they witness potentially dangerous situations or sexist language.

Limitations of Research

The research in this seminar paper was restricted to recent studies (the majority of sources must be 7 years old or less) except for a few key journals. Other than a brief historical review, the research in this study was limited to peer-reviewed articles published in the last seven years. It is the opinion of the writer that a much more thorough analysis could have been completed without this limitation. Academic Journals and Articles were found through the Karmann Library Online Database and Inter-Library Loan Program. Searches were conducted using keywords such as rape, college, campus, athlete, and sexual aggression within all available databases offered by the University of Wisconsin – Platteville.

Method of Approach

To gain an understanding of the perceived link between intercollegiate athletics and sexual aggression a brief review of the history on this topic is discussed; specifically, high profile cases such as Duke Lacrosse, Colorado Football, and Louisville Basketball. A review of literature relating to research and studies on sexual aggression, rape myth culture, and its impact on college campuses was conducted. Another review of the literature on research related to sexual aggression amongst collegiate student-athletes was conducted. The findings were summarized and synthesized in Chapter 2 of this paper. Conclusions and recommendations are included in Chapter 3.

Chapter– Review of Literature

Introduction – Scandal in College Football

In January 2014 a national news story out of Waco, Texas shocked the entire sports world when Baylor University football player, Tevin Elliot, was tried and convicted of three counts of sexual assault and rape (Witherspoon, 2014). Perhaps more troubling was that one of the victims, Jasmin Hernandez, even reported the assault to Baylor University officials and was told that nobody could do anything to help her; her reports were “swept under the rug” and forgotten by university officials. Hernandez was one of five women who reported that they were raped or assaulted by Tevin Elliot specifically and even more women had also come forward with allegations against several Baylor football players. The women involved in Tevin Elliot’s case had hoped that coming forward would stop others from being assaulted. What they didn’t know was that even before Elliot’s case went to trial, another Baylor football player, Sam Ukwuachu, was investigated for the rape of a female Baylor soccer player. After contacting Waco police, the victim also emailed the Baylor Chief judicial officer, Bethany McCraw, who opened a Title IX investigation. After a four-month investigation, both the Waco Police and McCraw stated that the victims' sexual assault allegations couldn’t be proved with any evidence and were dismissed. Upon reviewing files for the Tevin Elliot case, the assistant district attorney, Hilary LaBorde, stumbled upon the botched investigation into Ukwuachu by university staff. Five months after the conviction of Elliot, LaBorde prosecuted Sam Ukwuachu for two counts of sexual assault. Ukwuachu was convicted one year later and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Upon further investigation, these two cases were but a small sample of Baylor university staff repeatedly ignoring reports of sexual assault committed by football players. The systemic failure of the administration at Baylor University to properly act on these allegations eventually led to the

removal of Baylor University president Kenneth Starr, athletic director Ian McCaw, and head football coach Art Briles (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). While Baylor's systemic failures to report and handle instances of sexual assault made headline news, they were hardly the first and will not be the last higher education institution to make critical errors. History has shown that when it comes to acts of sexual aggression, university men of all capacities including campus administration, coaches, and student-athletes have made very public errors and are now being held to a very high standard. Arguably the most infamous case of institutional sexual abuse within a college football team came to light in November of 2011 at Penn State University. Allegations were made that longtime assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky, had sexually abused multiple children over a period of at least fifteen years. While the true number of victims impacted by Sandusky is unknown, he was eventually convicted on 45 counts of child sexual abuse and subsequently sentenced to a minimum of 30 years and a maximum of 60 years in prison. Sandusky, 75, will likely never leave incarceration. In response to Sandusky's conviction and an investigation by the NCAA, Penn State University was given harsh sanctions directed at the football team including a \$60 million fine. Most likely beginning with the 2006 Duke Lacrosse rape scandal, increased media coverage of athletes and coaches involved in sexually aggressive crimes have painted a picture of a much wider problem in college athletics, especially in aggressive male sports like football.

The purpose of this seminar paper is to research whether there is empirical data linking participation in collegiate athletics, specifically football, and a higher proclivity to commit an act of sexual aggression. Furthermore, if there is, in fact, an established link, what steps can be taken as a football coach to help facilitate the prevention of these acts.

Celebrity Athletes

College football is one of the most-watched sports in the United States every year. The most-watched game of the 2016 season between Ohio State and Michigan brought in over 17 million viewers (Statista, 2017). With the recent growth in popularity of collegiate sports in America, the student-athletes, especially in football and men's basketball, have become quasi celebrities. This celebrity status has caused a rise in disproportionate power over females on college campuses which may be a key risk factor for perpetration of a sexual assault (Wiersma-Mosley, Jozkowski, & Martinez, 2017). Fueling the disparity between student-athletes and general students, university athletic departments' count on the public following of their athletes in order to raise large amounts of money through ticket sales, merchandise, and alumni donations (Humphreys & Mondelo, 2007). Many athletes like former Duke Basketball player, Zion Williamson, boast massive followings on social media and are followed intently by members of the media. Williamson's Twitter account had over 5 million twitter followers while he was still technically a student-athlete at Duke University. On top of all the attention these young men receive in college, their celebrity status is elevated even higher when they become professionals, often making them millionaires overnight. This increase in a paycheck is accompanied by an even more watchful eye from mainstream media and when these athletes break the law, they make national headline news. Famous headlines in the last 15 years include Duke Lacrosse (NCAA), Ray Rice (NFL), Florida State Football (NCAA), Greg Hardy (NFL), Louisville Men's Basketball (NCAA), Colorado Football (NCAA), Josh Brown (NFL), and Baylor Football (NCAA). More recently, Tyreke Hill of the Kansas City Chiefs (NFL) and Antonio Brown of the New England Patriots (NFL) have faced allegations of assault. Due to the polarizing nature of these "celebrity athletes," these stories become national news overnight and flood news networks

and social media with mass arguments carried out in the court of public opinion. One primary example of media outlets picking up a case and driving public opinion was the 2006 Duke Men's Lacrosse case (Cohan, 2015). After a team party held by members of the Duke Men's Lacrosse team, a woman named Crystal Mangum who was hired as an exotic dancer reported to local law enforcement that she was raped by three of the team members during the party. What ensued was a massive media storm that ultimately drove public opinion that the three male athletes were, in fact, guilty of committing rape. During the investigation, protests were held calling for the resignations of several Duke University Administrative – protests that even included Duke University faculty! To make matters worse for the accused, Durham District Attorney Nifong also suggested that the alleged rape should be considered a hate crime because Mangum was African American, and the accused were Caucasian. During the investigation, University officials responded to the allegations by suspending the Duke Lacrosse team for two games and one week later, they forced the resignation of Head Coach, Mike Pressler (Cohan, 2015). At the end of the yearlong investigation and media whirlwind that had jumped to convict the three athletes, North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper dropped all charges and declared the three young men innocent of all rape allegations. The Duke Lacrosse case serves as a glaring example of how a negative public perception and assumption of guilt can quickly gain momentum, with no regard for the well-being of the accused. In 2019, Brazilian soccer star Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior, was also wrongfully accused of sexual assault by Model Nail Trindade after a consensual relationship occurred in May of the same year. All charges against Neymar were dropped and the local authorities have now indicted Trindade for procedural fraud, slanderous denunciation, and extortion (USA Today, 2019). Although all charges were dropped in both the Duke and Neymar cases, the long-term effects of the Duke Lacrosse case on public

perception of athletes remain. As bad as these cases are, they are just a few examples within the grand scheme of this issue. In 2015, the National Football League had over 20 active players that had been accused of sexual assault (Fitzsimmons, 2015). Much like the dysfunction with the NFL Conduct Policy regarding sexual assault, the cases at Baylor and Penn State were unprecedented documentation of institutionalized negligence and denial that their student-athletes or coaches had committed serious sexual crimes.

However, the high frequency of headline cases involving male athletes is not a new phenomenon in the sports world. What has changed is the media attention these cases have earned via social media and increased athlete exposure on news networks and the internet. This intense social following of these stories appears to have grown steadily over the years – driving the stereotype that male athletes are aggressive and may commit an act of sexual aggression. Published scholarly articles regarding the “aggressive athlete” are by no means new and can be found as far back as 1974 coming from the fields of sociology, law, medicine, and psychology. “In many cases, it appears the social commentary was a primary objective for these published accounts, leaving scientific rigor, methodological concerns, and systematic exploration of aggression as secondary concerns,” (Kimble et al., 2010). Further review of these published accounts shows that a lack of systematic investigation has led to an inability to provide clear answers on what drives these individuals to commit an act of sexual aggression. This lack of similarity amongst researcher’s methodologies means that we likely cannot say definitively that individuals involved in athletics are more likely than their non-athletic counterparts to commit a sexually driven crime. However, research does show that certain risk factors often linked to participation in aggressive sports like football. Although unfortunately outdated by the limitations of this seminar paper, an article published in 1993 that claims formal involvement in

varsity college basketball and football was predictive of sexual aggression. That same study when examined closer (without social commentary driving the results) showed that participation in those sports was much less predictive than nicotine and intensity of alcohol consumption, (Kimble et al., 2010). The impact of “social commentary” on these studies has ultimately helped drive stereotypes regarding athletes, which were all likely based on questionable methodologies (Kimble et al., 2010). While we cannot definitively state that participation in male college athletics is predictive for committing an act of sexual aggression today, we can take a closer look at some of the factors that may contribute to the perpetuation of these crimes against women. One factor believed to facilitate an environment where sexual aggression can occur is hyper-masculinity.

Hypermasculinity – Where does this behavior come from?

Hypermasculinity involves attitudes of sexual callousness, male dominance, and acceptance of aggression. These attitudes can combine to legitimize the use of violence against women (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Furthermore, there are three distinct characteristics associated with the hyper-masculine personality: (1) the view of violence as manly, (2) the perception of danger as exciting and sensational, and (3) callous behavior toward women, and regard toward emotional displays as feminine (Britannica, 2018). In the collegiate setting, two main demographic groups proliferate this hyper-masculine culture much more than all other campus organizations; fraternities and men’s athletic teams (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). We will examine the relationship between college football and hyper-masculinity, where hyper-masculinity starts (and where it can be stopped) and the sexual assault implications on college campuses in a hyper-masculine culture.

In sports such as football, hockey, and lacrosse – physical violence is often necessary for play. Aggression is seen as a valuable trait to possess to excel in competition and is taught to young boys learning the fundamentals of the game. In football especially, aggression and danger have become part of the thrill of the game for both participants and spectators. The American Medical Association classifies football as the highest risk of any sport in America for suffering a “catastrophic injury” followed by Cheerleading and Ice Hockey respectively. A catastrophic injury is any that causes one of the following; fatality, permanent severe functioning disability, or severe head or neck trauma with no permanent disability. Football is both aggressive and dangerous – key components of hyper-masculinity. Lastly, regarding football’s behavior toward women and regard toward emotional displays as feminine; football in America is played exclusively by men at the college level, coached exclusively by men at the college level, and until very recently – officiated by men only. The sheer lack of female involvement in American football from youth leagues all the way up to the National Football League perpetuates a culture conducive to hyper-masculinity. A culture where women are not valued the same as men and where those involved must constantly prove their masculinity to their peers for fear of ridicule and being ostracized from the group. To combat this hyper-masculine culture we need to understand where it comes from and how young men are conditioned to conform to societal norms that will put them at a higher risk of harming others during their collegiate years.

Collegiate men involved in either varsity athletics or a fraternity have been shown to be more likely than non-fraternity/athletic team students to have attitudes that condone sexual aggression. It should be stated though that possessing a rape-supportive or hyper-masculine attitude does not mean that someone will commit an act of sexual aggression (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Without college men willing to self-report their own acts of sexual aggression, regardless of

anonymity, it is unlikely that we will have a study that can show both a rape-supportive attitude and sexually aggressive acts being committed by the same individuals or groups. We can, however, state that college athletes are more likely to show characteristics of hyper-masculinity than fraternity men because while college athletes grew up within a hyper-masculine culture (their sport) throughout their academic careers, fraternity membership can only begin once enrolled in college. It can be further suggested that the longer a male spends time in a hyper-masculine culture – the more likely he is to commit an act of sexual aggression. When comparing a senior college athlete to a senior fraternity member, depending on when the student-athlete began their playing career, the student-athlete will have spent many more years in a hyper-masculine culture by their senior year of undergraduate schooling than the fraternity member of only 4-5 years at maximum.

When comparing football to other sports, the level of aggressiveness of the sport was hypothesized to be an important predictor of the relationship between athletic participation and sexual aggression, however, there were no significant differences (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Regardless of the sport, involvement in collegiate athletics can create a culture where some athletes treat females sport themselves and something to conquer rather than people with feelings (Marasescu, 2012). At universities where sports are king, star athletes often find that their athletic ability will override consequences, both from their team and from the law. What may appear fun to male athletes may be perceived as a threatening sexual assault to a female. When student-athletes are within a culture of hyper-masculinity, poor moral behavior becomes the norm and boundaries are pushed even further with little to no remorse for their attitudes and treatment of women. When achievement on the field of play is not enough, some men will use sexually deviant behavior to further display their masculinity; at the expense of the safety and

well-being of female students (Marasescu, 2012). Unchecked hyper-masculinity has the potential to wreak havoc on college campuses across the nation. Head coaches have a direct hand in their program's culture, minimizing hyper-masculine culture is crucial to the fight against acts of sexual aggression on their campus. If left to grow out of control, a coach could find themselves with a bad scandal and likely searching for a new job.

Current Campus Culture

To understand the culture surrounding college-aged men, specifically athletes, it is important to analyze American campus culture and why this period of life has such a high frequency of sexually aggressive acts committed. For the purposes of defining current campus culture, this paper will share details primarily focused on men, due to their increased likelihood of committing an act of sexual aggression. To appropriately understand the important factors that may contribute to an increased likelihood of committing an act of sexual aggression the following will evaluate alcohol use, sexual assault statistics, and everyday life for a college athlete.

One of the highest contributing factors to acts of sexual aggression is alcohol use, especially in high amounts and high frequency (White & Hingson, 2013). On college campuses across the United States, college students engage in excessive, or binge, drinking. This epidemic of binge drinking leads to 97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 being involved in an alcohol-related sexual assault (White & Hingson, 2013). Not only are students at a higher risk of being involved in a sexual assault, but they are also more likely to have unsafe sex. Recent statistics show that student-athletes in college binge drink at a similar rate to non-athletes (Bracken, 2012). This finding would lead one to believe that collegiate athletes are no more likely to commit an act of sexual aggression due to alcohol consumption, because of the more a college male drinks,

the higher the risk that he will commit an act of sexual aggression (McCray, 2015). One study aimed to find a link between expectancy to drink alcohol, and a likeliness to intervene during a sexual assault (Boyle, 2017). Boyle's study is unique because it specifically addressed alcohol's impact on the "bystander approach," not just whether an act was committed. The bystander approach is a recent sexual assault prevention method that encourages all members of a specific community to take ownership of protecting one another from potentially dangerous situations, especially when alcohol is present. Research shows that men who more strongly endorse positive alcohol expectancies (positive outcomes of drinking alcohol) are more likely to intervene during a potential sexual assault than women (Boyle, 2017). Boyle (2017) states that this may be because men are more likely to use alcohol as a social lubricant – making them more likely to intervene because they believe that alcohol gives them the power to do so.

Sexual assault/aggression is unfortunately commonplace on today's college campus. One study found that roughly 28% of women and 12% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual assault during their college-aged years (Krebs et al. 2007). The top three factors that victims reported to be the method used to perpetrate these acts were incapacitation due to excessive alcohol or drug consumption (over 50% of reported assaults) followed by physical force and verbal coercion (Mellins et al., 2017). Unfortunately, this data has been hard to track in a consistent manner as many studies use different methodologies. Depending on the scope of the study and differing definitions of sexual aggression, recent reports state that anywhere from as low as 1.8% and as high as 38% of college students are sexually assaulted during college (Fedina, Homes, and Backes, 2016). While studies and data for sexual assault/aggression victims are quite vast, data amongst perpetrators is much more difficult to locate. Several factors that likely contribute to this lack of perpetrator information include a lack of studies,

misunderstanding of consent and what is considered sexual aggression, and the withholding of honest information for fear of incrimination or shame. Potentially more harmful than the physical act of sexual assault are the lasting mental and emotional damages an individual may experience. Sexual assault can result in elevated anxiety, depression, fear, deflated self-esteem, and reduced sexual satisfaction (Ross et al., 2011). Within one week of a nonconsensual sexual experience, most female victims meet the criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder (Ross et al., 2011). In response to these lasting effects of sexual assault, many college and high school campuses have begun placing a higher emphasis on prevention and awareness education programs. Expanding on current campus culture, we also examined what educational programs were being used and their effectiveness in the fight against acts of sexual aggression.

Prevention and Awareness Education

On college campuses across the United States, as many as 25% of women and 3% of men are sexually assaulted during their college years. (Krebs et al., 2007). The physical and psychological effects of sexual assault are devastating; students who are sexually assaulted may face hardships in achieving their personal and academic goals (Rothman & Silverman, 2010). University administrations recognize this threat to student safety, and many now offer sexual assault awareness education programs to all first-year students as part of freshman orientation. While currently, there is no single uniform program for sexual assault awareness education that is used by all higher education institutions. Some of the more widely used programs include; bringing in the Bystander, Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), and Shifting the Paradigm. (Moynihan et al., 2010). Studies on the effectiveness of each of these programs show that groups who participated in prevention programming showed decreased rape myth acceptance, increased rape knowledge, and decreased behavioral intent to commit sexual assault and incidence of

sexual violence, compared to groups who did not receive prevention programs (Moynihan et al., 2010). Educational programs concerning victimization also showed an increased rate of victimization in the following year due to students understanding what could be classified as sexual assault (Rothman & Silverman, 2010).

Even with effective awareness programs, one study showed that many universities still placed the burden of preventing sexual assault on college campuses on female students – not the men that were perpetrating the crimes (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). A study including data from 40 different university websites utilized rape prevention techniques and tips directed female students that conveyed four main messages; there are no safe places for women, women can't trust anyone, women should never be alone, and women are vulnerable (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). Programs that continue to place the burden of prevention of sexual assault on women do far less dealing with the people that need the most education, perpetrators of sexual aggression/assault.

While most rape prevention programs take place during the first year of college, some believe that awareness education can and should begin sooner. Although there is no definitive answer on whether being involved in athletics contributes to juvenile delinquency, a key indicator of future likelihood to commit sexual assault, we do know that coaches have a unique and powerful opportunity to influence young men through sport (Spruit et al., 2015). Due to the profound impact a high school coach can have on an individual, one study examined the role of high school coaches in educating student-athletes about sexual assault deeper and could make five distinct statements; coaches believe that they do have influence over athletes, coaches lack education about sexual aggression, coaches endorse rape myth, coaches minimize the problem of sexual aggression, and coaches are resistant to being engaged in sexual aggression prevention

(Lyndon et al., 2011). High school coaches know that they can influence their student-athletes beyond the sports environment, but what they do with that influence is crucial to stopping sexual assault on college campuses. In Lyndon's study, they found that many coaches said that they may even help to shape their romantic relationships. These high school coaches value this relationship and their influence on an athlete's life – but many were hesitant to participate in sexual assault prevention education, or worse, some endorsed common rape myths (Lyndon et al., 2011). Unfortunately, many coaches feel underequipped and overworked – sexual assault prevention is not something they feel is necessarily their responsibility. Without sufficient knowledge, support, and willingness to properly educate high school student-athletes in the United States about sexual assault, student-athletes will continue to enter college at a higher risk of committing an act of sexual aggression than their non-athletic peers (Young et al., 2016).

Chapter Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

After reviewing all current literature, we can definitively state that college athletes, specifically football players, are more likely to commit an act of sexual aggression than the males in the general student body. No, playing football does not make you a potential rapist. Playing football in college leads to participation in or association with high-risk activities/groups more than the average male college student. This seminar paper has provided evidence that collegiate football players are likely to consume greater amounts of alcohol, (Boyle, 2017; McCray, 2015; Spruit et al. 2015; White et al. 2013), participate in hyper-masculine culture within their teams, (Bracken, 2012; Sawyer et al. 2002; Maraescu, 2012), and are offered preferential treatment over the general student body leading to feelings of entitlement (Humphreys et al. 2007; Cohan, 2015). All of these characteristics combine into a perfect storm that may lead a young man to commit an act of sexual aggression on their college campuses. Efforts to thwart this problem have been implemented on campuses nationwide, but there is still work to be done. This seminar paper was written in an effort to understand not only whether there was a link between football and a higher likelihood to commit an act of sexual aggression, but how to best educate future student-athletes and prevent these acts from ever being committed. Recommendations for head coaches of all high school and college-level programs would be the following; on at least a bi-annual basis provide a preseason educational seminar from a campus administrator/women's advocate, and in-season service project geared towards helping those affected by acts of sexual violence if possible, and an offseason presentation from an outside professional. It would be great if all coaches were experts on this issue, could properly educate their student-athletes, and stop all sexual assaults by their players from ever happening. Unfortunately, no amount of prevention education will effectively stop all acts of sexual violence

from occurring, but coaches can and must do more to prevent as many as possible. In the same way, football coaches were forced to fundamentally change how they taught the game in light of concussion research in the last decade, we must also fundamentally change how we teach these young men how to treat their female classmates. Football coaches can no longer shift the blame or pass the buck, it is their duty to proactively educate our student-athletes and help create a safe atmosphere on our campuses.

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