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# USF's Coverage of Women's Athletics: A Census of the USF Athletics Home Web Page

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USF's Coverage of Women's Athletics: A Census of the USF Athletics Home Web Page

by

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Abstract

This study examines the coverage of women's athletics at USF provided through photographic representations on the university's Athletics Internet home web page during the 2009–2010 academic year. Findings from this census of five areas that comprise the USF Athletics Internet home web page revealed that, consistent with recent research on coverage of female athletes and women's athletics on university web pages, women, compared to men, were underrepresented in the majority of the five areas of the home page analyzed. The difference in the number of overall total photographs of women and men was not that large—48% and 52%, respectively, not including totals for football. Likewise, the total number of active photographs of women and men was 22% and 26%, respectively. Again, that does not include football. However, in the overall “big picture” gleaned from accessing the Athletics home page for a period of 151 days, the researcher found significant absences of female athletes or representations of women's athletics within four areas that make up a large portion of the home page. Within areas labeled for this study as Areas 2, 3, 4, and 5 combined, there were nine representations of women's athletics compared to 514 representations of men's athletics in a span of 151 days. Studies such as this can be beneficial because, if gender coverage inequities are brought to the attention of university administrators and Athletics personnel, actions could be taken to reduce the inequities, thereby setting the tone for how we see and think about female athletes.

## Chapter One:

### Introduction

The Internet has become a standard fixture in the lives of many people, with more than two billion people worldwide accessing the World Wide web (Internet World Stats, 2011). Furthermore, the Internet has become a valuable medium through which universities can post a vast amount of textual and visual information concerning women's and men's athletics (Sagas, Cunningham, Wigley, & Ashley, 2000).

This census of five relevant areas on the University of South Florida (USF) Athletics Internet home web page examines the coverage of female and male athletes and their respective athletics provided through photographic representations on <http://www.gousfbulls.com/>. Framed around Tuchman's (1978) concept of symbolic annihilation of women in the media, the intent of the study was to get the "big picture" of the representation of USF Athletics on the site during the 151 days of the 2009–2010 academic year to determine whether female and male athletes were represented equitably on the home web page. In other words, were female athletes and male athletes represented equally in number of photographs on the Athletics home page, and were the athletes equally portrayed as active or non-active?

Results from this census of the Athletics home page are mixed. In one area, the total numbers of photographs for female and male athletes over a span of 151 days were fairly close at 48% and 52%, respectively; the photographs showing women and men

actively engaged in their sports was also close, 22% and 26%, respectively. However, those totals do not include the total number of photographic representations of football. If the study had included coverage of football, the gap would be more significant with 37% total photographs of women and 63% total photographs of men. The researcher chose to eliminate representations of football because currently there is no sport within the USF Athletics program in which women participate that is equivalent to football. Including representations of football would result in a significant imbalance in the overall comparison of coverage of women's and men's athletics and may be misleading for purposes of this study. Within other areas of the Athletics home page analyzed, female athletes did not fare as well. In fact, during 151 days of analysis, sole pictures of female athletes or women's athletics appeared just one time in Area 2 and only eight times in Area 4, and they never appeared alone in Areas 3 or 5. In other words, in 151 days, throughout Areas 2 through 5 combined, there were a total of nine representations of women's athletics or female athletes compared to 514 representations of men's athletics.

This study adds to a limited body of research concerning mediated coverage of intercollegiate athletics on intercollegiate media in general (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Cunningham, Sagas, Sartore, Amsden, & Schellhase, 2004; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Kane & Buysse, 2005; MacKay & Dallaire, 2009; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Wann, Schrader, Allison, & McGeorge, 1998) and, more specifically, to the limited body of research concerning coverage on universities' Athletics home web pages (Cooper, 2008, 2009; Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; Cunningham & Sagas, 2002; Sagas et al., 2000). Studies such as these are important because university athletic departments have the ability to control the gender coverage provided on their

Athletics web pages. The Athletics *home* page is especially important because it is the first layer of visibility into a university's Athletics program that a visitor sees upon access to the web page.

In Chapter Two, some background on coverage of female athletes in various media outlets such as newspapers, television, magazines, and university-related media products will be provided. The chapter will also include a discussion of Tuchman's (1978) concept of symbolic annihilation of women in the media and discuss its application to female *athletes* in the media. The chapter will also briefly delineate the provisions in Title IX, the 1972 federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds.

Chapter Three will include a review of the rich tradition of literature concerning media coverage of female athletes in traditional media such as newspapers, magazines and television, and the limited but emerging body of literature concerning coverage of intercollegiate athletics in intercollegiate media, such as school newspapers, media guides, and universities' athletic department's Internet web sites. In Chapter Four, the researcher describes the census method used to examine all areas on the USF Athletics home Internet web page that, together, provide an overall reflection of what is important in USF Athletics. Next, the results from the census will be presented in Chapter Five, followed by a discussion of the results in Chapter Six. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes with a summary of the results of the study, recognizing limitations in the study, and providing possible suggestions for future studies of coverage of intercollegiate female athletes in university Athletics Internet pages.

## Chapter Two:

### Background

It is well documented in scholarly research that mediated coverage of female athletes lags behind that of male athletes in both quantity and quality (Creedon, 1994; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Knight & Giuliano, 2002). Limited, though, is the amount of research focusing on mediated coverage of intercollegiate female athletes within universities' athletic departments' Internet web sites. Framed around Tuchman's (1978) "symbolic annihilation," this census of the USF Athletics home web page during the 2009–2010 academic year adds to a limited but emerging field of inquiry in which researchers examine intercollegiate women's and men's sports coverage provided within intercollegiate media such as university newspapers, television broadcasts, media guides, and web sites. According to Cooper and Cooper (2009), these studies are important because athletic departments that reside within universities that receive federal funding are required by Title IX regulations to provide equitable publicity and promotional devices for women's and men's athletic programs (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). Thus, the expectation would be that gender coverage of intercollegiate athletes on university-related media is equitable. However, a review of recent literature indicates this is not necessarily the case (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Cooper, 2008, 2009; Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; Cunningham & Sagas, 2002; Cunningham et al., 2004; Huffman et al., 2004; MacKay & Dallaire, 2009; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Wann et al., 1998).

In this chapter, Tuchman's (1978) concept of symbolic annihilation as it pertains to coverage of female athletes in the media will be described. There will also be a brief discussion of Title IX, the 1972 federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds.

### *Symbolic Annihilation*

Gerbner (1972) first introduced the term symbolic annihilation to describe the absence of particular groups in the media. According to Gerbner (1972), "representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation" (p. 44). Gerbner (1972) used the concept to reveal how media representations, including omissions, can create dominant assumptions about what is valued and approved in the world. Tuchman (1978) extended Gerbner's (1972) definition of symbolic annihilation by applying it to women's representation in the mass media. In developing her definition of symbolic annihilation, Tuchman (1978) referred to 1950s television, arguing that women were symbolically annihilated not only through their absence in media representations, but also through the condemnation and trivialization of women when they were portrayed in the media. Tuchman (1978) argued that the dearth of portrayals of women in the fictional world of television tells the audience that women have little, if any, value in American society, and that message is reinforced through treatment of women when they do appear on television. For example, men were more often than women portrayed as employed professionals on television programs; women were more numerous in soap operas, but portrayed as incompetent, inferior, and subservient to men; women were more likely than men to be portrayed as victims than aggressors when television programs involved violence; and television audiences most approved of women who were

presented in a sexual context or within a romantic or family role. According to Tuchman (1978), “sex-role stereotypes,” (p. 5) such as the ones just described, are generated and maintained through television, magazines, and newspapers, being passed on from one generation to the next. Thus, individuals and the roles with which they are associated become symbolic representations of American society, reflecting who and what has value and prestige in American culture. Given this background, it is important to study both the extent and the nature of media coverage of female athletes because “how female athletes are viewed in this culture is both reflected in and created by mass media images” (Kane, 1988, p. 89).

Tuchman’s (1978) description of symbolic annihilation did not refer specifically to media representations of female athletes, yet for more than three decades, media scholars have employed the term to describe the underreporting and trivializing of female athletes throughout mainstream media, which, they argue, reinforces the idea that sport is man’s domain (Bernstein, 2002; Birrell & Theberge, 1994; Bishop, 2003; Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Duncan, 2006; Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009; Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006; Hargreaves, 1994; Kane, 1996; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Knight & Giuliano, 2002; Rintala & Birrell, 1984; Pedersen, 2002a; Theberge & Cronk, 1986; Ziegler, 2006). Kane (1996) writes that female athletes “are trivialized when they are portrayed in ways that do not treat them, or their athletic achievements, seriously” (p. 108). This is accomplished through the production of images, photographs, or texts that focus on female athletes’ off-the-court characteristics and behavior, such as their femininity, sexuality, and personal lives, rather than their athletic accomplishments (Kane, 1996). Additionally, researchers find that female athletes are shown as motionless

or passive in relation to sport more often than male athletes (Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005; Kane & Buysse, 2005; McGinnis, Chun, & McQuillan, 2003), thus trivializing their status as athletes, whereas representations of male athletes focus on their athletic strength and competence (Kane & Buysse, 2005). In effect, this “symbolic annihilation” (Gerbner, 1972; Tuchman, 1978) of female athletes and their achievements in sport conveys the inaccurate idea that women do not participate in sports or that women’s sports are inferior to and not as noteworthy as men’s sports (Knight & Giuliano, 2002). According to proponents of symbolic annihilation, erasing women from our view effectively tells us that women are not an important presence in our culture. Likewise, erasing or underrepresenting female athletes in the media effectively tells us that women are not an important part of the sporting world, and their accomplishments are not deserving of our attention (Birrell & Theberge, 1994).

In sum, evidence of symbolic annihilation is found in studies of traditional mass media outlets, such as newspapers, magazines, and television. The current examination of coverage of female and male athletes on the USF Athletics home web page during the 2009–2010 academic year adds to a limited but emerging field of inquiry in which researchers examine intercollegiate women’s and men’s sports coverage provided within university-related media. According to Sagas et al. (2000), studies of campus-related media are important because they focus on university-related media, or “public media” (Cunningham, 2003, p. 44), rather than “private media” (Cunningham, 2003, p. 44). Cunningham (2003) describes private media as privately owned media sources that “deliver and cater to the needs and wants of their consumers and advertisers” (p. 44), such as newspapers, magazines or television broadcasts. In contrast, public media “are

funded, either directly or indirectly, by federal dollars . . . typically found in places of higher learning” (Cunningham, 2003, p. 44). Sagas et al. (2000) argue that, because public media do not contend with outside market forces and because they are mandated by Title IX legislation, representation and coverage of women’s and men’s intercollegiate sport in campus-related media should theoretically be equitable. Further review of the literature indicates that, despite advancements toward gender equity in athletics since Title IX was passed, there is still room for improvement of the level of mediated coverage of intercollegiate female athletes in intercollegiate-related media.

Before reviewing the literature in Chapter Three, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of Title IX, the 1972 federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds.

#### *Title IX*

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 reads: “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” (20 U.S.C. § 1681 (a)). Since athletics is considered an integral part of a federally funded institution’s education program, athletics is covered by Title IX. A Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Policy Interpretation dating back to 1979 clarifies the athletic requirements contained in the Title IX regulation and provides guidance to colleges and universities on how to comply with the regulation in three basic areas: (a) student interests and abilities, (b) athletic benefits and opportunities, and (c) financial assistance, i.e., scholarships (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

### *Student interests and abilities*

Under the “Student Interests and Abilities” area of the 1979 Title IX Policy Interpretation, educational institutions that receive federal funding are required to accommodate effectively the interests and abilities of students to the extent necessary to provide equal opportunity in the selection of sports and levels of competition available to members of both sexes (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). Since the implementation of Title IX in 1972, women’s participation and opportunities in intercollegiate athletics has increased substantially. The number of women competing in college sports has increased from less than 30,000 in 1972 to more than 180,000 in 2010. (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; “Participation,” 2010; Thomas, 2011). Similarly, the number of athletic teams offered to female athletes at the intercollegiate level is at a near high of 9,087, with 8.64 women’s teams per school (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010).

### *Athletic benefits and opportunities*

Title IX requires that educational institutions receiving federal funding assistance that operate or sponsor interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics provide equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes. Among the factors considered in determining equity in this area is publicity. The Office for Civil Rights assesses compliance in this area by examining the equivalence for women and men in: (a) availability and quality of sports information personnel, (b) access to other publicity resources for men’s and women’s programs, and (c) quantity and quality of publications and other promotional devices featuring men’s and women’s programs (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

*Financial assistance*

Finally, in this area, the governing principle is that all financial assistance should be available on a substantially proportional basis to the number of women and men participants in the institution's athletic program (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

The effect of Title IX on women's athletics is evident in the increase in the number of sports teams available to women but, despite the increase in participation rates and opportunities for female athletes, a review of literature indicates female athletes still are "grossly underrepresented" (Kane & Buysse, 2005, p. 215) in all media outlets examined. However, compared to findings from early studies of coverage provided in newspapers, television and magazines, findings from recent studies of campus-related media products reveal fewer egregious instances of symbolic annihilation, even "an unmistakable shift toward representations of women as serious athletes and a sharp decline in gender differences" (Kane & Buysse, 2005, p. 214).

Chapter Three consists of a review of the research from previous studies of mainstream media—newspapers, television, and magazines—in order to provide historical context and to situate the recent literature relevant to the current study within a rich tradition of sports media research that spans nearly four decades.

## Chapter Three:

### Literature Review

A limited amount of research exists on the coverage provided to intercollegiate athletes within university-related media. Early research on the mediated gender coverage of athletes primarily focused on the coverage provided in traditional American media without intercollegiate affiliation, such as newspapers (Christopherson, Janning, & McConnell, 2002; Duncan, Messner, & Williams, 1991), magazines (Hardin, Dodd, & Chance, 2005; Hardin, Lynn et al., 2005; Leath & Lumpkin, 1992), and television (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991; Duncan, 2006; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Eastman & Billings, 2000; Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999; Messner & Cooky, 2010; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Tuggle, 1997). Within the literature, some scholars focus solely on a single, specific sporting event, specific titles of media, or specific populations of readers. For example, numerous scholars have focused on the Olympics as a forum in which female athletes receive less media attention and less favorable portrayals than male athletes. Studies of the Olympics have examined mediated coverage within newspapers (Hardin, Chance, Dodd, & Hardin, 2002; Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999; Kinnick, 1998; Lee, 1992; Pratt, Grappendorf, Grundvig, & LeBlanc, 2008; Vincent, Imwold, Masemann, & Johnson, 2002), television (Billings & Angelini, 2007; Billings & Eastman, 2002; Daddario, 1994, 1997; Daddario & Wigley, 2007;

Eastman & Billings, 1999; Greer et al., 2009; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Tuggle & Owen, 1999), and magazines (Duncan, 1990). *Sports Illustrated*, the “nation’s most popular sports magazine” (Bishop, 2003, p. 185) has been examined extensively for its neglect and trivialization of female athletes (Bishop, 2003; Duncan, 1993; Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Kane, 1988; Lumpkin, 2009; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Additional studies have even extended to sports media coverage in children’s magazines (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, & Hardin, 2002; Rintala & Birrell, 1984) and newspaper sports coverage of interscholastic sports (Pedersen, 2002a, 2002b; Pedersen & Whisenant, 2003).

Findings from these studies primarily identify two consistent themes: (a) Female athletes and/or their accomplishments are neglected or underreported in media representations, and (b) when they do receive publicity, female athletes are trivialized through the quality of coverage. The former creates the false perception that female athletes are absent from the sporting world; the latter provides a stereotypical view of female athletes through emphasis on their appearance and sexuality rather than their athletic performance (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Duncan (2006) describes the task of tracking and organizing this literature as “daunting,” (p. 32). Indeed, it provides an extensive, foundational body of scholarship that documents the inequitable coverage of women’s and men’s athletics in television, newspapers, and magazines. While not specifically relevant to the current study of college web sites, the existing literature provides a useful historical background and a rich tradition of sports media research that spans four decades, upon which subsequent studies have built.

Concerning early studies of mediated coverage of athletics, Cunningham et al. (2004) note that a “common theme” (p. 862) among the research is that media from the

*for-profit*, rather than the *not-for-profit*, sector were examined. Cunningham et al. (2004) argue,

Given the dependence upon consumers and consumer preferences among for-profit media sources, an alternative approach is to study the representation of men and women in not-for-profit media outlets, such as university newspapers, athletic department Internet web sites, and/or the *NCAA* (National Collegiate Athletic Association) *News*. (p. 862)

Sagas et al. (2000) argue that because public media do not contend with outside market forces, and because they are mandated by Title IX regulations, representation and coverage of women's and men's intercollegiate sports on campus media should be equitable. Though we might expect not-for-profit media sources to provide more equitable coverage of female athletes and women's athletics in proportion to men than for-profit media sources, a review of recent literature indicates this is not necessarily the case (Cunningham et al., 2004).

Eleven years ago, Sagas et al. (2000) established a "stepping stone to a new line of inquiry" (Cunningham & Sagas, 2002, p. 136) with their examination of Internet coverage of intercollegiate women's softball and men's baseball through NCAA Division I universities' Internet web sites. An analysis of softball and baseball web sites from 52 different NCAA Division I universities revealed that baseball not only received more coverage than softball, but baseball also received more timely pre-seasonal and seasonal coverage in the areas of updated scores and statistical information (Sagas et al., 2000).

Prior to Sagas et al. (2000), only two key studies had examined the coverage of women college athletes in media surrounding intercollegiate athletics (Shifflett &

Revelle, 1994; Wann et al., 1998). Reviewing selected issues of the print publication *NCAA News*, Shifflett and Revelle (1994) found that female athletes were underrepresented in both articles and photographs, demonstrating a similar pattern of underrepresentation to that found in traditional, popular magazines and newspapers. Wann et al. (1998) examined the sports sections of small, medium, and large university-sponsored newspapers and found that male athletes and men's athletics received "far more coverage" (p. 85) than female athletes and women's athletics, with coverage inequities most prominent at the larger universities.

Cunningham and Sagas (2002) note that the research by Shifflett and Revelle (1994), Wann et al. (1998), and Sagas et al. (2000) represents the first studies to examine the coverage of women's sport in the context of intercollegiate athletics, as opposed to the research in the private media—privately owned newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts—that has dominated the literature in this area. Since then, scholars have extended the research literature with additional studies concerning mediated coverage of intercollegiate athletics within various formats of university-related media that include the *NCAA News* (Cunningham et al., 2004); campus newspapers and campus television broadcasts (Huffman et al., 2004; MacKay & Dallaire, 2009); NCAA intercollegiate media guides (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Kane & Buysse, 2005); and, relevant to this study, universities' Internet web pages (Cooper, 2008, 2009; Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; Cunningham & Sagas, 2002). Findings from these recent examinations of university media reveal some signs of improvement in coverage and portrayals of female athletes compared to traditional media, though inequities still remain. For example, Huffman et al. (2004) found that college newspapers covered male

athletes and events in 72.7% of their sports stories, and college television devoted 81.5% of their sports coverage to male athletes. However, Huffman et al. (2004) also noted that when college sports media did cover female athletes, the quality of that coverage was equivalent to that of male athletes. That is, there was no significant difference in the average number of words per print story or the average number of seconds per broadcast story, nor was there a difference in how the stories were presented based on the gender of the athletes.

To explore the question of how seriously female athletes are represented in college media guides, Kane and Buysse (2005) examined media guide cover photographs from 68 colleges and universities for the 2003–2004 academic year. In a longitudinal comparison of data from a study by Buysse and Embser-Herbert (2004), Kane and Buysse (2005) found that female athletes “were overwhelmingly portrayed as serious, competent athletes” (p. 230) in the 2003–2004 academic year examined, in contrast to findings from the study of the 1989–1990 and 1996–1997 time periods when female athletes were less likely to be portrayed as active participants in sport and more likely to be portrayed in passive and traditionally feminine poses (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004).

Adding to the limited literature on intercollegiate athletics coverage on intercollegiate Internet web sites, Cunningham and Sagas (2002) furthered the research of Sagas et al. (2000) by comparing university-sponsored women’s and men’s basketball and softball and baseball web sites. Findings revealed that softball received less coverage than baseball, but women’s basketball received the same amount of coverage as men’s basketball in terms of timeliness and amount of coverage. Cunningham (2003) examined

women's and men's tennis web sites from 35 NCAA Division I universities, also for timeliness and amount of coverage available. In stark contrast to previous studies of media directly associated with intercollegiate athletics (Sagas et al., 2000; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Wann et al., 1998), Cunningham (2003) found that female tennis players received greater coverage than male tennis players. In fact, women's tennis received 55% of the overall media coverage, and there was no difference in the availability of information (Cunningham, 2003).

Until recently, studies concerning intercollegiate sports coverage and intercollegiate web sites have been limited to only a few similar sports—softball, baseball, women's and men's basketball (Cunningham & Sagas, 2002; Sagas et al., 2000) and women's and men's tennis (Cunningham, 2003). Cooper (2008) extended the literature by examining the overall gender and individual sport team coverage provided within four units of measurement—article coverage, advertisement coverage, multimedia coverage, and photographic coverage—for 18 sport teams on 30 intercollegiate athletic home web pages across three different NCAA divisions: Bowl Championship Series (BCS), Non-BCS, and Division III during the 2006–2007 academic year. Cooper (2008, 2009; Cooper & Cooper, 2009) found that female athletes received less favorable coverage allocation in terms of square inches of text and percentages in all four units of measurement.

To sum, Kane and Greendorfer (1994) argue that the symbolic annihilation of women's athletics in the media creates the impression in society that women are primarily absent from the sporting scene and that they have little, if any, value in society, particularly compared to male athletes. Portraying female athletes in stereotypical roles

when they do get media coverage marginalizes or downplays the seriousness of women's athletics. This, in turn, ultimately reinforces the idea of male supremacy in athletics and projects the idea that female athletes simply are not deserving of balanced media coverage in relation to that given their male counterparts (Adams & Tuggle, 2004).

Although recent studies indicate signs of improvement in both quantity and quality of coverage of female athletes, the literature demonstrates that inequities in coverage still remain. Most literature surrounding intercollegiate media coverage focuses on the underrepresentation of female athletes compared to male athletes. Findings of trivialization in the early literature concerning newspapers, magazines, and television, are not as prevalent in recent literature related to studies of university-sponsored media.

Based on the limited literature surrounding mediated coverage of women and men college athletes, the intent of the current study is to compare the quantity of representation of female athletes to that of male athletes. Additionally, following Kane and Buysse (2005), the study examines whether the athletes are portrayed seriously through the use of active or non-active poses.

## Chapter Four:

### Method

The current study is a census of the USF Athletics Internet home web page during the 2009–2010 academic year. The purpose of the study was to compare the quantity and quality of mediated coverage provided to female athletes on the USF Athletics home web page to that provided to male athletes. The researcher chose to examine all areas on the Athletics home page because the home page is virtually guaranteed to be viewed by all site visitors, and the fluid, interchanging visual and textual content on the home page provides visitors to the site an instant “at-a-glance snapshot” of which athletics are important in USF’s Athletics program. The small areas on the web page labeled “USF SOCIAL MEDIA,” “CONNECT,” AND “SHOP” were not examined because they contained content that remained the same throughout the study and did not present any significant content relevant to the purpose of study. Similarly, the small advertisements on the home page were not analyzed because they did not portray any significant content relevant to the study. Overall, during the period of analysis from September. 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010, five areas on the USF Athletics home web page were examined each evening at approximately 5:30 p.m. for a total of 151 days of analysis. Below is a sample of the home web page with each area of analysis highlighted and briefly described. The coding method used for each area analyzed is also described.



FIGURE 1. Sample USF Athletics home web page showing areas analyzed. Reprinted with permission.

*Area 1*

The space labeled Area 1 is a predominant feature of the home page. It is a slideshow—a set of eight individual blocks of visual or textual material that subsequently scroll across that area on the home web page. By pointing and clicking their computer mouse cursor on one of the frame numbers within the block, visitors to the site may view at their own pace any or all of the eight frames of content. If the users do not select any frame number, the content simply rotates to appear at set intervals. Visitors to the home web page may access the associated text linked to each of the eight rotating frames;

however, for the purpose of this study, only the material in Area 1 was examined, not the stories linked to them.

*Coding procedure for Area 1*

Each weekday evening, Monday through Friday, beginning September 28, 2009, the researcher accessed the USF Athletics home web page. During the data collection process for Area 1, the Zapgrab2 computer application was used to capture and copy the content of each of the eight frames in the slideshow to a Microsoft Word document. For each of the 1,208 potential units of analysis collected in 151 viewings, the researcher documented (a) the date of viewing, (b) the frame number, (c) the sport featured, (d) whether it showed the athletes as active or non-active, (e) whether the head coach or coaching staff member(s) appeared in the photo, (f) the headline and outline beneath each photo, and (g) a detailed description of the content. Of the 1,208 potential units of analysis, the researcher discarded 168 frames not applicable to the purpose of the current study, which was to compare the mediated coverage of female athletes to that of male athletes. Examples of frames discarded include pictures that showed only spectators or fans; unidentified people (not athletes); band members; buildings; groundbreaking ceremonies; mascots; city skylines; empty courts, fields, courses, or tracks; signs or logos; flags; and environmental elements such as rain puddles. After omitting 168 of these types of images, 1,040 photographs remained for analysis. Based on the analysis of the 1,040 photographs, the photographs were categorized by gender—woman or man, and further broken down into categories of active or non-active. Following Buysse and Embser-Herbert (2004), the researcher defined an athlete as active if she or he was on the playing field or court, in uniform, and actively performing the sport, while a non-active

athlete was in uniform but not actually performing the sport, or he or she was shown in a non-sport setting.

#### *Areas 2-5*

The content within Areas 2 through 5 often included graphics, images, or photographs not only of athletes, but of coaches, football stadiums, football jerseys, a playing field, etc. Whereas in Area 1 the researcher examined only photographs of athletes and/or coaches, in Areas 2 through 5, the researcher analyzed all content for 151 days. Often, the content in Areas 2 through 5 remained the same for the majority of the analysis period. If representations of male athletes, men's sports coaches, or men's sports are repeatedly presented on the home page, and female athletes, coaches, or women's sports are presented less, or not at all, the effect is the symbolic annihilation of women from USF Athletics. The relevance of including Areas 2 through 5 as part of the census of the Athletics home web page is because, taken together, with Area 1, they all make up the "big picture" of overall representation on the home page.

#### *Coding procedure for Areas 2-5*

For Areas 2 through 5, the researcher simply noted the content in the areas and tallied totals of what sport(s) or athlete(s) or coach(es) were featured. Due to the static nature of Areas 2 through 5, the information remained fairly consistent, but since it did change periodically, analyzing those areas was helpful for the intent of this study in comparing how often female athletes and their athletics were featured compared to how often male athletes and their athletics were featured. If both genders were shown, this was noted in the findings. For each area, the researcher simply categorized the photographs by the sports represented in the units of analysis.

## Chapter Five:

### Results

Results from this analysis of the USF Athletics home web page are broken down into two major divisions: Area 1, the prominent area located at the top of the USF Athletics home web page that consists of eight scrolling frames of content, and Areas 2 through 5, the smaller and less prominent areas located to the side and below Area 1 on the USF Athletics home web page. The findings will be discussed in Chapter Six.

#### *Area 1*

Results from analysis of Area 1 are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, which are described as follows. Table 1 represents the total number of photographs by gender, sport, and action collected from the USF Athletics home web page between September 28, 2009, and April 30, 2010. Table 2 represents the total number of photographs for each sport in order of prominence from highest to lowest number of photographs. Table 3 shows a sport-by-sport breakdown of numbers of photographs of women and men in similar or same sports, men only sports, women only sports, and sports in which both men and women participate. Lastly, Table 4 shows how many times female athletes and male athletes each were represented in the set of eight frames of content viewed during the 151 days of analysis.

Findings in Table 1 indicate that of 1,040 photographs examined from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010, female athletes were represented in 388 photographs,

compared to 655 photographs representing male athletes, or 37% and 63%, respectively. Women appeared active in 227 of those 388 photos, and men appeared active in 388 of the 655 photographs, or 58.5% and 59%, respectively. The 655 photographs of male athletes include 229 representations of football which may be misleading. After excluding representations of football, for which there is no equivalent women's program, the difference between total number of representations of female and male athletes narrows to 388 and 426, respectively.

Broken down by sport, there were 126 photographs of male baseball players compared to 83 photographs of female softball players. Baseball players were portrayed as active in 78, or 60%, of their 126 photographs, while softball players were portrayed as active in 37, or 45%, of their 83 photographs.

There were 166 photographs of male basketball players compared to 138 photographs of female basketball players. Male basketball players were portrayed as active in 110, or 66%, of their 166 photographs, while female basketball players were portrayed as active in 84, or 61%, of their 138 photographs.

The cross country program at USF consists of female and male athletes. In the total of six photographs of cross country athletes, five photographs were of male athletes, and only one photograph showed a female athlete. Four of the five photos of male cross country athletes were active; the photo of the female cross country runner was also active.

Football, for which there is no comparable sport for women, ranked the highest in the overall number of photographs. Of the 229 photographs of football players, 117, or 51%, were active.

There were more photographs of female golfers than male golfers during the period of analysis. There were nine photographs of male golfers compared to 19 photographs of female golfers. However, male golfers were portrayed as active in 7, or 78%, of the 9 photographs, while female golfers were portrayed as active in 13, or 68%, of the 19 photographs.

The nature of the photographs of the sailing team, which consists of only women, is such that it was difficult to analyze whether they were actually in a sailing competition or not. For purposes of this study, the researcher counted all six photographs collected during the analysis period as active, because the women were in boats on the water, though usually they were shown alone or with just one other sailboat nearby.

There were 70 photographs of male soccer players compared to 30 photographs of female soccer players. Male soccer players were portrayed as active in 35, or 50%, of the 70 photographs, while female soccer players were portrayed as active in 12, or 40%, of the 30 photographs.

There were 33 photographs of male tennis players compared to 30 photographs of female tennis players. However, female tennis players were portrayed as active in 27, or 90%, of the 30 photographs, while male tennis players were portrayed as active in only 22, or 67%, of the 33 photographs.

Similar to cross country, the track and field program consists of female and male athletes. While there were 39 photographs of track and field athletes, three of the photographs represented both women and men, so the researcher counted each gender for three photos, resulting in a finding of 25 women and 17 men. The male and female track and field athletes were portrayed as active in 37, or 95%, of the 39 photographs. One of

the non-active photographs consisted of a man and a woman not in uniform in a non-athletic setting; the second non-active photograph portrayed a male athlete standing on a track during a medal ceremony.

Finally, in volleyball, a sport only played by females, there were 56 total images analyzed from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010. Of the 56 total images, 23, or 41%, were coded as active.

Table 1. *Total number of photographs by sport, gender, action, collected from the USF Athletics home web page between September 28, 2009, and April 30, 2010*

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Total photos</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>% of total photos</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Non-action</b>	<b>% Action</b>	<b>%Action of total photos</b>
Baseball-M	126		126	12	78	48	62	7.5
Basketball-M	166		166	16	110	56	66	10.6
Basketball-W	138	138		13	84	54	61	8.1
Cross Country (W/M)	6	1	5	.6	5	1	83	.5
Football (M)	229		229	22	117	112	51	11.3
Golf (M)	9		9	.9	7	2	78	.7
Golf (W)	19	19		1.8	13	6	68	1.3
Sailing (W)	6	6		.6	6	0	100	.6
Soccer (M)	70		70	7	35	35	50	3.4
Soccer (W)	30	30		2.9	12	18	40	1.2
Softball (W)	83	83		8	37	46	45	3.6
Tennis (M)	33		33	3.2	22	11	67	2.1
Tennis (W)	30	30		2.9	27	3	90	2.6
Track & Field <sup>a</sup> (W/M)	39	25	17	3.8	37	2	95	3.6
Volleyball (W)	56	56		5.4	23	33	41	2.2
<b>Total<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>427</b>		

<sup>a</sup>In Track and Field, three images contained both women and men and were counted twice. <sup>b</sup>Total images equals 1,040; total W/M representations equals 1,043 due to three images in Track and Field counted twice.

As indicated in Table 2, photographs of football players ranked highest in the number of photographs of athletes on the USF Athletics home web page. The 229 photographs of football players made up 22% of the total 1,040 photographs analyzed during the 2009–2010 academic year. There were 166 (16%) and 138 (13%) photographs

of male and female basketball players, respectively, of the total 1,040 photographs. There were 126 photographs of baseball players and 83 photographs of softball players, 12% and 8%, respectively. Photographs of male soccer players totaled 70 (7%) of the total number of photographs examined. Photographs of volleyball players, a game played by females, totaled 56, or 5.4% of the 1,040 photographs analyzed. There were 39 photographs of track and field athletes, or 3.8% of the total 1,040 photographs. The total number of photographs of male tennis players was 33, while photographs of female soccer players and female tennis players were each shown 30 times. Photographs of female golfers outnumbered photographs of male golfers 19 to 9. Finally, photographs of cross country athletes and the sailing team totaled only six each, or .6% of the total number of photographs.

Table 2. Total number of photographs for each sport at USF collected from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010, in order from highest to lowest number of photographs

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Total Photos</b>	<b>% of Overall total</b>
Football (M)	229	22
Basketball (M)	166	16
Basketball (W)	138	13
Baseball (M)	126	12
Softball (W)	83	8.0
Soccer (M)	70	7.0
Volleyball (W)	56	5.4
Track and Field (W/M)	39	3.8
Tennis (M)	33	3.2
Soccer (W)	30	2.9
Tennis (W)	30	2.9
Golf (W)	19	1.8
Golf (M)	9	.9
Cross Country (W/M)	6	.6
Sailing (W)	6	.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1040</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows a comparison in numbers of photographs of women and men in sports that are equal (basketball, soccer, tennis, and golf) and those that are similar (softball/baseball) that were analyzed during the study of the USF Athletics home page during the 2009–2010 academic year. Additionally, Table 3 shows the numbers of photographs of male and female athletes in the two sports that include both genders (track and field and cross country) and the numbers of photographs of male and female athletes in their respective gendered sports (football, volleyball, sailing). Finally, Table 3 shows the number of active and non-active photographs for each sport analyzed. As indicated in Table 3, in equal or similar sports, there were more overall photographs of male athletes in all but one sport—golf. Additionally, with the exception of women’s tennis and

women's golf, there were more overall active photographs of men than there were overall active photographs of women during the period of analysis.

Table 3. *Numbers of photographs of women and men in equal, similar, combined gender, or gender-specific sports and numbers of active and non-active photos*

<b>Equal/Similar Sport</b>	<b>Total Photos</b>	<b>% of Overall total Photos (1,040)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Non Action</b>	<b>% of Action</b>	<b>% Action of total photos (1,040)</b>
Basketball (M)	166	16	110	56	66	10.6
Basketball (W)	138	13	84	54	61	8.1
Baseball (M)	126	12	78	48	62	7.5
Softball (W)	83	8	37	46	45	3.6
Soccer (M)	70	7	35	35	50	3.4
Soccer (W)	30	2.9	12	18	40	1.2
Tennis (M)	33	3.2	22	11	67	2.1
Tennis (W)	30	2.9	27	3	90	2.6
Golf (M)	9	.9	7	2	78	.7
Golf (W)	19	1.8	13	6	68	1.3
<b>M/W Sport</b>						
Track & Field	39	3.8	37	2	95	3.6
Cross Country	6	.6	5	1	83	.5
<b>Men's Sport</b>						
Football	229	22	117	112	51	11.3
<b>Women's Sport</b>						
Volleyball	56	5.4	23	33	41	2.2
Sailing	6	.6	6	0	100	.6

Table 4 breaks down, by range, the number of times photographs of female athletes appeared and the number of times photographs of male athletes appeared in Area 1, the set of eight interchanging frames of content on the USF Athletics home web page analyzed from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010. As indicated in Table 4, on three days during the 151 days of analysis, when the USF Athletics home web page was accessed, no photographs of female athletes or women’s athletics were viewed, whereas there was no day when at least one photograph of a male athlete or men’s athletics was not shown. Photographs of female athletes appeared in the range of only one to four frames on 134 of the 151 days, compared to photographs of male athletes appearing in one to four frames only on 64 days. However, in the higher range of appearances—five to eight images—representations of male athletes and their athletics outnumbered that of female athletes 87 to 14.

Table 4. *Number of days of photographs of female and male athletes in Area 1*

	<b>0 Photos</b>	<b>1-4 photos</b>	<b>5-8 photos</b>	<b>Total days</b>
# Days (W)	3	134	14	151
# Days (M)	0	64	87	151

#### *Areas 2-5*

Analysis of Areas 2 through 5 revealed significant underrepresentation of women’s athletics or female athletes. Table 5 shows the breakdown of numbers of representations of women’s or men’s athletics in Areas 2 through 5.

Female athletes or women’s athletics alone were represented in only one instance in Area 2. Women “shared” the representation with men in 13 instances when both

genders were featured in Area 2. Representations of male athletes or men’s athletics outnumbered women 134 to 1, out of a possible 151 instances. Three separate occasions when Area 2 showed only the USF mascot in a non-descript setting were excluded from this analysis because they were not representative of any specific sport or athlete.

There were no instances when female athletes or women’s athletics alone were represented in Area 3. The shared category of women and men contained 33 instances when women’s and men’s sports were both featured. Representations of male athletes or men’s athletics outnumbered women 118 to 0, out of a possible 151 instances.

Female athletes or women’s athletics were represented in only eight instances in Area 4. Again, the shared category of women and men contained 32 instances when women’s and men’s sports were featured. Representations of male athletes or men’s athletics outnumbered women 111 to 8, out of a possible 151 instances.

Like Area 3, Area 5 revealed zero representations of female athletes or women’s athletics. Here, the shared category of women’s and men’s sports also contained zero representations. Representations of male athletes or men’s athletics outnumbered women 151 to 0, out of a possible 151 instances.

Table 5. *Number of representations of women’s or men’s athletics in Areas 2-5*

	Area 2 <sup>a</sup>	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
(W)	1	0	8	0
(M)	134 <sup>b</sup>	118 <sup>c</sup>	111 <sup>d</sup>	151 <sup>e</sup>
(W)&(M)	13	33	32	0
N/A	3			
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>151</b>

<sup>a</sup>In Area 2, three images were not counted because they showed only school mascot in non-descript setting. <sup>b</sup>Of 134 photographs, 20 showed new head football coach Skip Holtz. <sup>c</sup>Of 118 photographs, 75 showed new head football coach Skip Holtz. <sup>d</sup>Of 111 photographs, 6 showed new head football coach Skip Holtz. <sup>e</sup>Of 151 photographs, 55 showed new head football coach Skip Holtz.

## Chapter Six:

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare the mediated coverage of women's and men's athletics on the USF Athletics Internet home web page during the 2009–2010 academic year. Specifically, the study addressed two questions: 1) Do women receive equal amounts of representation on the USF Athletics home web page, and 2) Are female athletes portrayed more than, less than, or equally active to men in the representations? Overall findings from this census of all areas of content that comprised the home page of the USF Athletics web site during the period of analysis from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010, reveal mixed results. While the overall gender coverage of female and male athletes in Area 1 was fairly equitable, the “big picture” representation of USF Athletics, reflected in findings from daily viewings of all areas under review from September 28, 2009, through April 30, 2010, was consistent with Tuchman's (1978) symbolic annihilation of women and, more specifically, findings of women's underrepresentation revealed in recent, but limited, studies of intercollegiate athletics on universities' Internet web pages (Cooper, 2008, 2009; Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Sagas et al., 2000). Below is a discussion of the findings as they pertain to each area analyzed, Areas 1 through 5. These five areas comprised the USF Athletics home web page during the period studied and provided visitors to the home page with an instant “snapshot” of USF Athletics.

## *Area 1*

Analysis of Area 1 on the USF Athletics Internet home web page revealed 1,040 photographs of female and male athletes and/or their coaches. Overall findings indicate that, of those, 388, or 37%, represented female athletes and 655, or 63%, represented male athletes. (Three photos in Track and Field contained both genders and were included in both totals.) While that comparison of total photographic representations reveals a large gap, the difference is less extreme after subtracting the photographs of athletes from the sport with the largest number of photographs—football. After removing 229 photographs of football players, the overall total of photographs of women compared to men was 388 to 426, or 48% and 52%, respectively. Of the 1,040 total photographs, 59% showed athletes in action, and 41% showed athletes not in action, that is, not actively participating in their sports. By gender, overall action photographs of women totaled 22%, while overall action photographs of men totaled 37%. Again, after subtracting the total of action photographs of football players, the difference was not significant: 22% and 26% of action photos of women and men, respectively.

Within the individual sports at USF that are similar or equal—basketball, baseball/softball, soccer, tennis, and golf—photographs of men outnumbered photographs of women in each sport category except for golf, where photographs of women golfers outnumbered photographs of men golfers 19 to 9. The widest gap between women's and men's equal sports was seen in soccer, where the number of photographs of male soccer players totaled 70 compared to 30 photographs of female soccer players. Additionally, 50% of the 70 photographs of male soccer players showed them in action, compared to 40% of the 30 photographs of female soccer players. These findings are

somewhat consistent with previous findings from early literature that women in team sports are underrepresented (Kane, 1989; Rintala & Birrell, 1984). However, representations of women's basketball outnumbered those of baseball and men's soccer, 138 to 126 and 70, respectively. Likewise, the total number of photographs of women basketball players and softball players each outnumbered the total photographs of men's soccer players 138 and 83 to 70, respectively.

Except for the significant difference in soccer, overall gender representation in Area 1 during the period under analysis was fairly equitable. Significant, however, was the number of times female athletes were represented within the eight scrolling frames of content in the slideshow feature of Area 1 on the home web page, collected during each of the 151 daily viewings over the period of analysis between September 28, 2009, and April 30, 2010. As shown in Table 4, during the period of analysis of the home web page, on three days, there were no photographic representations of female athletes. In contrast, there were no days when zero representations of male athletes were shown during the data collection. Male athletes appeared in more of the eight frames, and more often, than female athletes during each of the researcher's daily visits to the site. That is, on 87 days, male athletes were viewed in at least five and up to eight frames of content in the photo slideshow, compared to 14 days in which female athletes appeared in five to eight frames. On 134 days, photographs of female athletes appeared in one to four frames, while photographs of men appeared in one to four frames of content on 64 days. In other words, with each visit to the USF Athletic home web page during 151 days of analysis, photographs of male athletes were viewed more often than female athletes.

### *Areas 2-5*

Results from the examination of Areas 2 through 5, the remaining areas that complete the “big picture” of the USF Athletics home web page, showed little representation of female athletes. The nature of the content in Areas 2 through 5 was such that the content within the areas often remained the same for several days or lengthy periods. In addition to showing athletes, the content in Areas 2 through 5 often showed coaches, aerial views of stadiums, playing fields, mascots, fans in stands, etc. Since Areas 2 through 5 comprise the majority of the Athletics home web page as a whole, the content within them, along with the content in Area 1, present an overall view of what is considered important within USF Athletics. Therefore, when analyzing the results in Areas 2 through 5, the researcher simply noted the content within each area, whether it was an athlete, a coach, or some other representation of an athletic program.

As the results in Table 5 show, female athletes or women’s athletics were seldom shown in Areas 2 through 5 during the 151 days of analysis. Only one picture of a female athlete appeared in Area 2 during the analysis; it showed a basketball player, not performing any action, just looking to her side. That picture remained on the home web page for one day. Male athletes and men’s sports, however, were featured in Area 2 in 134 separate instances during the analysis period. Of the 134, 99 photographs represented football, 24 represented men’s basketball, 7 represented men’s soccer, and 4 represented baseball. In 13 instances, Area 2 showed only a new basketball facility, thus the researcher counted those as representations of both women’s and men’s basketball, although no people/athletes were shown.

There was no representation of female athletes in Area 3 during the analysis. For 33 days during the analysis, a women's basketball player "shared" the photo with a men's tennis player and a men's soccer player. The basketball player was shown cutting down a basketball net, the men's tennis player and the men's soccer player were each shown kissing a trophy. The remaining 118 images included two representations of men's basketball and 116 representations of football.

Women's softball was represented on eight occasions within Area 4 during the analysis, through a photograph of a softball field, with the players on it barely visible and in no obvious action. Both women's and men's basketball were represented 32 times during the analysis through an image that only showed children in stands, while promoting tickets for each sport. The remaining 111 images represented men and male athletes, with the majority showing football and men's basketball players and coaches.

Finally, in Area 5, there were no representations of female athletes on any of the 151 days of analysis. Rather, on all 151 days, Area 5 showed images representing either men's basketball or football.

The nature of the content in Area 1—the eight scrolling photographs—of the home page was such that the photographs changed throughout the day, based on updates or new feature stories that occurred within USF Athletics. That is, during the period analyzed, the content in Area 1 changed frequently, possibly offering a visitor to the home page different photographs each time she or he accessed the site. The content in Areas 2 through 5, however, seldom changed. That is, the content in those areas remained the same—often for lengthy time periods, as is demonstrated in Table 5. Thus, a visitor to the site could be presented with the same content consistently, day after day. As shown in

Table 5, findings from this study indicate that the majority of photographs in Areas 2 through 5 represented male athletes or male athletics. In mid-January 2010, during the analysis period, USF hired a new football coach. Perhaps that resulted in the overrepresentation of football throughout Areas 2 through 5 and the significant imbalance between representations of women's and men's athletics. In Areas 2 through 5, female athletes and women's athletics alone were depicted on only nine occasions. On the other hand, male athletes and men's athletics alone were represented in 514 instances during the 151-day period of analysis.

As demonstrated in the results of this census of the USF Athletics home web page, female athletes appeared less often than male athletes between September 28, 2009, and April 30, 2010. Particularly in the daily distribution of content within the eight scrolling frames in Area 1 and the significant absence of female athletes in Areas 2 through 5, female athletes were underrepresented on the Athletics home page. As Birrell and Theberge (1994) argue, patterns of underrepresentation send the cultural message that women are not a significant presence in sports. Clearly, a visitor to the USF Athletics home web page during this period of analysis may have questioned the importance of women's athletics at USF when representations of male athletes and men's athletics were so much more prevalent than those of female athletes and women's athletics.

## Chapter Seven:

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a “big picture” perspective of the gender coverage of athletics on the USF Athletics home Internet web page during the 2009–2010 academic year. A census of all of the areas on the home page that presented that big picture reveals that coverage of female athletes and women’s athletics was equitable to that of male athletes and men’s athletics in part of one area of the home web page but not equitable in the other areas.

Within the most prominent area of the home page labeled Area 1 for this study, women were underrepresented in comparison to men by only a slight margin, 388, or 48%, to 426, or 52%, respectively—if photographs featuring football are not counted. Including football, the gap widens to 388 to 655, or 37% and 63%, respectively. Of the 59% total photographs showing the athletes in action, 22% were of women and 37% were of men. Again, after removing action photographs representing football, the gap narrows to 22% and 26%, respectively. Because this study looked at the “big picture” of the web page, a significant finding within the analysis of the eight scrolling frames of content in Area 1 is that more photographs representing male athletes and men’s athletics appeared on more days than those featuring female athletes or women’s athletics. That is, each time the Athletics home web page was visited, there were more images and more frequent depictions of male athletes and men’s athletics than of female athletes or

women's athletics. In fact, there were three instances when no representations of women were shown in Area 1. So, while the overall total gender representation appears equitable over a span of 151 days, the daily distribution of the eight frames of content in Area 1 presents a different perspective—one in which male athletes and men's athletics are featured more often than female athletes or women's athletics.

Underrepresentation of female athletes was more significant within the remaining four areas of analysis, Areas 2 through 5. As the results show, the most frequent area of representation of female athletes was in Area 4, where there were eight images, and those images consisted of the same photo appearing on eight consecutive days—a distant photograph of a softball field with no signs of activity and a couple of players hardly visible. The only other instance of a female athlete appeared in Area 2, in which a female basketball player is shown passively looking to her side. In Areas 3 and 5, no solo representations of female athletes or athletics appeared during a span of 151 days.

The current study builds upon the work of Shifflett and Revelle (1994) and Wann et al. (1998) that examined NCAA-related products and university-sponsored newspapers. More important, this study adds to the new line of inquiry established by Sagas et al. (2000) that includes coverage of intercollegiate athletics on universities' Internet web sites. To my knowledge, no other study has examined all areas on only the home page of only one university's Athletics web site.

Limitations to this census of the USF Athletics home web page include the time and frequency of data collection. Due to personal circumstances, the researcher's data collection began on September 28, 2009, although the fall 2009 semester began August 24, 2009. Therefore, since data was collected only on weekdays, there is a gap of 25 days

in the analysis. Additionally, because no data was collected on weekends, the data from weekend competitions was not captured, unless the representations remained on the home web page into the week. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges that by only collecting data once per evening, content that was posted outside the time of collection and removed before the next evening's collection was not included in the study.

Future studies of mediated coverage of intercollegiate athletics on universities' Internet web sites may benefit the existing literature by examining the actual process involved in the creation and maintenance of the universities' Athletics web pages. For instance, if a non-university related web designer is maintaining the site for the university, how much control does that designer have over the content? Does the designer simply post the images provided by the university, or can the web designer "pick and choose" the content? Something else to consider is the number of repeat photographs that appear over several seasons. Is the producer of the web content providing fresh material or simply recycling much of the previous content? A second approach to future studies is to conduct a longitudinal study to see if change occurs over time. The literature in this research area is so limited that to date, there has been no such study.

The expectation among scholars is that, because university athletics departments have the ability to control the sports coverage on their Internet web sites, the mediated representation and coverage of both women and men should be equitable. Studies such as this are important because how our culture views female athletes is both reflected in and created by mediated images such as those on the Internet. Through their media products, whether they are school newspapers, media guides, or their Internet web pages, Athletics

departments have the ability to set the tone for how we see and think about female athletes.

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