# “THERE’S NO I IN TEAM”:

# STUDENT ATHLETE IDENTITY AT AN NCAA DIVISION II UNIVERSITY

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A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of Humboldt State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Sociology

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December 2019

ABSTRACT

“THERE’S NO I IN TEAM”:
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Student athletes hold a unique identity at colleges and universities all across the nation. They are tasked with the high demands and time constraints of being both a college level student and athlete. While there have been growing conversations about student athletes at Division I institutions, those pertaining to Division II student athletes remain minimal.

While student athletes have a great deal in common, they all come from different backgrounds that have contributed to who they are today. When arriving to college, these unique individuals are introduced to institutional power structures that constrain and control their identities and individuality. These larger power structures have sculpted definitions of what it means to be a “good” student athlete. Meanwhile, society also has defined what a student athlete is. These preconceived notions become even more complicated when using an intersectional approach that takes into consideration the additional identities student athletes hold such as race, class, gender and more. As a result, student athletes are left with the task of living up to the “good” student athlete expectation while also managing a stigmatized student athlete identity. In this study, I used nonprobability and snowball sampling methods to conduct 14 interviews that

revealed the ways in which student athletes managed these complex identities. Participants thoroughly talked about the student athlete subculture, hyper surveillance technologies, pressures to sacrifice pieces of their identity and managing a stigmatized identity. Student athletes strive to satisfy the demands of the higher power structures while their personal needs are disregarded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I truly believe that nothing great is ever accomplished alone. There are many people who I owe “thank yous” to that have contributed to what I have been able to accomplish. My family-my mom dad and sisters, my friends, coaches and my amazing boyfriend have provided me the support I needed to get through not only graduate school, but through everything. I thank my amazing cohort for all of the insight they have provided me with along with their support for my interests. My professors and other faculty who have worked hard to prepare me as a student going into the professional world. Particularly, I want to thank Mary Virnoche for her endless encouragement and support through this process. I also would like to use this space to thank Stephanie Lane for supporting student athletes, and for generously supporting me in my graduate work. Lastly, I thank all student athletes, especially those who participated in my research. For dedicating time out of your busy schedules to help co create this knowledge. This work would not have been possible without any of you, thank you.

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# INTRODUCTION

In August of 2016, Humboldt State University (HSU) is where I found myself embarking on this journey of being a student athlete. I had been a college student athlete for two years, at two different schools. It was my third year of college and I was already approaching school number three. I enrolled in a four year university (Point Loma Nazarene University) directly out of high school heavily influenced by basketball and shortly realized, like many athletes do, it was not a fit. Wanting a fresh start and having to comply with the NCAA rules, I ended up at a Community College following my passion of playing basketball and desire to earn a college education. A year later, I ended up at HSU, a place I had never been before, a place I didn't even know existed.

Balancing academics, athletics and a social life was almost effortless in high school; however, being a student athlete in college was something completely different. In high school, my life as an athlete was harmonious with my life as a student. In college, these identities were disconnected. I was able to maintain a social life and participate in things outside of academics and athletics when I was in high school, but that was something I had to sacrifice as a collegiate student athlete. The negative stigma wrapped around the student athlete identity on a college campus was not something I witnessed before. In high school, my teachers and peers always took an interest in my involvement in sports. In fact, many of my teachers were even coaches for the sports teams at my high school. That dynamic no longer existed at the collegiate level.

Not all of my college professors were thrilled to hear about my involvement as a student athlete. Often they learned that I was an athlete as I was also informing them of class sessions that I would miss because of my sport. While looking for a graduate program to enter, faculty was not thrilled about my athletic involvement either. In my search for a fitting department, it was assumed that I solely wanted to use graduate courses as a placeholder for my athletic eligibility. These experiences are what made me realize that my basketball world and my school world were no longer connected. Not only were they no longer connected, but they were competing against each other in many different ways. I had to figure out how I was going to navigate my identity as a student and how I was going to navigate my identity as an athlete because for me, they were no longer meshed into one. Even though I saw myself as much more than just a student athlete, these two identities were preceding all others. I was also a daughter, a sister, a friend, and more. For a period of time, it was my athletic identity that received top priority and that created strains on other parts of my identity. As a student, I still had all the same expectations as nonathletes. As an athlete, I was expected not to let anything interfere with my athletic performance. My outside life was expected to be left out of practice, games, film sessions and all other basketball related activities.

It was difficult to give both basketball and school 100 percent effort. With the time constraints and fatigue I was experiencing, it did not even seem possible to do. If I was not giving my best to both, then one was eventually going to suffer in some way. Although being a student athlete in college was undoubtedly difficult, I had not experienced an overwhelming strain between these two identities until I entered graduate

school as a student athlete. Entering a master's program forced me to shift my identity from being more of an athlete-student, who identified more with my athletic self, to a student-athlete -- who consciously shifted to prioritizing academics over athletics. I reached a point where I was genuinely thinking more about myself in my future career, and it no longer involved playing a sport. Graduate school was much more demanding and took much more effort to earn a high GPA compared to my undergraduate education. I would not have been setting myself up for academic and professional "success" if I was not fully engaged in my academics. What I found was that I was not as motivated to get up extra shots outside of practice or watch extra game film. It became more important and necessary for me to focus on my academics.

I began to identify more as an academic; however, the demands that came with playing college basketball remained the same. I went to practice mentally exhausted from reading for hours right before I got there. Though I may have been of the same skill level or even better than the previous season, I quickly noticed that my athletic performance declined. Yet my poor performance did not genuinely bother me as it had in the past. It was not because I did not care about basketball anymore; instead, I no longer had time for it to consume my thoughts.

Interestingly enough, graduate school sparked my interest in studying these types of identity conflicts that many other student athletes also face. My experience as a student athlete has given me a unique inside perspective of what that life is like. While I have something in common with student athletes all across the country, our stories still differ greatly. I wanted to hear how others have navigated their student athlete identities.

I knew that I wanted to work in athletics professionally, so I decided to seek an entry-level position within HSU athletics while finishing my master's degree. I applied for and began working a paid position in athletics soon after exhausting my NCAA eligibility. I was a study hall coordinator and supervisor for student athletes. During my time in this position, I was given the privilege of implementing new ideas to what was already in place. I met with head coaches to find out what they wanted or needed as far as a study hall for their student athletes. I developed surveys that were sent out to student athletes regarding how their study hall experience could be bettered. I also initiated a more engaged relationship with athletics and the library staff, who kindly provided a space in the library to host athletics study hall. This experience has contributed to my knowledge of student athletes in a different way than what I had experienced before because I was no longer a student athlete, but was in a paid position to provide a service to student athletes. Even though I was in a lower position that did not have much decision making power, I approached this opportunity with excitement to give back to a community that I was a part of. I enjoyed hearing first hand from student athletes what they wanted to see more of in regards to supporting their success.

*What is the NCAA?*

Founded in 1906 by former president Theodore Roosevelt, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a nonprofit member-led organization that has claimed dedication to the well-being and lifelong success of college athletes (NCAA 2019). The NCAA is the dominant control force over student athletes that provides rules,

organizes championships, controls television rights, and certifies bowl games (Eitzen 1986). The NCAA is made up of three divisions (I, II, and III). Within these three divisions, there are 1,117 colleges across the United States who are member schools. Within these 1,117 schools are 100 athletic conferences, 40 affiliated sports organizations and nearly 500,000 collegiate student athletes (NCAA 2019). Each Division has its own manual defining the terms and conditions imposed by the NCAA. The 2018-2019 Division II manual includes more than 300 pages of rules and regulations.

A student athlete, as defined by the NCAA (2019):

> is a student whose enrollment was solicited by a member of the athletics staff or other representative of athletics interests with a view toward the student's ultimate participation in the intercollegiate athletics program. Any other student becomes a student-athlete only when the student reports for an intercollegiate squad that is under the jurisdiction of the athletics department, as specified in Constitution 3.3.4.4. A student is not deemed a student-athlete solely on the basis of prior high school athletics participation.

NCAA student athletes are considered amateurs who must abide by the rules listed in the NCAA manual specific to their division in order to keep their eligibility to play for an NCAA member institution. Violation of rules puts student athletes at risk of losing their eligibility and scholarship.

Recently, criticism has been leveled at the NCAA for a number of reasons, largely because of its exploitation and control over student athletes. The NCAA operates as a monopoly that has limited the freedom of student athletes and increased the power that schools have over them (Eitzen 1986). Though the NCAA claims that student athlete well-being is their priority, much of the previous literature suggests otherwise. Research

points to NCAA student athlete exploitation that includes critiques of (no) pay, coach overpayment and the negative impacts on the student athlete quality of education (Hawkins 1999; Haden 2001; Gatmen 2011; Cosh and Tully 2014; Murty, Roebuck and McCamey 2014; Rheenen and Atwood 2014; Greer 2018). Furthermore, these critiques are linked to racial disparities in higher education. At many universities across the nation, student athletes are more likely to identify as minoritized students than the nonathlete student body on their respective campus. To this point, Murty and colleagues (2014), as well as Rheenen and Atwood (2014) criticize the NCAA as a white power structure that exploits student athletes, particularly student athletes of color.

*Student Athletes and Academic Success Across Divisions*

There are many similarities and differences between Division I, II and III NCAA institutions. While each division produces its own manual and much of the content across manuals overlaps, one of the most striking differences between Division I and II institutions is the level of funding (NCAA 2019). On average, Division I athletics are funded exponentially more money compared to Division II athletics. Division III universities receive the least funding and do not allocate athletic based scholarships to their student athletes. For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, there was nearly $679 million allocated specifically to Division I programs while $41.8 million was dispersed across Division II schools and $32.3 million across Division IIIs (NCAA 2019). Such a discrepancy may contribute to other notable differences seen between the two divisions

such as graduation rates, retention rates, and the day-to-day experiences of student athletes in those programs.

Division I student athletes are more academically successful than Division II student athletes. The NCAA provides graduation and academic success rates for each division on its website. The NCAA (2019) introduced two success metrics: Graduation Success Rate (GSR) in 2002 and Academic Success Rate (ASR) in 2006. The GSR used at Division I's takes into account student athletes who transfer in and out of schools. Students who transfer out of Division I schools but are in good academic standing are basically passed from that school's cohort to a different school's cohort. If a student athlete leaves a school in poor academic standing, they are counted as a nongraduate in their cohort. The GSR also includes nonscholarship student athletes if they attend a school that does not award athletic based scholarships (NCAA 2019). The ASR is a measurement used at Division II and III institutions, and takes into account all student athletes, including those who are not on an athletic scholarship when measuring graduation outcomes. The ASR also includes student athletes who transfer in and out similar to how the GSR does.

The Academic Progress Rate is an additional measurement that gages student athlete success. The academic progress rate (APR) was implemented in 2003 in order to foster academic reform efforts in Division I schools. APR data is collected every year in the Spring to track academic performances on a more consistent basis. NCAA participating schools are required to report all rates mentioned above (NCAA 2019).

Division I student athletes are more likely to receive a full athletic scholarship than Division II student athletes are. The two divisions differ in terms of scholarship allocation, talent and public exposure (Watt and Moore 2001). Many Division II student athletes are on a partial scholarship or no athletic scholarship at all (walk-ons) because of this difference in funding. For the most recent cohort, the NCAA reported Division II student athletes having an overall ASR of 73 percent while student athletes at Division I schools had an overall GSR of 87 percent. There is drastically more money committed to Division I programs, including a 48 million dollar academic enhancement fund that is in place to assist Division I schools with academic programs and services (NCAA 2019). It is not surprising that Division I student athletes are graduating at noticeably higher rates when Division II schools are not receiving the same funding.

For the most part, student athletes are graduating at higher rates than their nonathlete counterparts when looking at Division I and II schools specifically (NCAA 2019). In addition to that, women student athletes are consistently graduating at higher rates than men student athletes (NCAA 2019). Women student athletes for the Division II 2015-2018 cohort had an ASR of 86 percent compared to 64 percent for male student athletes. The same trend is also seen at Division I schools where the women student athletes in the 2015-2018 cohort had a GSR of 93 percent, and male student athletes were at 82 percent. This is believed to be associated with higher levels of academic engagement with female student athletes due to the lack of opportunities to go professional after college (Harrison et al. 2009).

Despite these similarities, there were notable differences found between divisions. One of the more glaring differences is that Division I and III student athletes are academically succeeding at higher rates than Division II student athletes. Much of this difference observed in academic achievement is said to be due to the difference in the academic missions of many DII institutions. They are catering to "nontraditional" students and families who may not have had a long history of college attendance (NCAA 2019).

NCAA white student athletes have higher rates of academic success than black and "other" racial identifying student athletes (NCAA 2019). Division I black student athletes had an overall GSR of 76 percent while Division II black student athletes had an overall ASR of 50 percent. Division I white student athletes had an overall GSR of 91 percent while Division II white student athletes had an overall ASR of 80 percent. This trend of Division II schools falling short of Division I schools in academic success held true for all categories of the most recent cohort as seen in the figures below (NCAA 2019). I discuss these academic outcomes with a more thorough intersectional rationale later in my literature review.

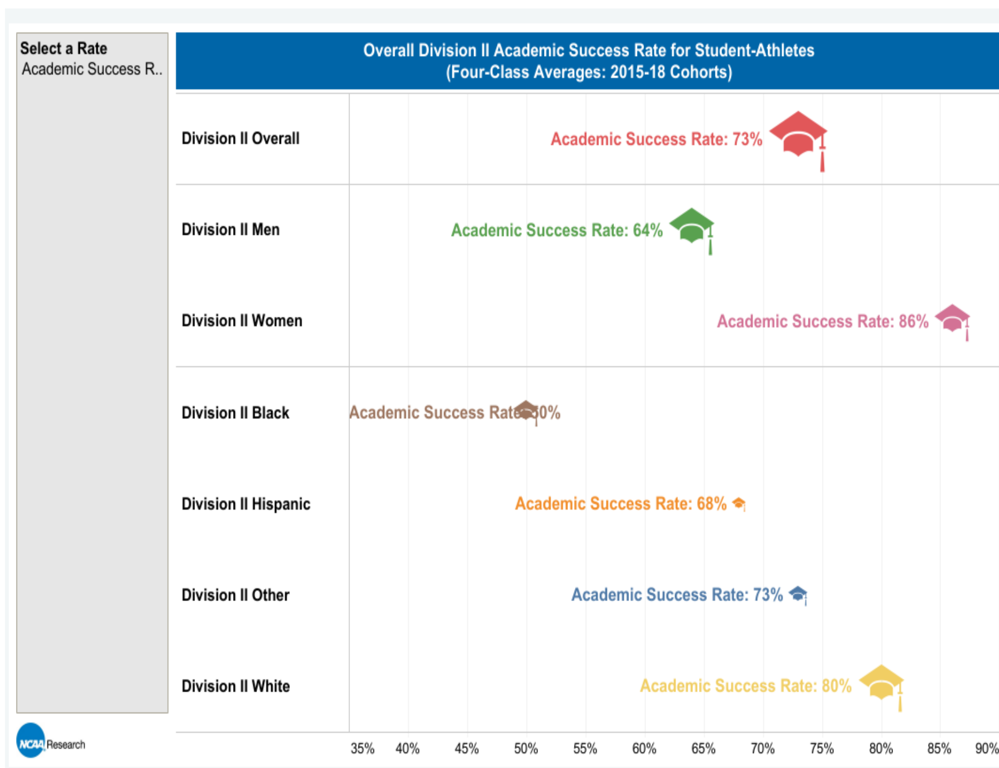


Table adopted from NCAA 2018 Division II Graduation Rates Database.

https://public.tableau.com/shared/X22M8B3C8?:display_count=y&:origin=viz_share_link&:embed=y

Figure 1: Overall Division II Academic Success Rate for Student Athletes (2015-2018 Cohorts):

Table adopted from NCAA 2018 Division I Graduation Rates Database.

https://public.tableau.com/shared/QSMM3QWCM?:display_count=y&:origin=viz_share_link&:embed=y

Figure 2: Overall Division I Academic Success Rate for Student Athletes (2015-2018 Cohorts)

*Student Athlete Success at Humboldt State*

While existing research on student athletes focuses predominantly on Division I institutions, this study offers a unique contribution with its focus on student athletes at an NCAA Division II institution. As noted above, given lower levels of funding at Division II athletic programs, many NCAA Division II student athletes are on partial scholarship or enter programs as walk-ons. Still, NCAA Division II coaches and faculty hold these

student athletes to many of the same expectations as outlined for Division I athlete but without the same support.

For NCAA Division II schools, student athletes are on average more successful than the nonathlete student body. This trend has held true since at least 2002 as shown on the NCAA website (NCAA 2019). For the 2012-2013 Division II cohort, student athletes had an ASR of 61 percent while the student body graduated at a rate of 52 percent. Looking more closely at HSU sports, there were significant discrepancies found across specific teams. Men's basketball had an ASR of 33 percent, cross country and track were at 70 percent, football was at 46 percent, men's soccer was at 55 percent, women's basketball was at 75 percent, women's cross country and track were at 83 percent, crew/rowing was at 69 percent, women's soccer was at 76 percent, softball was at 64 percent and volleyball was at 63 percent (NCAA 2019). These data reveal visible gaps across different sports, but also reinforce that there are gendered gaps when looking at the differences between men's and women's sports.

It is in this context that I situate the student part of my student athlete identity negotiation. I have found great importance in this topic not only because of my experiences as a student athlete at HSU but also because of my desire to remain in an environment that works with student athletes. A significant epistemological piece for me was experiencing and negotiating an overwhelming athletic role that sometimes came at the expense of academics. There were days that I would miss class because I felt too tired to get up; however, I would never consider missing practice. I constantly fell asleep in my morning classes when I had to wake up at 5 a.m. for morning practice. I would often

wait until the last minute to complete assignments, reaching a point where I was not able to give my academic work very much intellectual thought because I was rushing just to get something turned in. I found myself lacking adequate experience that I could put on my resume. As I began to think about making a professional transition, it felt impossible to manage both a college level sport and a job. I did not have the motivation to get involved in any clubs or groups around campus that I would have liked: I had little energy left. In the next chapter, I will talk about the current literature that exists around student athlete identity. I then go into my methods chapter and discuss the methods I used in doing this research. Later, my data analysis chapter, where I lay out the themes that arose through my semistructured interviews with student athletes.

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE: IDENTITY MANAGEMENT AND THE ATHLETIC PANOPTICON

With sports and society a growing conversation, athletic identity has become a popular topic for discussion (Beron and Piquero 2016). Research suggests that playing sports can help people develop a sense of identity because it promotes self-confidence, increases test scores on a variety of standardized tests, raises educational goals (Ward 2008) and "makes [one] feel competent and self-efficacious during activity engagement" (Donahue 2010:527). Donahue (2010) found that when one enjoys and participates in an activity on a regular basis, the representation of the activity becomes integrated in that person's identity. Similarly, Kirk and Kirk (1993) found that athletes believe they are what they do. This leads to a passion that causes an activity to be so integrated into one's identity that it becomes central to who they see themselves as.

## *The Student Athlete Identity*

The collegiate athlete identity is unique considering many student athletes simultaneously experience two competing identities: student and athlete. By virtue of one's identity as a college student, they are assumed to be one of high academic motivation and ability (Engstrom and Sedlacek 1991). In contrast, their identity as an athlete is assumed to be lacking of these qualities; they are stigmatized as dumb jocks (Adler and Adler 1991; Engstrom and Sedlacek 1991; Harrison 2008; Stone, Harrison, and Mottley 2012; Bimper, Harrison and Clark 2013; Riciputi and Erdal 2017).

Much of the previous literature concerning student athlete identity takes into consideration how student athletes go about managing these two very demanding identities (Adler and Adler 1991; Burns et al. 2012; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper et al. 2013). Student athletes are tasked with time constraints, the demands of practice and games, social isolation and social evaluation (Bimper 2014). Many have come to the conclusion that student athletes who identify more with the student part of their identity generally have higher GPAs compared to student athletes who identify more with their athletic identity (Adler and Adler 1991; Bimper 2014; Beron and Piquero 2016). Beron and Piquero's (2016) study found that a student athlete's GPA was directly influenced by the ways in which they saw themselves. I discuss these role negotiations later in this chapter.

Women student athletes tend to identify more with their academic identity than male student athletes do and typically report higher GPAs (Kirk and Kirk 1993; Harrison et al. 2009; Riciputi and Erdal 2017). With the knowledge that there are less opportunities for women to go professional than there are for men, women are graduating college at higher rates (Harrison et al. 2009). Some athletes may be more inclined to identify with their athletic identity because of the instant glamorous rewards that come with being an athlete such as attention from the media, being asked for their autograph and swarming fans (Snyder 1986; Adler and Adler 1991; Kirk and Kirk 1993; Watt and Moore 2001), as well as the demands they are receiving from their coaches, and the slim opportunity to go professional (Adler and Adler 1991; Kirk and Kirk 1993).

Adler and Adler (1991) found that the male basketball players in their study had become aware that their lives were actually compartmentalized into several extremely demanding roles. Critical to this finding was recognizing that these compartmentalized roles were often overpowered by one's athletic role, ultimately resulting in athletic role engulfment: a term described by Adler and Adler (1991) that explains how one's athletic role "conflicted and competed with other roles and activities for access to athletes' time, effort, and self-identification...Once committed to this identity, they encountered conflicts between their athletic and other roles" (Adler and Adler 1991:221).

*A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective of Student Athletes*

Social and behavioral scientists study identity: how one sees oneself and how they believe that others see them (Beron and Piquero 2016). Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical lens used to view identity construction. Blumer (1969) built on Herbert Mead's (1934) theoretical foundation in this area. Blumer developed three premises for symbolic interactionism. One being that people strive and act towards what represents meaning for them, the second being that people make meaning out of social interactions, and third, that meaning is handled through interpretative processes (Blumer 1969; Handberg et al. 2015).

Handberg and colleagues (2015) explains that Blumer's (1969) idea of symbolic interactionism declares that the meaning that one makes of things comes from social interactions that occur with others. Symbolic interactionism takes into account how people communicate meanings through spoken language, as well as nonverbal symbols

like body language or dress. Usually, social interaction occurs through structured sets of roles and identities that correspond to the social status of individuals. One then begins to connect individuals to roles and identities, and as a result, leads to different role interpretations and performances. These identities receive development and verification from social interaction with others. That being said, social identities, actions and interactions are all viewed as fluid and dynamic, and are influenced by what is known as the looking-glass self- Charles Horton Cooley's (1998) notion of what allows social actors to imagine how they are seen by others.

Within the sociology of sport, researchers have focused on athlete identity. Athletes are expected to assume an aggressive, competitive, skilled, disciplined and hardworking role. These meanings in the sport world provide frameworks for thinking and ways for individuals to evaluate each other's and their own performance (Snyder 1986).

Snyder (1986) examined the identity construction of student athletes and found that those who attended major universities likely developed a perception of themselves as "good athletes" during adolescent years. Many student athletes indicated that during these years, on a scale of 1 to 10, the importance of sports was a 9 or 10. Student athletes mentioned the recognition and rewards from society were salient to their perception of themselves and their athletic identity formation. Individuals learned to anchor their view of themselves due to their experiences during these formative years. When one does not perform well in their sport, their identity as an athlete becomes threatened (Ball 1976; Harris and Eitzen 2016). Their identity is illegitimate in the eyes of the coach causing low

self-esteem, humiliation and embarrassment. When student athletes faced identity threatening experiences, they often further engaged in identity management, and attempted to save face by adjusting or reconstructing their athletic identities and projecting the blame away from themselves (Goffman 1961in Snyder 1986). Athletes might try to maintain their self-esteem by creating more of a distance between their self-perception and the role. In response to a coach's threat to an athlete's self-esteem, the athlete creates a distance from the athlete role and its definitions. One might say that they are only playing to receive a scholarship, or that they cannot wait for the season to be over in order to distance themselves from the identity they feel they are not living up to (Goffman 1961 in Snyder 1986).

In college athletics, it is common for athletic departments to institutionalize their role expectations for coaches, players, trainers and administrators. There are several ways in which athletic departments go about facilitating the maintenance of the system and constraining behavior, which I go into more detail about later in this chapter. A symbolic interactionist approach is useful in examining how student athletes define, reflect and make choices while their daily activities become regimented, repetitive and stripped of their identity (Eitzen 1986).

*Stigma*

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) sets up a theoretical lens for viewing humans and how they go about interacting and managing their identity. Goffman uses the metaphor of a theater to suggest that individuals take part in what he

calls a performance to manage the impressions they are making with others. Goffman suggests that individuals wear different "masks" based on who they are performing for at any given time: "sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain" (Goffman 1959: 3).

Following his work above, Goffman (1963) went on to publish *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Stigma is defined as shameful attribute different than what one may have wanted or expected. A stigmatized person holds a special relationship with their attribute and stereotype. This undesired differentness causes society to believe the person with stigma is not quite human, triggering forms of discrimination to take place. (Goffman 1963). All individuals in society are stigmatized at some point in their life. Individuals are thus challenged with managing a stigmatized identity. During social interactions, stigmatized individuals do not know what others are truly thinking about them. This causes individuals to develop a self-conscious calculation of the impression they are making (Goffman 1963).

Previous literature has identified people who experience stigma as more likely to have negative feelings towards themselves due to society assigning them unwanted negative characteristics (Goffman 1963; Kirk and Kirk 1993; Simons et al. 2007). Goffman (1963) defines three distinct categories for the types of stigma that exist. One being of the body, such as a physical form out of the ordinary, another as pertaining to an individual's character such as imprisonment or alcoholism and lastly, what Goffman

called the tribal stigma which includes race, nation and religion (Goffman 1963). Individuals who possess overt stigma such as race and gender are considered the "discredited". Those who have a stigmatized quality that is not visible such as mental illness, alcoholism or even student athlete status are considered the "discreditable" (Goffman 1963; Chaudoir, Earnshaw, and Andel 2013). Although student athlete status is something that would technically be considered discreditable, it is more often than not something that can be visually determined. On college campuses that are predominantly white, tall black students wearing athletic attire they were given by the athletic department are more likely to stand out and to be assumed a student athlete (Adler and Adler 1991; Simons et al. 2007; Bimper et al. 2013). Black male student athletes have identified it as almost impossible to conceal their student athlete identity:

> From the day we get on campus everyone knows or presumes we play ball. No one says oh he must be here for business school. No, they say 'that black dude plays a sport.' I know most folk think we are here to play ball just because they see us [black athletes on campus] in the same school colored clothes that we get from the equipment staff. Everybody sees you as an athlete. It's like I got "athlete" tattooed to my forehead (Bimper et al. 2013:117)

Bimper and colleagues (2013) reported that in this study, the black male student athletes at a predominantly white institution were motivated to negate the stigma that society imposed upon them by achieving academic success. The student athletes in this study coped with stigma by combatting it through liberation. Participants found comfort in a community of fellow black student athletes along with others who were thought to have had a positive influence on their academic and athletic success. Participants explained that they negotiated their complex identities by recognizing that their athletic

role was indeed a significant one; however, their narratives concluded that it was not all they defined themselves as (Bimper et al. 2013). The individuals in this study also claimed that having a supportive community contributed to their success as a student athlete. They acknowledged the importance of seeking a network of resources that would fulfill their academic and personal needs.

It is necessary to use what Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) reckons an intersectional approach in this research because individuals simultaneously hold several different social identities (Hoelter 1983; Snyder 1986; Adler and Adler 1991; Shogan 1999; Watt and Moore 2001; Yopyk and Prentice 2005; Burns et al. 2012; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper et al. 2013; Yukhymenko-Lescroart 2018). With that being said, it is possible for one to experience stigma from multiple different angles. A student athlete may be experiencing stigma as a result of their race, gender, and student athlete status (Simons et al. 2007; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper et al. 2013). Using an intersectional approach requires a lens that does not separate these identities, but looks at them where they intersect and interrelate (Crenshaw 1991). This multilevel stigma may cause student athletes to attempt to keep their identity as a student athlete concealed to prevent any more stigma than what they are already experiencing (Simons et al. 2007; Harrison et al. 2009; Lane 2016). Unfortunately, this coping method invites additional burdens for the student athlete and has a negative effect on their academic performance as discussed in the section below (Harrison et al. 2009).

There are many people on college campuses such as professors and nonathlete students who think that student athletes are a privileged group due to their status on

campus (Adler and Adler 1991; Kirk and Kirk 1993; Baucom and Lantz 2001; Simons et al. 2007). Some student athletes get into colleges on lower academic requirements, miss class, have more privileges to tutoring and resources and receive an athletic scholarship to aid the costs of college. There is an assumed celebrity status that comes with being an athlete on a college campus (Snyder 1986; Adler and Adler 1991; Watt & Moore 2001; Harrison et al. 2009). However, the treatment that people *think* athletes get and what they actually receive differ (Adler and Adler 1991; Kirk and Kirk 1993). Student athletes go through intense, grueling practices before they are exposed to rewards and public attention (Adler and Adler 1991). This lack of understanding nurtures the existence of negative stigmas.

*Managing a Stigmatized Identity as a Student Athlete*

Student athletes' social identity has the potential to be valued in one context, yet devalued in another. This setting dependent nature of stigma is evident for student athletes when their athletic identity is stigmatized in the academic realm, but glorified in athletic settings (Adler and Adler 1991; Simons et al. 2007). Student athletes are forced to navigate the "dumb jock" stigma that exists both on and off college campuses (Adler and Adler 1991; Harrison 2008; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper 2013; Riciputi and Erdal 2017). They are perceived as less intelligent, less motivated and not adequately prepared for what's to come with higher education (Adler and Adler 1991; Kirk and Kirk 1993; Simons et al. 2007; Stone et al. 2012). This "dumb jock" stereotype refers to student athletes in general, but places an additional stigma on student athletes of color who are

stigmatized as less intelligent due to their racial identity. (Yopyk and Prentice 2005; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper et al. 2013). Simons and colleagues (2007) found that male athletes, athletes in revenue generating sports and African American student athletes reported higher levels of negative perceptions and treatment than their counterparts. I discuss the racialization of black student athletes more thoroughly later in this literature review. Unfortunately, stigmatization subjects one to prejudice and discrimination, (Goffman 1963) so for collegiate student athlete, the value of their educational experience is more at risk.

Despite the negative experiences reported by student athletes (Simons et al. 2007), collegiate level student athletes are often still perceived as privileged rather than stigmatized. Though they hold a stigma that is discreditable, they are often not given the opportunity of communicating their identity or not (Lane 2006). As a student athlete, these individuals constantly have eyes on them and cannot do much to avoid being stigmatized (Simons et al. 2007).

There are several different responses individuals use as an attempt to escape negative expectations and prejudicial treatment (Simons et al. 2007). A common negative coping mechanism is the implicit or explicit acceptance of the validity of stigma. Student athletes might begin to believe that to some extent, they do lack the intellectual ability to succeed academically. This belief turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy where student athletes make attempts to avoid or resist the academic predicaments where they feel insufficient. This is done by participating in self hindering behaviors such as lateness, poor class attendance or lack of participation in class (Simons et al. 2007). Essentially,

athletes internalize the negative "dumb jock" stereotype that exists to be true, causing them to disidentify with academics, and increase their athletic identity. As a result, student athletes strengthen relationships with their teammates, and lose connection with their nonathlete peers. Their identity is rebuilt so that their self-worth is more reliant on the athletic part of their identity (Simons et al. 2007). An alternate coping method is for student athletes to implicitly accept their stigmatized identity by making attempts to conceal their athlete status to avoid stigmatization. This coping method might be less damaging to one's academic performance because it avoids stigma (Simons et al. 2007).

There are also positive coping methods for managing a stigmatized identity. Student athletes may reject the assumed stereotype by choosing to not conform to it. They work hard in classes to earn good grades, participate in class and show interest to prove that they can be an academically successful student (Simons et al 2007). Unfortunately, not all student athletes use this approach, and may default to the negative coping methods mentioned above.

*Role Engulfment*

Student athletes often experience role engulfment (Snyder 1986; Adler and Adler 1991; Harrison 2008; Beron and Piquero 2016), the idea that student athletes' athletic role intrudes other aspects of their lives (Adler and Adler 1991). In Adler and Adler's (1991) study, student athletes were expected to conduct themselves in ways that protected the reputation of the athletic department, even during class and their free time. Combined with extreme time demands, this resulted in refraining from other social activities such as

going out for an afternoon drink with peers, being part of a frat and going to college parties (Adler and Adler 1991). The academic role of student athletes suffers as a result of athletic role engulfment (Adler and Adler 1991; Cosh and Tully 2014; Beron and Piquero 2016). Regarding their academic role, student athletes held very little autonomy over academic related decisions such as their major and course selection (Adler and Adler 1991; Murty et al. 2014). Student athletes were often so mentally and physically fatigued that they had little energy left to dedicate to their schoolwork. Student athletes were making adjustments to their academic ambitions and changing their desired major to less challenging ones so that they could pass classes and remain eligible in athletics. All the while, their coach held the power to renew or take away the scholarship that they were receiving for participating in athletics. These situations have lead student athletes to become engulfed in their athletic role (Adler and Adler 1991). Despite these sacrifices student athletes were making for their athletic role, there were many rewards it brought about. The glamorized athlete life offered student athletes many instant rewards such as fans and media attention as a result of their commitment to athletics. These instant rewards are difficult to reject and make student athletes more inclined to remain engulfed in their athletic role so that they might continue to receive these rewards.

Hughes' (1945) concept of a master status was also used to describe what student athletes in Adler and Adler's (1991) study were experiencing. Hughes (1945) defined a master status as "an individual's position in society as it is influenced by the most salient role in his or her repertoire...the master status influences individuals' interaction with others by affecting the way both they and significant others perceive, interpret, and define

them and their behavior" (Adler and Adler 1991:225). The dominant role that athletics took in these student athletes' lives affected other parts of their identity.

Similarly, Beron and Piquero (2016) found that student athletes who identified more with their athletic role over their academic role reported lower GPAs. When coaches funnel athletes into certain majors there is an observed drop in GPA. Having academic advising from coaches was identified as something that might have a negative effect on student athlete academic success (Beron and Piquero 2016). Beron and Piquero (2016) identify that coaches might be motivated to keep student athletes eligible to play at the expense of the student athlete's academic autonomy, further entrenching athletic identity engulfment (Adler and Adler 1991).

Similar to Adler and Adler's (1991) findings, Harrison (2008) looks at the campus perceptions and recruiting experiences of African American and white male student athletes. Harrison (2008) found that on a recruiting trip, both black and white student athletes viewed the recruiting process to be mostly about athleticating African American male student athletes rather than educating them. "Athleticating" in this context means that the student athletes are treated as superstars, and their recruiting trip is made more about athletic glamorization rather than academic building (Harrison 2008). Harrison (2008) includes an analysis on the racialization and stigmatization of the black male student athlete, especially on predominantly white college campuses (Adler and Adler 1985). This conclusion was drawn due to athletic parts of the school being glamorized while academics were given little to no attention. This resembles the reality of the athletic role engulfment that the student athletes in the Adler's study faced; the overemphasizing

of athletics during a recruiting trips (Harrison 2008) was a preview for the overemphasized role athletics takes in the lives of student athletes, especially those who identify as black men (Adler and Adler 1991).

*Winning Seals One's Identity*

In sports, when you get to the college and professional level, winning is something that holds great value. Winning has gained its status through the value society has placed on it. It also makes college athletic programs significantly more money. The success of a college athletic team is determined primarily by their winning records (Snyder 1986). Dr Raj Persaud makes the claim that when our team wins, we win and our identity is confirmed (Versi, 2004). Not only can winning be an aesthetic experience, but winning often determines whether or not many college coaches will maintain their current jobs. It therefore becomes their primary goal, the most important thing to them (Eitzen 1986). This has contributed to the commercialization of college athletics (Banks 1983; Eitzen 1986; Kirk and Kirk 1993; Hawkins 1999; Watt and Moore 2001; Murty et al. 2014; Rheenen and Atwood 2014; Giulianotti 2016). Student athletes dedicate a substantial number of hours to practice and training with the goal of winning in mind. There are coaches who will do everything that they can to win, even if it means enforcing strict discipline and control over student athletes (Eitzen 1986; Shogan 1999; Abdel-Shehi and Kalman-Lamb 2011). If and when a team wins, coaches' identities are solidified because that is what they have been working towards, and that is what gets desirable feedback from the media and society. Even fan emotional reactions and

willingness to associate oneself with the team were found to be influenced by the immediate performance of the team (Talarico and Moore 2012). Fans often tie their individual fate and status to the results of their favorite player or team (Abdel-Shehi and Kalman-Lamb 2011; Giulianotti 2016).

*Student Athletes and Racial Identities*

Racial identities play a critical role not only in how one sees oneself, but also how one is viewed by others. Racial identity plays a particularly significant role in the development of black college student athletes (Bimper 2014; Harrison 2011). Athletics are an integral part of African American male socialization, particularly for those who come from poor neighborhoods. Studies have shown that black men are more likely to develop a special connection with sports. Athletes are identified as a symbol of success in the black community, and this has an effect on the identity formation of young African American boys (Beamon 2008). This leads to the belief that sports are the only way to escape poverty in these communities (Sailes 1998b). In the mid-late 1900's when African Americans were becoming more involved in sports, they began to dominate. Society linked this overwhelming success to a genetic difference; however, there is no evidence to support this claim (Harpalani 1998). This idea of black athletic superiority opens the door to the belief that whites are intellectually superior to blacks.

Even within sports, black athletes are funneled into more “athletic” positions, for example, in football a running back or wide receiver, while positions that require more intelligence, such as a quarterback, are reserved for white athletes (Edwards 1971). It is

in this context that black male athletes have reported higher levels of stigma on college campuses (Sailes 1998a; Yopyk and Prentice 2005; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper et al. 2013). The dumb jock stereotype is not race specific, but has been perceived more in African Americans when compared to white counterparts (Sailes 1998a) because it is believed that African Americans are not as "intellectually sharp" as their white peers (Adler and Adler 1991; Simons et al. 2007; Giulianotti 2016). If it is assumed that the typical student athlete is a dumb jock, then the black student athlete is assumed the dumbest of them all (Sailes 1993 in Sailes 1998a).

Mentioning the overrepresentation of black athletes involved in NCAA revenue generating sports (Majors 1998; Beron and Piquero 2016; Harrison 2008), Bimper (2014) suggests that the racial identities of student athletes might be salient to the relationship between college student athlete identity and academic outcomes. In contrast, much of the existing literature that examines student athletes' racial identities and academic outcomes concludes that racial identity is not a significant predictor in the academic outcomes (Bimper 2014). While racial identity alone is not a significant predictor of the academic outcomes of student athletes, it is salient in one's identity formation from a young age.

Black male student athletes may cope with negative stigma by accepting the belief that they are intellectually inferior by disidentifying with their academic self (Simons et al. 2007; Bimper et al. 2013) and, thus, developing more of an athletic identity than an academic one. Previous literature notes how black male student athletes often feel socially isolated on college campuses, which may make one more likely to disengage from their academic and social selves (Bimper et al. 2013). Regardless of multiple

negative stigmas placed on the identities of student athletes of color, black student athletes tend to academically outperform their nonathlete peers of the same race (Giulianotti 2016; NCAA 2019).

Bimper (2013) looks specifically at "successful" black male student athletes and how they go about navigating their identity. Though individuals in the study did see themselves as athletes, they did not see themselves as only athletes. Participants talked about how it would have been impossible to not identify as an athlete because of the demanding time commitments they faced with athletics. Participants also talked about how their racial identity made them susceptible to negative stigma, a negative racial stigma that was not separate from their athletic identity. The experiences of these student athletes and their knowing of how others saw them as a result of their racial and student athlete status played an important role in their identity development. These particular student athletes knew that they were perceived as athletes who valued their sport over their education: They consciously and unconsciously made efforts to foster other parts of their identity to combat the negative stigma that society assigned to their identity. Surrounding themselves with people who contributed to their academic and athletic success, and using education as a tool for liberation were ways that the black male student athletes in this study were able to disprove the negative stigma assigned to their identities (Bimper et al. 2013).

*The Athletic Panopticon*

> The discipline of the high-performance sport produces a set of knowledges about 'the athlete,' who is then controlled and shaped by these knowledges

in a constant pressure to conform to a standard of high performance (Shogan 1999:10)

A Foucauldian perspective offers theoretical frameworks that highlight power, surveillance and the body as a site of discipline. These lenses provide significant insight to the identity development of collegiate level student athletes discussed below. In this section, I will introduce this framework and develop Foucault's (1995) ideas of discipline, docile bodies and surveillance, and analyze how these concepts apply to modern day student athletes. I then consider directions for integrating ideas from *Discipline and Punishment* with symbolic interactionism and identity management in the development of an analytical framework for this thesis.

Foucault was a French philosopher and theorist who focused largely on modernity. Foucault centered his work on the emergence of modern institutions like prisons, schools and hospitals. Foucault focused on this new modern form of power that emerged that no longer exercised through cruel and unusual punishment.

In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault (1995) addresses the birth of the prison and the shift from public torturing to incarceration. At the time, the growing capitalist society in Europe required new mechanisms of control. Locking people up allowed for more regulation of their bodies (Foucault 1995). This shift from conducting public torture to incarceration displayed with its technologies of normalization a shift to a modern, disciplinary society that allowed less deviance and disorder (Shogan 1999).

Foucault (1995) thoroughly describes the disciplining of the body. This disciplining produces docile human bodies that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved. The human body becomes subjected to this machinery of power that explores

it, breaks it down and then rearranges it. Foucault (1995) proposed that discipline removed power from the body, creating docile bodies and a relation of strict subjection.

Sports in general are centered on the idea of discipline. The way one runs, jumps and swings are all measurements of the body that are examined and surveilled by coaches, officials and spectators (Giulianotti 2016). Discipline specific to sport involves both discipline as a body of knowledge and discipline as control. The body of knowledge that makes up the discipline of high-performance sport is knowledge of the technologies that discipline or control athletic bodies (Shogan 1999). There is a docility that comes with college athletics. A docile body is a productive body, a body that is able to carry out specific skills (Shogan 1999). College coaches often designate discipline as one of the most important values of the team. Shogan (1999) suggests that a disciplined athlete is one that submits themselves to the power of a certain way of behaving/knowing; they at times may appear as brainwashed bodies who are controlled by a more powerful coach. Athletes have little to no agency and have been compared to trained soldiers in a military boot camp because they go through an impersonal production where the individual has little control (Shogan 1999).

Athletes are awarded when they conform to what coaches ask of them and are punished when they do not. This constant pressure athletes receive from coaches to conform to the same model resides with the goal of subjecting them all to subordination and docility so that, eventually, they might all be like one another (Foucault 1995; Shogan 1999). Athletes subject themselves to conformity because they realize that they are visible to coaches. As a result, they begin to monitor their own behavior; they become

the principle of their own subjection. The watchful eye of the coach and normalizing standards become internalized by athletes, and they begin to police themselves to behave as “good” athletes.

Foucault theorizes this process of self surveillance in connection to- panopticism the sense that one is always being watched, but can never be sure. “He is seen but he does not see” (Foucault 1995: 200). Foucault derived the idea of the panopticon from philosopher Jeremey Bentham. Bentham conceptualized the panopticon as an architectural figure: a tower at the center with windows that look out at a building that is divided into cells. Each cell holds a person who can be seen by the supervisor in the tower, but the prisoners cannot see the supervisor watching them or people in other cells. This setting results in the prisoners being unable to tell whether or not they are seen at any given moment, and leads to them feeling as if they are always being watched. This external panopticon (tower) becomes internalized. Prisoners begin to behave as they are always being watched, creating the internal panopticon where they monitor their own behavior (Foucault 1995). In Foucault’s example, the prisoners that he was writing about were unable to tell whether they were being watched or not at any given moment, and this created a feeling of constant surveillance. This constant surveillance leads to an internalization of the hyper surveillance taking place, and bodies begin to police their own behavior. Prisoners, or athletes, essentially become their own guard (Shogan 1999).

In the case of high performing athletes, practices and training sessions are structured so that all athletes can be seen by coaches; this makes it possible for them to always be seen, but not know when a coach is actually specifically watching them.

Training and practice without intensity is not desirable by coaches and can result in punishment or lack of playing time. This conditions athletes to practice and train like they are always being watched, with maximum intensity; they essentially become their own coach. These technologies of discipline imposed by coaches and athletes themselves have the potential to intrude other aspects of athletes lives such as how they behave, what they eat and when they sleep.

Similarly, though it was not their focus, Adler and Adler (1991) noted that the players in their study felt that their coach was over controlling their social life:

> He fixes it so you have hardly any social life. He makes you tired as hell, he makes you watch a film, go out to dinner with boosters, show a recruit around. Rather than being with friends...he tries to control your whole life (Adler and Adler 1991:120-122)

The coach in this study was over scheduling practices, film sessions, booster events, enforcing dorm rules and more to maintain a degree of control in the student athlete lives, even when they were not engaging in basketball related activities. Players felt like they were always being watched and that their coach knew everything that they were doing. Because of who they were, they could be recognized by boosters, children, faculty or fans who could report back to their coach. The idea of always being watched turned into self surveillance. These student athletes were behaving as if they were being watched even though they might not have been due to the potential consequences of their actions.

Foster (2003) examined how the identities of black female athletes at Midwestern University were shaped. Midwestern University functioned as a site to maximize these individuals’ academic and athletic potential. The student athletes in this study were

described as victims to a modern-day panopticon. The university athletic program aimed to maximize the participant academic and athletic potential through its modes of discipline, control and surveillance. The athletic program ensured the transformation of high profile athletes into successful women through its modes of control; success in this context is considered athletic achievement, degree attainment and professional transitioning. These participant lives were controlled both on and off the field and allowed little autonomy. Student athletes feel that their experiences are normal because of the norms established by those in higher positions of power. In this way, the demands placed on them become internalized as normal.

Foster (2003) found that the student athletes were isolated from the rest of the student body. This allowed hyper surveillance to take place and for the athletic department to act as what Foucault would call a panopticon. The university was a site that ensured student athletes were always under surveillance. The center consisted of training rooms, weight rooms, practice fields, academic centers and athletic offices. There were rooms that student athletes would do school work and study, and each of these rooms was accompanied by one-way mirrors. These one-way mirrors allowed the idea of privacy to exist, but in reality did the exact opposite. The mirrors facilitated “good” behavior and made it possible for one staff member to monitor a large number of student athletes without them knowing if they were being watched or not. The invisibility of the department staff, coupled with the potentially permanent visibility of the student athlete, was a guarantee of order (Foucault 1995: 200). In addition to the requirements of practice, films and games, student athletes were required to spend twenty additional

supervised hours a week in the academic center (Foster 2003). In this way, student athletes reached a state of self surveillance, behaving as if they were always being watched: “she who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; ... [s]he becomes the principle of [her] own subjection" (Foucault 1995:202-203).

Student athlete identity is constrained by the disciplinary technologies in high-performance sport (Shogan 1999). Student athletes are often stripped of their identity and pressured to conform to the idea of the “good” student athlete. The discipline that coaches force upon their athletes constructs identity. Athletes undergo a constant pressure to conform to the same model, the same “good” athlete identity (Shogan 1999). Student athletes negotiate the consequences of deviance, and oftentimes make the choice, or choose the identity that refrains from disciplinary actions (Foster 2003). This mechanism of control imposed by athletic departments pushes student athletes to perform the student athlete identity their “audience” wants to see.

Student athletes are a group of people commonly identified as disciplined, hard working, team-oriented people. I aim to shift the conversations and treatment of student athletes away from student athletes as a whole to one that examines the micro sociological aspects of student athletes lives that contribute to their identity construction. The purpose of this research is to examine the processes through which identities are produced, negotiated and shaped, as well as contribute to the current conversations regarding Division II student athletes. Foucault further pushes that analysis to be connected to the technologies of power, which in the case of the student athletes would

be the NCAA as a capitalist organization, athletic departments who hire coaches and faculty to manage student athletes and the higher education institution. It is important to note that this is not solely an issue created by the NCAA and universities, but a larger structural problem in the United States that fosters racism and capitalism. The literature offered on Division II student athletes is limited, so much of this literature review reflects on studies done with Division I male student athletes in revenue generating sports such as football and basketball.

I offer information from previous literature on student athlete identity navigation using a symbolic interactionism lens. I later incorporate a Foucauldian perspective and reference previous literature that has talked about how student athlete identity is constrained by the discipline, control and surveillance of athletic departments. These lenses further shape how I analyze the data I collected. I incorporate an intersectional approach doing my research with student athletes from both men's and women's teams who are from a variety of different racial and ethnic backgrounds at a particular Division II university. I apply this analytical framework to explore student athlete identity negotiation, stigma management processes, and the larger athletic panopticon that shapes those identities. I aim to contribute to existing literature and support the continuation of the conversation.

My next chapter illustrates the processes I participated in to co create knowledge with my participants. I follow up with an in depth summary of my findings as informed by the theoretical lenses introduced in this literature review. After that, I conclude with a

detailed discussion of my findings and possible future implications to better the experience of the Division II student athlete at HSU University.

# METHODS

This study is based on 15 semi-structured interviews conducted between April 2019 and November 2019 with Division II student athletes at HSU University. I identified participants through a combination of theoretical sampling supported by purposive and snowball techniques (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). I analyzed data through interactive processes using Atlas.ti (https://cloud.atlasti.com/) for initial coding and later more focused coding (Charmaz 2014). The latter was informed by grounded theory (Charmaz 2014), as well as my developing lenses for analysis.

In this chapter I will discuss the particular setting where my research took place, and the possible influence it may have had on student athlete experiences. I also talk about my participant selection and demographics as those are two important factors in my data analysis. I then talk about my identity as a researcher and the ethnographic piece to my work, along with the ethics and responsibility I held to not impose my own thoughts and experiences onto participants or my research. Lastly, I will talk about my interview process and how I analyzed interviews to co create knowledge with HSU student athletes.

## *Setting*

HSU is located in the small rural town of Arcata on the coast of Northern California. Students who attend HSU are over 200 miles away from any major city. The city of Arcata has a population of just over 18,000 people, while HSU enrollment in Fall 2018 was 7,709. Both the city of Arcata and the University are predominantly white.

Many student athletes are not from Humboldt County, so moving here was a big cultural change for them.

Until 2018, HSU was home to 12 NCAA Division II teams. That year, the HSU president announced the discontinuation of the football program. Interviews with football players took place after the football program decision was finalized. Football teams are made up of nearly 100 players a year. Many people were affected by this decision, especially student athletes. Student athletes who were receiving an athletic scholarship and were not graduating before the program cut were heavily impacted by this decision. Since 2015, HSU Athletics had accumulated increasing debt. This financial picture, coupled with declining university enrollments, placed the football program in the spotlight of larger budget cuts. With the exception of Azusa Pacific, a private school in Southern California, no other NCAA Division II school in California besides HSU had a football program. While fielding a team made HSU unique, it also created financial burdens that other Division II California campuses did not experience.

*Sample*

This research is based semistructured interviews with 14 senior and alumni student athletes from HSU (Appendix A). Six of my participants identified as female and eight identified as male. Participants were student athletes who participated in women's crew, men's and women's track and field, men's soccer, football and men's and women's basketball. Participants ages ranged between 21 and 27 years old. Student athlete participants had varying educational pathways: some came to HSU straight from high

school, some transferred from a community college, and some previously attended four-year universities. More than half of participants came to HSU as a freshman as opposed to those who transferred in. One participant was a graduate student while a student athlete. Of the 14 participants, most (12) were student athletes of color.

*Recruiting Participants*

I used a combination of theoretical sampling methods supported by purposive and snowball methods (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981; Berg and Lune 2012; Charmaz 2014) to gain participants. I gathered student athlete rosters from the HSU Athletics website where all teams and players were listed. I began recruiting student athletes for interviews by emailing those who were upperclassmen in the Social Science department at HSU. I later extended my recruitment out to upper class student athletes and alumni of any major because I did not have direct access to participants from a wide range of sports. In my emails, I formally asked student athletes to participate in my study by meeting with me for an interview that would likely last thirty minutes to an hour. I intentionally reached out to student athletes who represented a range of sports to keep a diverse pool of data that could be analyzed and compared with reference. While some did not get back to my email, I was able to set up eight in person interviews with student athletes who responded to my emails and were willing to participate.

I also used my personal network of student athletes to recruit participants: some of my participants (2) were a convenience sample of people who I knew would be willing to participate. One student athlete reached out to me through snowball sampling after her

professor assisted me in my recruiting process by sending out an announcement via email. I am unsure of any other outcomes occurring from my snowball sampling method. It is possible that some student athletes were more inclined to respond to my emails if they heard about my research from a teammate or fellow student athlete. To protect the confidentiality of participants, I assigned pseudonyms. I also cloaked their majors: I include only the general field (college) of their major. I also cloaked each participant sport to limit identifying information.

Table 1: Participant Demographics Summary

| **Gender** | **% (n)** |
|---|---|
| Female | 43% (6) |
| Male | 57% (8) |

| **Race/Ethnicity** | **% (n)** |
|---|---|
| Black | 43% (6) |
| Asian | 14% (2) |
| Mexican American | 14% (2) |
| 2 or More | 14% (2) |
| White | 14% (2) |

| **Status** | **% (n)** |
|---|---|
| Transfer | 43% (6) |
| Nontransfer | 57% (8) |

*Interviews and Analysis*

I conducted interviews for this research between April 2019 and November 2019. Interviews took place in public places, primarily in the HSU library. Other locations included the HSU depot dining area. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 to 75 minutes. I captured audio recordings of the conversations on my password protected iPhone X using the Voice Memos app. These interviews were later transferred to my laptop where I transcribed the audio recordings using *OTranscribe* (https://otranscribe.com/) transcription software. After each transcription, I transferred the *OTranscribe* transcriptions to a Microsoft Word document and later uploaded these documents into my Google Drive shared with my advisor. Following transcription and converting to Word documents, the interview audio files were deleted from my laptop and phone.

I began my interviews by thanking participants for taking the time to participate in my research. I then gave them the consent form (Appendix B) to read over and accept or decline. I briefly reviewed some of the main points with them such that all information disclosed during the interview would be confidential, and that if they agreed to allow me to use direct quotes in my research that I would use pseudonyms so that they would not be identifiable. All of my participants agreed to the consent form, and allowed me to use direct quotations with pseudonyms.

I used a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) that included a series of open-ended questions (Charmaz 2014). I asked questions regarding student athlete

identity and aimed to identify specific experiences that have contributed to shaping that identity. I opened interviews by asking participants what brought them to HSU, along with asking about their major and why they chose it. My interview then asked participants open ended questions about their student athlete identity and how they went about balancing their roles. I later asked participants about any support they may or may not have received as a student athlete, and followed up by asking them if they had any recommendations for change to student athlete support at HSU. After that, I got student athletes to think about what a typical day for them looked like, and closed with questions regarding participant plans post graduation. If at any point participants did not understand a question, I reworded and gave further clarification.

I felt that my interviews went well because of how much information student athletes were offering me; although, there was room for improvement. In my first few interviews, I discovered that I was not doing enough probing when I went back to transcribe and code. In some areas, there was not enough information for me to theorize and draw conclusions based on what was said. From that point on, I made sure to ask even more follow up questions that probed the narratives of participants and brought up the details of their experiences. After doing six interviews, my advisor and I went back to my original interview guide and revised it to flow more smoothly and gear my questions more towards the themes that were arising. I integrated questions that aimed to get participants to talk about the hyper surveillance technologies that existed in their student athlete life, and also changed the language around some of my other questions. After doing my first round of 11 interviews, I coded and analyzed my data using the atlas.ti

cloud software. I then went into my interviews to code up and focusing on emerging themes. During that process, I began to write my data analysis. Based on the information that I had up to that point, I did a second round of (4) more focused interviews where I asked participants questions geared towards emerging themes. One of my second round interviews was a follow up with a previous participant.

I initially planned to print the transcripts for review and initial coding (Charmaz 2014), but was informed about the atlas.ti cloud software from one of my peers in my cohort. The atlas.ti cloud software was user friendly, and ended up being my choice for my data analysis process. Atlas.ti cloud allows users to code documents line by line, and differentiate between codes with different colors. This feature allowed me to easily recognize similarities and differences that were taking place in narratives. Doing careful line by line coding helped me keep my personal motives and thoughts separate from the data collected. In addition to that, my detailed coding helped me think about data in a way that likely differed from how participants thought about it (Charmaz 2014). While using atlas.ti, I would go back and forth between carefully reading interview transcriptions and codes to theorizing the experiences of my participants.

*Identity as a Researcher*

Being a Sociology graduate student while also being a student athlete allowed me a space to step back and analyze my personal experiences from both a micro and macro perspective. The life I was living became so routine that I had never stopped to give it this type of thought. Because I was still on the basketball team while coming to the

decision of doing my research with student athletes, there was a piece of ethnography that informally included myself as a research participant (Charmaz 2014). My insider status as a former student athlete allowed me a great deal of rapport with my participants (Berg and Lune 2012; Bishop 2008; Johnson 2002). Regardless of my insider status and personal experiences, I had to be cautious of myself making assumptions and misinterpreting the information I was receiving from my participants because of my past involvement as a student athlete (Charmaz 2014; Johnson 2002). It became very important for me to make sure that I was asking participants to describe situations or tell a story about their experiences rather than imagining how my story related to what they were saying. I had to make efforts to not place my own experiences and assumptions onto the stories student athletes were sharing with me.

Instead, I used my guiding interests as points of departure to help form the questions I asked during interviews, look at data collected, listen to interviewees speak and think about the collected data analytically. I used my interests and perspective to develop my research rather than limit it. As a researcher, I had to allow my participants to push me towards topics that emerged as salient (Charmaz 2014). Engaging in this process of co creating knowledge, I wanted the purest narrative of participants experiences rather than a narrative that was learned from society. That meant I needed to work with my interviewees to create their realities. Rather than being a spectator, I had to make conscious efforts to probe and ask for specifics so that I could later engage in a process of meaning making (Brinkmann and Kvale 2004). Reminding myself to be willing to adjust what I predicted was a critical piece of ethics in doing this research. I made it a point to

remain as open to whatever information came through in the early stages of my research (Charmaz 2014).

Being a former student athlete, I was a familiar face to some of the student athletes that I interviewed. I had an insider status that easily allowed for student athletes and me to talk about some of the things that were brought up in my interview. As an interviewer with an insider status, I was able to ask a wide range of questions that I otherwise would not have been allowed (Charmaz 2014). Student athletes would often refer to things that they knew I would know about without going into great detail about it. As a researcher, I had to probe for more information in these situations to prevent myself from making self interested assumptions (Berg and Lune 2012; Charmaz 2014). The power of knowledge in the interview process rested on the side of my interviewees. It was not my job to offer my perspective during interviews, but to offer my undivided attention and respect (Czarniawska 2004).

It was also my insider status that drove me to want to do meaningful research involving a population of people that I belong to and identify with. I approached interviews with excitement for the opportunity to engage in meaning making processes with my peers. At the same time, I also recognize that my insider status as an athlete may have actually prevented people from telling specific stories. As a minority on a small campus, many student athletes know each other, and that may have caused participants to conceal certain information.

## DATA ANALYSIS: STUDENT ATHLETE IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONTROL

It is not unusual for sport to be a place of identity struggle. Current and previous literature suggests that student athlete identities are shaped within the macro power structures of college athletics and strained due to the extreme demands of both academics and athletics. Four overarching and related themes were prominent in my conversations with HSU student athletes: the student athlete subculture, hyper surveillance, the student athlete binary and stigma management.

### *Ties that Bind: Creating a Tight-Knit Athlete Subculture*

The student athlete subculture supports the building of strong bonds between players and coaches. As mentioned earlier, athletes and coaches on the same team spend a lot of time together in practices, games, travel time and film sessions. Playing a sport can create strong bonds as players and coaches coordinate team bonding sessions and create memories together that are unique to experiences of student athletes. Many student athletes share similar backgrounds and struggles that they can express to one another. Many are accustomed to the same norms, values, role behaviors and shared knowledge (Adler and Adler 1991). Adler and Adler (1991) describe this athlete peer subculture as encompassing common shared knowledge of difficulties faced by college student athletes.

While the athletes in the Adler and Adler (1991) study were housed in the same dormitory along with other student athletes, most of the student athletes that I interviewed lived off campus with teammates. Thus, the student athletes in my study did not

experience an all-encompassing residential athlete world that molded even home life. The participants in my study or their coaches created this world together by choosing to live with teammates with who they were already spending large amounts of time. This kind of setting that I observed my participants describing allows student athletes to focus even more on athletics because they might go home and talk to teammate(s) about practice or an upcoming game since they all have that in common (Adler and Adler 1991). All of these factors contribute to athletes relying on each other as their main social group. One of the participants in my study, Will, a white male student athlete talked about the time he spent with his teammates, some with whom he lived in a house off campus. When asked to reflect on whether the meaning of being a student athlete changed from when he first got to college to now being an upperclassman, Will responded that it changed a lot, specifically from when he was a freshman living in dorms with nonathlete peers to when he moved in with teammates his sophomore year:

> It's just changed because when I first came in, I was also just like a first year college student. And it was like I'm [an athlete] I do all these different things, but I was also in the dorms with everybody else. So I would just do extra things. I just noticed the difference between me and regular students. How much harder I was working. And I'm sure you know all about that...and then after that, I just surrounded myself with [teammates] my sophomore year because I moved off campus...I lived with teammates, and it was just like that was all I knew. And they were my best friends. We ate meals together, we worked out together we played together. We did everything. Everything was with student athletes. So I mean that's when I really just like kinda just got you know, sucked in I guess.

Will's narrative revealed similarities that were also seen in Adler and Adler's (1991) study. He talked about spending almost all of his time with his teammates

suggesting that the peer subculture that existed in the Adler and Adler's (1991) study also existed for him. Will suggests that the time involved contributed to the process of developing their own peer subculture. Yet Will noted the struggles among teammates with being a collegiate student athlete: "I saw through three years we had ups and downs...And that builds relationships amongst each other too. Working hard, blood, sweat and tears." So the process of community and subculture building is created through sharing hard times and celebrating good times. The time spent together creates common histories. Teammates share specific knowledge and memories with each other. They know what each other is going through better than anyone else because they are too. They are the ones there with each other through every loss and every win.

Will's teammate Michael, a black male student athlete made similar comments about being around his team all the time:

> ...it's like I wake up I see him, at the end of the night I see him...I'm on the bus I see him, on the plane I see him. In the game I see him, in the locker room I see him.

Michael emphasized how much he sees his teammates during season as mentioned by Martens and Lee (1998). Though athletes may want to socialize with others, by default, they end up spending most of their time with teammates and not with others around campus. This creates an unwanted divide between student athletes and the rest of campus, a divide that leaves room for a lack of understanding of student athletes' lives by the general population.

Participants also talked about the importance of teammate support that kept them from quitting. They vented to teammates and witnessed them face the same difficulties they were pushing through. Danny, a Mexican American student athlete, illustrated this experience with his teammates: “And so every day we tell each other like, ‘Oh, you better not quit.’ Or, ‘Come on, I can see you wanna like, you're done with this.’” Danny’s narrative illustrates the encouragement that he and his teammates provided to each other when they felt like giving up. Players are often expected to be docile bodies who follow the orders of their coach and display mental toughness. Many players, however, struggle with these demands and contemplate walking away from their sport. Through reflection, all (except one) of my participants mentioned their teammates as people who played a significant role in their student athlete experience. For most student athletes, HSU was far away from home. They did not have the luxury of being able to go home to family and friends whenever they wanted to, and so teammates played an important role in each other's lives. Some participants also talked about their coach playing a significant role in their experience.

One salient characteristic in Adler and Adler’s (1991) analyzation of athletes’ relationships with teammates was the initiated bonds between the new players and disciplined veterans. Older players took on the role of mentoring freshmen athletes to socialize them into life as a collegiate student athlete. These relationships between younger and older players helped mold the new players into the right image, or warned players to avoid potentially damaging behavior and to conform to the ways of the team (Adler and Adler 1991). Brittany, an Asian student athlete discussed a similar experience

when she said: “We did it on our team where they would pair a [senior] with a [freshman] their first year. And then when I became [a senior] I was paired with a [freshman].” As in Adler and Adler’s (1991) study, Brittany explained she was both a mentee and a mentor during her time as a student athlete. She received help navigating the norms of being a student athlete. This is a way to mold new players into a subculture that supports what coaches wanted them to be by using older players as shapers (Adler and Adler 1991).

A piece of this student athlete subculture is the narrative that student athletes often miss out on many activities and events that their peers are involved in. Student athletes often feel socially isolated from the rest of their college campuses (Adler and Adler 1991; Martens and Lee 1998; Bimper et al. 2013; Murty et al. 2014). Adler and Adler (1991) reported that student athletes in their study described feeling socially isolated from campus: they could not engage in social activities due to being tasked with many athletic related activities (Adler and Adler 1991). Mark, a black student athlete, reported a similar strain on his social identity when I asked him about a strain created as a result of his student athlete identity.

> It’s created a strain on my social life definitely. Especially during the season. Some of my best friends were on the [same] team, but like everybody has friends outside of their immediate friend group. And there's a lot of missing out. Like you have to do it, you know what I mean? Like at the end of the day it's like let's say for lack of better words all your dorm friends, or friends that are out of season are going to be like, ‘oh we're going to the river on Saturday’. Like ‘oh I have Saturday practice, I can’t go’. You know what I mean. It blows. Or like ‘oh, we're going to go to this festival’. Like ‘oh, I can't go. I have practice’.

Mark was frustrated about "missing out" on many social activities that are expected to be a part of the college experience. Even though he wanted to participate in activities or socialize with dorm friends, many times practice or games made that impossible. These experiences created a noticeable strain on his social role. Similar to Mark, the majority of my participants referred to their main friend or social group as their teammates. While participants enjoyed the close bonds and friendships they created with their teammates, many still wanted to engage with peers outside of this group. Having such extreme demands as a student athlete makes it hard for student athletes to spend time with these outside friend groups. As a result some expressed feelings of social isolation and social strain. Similar to Mark, Brittany, an Asian student athlete also expressed these sentiments:

> My social time, you know. And then it totally changed. First, like, I just kind of lost friends outside because I was like, I have to be good at [my sport], good at school and I was like, I don't have time for people. And I realized I had to make time now. It wasn't like 'hey, let's just do this'. And also, like, creativity. I like to draw a lot and like music. I kind of got lost from that for a little bit. Just when I was transitioning. And I kind of had to work harder to bring my own, my identity basically back to myself. I have to work, I had to work for more than just letting it be there conveniently.

Brittany's situation was slightly different because she became a student athlete her sophomore year, rather than her freshman year like most college athletes. Like Mark, she also reported a strain on her social role due to the demands that came with her student athlete identity. The friends that she made when she got to college were lost once she joined her sport. Her desire to excel in academics and athletics resulted in her not having time for her nonathlete peers anymore. Similar to Adler and Adler's (1991) findings,

Brittany had limited relationships with her nonathlete peers. While most of the athletes had at least a few friends from class or outside experiences, the relationships were not extensive (Adler and Adler 1991). The large amount of time spent with teammates compared to the limited amount of time spent with other peers did not allow much space for the development of outside relationships. Brittany also expressed having to sacrifice other activities important to her in order to be a "successful" student athlete.

In contrast to most participants, Sara, talked about the athlete peer subculture in a different way. Sara's perception was that a lot of student athletes did not socialize outside of their student athlete friends, and she identified that as something that she did not like. She suggests that she does not want to fit the stereotype of an entitled, "stuck up" student athlete, and therefore, does what she can to socialize with her nonathlete peers too. While the majority of student athletes sacrifice their social life due to the demands that came with their student athlete role, Sara utilized a "positive" mechanize to coping with stigma (Simons et al. 2007) by consciously making extra efforts to create relationships with nonathletes. Sara's response also differed from other participants because she did not talk about her teammates playing a significant role in her life as a student athlete. She talked more about the good relationship she had with her coach.

*Gender, Self Surveillance and the Internal Coach*

The subculture of athletes as discussed above is produced at least partially through a gendered project of social control. College athletics has become an ultra-competitive environment for players, coaches and athletic faculty. The commercialization

of college sports creates great pressure for coaches to develop winning teams, keep their jobs and boost their salaries. This has turned into an obsession for winning that coaches will do anything for (Eitzen 1986; Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb 2011). Coaches often try to control all aspects of student athlete lives in order to ensure they are doing everything they possibly can to be in the best position to win (Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb 2011). In my research, student athletes described a subculture of hyper surveillance through a range of monitoring techniques. The athletic panopticon created a feeling of always being watched. In the process, athletes develop an internal coach and policed themselves (Foucault 1995; Shogan 1999; Foster 2003). While most participants identified these processes, I found that women student athletes were more likely to frame the experience as positive to their success and development. The men student athletes talked more specifically about hyper surveillance technologies occurring through athletics.

*For her own good: rationalizing high surveillance*

Shogan (1999) illustrates how through "subjection to elaborate and minutely detailed organization of their movements, powerful athletes are made and produced" (Shogan 1999:3). Student athletes become subjects to their coach. If they do not, they risk a great deal as a student athlete (Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb 2011) considering they may potentially be removed from the team, lose scholarship money and lose an integral piece of their identity. Different technologies are used to monitor and control student athlete behaviors. The panopticon operates both internally and externally for the college

student athlete. These ideas of hyper surveillance and the panopticon were prevalent in several student athletes' lives.

Lauren, a racially mixed student athlete whose ethnicities I choose not to disclose, talked about the use of a phone application "ARMS" to track her team's physical locations and activity:

> [They] make sure you get study hall. [They're] very strict about it if you don't get it. Especially if you have a lower GPA, you don't get to travel. Or you'll have to miss practice, which means you don't travel. So [they're] really strict about it and [they] like, we have the ARMS app, which if you're not going to your classes [they] find out. [They'll] make you check into your classes. And ARMS, it's like GPS, so [they'll] know if you're not there, which is the same thing we have to do for practice...But like you check in every day and then it has your locations. If you're by close by [practice], [they'll] know you're there. But like if you say you're in class in Founders Hall, but you're sitting on LK Boulevard, [they'll] know.

Thus, in this way the adoption of new information technologies that integrate global positioning system (GPS), scheduling and behavioral logging serve to monitor and track athlete behavior. Marx (2016) describes a "velvet glove" of new surveillance technologies that are seductive in their design and application. To this extent, the ARMS application allows coaches to monitor whether their student athletes are going to class on any given day; however, student athletes remain unaware of when their coach will actually check on them. Lauren mentioned that her coach was very strict about academics but has not really had to take disciplinary action for student athletes not being where they are supposed to be. Lauren claimed that they are all "pretty reliable and pretty consistent," suggesting that the coach's surveillance technologies may be working. As a result, the external panopticon of their coach monitoring their behavior with the

application becomes internalized, and student athletes monitor themselves to make sure they go to class and practice so that they do not risk sanctions, such as not being able to travel with their team.

Foster (2003) discusses the loss of individual agency and freedom from surveillance student athletes experience. The athletic program maximized athletic and academic potential through discipline, control, and surveillance (Foster 2003). In the quote above, Lauren highlights a similar experience through the academic and athletic monitoring by her coach. While Lauren's coach was not physically present to ensure student athletes were in class, she used technology to suggest the behavior she wanted. This hyper surveillance facilitated the "good behavior" that the coach expected from their student athletes (Foster 2003). According to Foucault (1995), the invisibility of staff, coupled with the permanent visibility of student athlete, was a guarantee of order. Lauren had no way to know if her coach was really checking her class and practice attendance; however, she had to comply with her coach's demands to avoid possible disciplinary consequences.

Lauren also discussed the study hall requirements enforced by her coach. This behavior is also monitored with new information technology: student athletes required to attend study hall are logged in using their student identification number. A study hall monitor (paid student staff) watches the space where athletes are to be academically productive. Monitors are instructed to report athletes who are consistently not following the athletic study hall rules. This would lead to eventually informing the student athlete's coach so that disciplinary actions might take place to correct behavior. Making these

rules for Lauren and her teammates required them to be in spaces where their behaviors are watched and controlled. Through these systems and technologies of surveillance and control, student athletes are systematically tracked, constrained and marked for either reward or punishment in an integrated account of their individual records (Foucault 1980).

Student athletes face major time constraints that come with the pressure/responsibility to be successful in both academics and athletics. Much of the time constraints come from their athletic responsibilities: they practice and work out 3-4 hours each day, play games, travel, attend study hall and team meetings, and may try to carve out a few hours for eating, self-care, social life and volunteer activities. Because little free time is left, it is justified and ultimately naturalized for coaches to assume strict control over student athletes (Foster 2003). Coaches and sometimes student athletes come to believe that this control eliminates distractions that may hinder their ability to be a "successful" student athlete. The forms of academic support being received in these situations are more subtle ways to practice control over bodies, so the power dynamic taking place may remain unnoticed. Student athletes might complain about the lack of control that they have over their lives due to the requirements of attending study hall, but it would be difficult to argue whether or not the system in place is for their own good (Foster 2003).

Female participants discussed the "for one's own good" rationalization for high levels of surveillance and social control. Sara, Mexican American student athlete shared her perspective on the controls she experienced:

> So, like we meet with the coach, and then [they] gives us this certain grid and it has Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And it gives you the hours too, like from five in the morning to ten at night. And [they] help us plan out. At first we start by putting in things that we just can't change. Like our scheduling, it's going to stay the same throughout the whole semester. And then after that, we put practice, and then [they] help us kind of manage our time. And after we put practice, there's things like, oh, when are we going to eat...I tend to study a lot at night...So [they're] like, let's try to move these study hours to early in the day so you can go to sleep early. So [they] kind of, I think from the beginning because it's a new semester or something [they] guides you through the right direction. So you have your semester set as to like sleeping schedule, eating schedule.

Sara brought up multiple times in her interview the benefits of her coach's implementation of these time management skills. She appreciated the guidance she was receiving from coaches and claimed a good relationship with her coach, largely due to the structure that the coach created to foster time management and communication skills.

Coming to HSU, Sara found that her workload felt heavy and the demands of college were difficult; however, the precise planning of her day helped her structure and manage her student athlete life. She felt that the constant accountability to her coach helped her achieve better grades than she had in high school. Sara's experience highlights Forster's (2003) recognition of the hyper surveillance of student athletes being for their own good. There was nothing reported by Sara about feeling controlled by the coaching staff.

Brittany, an Asian student athlete, also mentions how sports have fostered a positive relationship with academics:

> Oh, yeah, it's definitely helped me a lot. I feel like I wouldn't be as good of a student if I didn't join [my sport]. Because now like my schedule is so

> much more busy. I have to really think about when I need to do certain things and plan things out. And I feel like if I wasn't doing a sport, I don't know if I'd be as good at school and motivated as I am now. Like, I take in the attitude you have to have for sports to school.

Brittany's positive experience of using athletics to create motivation and success in academics was highly influenced by her coaches. She claimed that she was not good at school until becoming a student athlete and learning a lot of skills from her coaches on how to be a more successful student. Athletics requires certain skills such as motivation, discipline and dedication, all skills that can be transferred over to the academic world to be a successful student. Having a busier schedule has led to Brittany engaging in more processes of planning to keep the many tasks that come with being a student athlete organized.

In a different way, Susan, a white student athlete discusses how hyper surveillance technologies amplify the pressure to conform the "perfect" student athlete model:

> ...the pressure from coaches to be completely perfect in all aspects, even outside of [my sport] and school. Which that's what I thought it was only going to be being a student athlete, only perfection in school and [my sport]. But it ended up being one type of person...we were always considered role models to other people. So, if we were perceived as something else that wasn't considered a role model we were pretty much penalized or we would discuss [our wrong actions]…but I do believe having discipline on the team is beneficial…this has definitely in my opinion been more beneficial to me to become a better person.

Susan's remark acknowledges the punishment that occurs when conformity did not take place. Her narrative taps into this idea of hyper surveillance that is identity constraining when she expresses there was only one way to be the "perfect" student athlete. Because

there were disciplinary actions taken if they did not live up to coaches' expectations, this is a mechanism of control that results in a student athlete identity that is regulated by higher power structures.

The women student athletes in my study talked in depth about the technologies that contributed to the hyper surveillance of their bodies. The ways in which they talked about surveillance was parallel to the velvet glove (Marx 2018), a more appealing type of surveillance that seemed to have one's best interest in mind. This hyper surveillance was normalized, rationalized and created a sense of security. Normalization is an effect of the "constant pressure [for student athletes] to conform to the same model...so that they might all be like one another" (Foucault 1995:182; Shogan 1999). These technologies of surveillance create docile bodied athletes who are stripped of their individuality and conform to the same "good" student athlete that their coaches expect.

Consistent with existing literature and data, the women student athletes who I spoke with had noticeably higher GPAs than male student athletes did (Kirk and Kirk 1993; Harrison et al. 2009; Riciputi and Erdal 2017). They talked about their plans after college with much more confidence than male student athletes, and seemed to have more of an understanding that their sport would be ending soon and they would be relying on their education to jumpstart their career.

*Is he doing what he's supposed to be doing?*

Male participants who belonged to the same team talked about hyper surveillance in different ways than those discussed by female student athletes. The narratives of female student athletes were more abundant in describing the hyper surveillance in the

academic realm in a positive light compared to the narratives of male student athletes. The male student athletes who I spoke with discussed hyper surveillance occurring mostly in athletics and in a way that did not allow them to get away with anything. These participants described the technologies of surveillance specifically through the filming of games and practices.

Will shared that every practice was filmed -- so "you couldn't get away with [anything]". Will talked about his everyday activities and the significance of careful analysis of strategy and movement in film – with at least some of that footage crystalizing his every move in each frame. Yet even though a given film screening might include only minutes of a particular player, the video recording of practices and games created the feeling that players were being watched every second. These experiences mirrored Foucault's (1995) theorizing of the panopticon: "conformity takes hold of an athlete, in part, because he or she is visible. Realizing that they can be seen by coaches, athletes come to monitor their own behavior and shape it according to the expectations of the sport" (Shogan 1999:37). Though Will and his teammates were uncertain of being watched, it was in their best interest to train with high intensity every single rep.

Student athletes face disciplinary consequences when they do not live up to the "perfect" student athlete expectations set by their coaches. Allen relates the hyper surveillance technology of film to his desire to be perfect:

> You watch your mistakes, you want to be perfect. So literally, if you step wrong...you'll get in trouble. If you're not knowing your assignment, where you're supposed to, your alignment where you're supposed to stand. So you really study yourself to be perfect.

In watching films with his coaches and teammates, there would be moments where they were exposed in front of everyone for their mistake. Allen responded to the existing disciplinary threats by making attempts to be perfect in his performance. The possibility of getting in trouble for your mistake caught on film causes athletes to participate in self surveillance. Coaches also tested players on the films: they might ask about a particular play in a film to find out if players had actually watched on their own. This quiz tactic forced players to watch in case they were questioned. Another teammate, Michael, tapped into this idea of conformity under their coaches' control as he shared his experience of watching films on his own time in case he did actually get quizzed. Players also watch film of themselves with coaches and are asked to evaluate their own performance in a practice or game.

These gendered themes of hyper surveillance connect to society's constructs of masculinities and femininity, and the structural fact that men have dominance over women (Connell 1987). Men and their hegemonic masculinities are only constructed with the suppression of minority groups, especially and particularly women. The feminine role of a woman is one that accepts control and complies with a man's desires (Connell 1987). While acknowledging that experiences are not limited strictly to gender, Connell (1987) presents these gender norms that have been constructed by society. These norms seem to appear in my data when the women student athletes rationalized being subjects of control. It has been normalized by society for women to be controlled and take on roles of subjection. With that being said, it may be safe to assume that the women in my study

rationalized the control athletic departments took over them because it was something they had already experienced and normalized.

*A Binary Relationship: "You Kind of Have to Choose Which One You Want to be Good at"*

Student athletes engage in this process of role switching; at one moment they are in their athlete role at practice or a game, and the next moment they are in their student role in class or doing homework. For many, these roles are not so clear cut. Although it was not exclusively males talking about how their student identity and athlete identity competed with one another, these narratives did come mostly from male participants. Michael suggests a binary relationship that exists for the student athlete "it's kinda hard juggling both at the same time, you know what I'm saying, it's [sports] or school". Michael claimed that he focused more on his sport when he was in season, and that resulted in him giving less of his focus to school. Because his sport took up so much of his time, schoolwork would often times be put off until the last minute. Similar to Adler and Adler's (1991) idea of role engulfment where student athletes' athletic roles impeded other facets of their lives, Michael illustrates how his commitment to the athletic role impeded his academic role and created a conflict. There were days where he had to wake up extremely early for practice, a setting where one's body is exerted, and then go to class after with trouble staying awake. With athletic activities such as film sessions, practice and traveling took up most of Michael's time, little was left to focus on school. The remaining time consisted of exhausted hours at the end of the day. This narrative was

especially consistent in my interviews with three male athletes who were from the same athletic team that I choose not to disclose, a narrative also reiterated by Adler and Adler (1991).

Michael goes on to suggest that as a student athlete, when you excel at one role, your other roles are going to give:

> You gotta perform well to play. And school, you gotta do homework to get better grades. So it's hard to juggle both because on the [sport] side you want to get better, so you want to focus on that and you think less about school. Versus you wanna be good at school so you focus less on [sports]. So, it's kinda hard to juggle, it puts pressure a lot, cause you know you want to be good in both. But you kind of have to choose which one you want to be good at you know what I'm saying? Be successful you know...But a lot of guys who wanna make [pro] go hard. They wanna focus on [sports] more so they could get that check all that and focus less on school.

Michael suggests an impossibility of being “successful” in academics and athletics simultaneously. Both come with extreme demands in order to succeed and includes the pressure to choose one role or the other. That choice results in a stronger tie to that identity. Beron and Piquero’s (2016) found that student athletes’ GPAs were directly influenced by their athlete versus academic identity. Michael’s statements about choosing an identity supported this claim. Student athletes who identify more with their athletic identity typically report lower GPAs (Beron and Piquero 2016). When Michael said one might want to get better at [their sport], he indicated that they’re likely to think about school less, a decision that is likely to result in a lower GPA.

Michael’s teammate Will echoed the strain between his athletic and academic roles as well. Having to miss class to travel for his sport created a conflict with his

academic role because he was not able to be there like most students were. Missing class does not allow students the in depth learning experience they likely would have received if they were in class. It also allows room for professors to develop frustration with a student athlete for missing more class sessions than what is desired. Not only did he have to miss several class sessions, but Will also described how difficult it was to complete homework while on the road because busses did not always have Wi-Fi. Both Will and Michael illustrated how when they did finally arrive to their destination, players were tired from a long day of travel and just wanted to get some rest. These environments where players end the day exhausted and sore from practicing make it easier for them to procrastinate, waste time and rationalize not dedicating significant time to their academics (Bernstein 1987 in Adler and Adler 1991). Will makes a similar claim when he talks about how he is a procrastinator. Both Michael and Will mentioned how there were many times where they waited until the last minute to get an assignment done because free time was scarce as a student athlete, “I had that moment of free time, and took it” Will claimed. There were no study hall hours mandated by the coach when they traveled, so players had to take it upon themselves to get done what they had to do for school; however, players on this team were usually swamped with studying the other team as instructed by coaches to be best prepared for the game. Allen, a player of the same team claimed, “we [players] literally have our own book that we study like week to week...A playbook or scouting report. And so like to be honest I never seen anybody doing homework on the road”. This narrative mirrors what Adler and Adler (1991) realized in their research. Peter and Patricia Adler (1991) observed that student athletes

stopped bringing their books with them during travel because of how difficult it was to do any studying was on the road for a game (Adler and Adler 1991).

Hailey, an African American student athlete, talked about how athletics interfered with her academics. Hailey in talking about her coach claimed "[they] talk about academics coming first, but [their] actions say different...I feel like there's not time." Hailey felt that there was not enough time for her to dedicate to her studies because she was sometimes having to do multiple workouts a day in addition to going to class and other daily activities. This resulted in her having to stay up late at night and lose sleep because she was not willing to sacrifice her education. Hailey found herself being punished with running for not completing enough study hall hours in the week even though she was being overscheduled by her coach and had no time to complete these hours.

*Stigma Management: Handling Society's Perceptions*

Student athletes are a stigmatized group of people on college campuses (Simons et al. 2007; Bimper et al. 2013). Often times, they are stereotyped as dumb jocks (Adler and Adler 1991; Harrison 2008; Stone et al. 2012; Bimper 2013; Riciputi and Erdal 2017) who get special treatment (Fletcher, Benshoff and Richburg 2003) and academic "passes" they have not earned (Baucom and Lantz 2001). Many believe that student athletes receive undeserved privileges like gaining university admission on lower academic requirements or being able to missing class with no penalty (Baucom and Lantz 2001). While dealing with the stigma of being less studious than other students, student athletes

also have a heightened sense of role obligations to protect their image as leaders on campus who deserve the “special treatment” they receive. The male identifying student athletes of color talked more about this responsibility to maintain a particular image than women and white identifying student athletes. Mark, a black student athlete talked about navigating a positive student athlete identity:

> A student athlete is like, I've always been told you hold yourself to a higher standard than the average people on your campus. Or like your high school or whatever. And that's kind of what it is. Like you're just not another person...And it's like you guys are basically the face of this school. So you have to act on it. For me that's doing what I'm supposed to be doing, when I'm supposed to be doing it.

Mark’s narrative indicates that as a student athlete, he has been tasked with holding himself to a higher standard compared to his nonathlete peers. Saying that student athletes are “the face of the school” gives the impression that there are always eyes on you, that people are watching you more. Mark indicated that he navigates being the “face of the school” by doing what he is supposed to be doing when he is supposed to be doing it to protect his student athlete image. Should he be seen doing something that he should not be doing, his image, and the athletic department image risk being spoiled (Adler and Adler 1991). A similar narrative emerged from Michael: “it's like a role you have to play...You have to carry yourself very representable cause people look up to you as role models, you know little kids”. Both Michael and Mark indicate that being a student athlete involves role playing to protect not only their image as the face of the school but as a role model to children as well. Allen echoes Mark and Michael’s narrative in his claim, “you’re definitely more known than the average student...people know you

more." Student athletes know that they are being watched by fans, coaches, faculty, children and more. If they do something unfavorable in public, they risk confirming negative stigma as well as the possibility of someone recognizing them and reporting it back to the athletic department (Adler and Adler 1991). Here lives the potential for negative consequences such as suspension, removal from the team or additional workouts. Student athletes are expected to only represent the athletic department positively as described by Allen:

> You're held to a certain standard and your coaches. Your coach definitely preaches that you can't be that crazy drunk person at a party. You can't be just doing the wrong thing because you are looked at as a leader automatically or a role model.

Allen illustrates how these expectations are enforced by coaches. Living up to these expectations requires a great deal of sacrifice from student athletes, they cannot simply get away with things like their peers can because they have to deal with the consequences enforced by the athletic department."'It's a lot of pressure to be a role model but it's rewarding"' (Adler and Adler 1991:124). While living up to the role model standard is a difficult thing, it is rewarding when you have children and adult fans who love and look up to you.

As also seen in previous literature (Baucom and Lantz 2001; Simons et al. 2007; Lanning 1982 in Kirk and Kirk 1993), some of my participants talked about others on campus thinking student athletes are privileged. Michael indicated that student athletes have to work hard, and earn what they are given as opposed to common beliefs around campus that they are undeserving. Similarly, another student athlete participant Lauren

indicated that people might resent student athletes because they think that they are receiving special treatment. Lauren then indicated that she does not believe that student athletes are getting special treatment, but are more so utilizing resources to help with their extreme demands. This is yet another negative stigma that student athletes face. If others on campus believe student athletes are undeserving of the treatment they receive, there is an additional pressure to prove one is deserving, or an internalized belief they actually are undeserving (Simons et al. 2007).

Both Lauren and Michael indicated that they are bothered by other people's false perceptions of them. After both of these narratives, Lauren and Michael both indicated that they believe that if there was a better understanding between student athletes and the rest of campus, these negative feelings towards student athletes would not exist so much, a claim also made by Sailes (1998a): "…myths and stereotypes are born out of ignorance. Lack of contact with different social and/or ethnic groups create ideologies that are generated from social dissonance and are sounded on subjective observations" (Sailes 1998a:196). There was no description of the ways in which Lauren and Michael negotiated this type of stigma, just the desire to create more of an understanding between themselves and other students and faculty on campus. This narrative was also consistent with several other participants.

While participants talked about having to be a role model as a student athlete, previous literature has suggested that one's student athlete identity is often visible (Adler and Alder 1991; Bimper et al. 2013). Michael mentions that one's visibility as a student

athlete means that there are always eyes on you, and you have to act accordingly to protect the student athlete image:

> Well it's like a role you have to play you know? You have to carry yourself very representable because you know people look up to you as role models. You know little kids. People, the students look up to you guys because you know you're like their fan base...So it's pretty much a role we have to play.

This visibility makes student athletes identifiable outside of college campuses considering they may run into a fan somewhere around town. The particular town of Arcata that HSU is in is very small, making it more likely for HSU student athletes to run into a local fan. In this way, student experience a loss of autonomy and privacy (Adler and Adler 1991). Not only are student evaluated by boosters and fans but by another significant audience, children. Going out into the public eye meant that student athletes had to be careful of the image they were portraying because it was representative of both themselves and their university, also keeping in mind that anything they were doing could get back to their coach. Having children as fans gives student athletes the potential to influence young lives; however, this form of attention is constraining to one’s identity because they feel obligated to always portray the positive “good athlete” image (Adler and Adler 1991). For student athletes, going out into the public turns everyone they might see into a possible observer (Adler and Adler 1991) forcing them to act accordingly.

A necessary piece in my research was using an intersectional lens in my data analysis. I was particularly interested in hearing the experiences of minority student athletes and kept that in mind while writing my literature review and in doing my coding

and analysis. Black male student athletes have consistently reported higher levels of stigmatization on college campuses (Sailes 1998a; Gaston and Hu 2009; Martin et al. 2010; Bimper et al. 2013). Bimper and colleagues (2013) found that the negative stereotypes of being black and being an athlete were intertwined with one another. The black male identifying student athletes who I spoke with reported several forms of racialization taking place. Participants mentioned how they were assumed an athlete because they were black, an assumption that demonstrates the belief that blacks are intellectually inferior and must only be in college because of their athletic abilities. With that being said, participants mentioned that as a black athlete, people expected less of them academically and more from them athletically. Participants mentioned several different mechanisms used for coping with this negative stigma. Allen, a former black student athlete at HSU, talked specifically about racial embodiment in his interview:

> I've been told I'm only in college because I'm black, and you know I'm athletic. That's the only reason I'm in college. Not because my brains. And then that's where that whole just big, dumb not smart jock comes in, you know. And then you got the people like "The Blind Side" who, you know, all want to take care of this person. ‘This person comes from poverty, but he's a good football player, Ima take him in’, you know...Especially being in Humboldt. Like I said it's been either or where you get the people who just love you, ‘Oh, I love you, how are you doing’. And then you got the people who, you know, eyeball you when you walk in a restaurant or walk in a certain area or...classroom big time. I've had people stand up and walk away from me. And then like, you don't say nothing, because you don't want to be that stereotypical, angry person[of color]. So you just stay to yourself you know.

The negative dumb jock stereotype that exists is a heightened experience for student athletes of color. Allen coped with negative stigma by keeping to himself in order to refrain from being stigmatized even further in particular settings. While there are no biological differences between student athletes who are of a different race, there are differences in the way these student athletes are treated and perceived by society. This is demonstrated when Allen experienced being told that it was his athleticism that got him into college, not his intelligence. These experiences are linked to larger racialized imagery and stereotypes such as the belief that race is tied to individual abilities and behaviors such as blacks having more athletic abilities and less intellectual abilities. Allen's reference to "The Blind Side" illustrates how black student athletes are depicted as needing saving. This racialization further contributes to negative views of student athletes of color while whites are depicted as their saviors.

Chris, a black male identifying student athlete, also notes on the belief that athletic ability is tied to race: "they always expect us [person of color] to be like the best. Or you know, anticipate us to be the best player, or like to do more work or have like an extra jump or something". Our society has a long history of searching for racial differences and linking performance and behavior to those differences. (The difference between us). Through the narratives of these student athletes, it is evident that this is still taking place today. These racialized experiences were taking place both on and off campus.

Other student athletes who I spoke with echoed Allen's narrative. James, a racially mixed black and white student athlete, talks about the racialization that takes place being a student of color on a college campus. When asked what it meant to be a student athlete of color, James mentioned the assumptions that are made about you:

> People expect you [student of color] to play sports. Like you're looked at as an athlete by other people that go to the school and the professors...It could be good. Sometimes professors are more lenient with you because you play sports, or students are more friendly with you because you play sports. And then sometimes it could be bad because, I don't know, people like to categorize athletes into a certain way...that you don't care about school as much or you're not as studious as other people because you play sports.

James' narrative resembles that of the "successful" black male student athletes in Bimper's (2013) study. The black student athletes in Bimper's study illustrated how it was nearly impossible not to identify as an athlete because everyone on campus assumes that they are an athlete because they are black. The assumption that one is black and therefore must be an athlete is an oversimplified racial belief tied to the identities, abilities and expectations of black male student athletes (Bimper 2013). Aligning with the stereotypes beliefs that society has placed on blacks in America, James reports the racialized beliefs made about him as a student of color on a college campus.

James also highlights a point brought up by Simons and colleagues (2007) in regard to coping with stigma. James talked specifically about how he responded to the negative stigma he was experiencing when he talks about his efforts to disprove the existing negative beliefs. He made attempts to prove to his professors that he cared about his academics by participating and going to office hours. Essentially, James rejected the

negative stereotype that student athletes are less studious than other students by working not to conform it (Simons et al. 2007). As quoted earlier, Allen describes his attempt to reject the negative stigmas around his identity by staying to himself. In these ways, both student athletes of color negotiate the racialized behavioral expectations imposed by fellow students, professors and society at large.

James, Chris and Allen's narratives show how their athletic identity and racial identity are both salient in their student athlete experience. This discussion of race relates back to my earlier discussion of student athlete visibility. The racial embodiment of black male athletes makes them even more visible in the public eye. On a predominantly white campus in a predominantly white community, black males are especially visible. They do not have the ability to put on nonathletic clothing and hide their athlete identity because their athlete status is assumed from the color of their skin.

# DISCUSSION

Previous literature and my own experiences have given me a thorough understanding of what being an NCAA student athlete entails. Student athletes are a part of this larger student athlete subculture on campus. There are particular norms and values that exist within the student athlete subculture that incoming student athletes adopt to. Many student athletes reported having to sacrifice their social life in order to dedicate enough time to their academics and athletics. While this was a conscious decision for many, it was not always favorable because there were occasions they felt they were missing out on experiences the rest of campus got to be involved in. Student athletes are also subject to surveillance. The idea that they are always being watched exists, and so they behave accordingly. Student athletes also face pressures to sacrifice pieces of their identity. Often times when student athletes want to excel at one role, such as athletics, they feel the that they cannot excel in certain other roles, such as academics. Lastly, student athletes also have to also manage stigmatized identities. There are expectations that student athletes have to live up to, as well as negative stigmas that are tied to the student athlete identity that they are forced cope with. These are all results of the high demands that come with college-level sports, and ultimately result in a loss of individuality. Several studies offered an intersectional approach that noted identity nuances between men and women student athletes, as well as between student athletes of color and white student athletes.

My work is unique as it contributes to existing research conducted with NCAA Division II student athletes. Most of the existing work revolves around male Division I student athletes in revenue generating sports. While I establish in my introduction that Division II athletic departments and student athletes receive less financial assistance, many of the athletes I spoke with reported similar narratives to those at Division I schools. What is also unique is the observation that HSU has less athletic staff than many of the other Division II schools in our athletic conference. My work raises HSU student athlete voices and their desires for more support academically and holistically.

It is established that student athletes have complex identities as both college level students and athletes. We begin to understand further the complexities of these identities when applying an intersectional approach to analyzing student athlete experiences. Participants talked a lot about the extreme time demands they were tasked with that had an effect on their college experience. Student athletes brought up both the benefits and drawbacks of their student athlete life.

One particular topic that demanded a strong presence in my work is the concept of surveillance. Because discipline is a foundational philosophy in sports, hyper surveillance is exercised over many student athletes to create disciplined bodies. The student athletes who I spoke with talked about the ways in which their coaches used hyper surveillance technologies over them, and how this external hyper surveillance eventually became an internalized practice of self surveillance. These were methods used by coaches to obtain control of the behavior of student athletes. Student athletes began to monitor their behavior by not participating in certain activities, practicing when no one was watching

and striving for “perfection”. These mechanisms strip one of their individuality, and pressures student athletes to conform a preconstructed identity “so that they might all be like one another”. Here lives the idea of what a student athlete is supposed to be, a mold that individuals must fit themselves in. In coming to the conclusion that HSU student athletes are subjects to strict surveillance, my work serves as a call to remind society that student athletes are a diverse group of people that come from many different walks of life. Individuality should be acknowledged and respected. Ignoring the differences individuals hold resembles forms of racism because it ignores histories and cultural traditions that may be a central piece of one’s identity.

In athletics, the saying “there’s no I in team” has gained great popularity. In my own experience, the saying was used in a context to emphasize teamwork, that you had to give up your own selfish desires and put the team first. Coincidentally (or not), that same saying serves as a play on words when considering the identity stripping that student athletes often times go through. Athletics are no place for “I”. The larger power structures that exist such as the NCAA, universities and coaches deprive student athletes their “I”- their individuality. This is done primarily through practices of surveillance, control and discipline.

An interesting piece in some narratives was a hyper surveillance experience that appeared to be gendered. The women student athletes talked about hyper surveillance technologies as being beneficial to them, “for their own good”. They made strong claims that being a student athlete has helped them acquire skills that can be applied to school and the working world. Some even made claims that being a student athlete has helped

and motivated them to do better in school. In contrast, the men student athletes spoke about the hyper surveillance technologies as hindering them from being able to excel academically. They felt they had to focus so much on their sport that they had little time and energy left to dedicate to school. It was evident that hyper surveillance was present in the lives of both men and women student athletes; however, their experiences with it differed.

The particular narratives that arose from black, male identifying student athletes holds significance. These participants reported higher levels of stigma as a result of their racial embodiment. There were particular methods that these student athletes used to cope with the multilevel stigma they faced.

To conclude my findings, I report that a common narrative of student athletes was that the emotional and mental well-being of student athletes received little to no attention. Toughness (mentally and physically) is another common philosophy in sports, but can be harmful in its suggestion internalize emotion. While there are positives in being mentally and physically tough, there are significant risks that come with an unhealthy balance. Student athletes have declared that their mental and emotional well-being requires more attention that what it has received thus far.

A significant strength of my research was that it took into consideration both the strengths and weaknesses of the experiences of student athletes. This analysis can be used to build off of what already exists to create a more inclusive, supportive and positive student athlete experience. Echoing the voices of the student athletes that I spoke with, I

have created a list of feasible recommendations for the HSU athletic department, some of which are already in place:

- Promote more synergy between HSU academic and athletic departments
    - Continue inviting faculty, staff and students to athletic events
    - Encourage students to actively communicate with professors
    - Provide an academic advisor for all student athletes
- More holistic support for student athletes
    - Having a sport's psychologist on staff
    - Listen and respond to the voices of student athletes through conducting surveys
    - Provide and create internships for professional development
- Encourage/embrace interconnectedness across athletic teams
    - Hold events that promote bonding across sports

In considering areas that I did not explore very thoroughly, it would be beneficial to do further research that continues the concept of an intersectional approach by looking further into factors such as student athlete socioeconomic status, sport, sexuality, transfer status, and more. My work is limited considering that the areas I chose to dig deeper in were exclusive to race and gender. Further research would also benefit from having a larger sample size that looks at student athletes from more Division IIs than just HSU. Overall, this work reinforces the existing knowledge that student athletes are a stigmatized minority on college campuses, but my work adds that this holds true for Division II student athletes as well, particularly those who identity as black males.

While my research focused on a critical analysis of college athletics, I believe there are many benefits that come with the experience. While the environment of high-level sports can be oppressive, they also serve as sites of resistance. Like many others, I take pride in the student athlete part of my identity. While a victim of certain inequalities, I recognize the privileges I do have. In this context, I am privileged to be in an academic space co creating knowledge with my peers and faculty. Being a student athlete gave me the opportunity to get my education paid for while doing something that I love. It has brought me many lifelong friendships and skills. I echo the narratives of participants in my study when I say with positivity that being a student athlete has made me more disciplined, competitive and has shown me how to push myself in all aspects of life.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

| Name | Gender | Race/ethnicity | First Generation | On athletic scholarship? | Year | Transfer? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sara | F | Mexican | Yes | Yes | Senior | No |
| Hailey | F | African American | No | Yes | Senior | Yes |
| Lauren | F | Mixed | No | No | Senior | Yes |
| Danny | M | Mexican | Yes | Yes | Senior | No |
| Devin | M | Black | Yes | No | Senior | No |
| Michael | M | Black | Yes | No | Senior | Yes |
| Will | M | White | No | Yes | Senior | No |
| Mark | M | Black | Yes | Yes | Senior | No |
| Brittany | F | Asian | Yes | Yes | Senior | No |
| James | M | Black and White | Yes | Yes | Alumni | Yes |
| Kayla | F | Asian | No | Yes | Senior | No |
| Allen | M | Black | Yes | No | Alumni | Yes |
| Chris | M | African American | Yes | Yes | Senior | No |
| Susan | F | White | No | Yes | Alumni | Yes |

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

**Informed Consent**
**Humboldt State Student Experiences with Peer Support and Academic Success**

You are invited to participate in a 30-90 minute interview that is part of a research study of peer support experiences that shape academic success. [This interview is part of a subset of conversations that focus on
Division 2 NCAA student-athlete.] The goal of this research is to identify obstacles that play a part in hindering [student-athlete] academic success, as well as pinpointing some of the most effective methods for academic success.

My name is Jovanah Arrington, and I am a student-athlete and a graduate student working to complete my thesis and obtain my Master's in Public Sociology degree from Humboldt State University.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You have the right to not participate at all or refrain from answering particular questions. You have the right to discontinue the interview at any time with no negative consequences.

There are minimal risks for participants and those are no greater than discomfort you may experience in everyday conversations. You may feel uncomfortable speaking negatively about an institution and people. There are also potential benefits to your participation. You may be informed about academic support and other resources to which you are entitled. You will also have the chance to give input on resources that may be more useful. Finally, you may find benefit in just talking about and sharing your experiences.

To protect confidentiality, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym instead of using your real name. You have the opportunity below to consent to the use of direct quotes: when quotes are used, I will be sure that your individual identity is protected. I will also edit the quotes as needed and present data in an integrated form so that the identity of the individual may not be traced. It is anticipated that the study results will be shared through presentations and publications.

Interviews will take place on campus at Humboldt State University in the library or depot dining area. Interview audio recordings will be stored on my password-protected phone. Within two days of the interview, I will transfer the audio file to a password-protected computer and delete the file from my phone. Within 30 days, the audio file will be transcribed and deleted. The interview transcription will be stored for up to 7 years and then destroyed. Within 7 days, this written consent form will be scanned and stored in a secure electronic location separate from the transcription and stored for the same period.

Dr. Mary Virnoche, Professor, and Chair, Department of Sociology, will maintain these locations and oversee the data security process.

If there are any questions about this research, you may email me ja2862@humboldt.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor Dr. Mary Virnoche: mary.virnoche@humboldt.edu. If there are any questions about this study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects via phone at (707) 826-5165, or via email at irb@humboldt.edu.

Signing below indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, are willing to participate, understand that your participation is completely voluntary, and may stop at any time.

I have read and understand the information above:

____ (initial) I give consent to use direct quotes with pseudonym

| Print Full Name | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Interview Guide - Student/Athlete**
Virnoche/Arrington

**Opening Questions - Coming to HSU**

1. What brought you to Humboldt State?

   (Where you start playing? Were you at another school before HSU - community college(s) or 4 year)

2. What is your major and how did you choose it?

3. How close are you to graduation? (class standing; eligibility; on track?)

**Typical Day**

1. What does a typical school day with class and practice look like for you?

2. What about on a day where you have a game during the week?

**Student/Athlete Identity**

4. What does being a "student-athlete" mean to you?

5. When you think back across your experiences playing sports, are there ways in which the meaning of "student-athlete" has changed for you?

   (particular memory of this shift; relationship between two; emphasis of one or the other)

6. Thinking about the two parts of this identity, "student" and "athlete," can you talk about a recent example where being both helped you?

7. What about a significant example about strain created between these two parts of your identity?

8. (If not already mentioned) -- what about the physical parts of being an athlete? How does that shape your sense of self? (Tell me about how you deal with the physical demands of being an athlete? … go to extremes.. Period that was hardest? How come? What did you do to get through? … at your best? Day to day…

9. Are there times that you go do extra workouts beyond what is required? When you are in the field or gym alone?
10. What is it that keeps you going when no one is there to see? Or not?

*Now I'd to talk a little bit about how your relationships with different people or groups of people in your life -- and how they have shaped and/or changed how you go about being a student/athlete. People like your family members, your peers, coaches, advisors, teachers.*

**Student/Athlete -- Individual and Group Influences**

11. Let's start with those who have most influenced you. Can you talk about a particular person shaping your approach to being a student/athlete?

12. How about other significant people?

13. Coaches? Different from past coaches? How did they convey their expectations for you as a student/athlete?

14. How about peers -- Can you talk about the most significant peers in your life?

13. Have you ever been in a program where you were assigned a peer mentor or where peer mentors were available? What did you talk about?

Follow Ups on all the above:

> Particular memory that stands out in that relationship? How did you feel about that? What was/is that relationship like? How did that affect your approach? Your performance in the sport? In your academics? In your personal life?
>
> Anyone else? (continuing asking probing on different groups -- ask about faculty if they do not bring it up)

**Student/Athlete Culture and Structure**

*OK now I want you to think back on the different places where you have played/participated in your sport. Think about the commonalities and differences in those team and school environments.*

1. *When you came to HSU, what were your expectations about the particular student/athlete environment you were going to be in?*

2. *What were the signs that shaped that expectation?*

3. *Now that you have been here a while, how does your experience compare to that expectation?*

4. *How does this environment relate to your* success as an athlete and as a student? Does it matter?

5. If you have to pinpoint the most influential thing that has shaped your student/athlete experience -- what would it be?

6. Can you compare your experience at HSU with another place you have played/participated? Similarities/difference? And?

7. I've noticed that time management is a big factor in my life as a student/athlete. Can you talk about your approach to time management and how/if it has changed over your career? (Influences? What helps? Challenges?)

**Student/Athlete - Structure - Programs**

11. What academic resources and/or programs have been most significant for you at HSU and/or elsewhere?

12. How did you learn about those?

13. Example of recent use?

14. Any challenges in using them?

15. What happens with academics when you are on the road? (coaching structure question)

16. How have your professors handled you **missing class for sports**? (Maybe move up to intentional ask in significant people section? Note if only talk about faculty if prompted.)

17. Tell me about the best experience with a professor when you miss class because of a game? Worst? (move up to significant people)

18. If you were hired as the athletic director at a new school and told to build sports programs where student/athletes would thrive -- what would be the building blocks of those programs? (Think both about your very best experiences as a student/athlete -- and also things that might be missing at HSU that you would build into your programs.)

**Closing Questions**

17. What are your plans after college?

18. What have been the most significant experiences you had to help you get ready for that transition?

Does your major provide curricular and/or extracurricular support to support these transitions between your academic career at HSU and your post graduation plans? Classes: proseminar, service learning, internships, advisor one-to-one, links to career center? Ask for details.

19. What did I miss? What else do I need to understand about you and your journey as a student/athlete?

20. What questions do you have for me?

Follow up questions

1. Can you talk about the usage of film and recording of practices and games during your time at Humboldt State?
2. What was the purpose of this recording of games and practices?
3. What effect did it have on you as a player in games and practice?
4. In my last interview I asked you what being a student athlete meant, what does being a student athlete of color mean to you?
5. What are the expectations around masculinity as a male student athlete? Are there any?
6. How has it felt being a student athlete of color at Humboldt State
7. What does it mean to be a “good” student athlete? What does that entail and how do you achieve that?

**Demographics**

Age
Gender identity
Sexuality
Race and Ethnicity
GPA
Athletic scholarship?
Did either of your parents/legal guardians go to college?
What lines of work have they been in?