Media Portrayals of Male and Female Collegiate Rowers: An Analysis of University Athletic Web-Article Coverage

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Précis

This study examines the differences between the portrayals of male and female collegiate rowers in web articles published by university athletic websites. Participation in sports at the collegiate level has traditionally been dominated by men. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act which required schools receiving federal funding to provide an equal number of opportunities proportionally and spend a similar amount of money on men’s and women’s sports teams. Studies have been conducted from the mid 1970s to the present on the media representations of male and female athletes in television coverage, newspaper articles, and web articles. Consistently, these studies have demonstrated that male athletes receive a much greater amount of media attention than female athletes. Male and female athletes have been described in different ways which have perpetuated gender stereotypes and potentially have hindered the development and growth of women’s sports despite the fact that, according to law, men and women are supposed to have equal athletic opportunities.

Rowing was first introduced at the university level in 1843, well before the passage of Title IX and was a sport available exclusively to male athletes. For the first hundred years of collegiate rowing competition, most teams were started and developed in East Coast schools before the sport began to gain popularity on the West Coast. Following the passage of the Title IX legislation, women’s rowing team initially did not receive much funding or cooperation from their university athletic departments. However, due to the large size of the teams and the fact that no prior experience is necessary collegiate women’s rowing has become larger than men’s rowing and has received more attention. This study was designed to determine whether or not the trends seen in previous gendered media studies are present in the media coverage of collegiate
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rowing, a sport that has undergone a historical reversal in the gender composition of its participants.

To make this determination, 467 articles taken from university athletic websites covering the end of the year rowing championships for the East Coast and West Coast between 2002 and 2011 were content coded using indicators inspired by previous research in this field. The results indicated that many of the differences seen in the patterns of gendered coverage in previous studies were present in the articles covering collegiate rowing events. The results of this study demonstrated that there were differences in the use of gender qualifying terms, the amount and types of loss attributions that were made, and the types of praise given to male and female rowers. In addition, these results were more prevalent in the articles covering the East Coast championships than the West Coast championships. However, many of the patterns of bias seen in previous sports media studies, such as the higher amount of coverage afforded to male athletes and the more frequent use of terms of lower status to refer to female athletes were not evident. These results may indicate that the presence of overt gender bias in the website media coverage of collegiate rowing is less prominent. The pattern of development of collegiate rowing and the composition of its athletes coupled with the strong regional differences seen in the results of the data analysis may suggest that the history and the gender of the main group of participants of a particular sport may influence the amount and type of gender bias present in the media coverage of that sport. The results of this study may help inspire future researchers to consider the specific characteristics of a sport in their study designs so a more nuanced understanding of the gender bias present in media coverage of athletics can be obtained.
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Introduction

Participation in sporting and athletic competitions was a sphere traditionally dominated by men prior to the passage of Title IX in 1972 in the United States. According to gender schema theory, individuals learn the differences between the classifications of male and female from society and then adjust their behavior to fit them (Mcvee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005). Due to the fact that sports receive large amounts of media attention, they are a primary site for the creation, implementation, and perpetuation of gender stereotypes based on the portrayals of male and female athletes. Since the 1980’s, social science researchers have examined the representations of athletes by gender and have found many notable differences between the ways male and female athletes are discussed in various types of media (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Duncan & Messner, 1994; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Halbert & Latimer, 2004; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Billings et al., 2008; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2009). Differences in the amount and type of media coverage subtly suggest that women’s sports and women athletes are less important than male athletes and reaffirm traditional stereotypes regarding appropriate behavior for women and men.

The research that has been conducted to date examining media portrayals of male and female athletes has mainly focused on mainstream sports such as basketball, tennis, and soccer. All of these sports have significantly more male than female participants. Additionally, the men’s teams participating in these sports all have larger groups of dedicated spectators who attend their games than the women’s teams. While the research has clearly demonstrated that female athletes are described differently than male athletes, this finding may be due to the fact
the studies were focused on sports where the men’s versions were larger and more popular than
the women’s versions.

This study examines the online media coverage of collegiate rowing, a sport that was
historically an all male sport but in recent years has become dominated by women in terms of
overall participation. In addition, women’s rowing has been acknowledged as an NCAA sport
and has more varsity programs overall at universities across the United States than men’s
rowing. If the biases seen in previous research exist in the web articles published covering men’s
and women’s rowing, we can conclude that the media continues to perpetuate stereotypes
regarding women in sport regardless of how successful female athletes have become.

This paper will discuss the history of women in collegiate sports, the use of gendered
language in sports media, and the history of collegiate rowing in order to provide the background
information necessary to demonstrate the importance of studying media portrayals of athletes
that participate in rowing. This study evaluates the web articles published by university athletic
websites to determine if the amount and type of coverage provided is different for male and
female rowing teams competing in the largest spring regattas for the East and West Coasts from
2002 to 2011.

Women in Collegiate Sports

Participation in athletic competitions was dominated by men until the passage of Title IX
of the Educational Amendments Act in 1972 in the United States, which required high schools
and colleges to spend an equal amount of money for men’s and women’s sports teams (Connell,
1990). The Title IX legislation made discrimination based on gender, including in athletics,
illegal in schools that receive federal funding (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004). The law
states, “no person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in,
be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal assistance” (Educational Amendments, 1992). However, regulations specifying how Title IX was to be implemented were not published until 1979 with the release of the Athletics Policy Interpretation (Gavora, 2002). This means that although Title IX was a large symbolic step towards equal opportunities for women in the educational realm, there was nothing to guarantee schools would comply with the law for many years. As a result, while female participation in sports did rise after the passing of Title IX, there were still significantly fewer female athletes than male athletes (Himmelberg, 1992; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004).

Once the consequences of the law were more clearly stated, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) representatives, universities, and university athletic directors sent large numbers of letters in protest to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare claiming that Title IX would ruin college sports (Blumenthal, 2005). During the mid 1970s, budgets for women’s sports were increasing by two or threefold from what they had previously been. However, they were only a fraction of the amount of money spent on men’s sports (Blumenthal, 2005). Non-compliance was a major issue, so in 1988 Congress passed the Civil Rights Restoration Act which extended the coverage of the Title IX legislation to all of a school’s programs if the school received federal money (Blumenthal, 2005). Even with these new enforcement requirements, in 1998 a House Subcommittee Hearing on Intercollegiate Sports stated that, “nearly everyone agrees that enforcement of Title IX has been virtually non-existent over the last 12 years. The fact remains that 20 years after the passage of Title IX, men continue to dominate all areas of collegiate sports.” (House Subcommittee Hearing, 1998). Female college athletes were receiving less than 24 percent of the athletics operating dollar and less than 18 percent of the athletics recruiting dollar (NCAA Gender Equity Study, 1992).
A three prong test was created to ensure schools would implement the law. In order to meet the standards of Title IX, a school was required to either 1) offer its males and females roughly equal opportunities to play sports proportional to their representation in the student body (through either the actual number of athletes participating on sports teams or through spending equal amounts of money on men’s and women’s programs), 2) show a history of improving opportunities for girls and women, or 3) show that it was meeting the demands and interests of its female students (Blumenthal, 2005). In addition, the government passed the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act that required all colleges and universities to provide detailed information about their sports programs for men and women separately. The schools were required to report the number of athletic participants, recruitment expenses, coaches’ salaries, and the total number of full time undergraduate students by sex (Gavora, 2002). Following the passage of these new regulations, schools searched for ways in which to balance out the total amount of money spent on women’s and men’s programs and to increase proportional participation in their athletic teams. One major hurdle for schools was that Title IX only considered the amount of money a school is spending on men’s and women’s athletes and teams without accounting for the sources of that money (Gavora, 2002). Even if a team provided funding for their team from a source outside the university athletic department, such as using alumni donations, the law classified it as if the money came directly from the university athletic budget.

Most universities spent over half of their athletic budgets on their football teams, which is a sport available exclusively to male athletes. Not only is football an extremely expensive sport, it is also a sport that requires a very large group of athletes. Factoring football into the Title IX compliance regulations, universities quickly realized that achieving proportionality in terms of
the number of female athletes participating or the amount of money spent on their teams would be difficult to achieve. In an attempt to meet their quotas, colleges and universities began putting their resources into sports such as archery, equestrian squad, and ice hockey for women hoping to attract enough female athletes to achieve proportionality (Gavora, 2002). However, after a few years it appeared these smaller sports were insufficient additions to help school athletic departments acquire the total number of women athletes they needed to meet their quotas. Schools needed a sport that included a large number of women per team that didn’t require previous experience so any female undergraduate could participate. The solution to this dilemma turned out to be women’s rowing, a sport that would both add large number of athletes to help the schools meet their quotas and that came with greater expenses due to equipment and travel (Gavora, 2002).

**Gendered Language Usage in Sports Media**

While gender was once considered to be an innate trait that people possessed from birth, current research suggests that gender is much more complex and multi-faceted. Different tasks have traditionally been assigned to men and women and have been considered to be either masculine or feminine in nature. According to social science research, these categories of masculine and feminine are social constructions which we create based on information we are presented with regarding socially acceptable behavior (Koivula, 2001). Our expectations about gender and, more specifically, about the gender categories of male and female are based on social interactions, historic representations of gender, and on cultural representations of the social interactions. Thus, the associations people make when they think about gender are influenced by their interactions with others and the messages they are presented with in their daily lives and are, therefore, subject to change.
One of the major places where gender constructs are created and reinforced is at athletic competitions and sporting events. According to Rowe (1999), “if culture is the ‘stuff’ of everyday life—the frame through which we experience, interpret, mould, and represent everything that surrounds us—then sports occupies… an uncommonly prominent position within it” (Rowe, 1999 p.23). The fact that sport occupies such an important spot in dominant culture is vital considering that sports have traditionally been defined and controlled by men (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004). Gender schema theory suggests that individuals learn to identify traits as masculine or feminine from society and then adjust their behavior accordingly to meet these societal expectations (Mcvee, Dunsmore, & Gavelek, 2005). Sports mirror gender roles in society and help to create and reinforce ideas about what is appropriate behavior for each gender (Jones & Greer, 2011).

Due to sports’ ability to shape gender schemas, many social scientists have devoted their research to the study of the ways male and female athletes are represented in the media coverage of major sporting events (Kane, 1989; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Koivula, 2001; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Carlisle-Duncan & Willms, 2007; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Jones & Greer, 2011). Tuggle, Huffman, and Rosengard (2002) found that the amount of television coverage of female athletes is substantially smaller than the amount of coverage given to male athletes at all levels of athletic competition (Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002). Less coverage has been given to female athletes in other news media outlets as well. In a study examining three leading sports websites, Kachgal (2001) found that female athletes received less coverage than male athletes in electronic articles. Female athletes were also given substantially less coverage in newspapers and radio broadcasts (Tuggle, Huffman, &
Differences were seen in the total number of column inches and running times of shows, people quoted, placement of articles and stories, presence and size of accompanying photographs, the range of sports depicted, and in the size and content of headlines of news stories in magazines and newspapers (Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002). The fact that female athletes are afforded less attention from the media is significant because sports media reflects, shapes, and helps create attitudes and values about how important women’s sports are in society. Due to the fact that female sporting events and female athletes are underrepresented in media, audiences may be left with the impression that few women participate in sports or that women’s sports are unimportant (Kane, 1989).

Studies have also found differences between the amounts of coverage given to male and female athletes based on the specific traits and popularity of the sports they compete in. Tuggle and Owen (1999) discovered that there was a higher amount of coverage afforded to men’s team sports than to women’s team sports in their study of the televised reporting on the Olympics (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). In addition, women who participated in power or contact sports received practically no attention despite the success of the women’s teams competing in those events. Studies have also demonstrated that women who participate in socially acceptable women’s sports receive more attention than women who compete in sports that are typically considered to be more masculine (Kane, 1989; Pederson, 2003; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Koivula, 2001). Sports that are considered socially acceptable for women are aesthetic in nature like gymnastics or diving. References to women participating in these sports tend to focus on their
femininity, attractiveness, and emotionality which diminish the importance of their strength and skills (Giuliano & Knight, 2001).

Several studies have shown that the type of coverage given to male and female athletes and the ways in which they are described differ across various formats of media. Scholars argue that language can be viewed as a collection of the predominant attitudes and values associated with men and women and with the distribution of social roles and statuses (McConnell-Ginet, 1980). Some terms convey a higher status than others. For example, referring to an adult male as a boy rather than a man or to an adult female as a girl rather than a woman conveys a lower status because it does not recognize the age status they have attained (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1989). In a study conducted by Messner, Duncan, and Jensen (1993), television broadcast commentators often called female athletes “girls” but almost never referred to male athletes as “boys” (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993). This tendency implies that male athletes hold a higher status than female athletes due to the higher level of respect in the term used to refer to them.

Another difference between the portrayal of male and female athletes occurred in the number of times commentators or authors marked individual athletes or events by gender. Gender marking occurs when a term specifying gender is attached to designate what type of event or team is being discussed. In a study conducted by Halbert and Latimer (2004), commentators for men’s and women’s tennis gender marked female tennis players far more frequently than they gender marked male tennis players (Halbert & Latimer, 2004). Often the commentators would talk about the female athletes as participating in women’s tennis whereas the male athletes were discussed as competing in tennis. This disparity in the number of instances of gender marking was also present in the study conducted by Duncan and Messner
(1994), where gender was marked approximately 110 times per game for women’s basketball games but was practically never mentioned in men’s basketball games (Duncan & Messner, 1994). The tendency of gender marking women’s events more frequently than men’s events is significant because it suggests that male events are the norm and don’t need a special designation whereas women’s events do because they are the alternative. A parallel example with respect to occupational titles would be the use of the terms “doctor” and “female doctor” and the use of the terms “nurse” and “male nurse”. For each set of terms, the occupation that has an attached gender specification reflects the fact that it is less common and less socially acceptable for a person of that gender to hold the job (McConnell-Ginet, 1980). Thus, in the coverage of sports, the fact that women’s sports are typically accompanied by a term qualifying the gender of the athletes participating suggests it is less typical for female athletes to participate in that sport.

Social science studies have also demonstrated that sports writers and commentators provide different reasons for the successes and failures of male and female athletes in ways which reinforce gender stereotypes. Eastman and Billings (1998) analyzed broadcast commentary and discovered that male athletes had a higher ratio of comments focusing on their successes rather than their failures. In addition, female athletes’ failures were attributed to lack of experience four times more frequently than male athletes were (Eastman & Billings, 1998). Duncan and Messner’s (1994) study of televised basketball also revealed different amounts and types of attributions of successes and failures for athletes of each gender. Women’s basketball players’ failures were typically attributed to an individual error, whereas male basketball players’ failures were either not discussed or were framed as the result of the prowess of their opponents (Duncan & Messner, 1994). This finding is important because it implies that female athletes are responsible for their failures due to an individual weakness while male athletes only fail when
they are beaten by stronger competitors. Thus, female athletes are portrayed as being more prone to error than male athletes. When discussing the successes of the athletes, commentators claimed male athletes achieved success due to their intelligence, strength, size, speed, hard work, and risk taking (Duncan & Messner, 1994). Women’s successes were explained in a similar fashion but almost always accompanied by attributes of emotion, luck, togetherness, and family (Duncan & Messner, 1994). This distinction frames individual male athletes as being in control of their own destinies and fully credits them for their accomplishments. In contrast, by attributing female athletes’ successes to reasons like emotion, luck, and togetherness they are portrayed as being less individually responsible when they succeed. These differences in the attributions used to describe male and female athletes thus reveal underlying gender stereotypes which are perpetuated when they are put forth by the media (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Similarly, studies conducted by Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002) and Halbert and Latimer (2004) demonstrated that sports commentators praise male athletes more frequently and positively and criticize them less than they do female athletes. Male athletes were praised for their physicality and athleticism while female athletes were praised for their positive attitude, personalities, appearances, or personal backgrounds (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). Halbert and Latimer (2004) noted that the ratio of praise to criticism was significantly higher for male athletes than it was for female athletes, and that male athletes were given a larger total amount of praise (Halbert & Latimer, 2004).

The findings of studies on gendered media coverage have changed some from the 1980’s to the present. More recent studies document fewer instances of overt gender biased coverage of men’s and women’s athletics in comparison with the older studies (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1989; Himmelburg, 1992; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Tuggle & Owen, 1999;
Giuliano & Knight, 2001; Kachgal, 2001; Koivula, 2001; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Acosta & Carpenter, 2004; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Carlisle-Duncan & Willms, 2007; Billings et al., 2008; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2009; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Jones & Greer, 2011). For example, in Duncan and Messner’s (1994) follow up study to their 1989 study the researchers noted that while their first study contained many instances where women basketball and tennis players were called “girls” and men were never called “boys” this trend had practically disappeared in the results of their current study (Duncan & Messner, 1994). However, commentators explanations of women’s and men’s successes and failures still contained significant asymmetries and higher instances of gender marking for women’s events still occurred frequently (Duncan & Messner, 1994). Similar trends were seen in studies conducted by the same set of researchers as follow-ups to their previous research (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Billings et al., 2008). In addition, the amount of media coverage of female athletes was significantly less than the coverage of male athletes across all the studies examined.

The biases found in the media portrayals of athletes in the body of research discussed above are significant because they create and perpetuate gender stereotypes (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). When the media portrays female athletic competitions as less important and focus only on “socially acceptable” women’s sports it is likely that the younger generation of upcoming female athletes will internalize these messages and will be less likely to participate in the team sports or power sports that the media has deemed unfitting for their gender. Overall, this means the media portrayals of athletes may hinder the development and growth of women’s sports despite the fact that, according to law, men and women are meant to have equal athletic opportunities.
This study seeks to determine whether the biases that have been previous identified will be present in the media coverage of collegiate rowing. Previous research has largely focused on sports that had greater numbers of male than female participants and received more attention from spectators when the teams participating were men’s teams. As a result, some of the biases seen in media coverage in the studies may have resulted from the fact that men participated in the sports more widely than women and as a result their teams received more attention. Collegiate rowing offers a new opportunity for the body of research on gendered media coverage because that the sport has experienced a historic reversal in the composition of its main participants. Additionally, women’s rowing is recognized as an official NCAA sport whereas men’s rowing is headed by a separate organization called the International Rowing Association. Therefore, women’s rowing has greater acknowledgement by the traditional collegiate sporting community than men’s rowing as the NCAA is the largest and most widely recognized association of institutions and conferences that organizes the athletic programs of colleges and universities. Examining media coverage of rowing provides us with the opportunity to discover whether the gender biases seen in previous social science research were solely the result of unequal participation (with men participating in larger numbers than women) and inferior status (with women’s teams receiving less acknowledgment than men’s teams), or whether they suggest an underlying inequity in the stereotypes society holds regarding male and female athletes and their capabilities.

History of Collegiate Rowing

In 1843, a Yale student purchased a secondhand Whitehall boat from Europe, and with it started the Yale rowing club which was the very first collegiate rowing program (Charbuck, 1998). During the following year, a rowing program was also started at Harvard. The Harvard
oarsmen met Yale in 1852 in the first intercollegiate rowing competition in the United States. This sparked interest amongst collegiate prep school students, especially amongst the schools located near the rivers in East Coast cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston (Roberts, 2007). For about 100 years Harvard and Yale raced amongst themselves, and the remaining schools formed the Intercollegiate Rowing Association (Charbuck, 1998). Eastern Ivy League schools continued to dominate the sport of rowing through the turn of the century, but programs were beginning to form in the Midwest and the West at schools like Wisconsin, Stanford and the University of California. Today, crews such as those from University of California Berkeley and the University of Washington are as famous as their prestigious counterparts in the East like Yale and Harvard and have risen to the top of intercollegiate competitions.

Women have rowed throughout most of the history of collegiate rowing, starting with the establishment of the Wellesley women’s rowing program in 1875 (Roberts, 2007). However, women’s participation in rowing was seen as secondary to men’s and was intended to preserve their health (Roberts, 2007). During the 1960s colleges and clubs began to set money aside to fund women’s rowing programs that focused on instruction in greater numbers. In 1964 the National Women’s Rowing Association was founded and two years later held its first national regatta, marking the beginning of competitive collegiate women’s rowing (Charbuck, 1998). Thus, even though women’s rowing programs had existed at the collegiate level they were not considered competitive sports teams in the same way that the men’s programs had been until about 100 years after the introduction of rowing as a sport to the university setting.

Despite the passage of Title IX in 1975, collegiate oarswomen continued to confront challenges stemming from men’s traditional dominance in rowing and sports more generally. At many schools, women were given insufficient equipment and given very inconvenient practice
times (Charbuck, 1998). Women rowers often had no access to shower facilities and would spend hours waiting to be able to use the men’s facilities. In protest of their ill treatment by the athletic department, the Yale women’s crew team marched into the office of the athletic director in 1976 and stripped naked to reveal the words Title IX written on their backs in blue marker (Ivry, 1988). This stunt gave women’s rowing teams around the country the publicity and attention they needed to force their respective athletic departments to give them the funding and facilities guaranteed to them by Title IX.

Collegiate rowing opportunities for women continued to grow in size and popularity. In 1997, women’s rowing was officially approved as a National Collegiate Athletic Association Sport (Roberts, 2007). This was a landmark moment in the history of the sport as men’s rowing has still not been accepted as an NCAA sport; thus, it represented an opportunity that was being given to women and not to men in collegiate athletics. Today, women row at almost all colleges and are consistently ranked amongst the most successful competitors in international competition (Roberts, 2007). As of the 2009-2010 school year the grand majority of collegiate rowers were women, with a total of 6,999 female rowers competing in comparison with the 2,276 male rowers competing (“1981-82-2009-10 NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report”, 2011). Thus, women’s rowing represents one of the only examples of a sport that is available to both genders at the collegiate level where there are more female than male athletes competing.

Studying the media coverage of collegiate rowing is beneficial because rowing switched from being an exclusively male sport to a sport where the majority of the athletes participating are female. Due to the fact that the tradition of collegiate rowing originated on the East Coast and was acknowledged almost exclusively as an Ivy League men’s competition for the first hundred
years of its existence, the sport also provides an opportunity to examine whether or not the location of the schools with men’s and women’s rowing programs contributes to the presence or absence of bias in the media coverage of its events. As previously discussed, many of the East Coast schools were extremely reluctant to fully support their women’s rowing programs following the passage of Title IX and it took dramatic action on the part of the Yale women’s team to finally garner the attention necessary to ensure their equal treatment (Charbuck, 1998). In contrast, teams on the West Coast did not develop until later around the turn of the century after Title IX had already passed which resulted in the development of these schools men’s and women’s programs at the same time (Roberts, 2007).

Research Hypotheses

My hypotheses are based on the results of previous gendered media studies and on the history of the sport of rowing. For the first five, the hypotheses mirror the results of the previous studies conducted on media coverage of other sports. If my study produces similar results, it will demonstrate that the gender bias present in media coverage is based on underlying stereotypes of men and women and occurs regardless of the amount of participation or the level of acknowledgement that women’s sports team receive. My last hypothesis focuses specifically on the history of rowing and the pattern of its development across the United States.

H1: There will be a greater number of articles covering men’s rowing teams than women’s rowing teams and the articles covering men’s teams will have a larger average word count than those covering women’s teams.

H2: Male rowers will be referred to with terms of a higher associated status than female rowers.

H3: Female rowers and events will be gender marked more frequently than male rowers and male rowing events.
H4a: Articles will provide more attributions for male crews’ wins and losses than for female crews’.

H4b: Wins of male rowers will be attributed more frequently to the abilities and prowess of the athletes while win attributions will rarely be given for female rowers.

H4c: Losses of male crews will more frequently be attributed to the prowess of the opposing teams or to elements outside their control while the losses of female crews’ will be attributed to an inability to work together or individual error.

H5a Male rowers will receive a greater amount of praise than female rowers.

H5b: Female rowers will receive a greater amount of criticism than male rowers.

H5c: Male rowers will be praised more frequently for their hard work and preparation whereas female rowers will be praised for their togetherness, heart, and improvement.

H6: All the expected results stated for H1-H5 will be more prevalent in articles covering the East Coast championship than the West Coast championship.

Data and Methods

To test the research hypotheses I examined and content coded articles from university athletic websites to determine whether or not there was a difference in the amount of coverage and language used to describe male and female collegiate rowers. All online articles covering the Pac-10 Championships and the Eastern Sprints, which are the two largest regattas for the spring collegiate rowing season, were selected for coding. Unlike the other spring regattas, these two events have both male and female participants which ensured that any difference in content between that of the male and female events is not attributable to the fact that they were not present at the same contest. The articles included cover all racing events of participating men’s and women’s rowing teams at these two events between the years of 2002 and 2011. This time
range was chosen because the archives for the university athletic websites only contained articles between these years. I used a website commonly called regatta central to compile a complete list of schools competing in these events for each year of the study. This site is the main website used for listing the entries at the major collegiate racing events in the United States, and is the most reliable way of obtaining a complete list of all the schools that competed at the Pac-10 and Eastern Sprints Championships. Based on the list of registered teams, articles were located on the participating schools athletic websites in the article archives section. The articles were chosen from university athletic websites because they are the largest source of consistent media coverage of collegiate rowing events. A total of 467 articles were coded.

The coding scheme used in this study was based upon those used in studies conducted by Duncan and Hasbrook (1989), Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993), Duncan and Messner (1994), Eastman and Billings (1998), Billings, Halbert and Latimer (2004), and Billings et al. (2008). Five coding indicators were used to determine the presence or absence of biased coverage of men’s and women’s rowing events. The first indicator used in this study recorded the total number of articles covering men’s and women’s rowing teams and the number of words in each article to determine the amount of coverage each gender received for each event.

For the second indicator, the gendered hierarchy of naming used within the articles was examined. For this indicator, the number of times the terms girls, boys, men, women, guys, gals, ladies, and gentleman were recorded to determine if there was a disparity in how often male and female collegiate rowers were given names at the same status level.

The third coding indicator recorded the number of instances of gender marking, where a team name, athletic competition, or individual boat was accompanied by a gender qualifying
term was recorded and compared to determine whether or not male and female athletes are
gender marked unequally.

The fourth indicator used in this study compared the frequency and type of the
descriptions of successes and failures for men’s and women’s rowing teams. For the purpose of
the study, success was defined as winning and failure was defined as losing. The total number of
win and loss attributions made in each article was recorded. In addition, the win and loss
attributions were separated into different categories of explanations to determine if certain types
were used more frequently than others for male versus female athletes. The categories of win
attributions included opponents pushed (when the win was attributed to the pressure put upon the
winning crew by their opponents), time focus (when the win was merely recorded with the
amount of time the winning crew took to complete the course), early lead (when the win was
attributed to a quick start or fast first half of the race), held off opponents (when the win was
attributed to the winning crew’s ability to stay in just in front of the other crews), and crew
prowess (when the win was attributed to the specific abilities or talent of the winning crew). The
categories for loss attributions included lineup changes (when the loss was attributed to
switching new rowers into the original or planned lineup), boat chemistry (when the loss was
attributed to a lack of chemistry between the rowers in the boat), close race (when the stigma of
the loss was mitigated by saying that the crew finished just behind the winning crew or crews),
opponent prowess (when the loss was attributed to the superior abilities of the winning crew or
crews), equipment breakage (when the loss was attributed to some piece of equipment in the boat
breaking before or during the race), and weather (when the loss was attributed to unfavorable
weather conditions like high winds).
The fifth coding indicator used in this study compared the amount and type of praise and criticism used to describe the male and female rowers. The number of comments made praising or criticizing the teams was recorded for each article and then the types of praise were categorized into subcategories to determine whether or not there was a difference in the amount of praise and criticism or the type of praise given to athletes of each gender. No subcategories were created for criticisms made because the articles contained only very generic and non-specific criticisms. The categories for comments of praise included improvement (comments that praised the improvement of a crew over the course of the season or on the improvement of their performance between a preliminary heats race and a finals race for the regatta), preparation (comments that praised the work a boat did to prepare for the regatta), heart/dedication (comments that praised the emotional traits of athletes in the boat like heart and dedication), togetherness (comments that praised the sense of togetherness of the athletes in the boat or on how well they worked as a group), and met potential (comments that praised the athletes for achieving what they were capable of or for placing in the race in the way they were predicted to).

Results

A two-tailed T-test for samples with unequal variances was conducted comparing the means for the articles covering women’s rowing teams and the articles covering men’s rowing teams. The results from these tests are provided below in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (Subcategory)</th>
<th>Men (Mean)</th>
<th>Women (Mean)</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Articles</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Count</td>
<td>351.94</td>
<td>214.18</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Marking</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Win Attributions | 0.72 | 0.91 | +
Opponents Pushed (Win Att.) | 0 | 0.004 | ns
Time Focus (Win Att.) | 0.42 | 0.55 | ns
Early Lead (Win Att.) | 0.09 | 0.13 | ns
Held Off Opponents (Win Att.) | 0.08 | 0.06 | ns
Crew Prowess (Win Att.) | 0.11 | 0.16 | ns
Loss Attributions | 1.16 | 0.84 | **
Lineup Changes (Loss Att.) | 0.01 | 0.01 | ns
Boat Chemistry (Loss Att.) | 0 | 0.004 | ns
Close Race (Loss Att.) | 0.81 | 0.61 | **
Opponent Prowess (Loss Att.) | 0.30 | 0.18 | *
Equipment Breakage (Loss Att.) | 0.01 | 0.02 | ns
Weather (Loss Att.) | 0.02 | 0.03 | ns
Praise | 6.47 | 6.56 | ns
Improvement | 0.74 | 0.79 | ns
Preparation | 0.09 | 0.11 | ns
Heart/Dedication (Praise) | 0.018 | 0.05 | +
Togetherness (Praise) | 0.004 | 0.05 | ***
Met Potential | 0.22 | 0.24 | ns
Criticism | 1.24 | 1.01 | +

| Table 1: | Comparison of means on study measures by gender. + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. |

Analysis of the data for the first coding indicator produced no statistically significant results. Contrary to hypotheses H1 which stated that men’s rowing teams would have a greater number of articles and a larger average number of words per article, there was a greater number of articles covering women’s rowing teams and the average number of words per article was about equal for both genders.
The second coding indicator that compared the number of times each term within the
gendered hierarchy of naming occurred simply did not occur as the rowers were only referred to
as men or women. Therefore, hypothesis H2 which stated that male rowers would be referred to
with terms of a higher associated status than female rowers was rejected.

In the data recorded for the third coding indicator of gender bias, gender was marked an
average of 1.74 times in articles covering women’s teams in comparison with being marked an
average of 1.02 times in articles covering men’s teams (p<.001, Table 1). Therefore, the results
for gender marking were consistent with hypothesis H3 that stated female rowers would be
gender marked more frequently than male rowers.

Analysis of the data collected for the fourth coding indicator of gender bias only
produced statistically significant results for the category of loss attributions and for the close race
and opponent prowess subcategories of loss attributions. Loss attributions were made for men’s
teams an average of 1.14 times per article and .84 times per article for women’s teams (p<.01).
This result confirms hypothesis H4a that stated loss attributions would be made more frequently
for male rowers than for female rowers. No significant results were produced for the category of
win attributions or for any of its subcategories. As a result, hypothesis H4b that stated there
would be different types of win attributions made for male and female rowers was rejected. For
the two statistically significant subcategories, losses of men’s teams were attributed to being the
result of a close race or the skill of the opposing crew more frequently than the losses of
women’s teams were. It is important to note that the opponent prowess attribution was only made
an average of .3 times per article for men and .18 times per article for women. This means that
this attribution was made fairly infrequently, but that it was made almost twice as often for men
than for women. Results for these two subcategories support hypothesis H4c which stated that
men’s teams’ losses would more frequently be attributed to the speed and skill of their opponents.

The analysis of the fifth coding indicator examining the amount and types of praise and criticism given to male and female rowers produced no significant results for the total amount of praise. Men’s rowing teams were praised an average of 6.47 times per article and women’s rowing teams were praised an average of 6.56 times per article. Thus, hypothesis H5a that stated male rowers would be praised more frequently than female rowers was rejected as praise was given equally to rowers of both genders. The comparison of the average amount of criticism between articles covering men’s rowing teams and women’s rowing teams produced the opposite results to those predicted by hypothesis H5b, which stated that female rowers would receive a greater amount of criticism than male rowers. In articles covering men’s rowing teams, male rowers were criticized an average of 1.24 times whereas female rowers were criticized an average of 1.01 times per article. Thus, male rowers were actually criticized more frequently than female rowers and hypothesis H5b was rejected. Analysis of the subcategories of praise produced significant results in the heart/dedication and togetherness subcategories. Praise of heart/dedication was given an average of .018 times per article for men and .05 times per article for women while praise of togetherness was given an average of .004 times per article for men and .05 times per article for women. The average number of times per article each of these types of praise was given was less than .05 for both men and women and therefore occurred extremely infrequently. The heart and dedication subcategory produced a p-value that was less than .10 but not quite low enough to be considered statistically significant at the traditional .05 cut off. In contrast, comments of praise for the togetherness subcategory were given to women an average of .05 times per article compared with .004 times per article for men (p<.001). Thus, women
were given praise for their ability to work together more often than men, which supports hypothesis H5c that stated women would be praised more frequently for their togetherness. Although only marginally significant, the heart/dedication comparison was very close and also matches the prediction made in H5c that stated female rowers would be praised more frequently for their heart than male rowers.

In order to test hypothesis H6 regarding regional differences, T-tests were conducted separately for articles covering the Eastern Sprints and for those covering the Pac-10s. Partial results from these tests are provided below in Table 2 and Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-Test Results East Coast</th>
<th>Category (Subcategory)</th>
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<th>Women (Average)</th>
<th>P-Value Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Articles</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
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<td>331.54</td>
<td>326.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Marking</td>
<td>0.74 (.86)</td>
<td>1.4 (1.17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Win Attributions</td>
<td>0.68 (1.38)</td>
<td>0.92 (1.18)</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss Attributions</td>
<td>1.14 (1.19)</td>
<td>0.73 (.93)</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Race (Loss Att.)</td>
<td>0.79 (.96)</td>
<td>0.55 (.81)</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponent Prowess (Loss Att.)</td>
<td>0.29 (.66)</td>
<td>0.15 (.42)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart/Dedication (Praise)</td>
<td>0.29 (.15)</td>
<td>0.15 (.18)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togetherness (Praise)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0.04 (.22)</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism</td>
<td>1.17 (1.64)</td>
<td>0.89 (1.22)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Comparison of means on study measures by gender. + p<.10, * p <.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-Test Results West Coast</th>
<th>Category (Subcategory)</th>
<th>Men (Average)</th>
<th>Women (Average)</th>
<th>P-Value Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Articles</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word Count</td>
<td>481.54</td>
<td>498.58</td>
<td>ns</td>
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As stated in hypothesis H6, many of the differences predicted in hypotheses H1-H5 were statistically significant only for the East Coast. However, some of the patterns predicted for the presence of gender biased coverage did not occur in the analysis of the different regions.

Analysis of the data collected for the first coding indicator examining the amount of coverage given to male and female athletes did not produce statistically significant results for the Eastern Sprints or the Pac-10s. The T-test comparing the average number of words per article for each region both resulted in non-significant results. As a result, hypothesis H1 was rejected in the comparison of articles between the East Coast and the West Coast.

In the analysis of the third coding indicator of gender bias, female rowers were gender marked an average of 1.4 times in articles covering the Eastern Sprints whereas male rowers were gender marked an average of .74 times per article (p < .001, Table 2). This means that female rowers were gender marked almost twice as often as male rowers were. In contrast, in articles covering the Pac-10 Championships male rowers were gender marked an average of 2.42 times per article and female rowers were gender marked an average of 2.67 times per article (p = ns, Table 2). Thus, male and female rowing teams were gender marked at almost an equal rate in

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Gender Marking</th>
<th>Win Attributions</th>
<th>Loss Attributions</th>
<th>Close Race (Loss Att.)</th>
<th>Opponent Prowess (Loss Att.)</th>
<th>Heart/Dedication (Praise)</th>
<th>Togetherness (Praise)</th>
<th>Criticism</th>
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<td></td>
<td>2.42 (2.76)</td>
<td>1.03 (1.05)</td>
<td>1.24 (1.15)</td>
<td>0.87 (.81)</td>
<td>0.37 (.67)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0.03 (.16)</td>
<td>1.76 (1.4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.67 (3.03)</td>
<td>0.91 (1.5)</td>
<td>1.13 (1.12)</td>
<td>0.78 (.83)</td>
<td>0.27 (.67)</td>
<td>0.08 (.27)</td>
<td>0.08 (.41)</td>
<td>1.36 (1.46)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Comparison of means on study measures by gender. + p<.10, * p <.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.
articles covering the Pac-10 championships. Overall, it was more common to gender mark both men’s and women’s teams in the West.

In addition to the category of gender marking, the analysis of articles covering the Eastern Sprints resulted in statistically significant results for the category of loss attributions and for the subcategories of close race, opponent prowess, togetherness, and heart and dedication (Table 2) included in the fourth coding indicator. Just as the analysis of the whole data set of articles produced significant results for loss attributions (Table 1), articles written about the Eastern Sprints made loss attributions an average of 1.14 times per article for male rowers and only .73 times per article for female rowers. This trend confirms hypothesis H4a that articles would make more attributions for male crews’ losses than for female crews’ losses. It also supports hypothesis H6 that the expectations made in hypothesis H4 would be statistically significant in articles covering the Eastern Sprints rather than in those covering the Pac-10 Championships. Analysis of the category of win attributions and its subcategories did not produce any significant results according to the traditional .05 level in articles covering the Eastern Sprints or the Pac 10s. As a result, hypothesis H4b that stated win attributions would be made more frequently for male rowers was rejected within the regional comparison. The analysis of the subcategories of loss attributions demonstrated that close race and opponent prowess attributions were made more frequently in articles covering male rowers than female rowers in articles in the Eastern Sprints (p<.01, Table 2). There was no statistically significant difference in the types of loss attributions made for male and female rowers in articles covering the Pac-10s. This confirms hypothesis H4c that stated that the losses of male rowers would more frequently be attributed to the skill of their opponents. It also confirms the prediction made by hypothesis
H6 that the opponent prowess loss attribution would produce a more significant gender bias in articles covering the East Coast championships rather than the West Coast championships.

The analysis of the category of praise and its subcategories for the fifth coding indicator produced no significant difference in the amount of praise given to male and female rowers in articles covering the Eastern Sprints or the Pac-10 Championships. As a result, hypothesis H5a that predicted male rowers would be praised more frequently than female rowers was rejected for the regional comparison. Male rowers were criticized more times on average per article than female rowers in articles on both the Eastern Sprints and the Pac-10s (Table 2, Table 3). Although neither result met the .05 level of significance, this result is the opposite of the expected result from hypothesis H5b that stated female rowers would be criticized more frequently than male rowers. Thus, hypothesis H5b was rejected for the regional comparison. Analysis of the subcategories of praise demonstrated that female rowers were praised more frequently for the togetherness subcategory and male rowers were praised more for the heart/dedication subcategory in articles covering the Eastern Sprints (Table 2). The fact that female rowers were praised more on average for the subcategory of togetherness replicates the results seen in the complete data analysis (Table 1) and confirms the predictions made in hypothesis H5c regarding the types of praise female athletes would be given. Unlike the trend seen in the analysis of the entire data set (Table 1), the fact that male rowers were praised more frequently for their heart and dedication in articles on the Eastern Sprints represented a reversal of the original trend and the predictions in hypothesis H5c regarding the subcategories of praise given to male rowers were rejected for the articles on the Eastern Sprints. In contrast, the praise subcategory of heart and dedication produced the only statistically significant results for the articles covering the Pac-10s. Male rowers were never praised for their heart and dedication in
these articles whereas female rowers were praised an average of .078 times per article for this subcategory (p<.05, Table 3). Thus, the prediction in hypothesis H5c that stated that female rowers would be praised more frequently for their heart was confirmed for articles covering the Pac-10s. For the fifth coding indicator as a whole, hypothesis H6 that predicted the differences stated in H5a, H5b, and H5c would be more significant in articles covering the Eastern Sprints was rejected.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results from my study replicated the findings of many of the studies which have previously been conducted examining the presence of gender bias in the media coverage of sports. Statistical analysis of the entire set of articles covering the Eastern Sprints and the Pac-10s from 2002 to 2011 revealed that female rowers were gender marked almost two times as often as male rowers. This finding confirms the trend seen in the studies conducted by Halbert and Latimer (2004) and Duncan and Messner (1994) that female athletes were gender marked far more frequently than male athletes. Gender marking female athletes more often than male athletes is important because including a gender qualifying term for women’s sporting events or teams more frequently suggests that their participation is less common and less socially acceptable for a particular sport (Duncan & Messner, 1994).

My analysis also revealed that loss attributions were made more frequently for male rowers than for female rowers. Additionally, the losses of male crews’ were more frequently attributed to the fact that the race was very close one or to the skill and speed of the opposing crews. These differences for the amount and types of loss attributions made about male rowers replicates the patterns seen in the studies conducted by Eastman and Billings (1998) and Duncan and Messner (1994). This finding is important because it implies that female athletes are
responsible for their failures due to an individual weakness while male athletes only fail when they are beaten by stronger competitors. Thus, female athletes are portrayed as being more prone to error than male athletes. Therefore, these differences in the attributions used reveal underlying gender stereotypes which are perpetuated when they are put forth by the media (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Statistical analysis of the type of praise given to male and female rowers revealed that female rowers were praised more often for their heart/dedication and togetherness, a trend which was also seen in research conducted by Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002), Halbert and Latimer (2004), and Duncan and Messner (1994). These previous studies documented that when discussing the successes of the athletes, commentators claimed male athletes achieved success due to their intelligence, strength, size, speed, hard work, and risk taking (Duncan & Messner, 1994). Women’s successes were explained in a similar fashion but almost always accompanied by attributes of emotion, luck, togetherness, and family (Duncan & Messner, 1994). The fact that my study replicated this trend of praising female athletes for attributes of emotion and togetherness is significant because praise of this type implies that the accomplishments of female athletes are not due to their skill alone but rather to these traits. This suggests they are less individually responsible for their successes. As a whole, the fact that my study contained many of the patterns of gender biased coverage seen in previous studies demonstrates that media coverage of rowing is similarly biased. Additional change is necessary if gender biased media coverage is to be eliminated.

My regional comparison of articles covering the Eastern Sprints and the Pac-10s indicated gender bias in media coverage of rowing was more of an issue on the East Coast than it was on the West Coast. These results carry the same implications for gender biased coverage
discussed in the above paragraph. However, the fact that the articles covering the Eastern Sprints contained a greater and more significant amount of gender bias as predicted in hypothesis H6 may have important implications for future studies on gendered media coverage of sports. The fact that the women’s and men’s rowing programs on the West Coast were created at the same time and were instituted during a time when Title IX was already being implemented may help explain why there was little statistically significant gender bias present in the articles covering the Pac-10 Championships. In contrast, women’s rowing programs were created later than the men’s rowing programs for almost all the East Coast schools and were instituted during a time that preceded the passage and implementation of Title IX. The fact that men were viewed as the dominant participants in rowing on the East Coast for about one hundred years could have affected the strong gender bias seen in the articles covering the Eastern Sprints. These findings suggest that the history and composition of the athletes of a particular sport may increase the likelihood that there will be gender bias present in the media coverage of that sport. However, there are fewer rowing programs on the West Coast possibly as a result of the fact that it gained popularity in that region later than it did in the East. As a result, fewer teams compete in the Pac-10 Championships and are were fewer articles written about them. Thus, the statistical power to detect differences in the West in this study was much more limited than it was in the East. Therefore, this conclusion should be viewed as tentative and additional research is needed.

While many of the tested indicators of gender biased coverage produced statistically significant results, there were several patterns seen in previous studies conducted on gendered media coverage that did not occur in my study. Studies conducted by Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002) and Halbert and Latimer (2004) found that female athletes were criticized far more frequently than their male counterparts. In contrast, the difference between the amount of
criticism given to male and female rowers in my study was not statistically significant. Another
strong pattern seen in previous studies that did not appear in my study was the tendency for male
athletes to receive a greater amount of overall coverage than female athletes (Duncan &
Messner, 1994; Kachgal, 2001; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Tuggle, Huffman, &
Rosengard, 2002; Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Billings et al.,
2008). My data revealed that there were more total articles coverage women’s rowing teams and
that the average number of words per article was approximately equal for both genders. This
suggests there was no gender bias present in the amount of coverage given to athletes of each
gender in my study. There were also no gender differences in the hierarchy of naming, unlike
some previous studies (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1989). In a study conducted by Messner, Duncan,
and Jensen (1993), television broadcast commentators often called female athletes “girls” but
almost never referred to male athletes as “boys”. However, the gendered hierarchy of naming
indicator designed based on this trend produced no significant results for my study. Whether this
is a finding unique to rowing or whether it reflects social change cannot be discerned here.

The current study was limited in several ways. First and foremost, only one person
completed the content coding of the articles in the data set. This means that my study lacks inter-
rater reliability and could have an implicit bias present. If I was to design a similar study, I would
have multiple people complete the content coding of the web articles in order to eliminate this
bias. In addition, although the data set contained a large number of articles written about male
and female rowers, the entry listings on the regatta central website revealed that there were many
teams that competed in a particular year but did not have an article written about their
participation. Some of the university athletic websites had archive sections which contained
articles for all the years from 2002-20011 while others had archive sections which only
contained articles for some of the years within the range of years studied. As a result, the data set
is more representative of the articles written by a subset of schools. While the results of my
regional comparison appear to be quite strong, it is important to note that of the 467 articles that
were coded 365 articles covered the Eastern Sprints whereas only 102 articles covered the Pac-
10s. As a result, there is a possibility that the lack of significant results in the articles covering
the Pac-10s was a result of the fact that there were many more articles in the sample covering the
Eastern Sprints. Lastly, the fact that I focused my study on collegiate rowing specifically means
that my findings might not be representative of the sport of rowing as a whole.

The fact that the indications of gender bias seen in previous gendered media studies did
not appear in my data may suggest that the overall amount of gender bias present in the media
coverage of sports may have decreased over time. However, the presence of some of the other
patterns of gender biased coverage seen in previous research suggests that there is still room for
improvement. The fact that the gender biases present in the web articles were more prevalent in
articles covering the East Coast championships than the West Coast championships has
potentially important implications. The pattern of development of collegiate rowing and the
composition of its athletes coupled with the strong regional differences seen in the results of the
data analysis may suggest that the history and the gender of the main group of participants of a
particular sport may influence the amount and type of gender bias present in the media coverage
of that sport. Hopefully, this conclusion will inspire more detailed research on this topic which
considers the specific characteristics of sports in the development of study designs so that a more
nuanced understanding of gender biased media coverage can be obtained.
Works Cited


Eastman, S.T., & Billings, A.C. (1999)-look up article title and location in BHD p. 9 online


## Perkins, Peggy

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Title             Collegiate Rowing: A Study of the Use of Gendered Language in Media Coverage
Date              Spring 2012

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