

BLACK FEMALE ATHLETES' PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETITIVENESS

Amy Henry

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

May 2008

Committee:

Vikki Krane, Advisor

Mary Ann Robertson

Nancy Spencer

Dave Tobar

© 2008

Amy Henry

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Vikki Krane, Advisor

The term competitiveness is constantly used in the sporting environment to describe something a person has or does not have. Often we hear athletes referred to as being competitive. Or we hear a person needs to be competitive to participate in sport.

However, what does competitiveness mean? It is a very ambiguous term.

Competitiveness can mean striving to win for some people and for others it could mean putting forth effort. The purpose of this study is to examine Black female athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. I also wanted to explore how their goal orientations and perfectionistic tendencies were related to their perceptions of competitiveness. I specifically wanted to research the competitive experiences of Black female athletes whose unique experiences tend to be omitted from sport psychology research. Through a qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews, 12 Black female Division I track and field athletes described their perceptions of competitiveness. The Task and Ego Sport Orientation Questionnaire was administered to determine their goal profile. The Sport Orientation Questionnaire also was administered to compare their competitiveness scores to their perceptions of competitiveness. Half of the athletes adopted a high task/low ego goal profile and the other half adopted a high task/high

ego goal profile. In general, the athletes with a high task orientation described competitiveness based on self-referenced goals whereas athletes with high ego orientation used social comparison when describing their competitive goals. As a result multiple dimensions of competitiveness emerged including the influence of effort and various physical and mental states associated with being competitive. In terms of perfectionism, the athletes felt that recovering from a mistake and not allowing the mistake to affect performance was viewed as being competitive. Some of the Black female athletes talked about their encounter with racial stereotypes and some felt that it affected their competitiveness. Gaining understanding of how athletes perceive competitiveness can bridge the gap between coach and athlete interactions and enable coaches to more effectively motivate their athletes. Also, developing a more concise, collective definition of competitiveness will aid in developing a scale to measure competitiveness.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” —Philippians 4:13

I dedicate this to my mother...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first and foremost like to thank my advisor for all of her diligent help and patience with me in completing this thesis. Without her guidance I would be unable to complete this thesis. I would like to extend sincere gratitude to my thesis committee members, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Spencer, and Dr. Tobar, for their valued input and advice. I would like to thank Hampton University for their help with my study. I also would like to thank my mother for her persistence on my finishing this thesis. And a special thanks to all my close friends who put up with me constantly saying that I need to work on my thesis...it is finally done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. Introduction and Review of Literature	1
Competitiveness.....	3
Martens' Model of Competition	4
Competitiveness in Athletes	6
Achievement Goal Theory	8
Correlates of Goal Orientations	15
Goal Profiles	23
Motivational Climate	25
Perfectionism	31
Perfectionism in Sport	35
Race, Stereotypes, and Sport	40
Race in Western Society	40
The Black Female Athlete	44
Black Feminist Standpoint.....	47
Interconnections among Competitiveness, Goal Orientation, and Perfectionism	52
CHAPTER II. METHOD.....	57
Pilot Studies	57
Exploratory Focus Group.....	57
Individual Pilot Interviews.....	59
Developing the Interview Guide.....	59

Interviewing	61
Quantitative Assessment of Goal Orientation	62
Quantitative Assessment of Competitiveness	62
Pilot Interview Sessions.....	63
Thesis Study	65
Participants.....	65
Procedure	67
Trustworthiness.....	69
Bracketing	69
Rapport Building.....	70
Critical Friend	71
Reflexivity	71
Data Analysis	72
CHAPTER III. RESULTS	76
Athlete Goal Profiles	76
TEOSQ Assessment of Goal Orientation	77
Interview Goal Orientation	77
Task-oriented Goals	78
Ego-oriented Goals	80
Combination of Task and Ego Orientation	82
Integrating Interview and TEOSQ Data	84
Dimensions of Competitiveness	87

Task-oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness.....	87
Ego-oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness.....	91
Combination High Task and High Ego-Oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness.....	91
Effort and Competitiveness.....	92
Mental States Associated with Being Competitive.....	94
Attentional Focus	94
Anxiety.....	96
Mental Preparation for Competition	100
Physical States Associated with Being Competitive	103
Physically Ready to Compete	103
The Strain of Physical Effort	104
Injury and Competitiveness	105
Becoming More Competitive.....	107
Describing a Competitive Performance	108
Competitive Spirit.....	111
Physical Preparation and Competitiveness	112
Effort, Practice, and Competitiveness.....	116
Task Orientation and Practice Behavior	116
Ego Orientation and Practice Behavior	118
Similarities of Practice and Competition	122
Socialization and Becoming Competitive.....	123
General Sports Participation	123

Socializing Agents	126
Competitive Motivation	129
Coach Influences	132
Athlete Perceptions of Coach's Competitiveness	132
Coach Goal Orientation	134
Coach-Athlete Congruence	137
Coach and Athlete Interactions	138
Perfectionism	144
Defining a Perfect Performance	145
Perfectionism and Reactions to Mistakes	149
Unproductive Perfectionistic Tendencies	149
Productive Perfectionistic Tendencies	150
Racial Stereotypes and Competitiveness	157
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION	162
Defining Competitiveness	162
Sport Orientation Questionnaire	163
Goal Orientation	164
Measurement of Goal Orientation	168
Perfectionism	169
Mental States and Behaviors Associated with Being Competitive	173
Race and Sport—the 21 st Century	174
Practical Implications	176
Future Research	177

REFERENCES	180
APPENDIX A. ATHLETE CONSENT FORM	192
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	193
APPENDIX C. TASK AND EGO ORIENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE.....	195
APPENDIX D. SPORT ORIENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE	196
APPENDIX E. INTEREST FORM	197

LIST OF FIGURES/TABLES

Figure/Table	Page
1 Summary of demographic information of participants	54
2 Quantitative/qualitative goal profile data and competitiveness scores	86

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Review of Literature

Destiny, a collegiate track athlete, is at the NCAA outdoor track and field championships. She has been competing well all year and through her hard work she has made it through the preliminary and semi-final rounds of the 400 meter dash. Destiny is one of the eight qualifiers in the finals of this one lap sprint. Of the field of eight runners, the winner of the race will become the national champion. Destiny's strategy for the race is to follow the race plan she has been developing and preparing all year. As she warmed up, she thought about her coach's advice, "just be competitive and I'll be proud." At the beginning of the race in lane three, Destiny starts out well. She looks strong and confident. On the back stretch of the track, she begins picking up the stagger on the runners in front of her and she appears to be one of the front runners in the race. In the final 100 meters of the race, Destiny and two other athletes are leading the field of runners. A runner from another team is leading, Destiny is following close behind, and then a third runner is trailing slightly behind them. All three runners are battling to be the winner—the national champion. Destiny is fighting, trying to catch the leader. As they cross the finish line, Destiny could not pull it off and came in second place. Overall, Destiny was pleased with her performance, after all she ran the fastest time of her life. However, Destiny's coach was unhappy. He berated her for not being "competitive;" that's why she didn't win. Destiny was baffled she felt she had been very "competitive." The other athlete simply was faster and, therefore, won.

This scenario is an example of how individuals may define "competitiveness" differently. One person may define it as performing up to her or his potential and another may define it solely as winning. In sport, it is essential that there is effective communication between coaches and athletes. Whether coaches are attempting to correct athletes' technique or motivate them to work hard, choosing language that unambiguously communicates the desired outcomes is imperative. Gaining a common understanding of the term "competitiveness" would reduce misunderstandings such as the one between Destiny and her coach.

In order to perform well, many athletes need to be motivated and coaches seek effective ways to motivate their athletes. Coaches tend to use language, such as “be more aggressive” or “be more competitive,” assuming that athletes understand the meaning of these phrases. However, this ambiguous language can be confusing because these phrases can have multiple meanings. A coach can intend one thing, whereas the athlete interprets it as something else. For example, a coach may feel that an athlete is not being competitive, but the athlete may feel that she or he is. But what does “being competitive” mean? Is it trying hard, improving, or winning? If coaches and athletes have different expectations or interpretations related to “being competitive,” they will be in conflict and this conflict may affect athletes’ performance and motivation.

Motivation is an important variable in the world of sport. It is described as the direction and intensity of one’s effort (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). In regards to a particular task, motivation reflects the amount of effort put forth in completing that task and which task warrants effort to complete. Motivation also affects individuals’ achievement and potentially their level of competitiveness. Achievement refers to the attainment of a personally or socially valued goal (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). Highly motivated athletes will use high levels of effort when involved in achievement tasks.

Motivation is considered a social cognitive process in which individual attributes combined with situational and social factors interact to affect behavior (Roberts, 2001). Individuals become motivated, or unmotivated, through assessments of their

competence in the achievement contexts. For example, the way athletes feel about their capabilities can affect their motivational level. If athletes feel they are not capable, they may be less motivated to complete the task and vice versa.

Achievement motivation refers to a person's efforts to master a task, achieve excellence, overcome obstacles, perform better than others, and take pride in exercising talent (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). Individuals display their achievement motivation through their achievement behavior. Achievement behavior is defined as "behavior in which the goal is to develop or demonstrate—to self or to others—high ability, or to avoid demonstrating low ability" (Nicholls, 1984, p. 328). Achievement behavior is displayed when an individual attempts to attain a goal. Sporting tasks can be viewed as achievement behaviors. In sport, achievement behavior is described by intensity, persistence, choice of action possibilities, and performance (Roberts, 2001). There are individual differences in achievement motivation and achievement behavior and research in motivation sets forth to explain these individual differences.

Competitiveness

Achievement motivation in sport has been referred to as competitiveness (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). In other words, competitiveness is a sport-specific form of achievement motivation. Martens (1975) defined competitiveness as a disposition in which one strives for satisfaction when making comparisons with some standard of excellence in the presence of evaluative others in sport. It is a process in which an

individuals' performance is compared with some criterion in presence of another who can evaluate the comparison process. In the opening scenario with Destiny, evaluative others included her coach, competitors, and the audience, all of whom could evaluate her performance. The criterion or standard of excellence was her place or time in the race.

Martens' Model of Competition

Competition was described by Martens (1975) as a process composed of four stages: the objective competitive situation, the subjective competitive situation, the response, and the consequences of the response. The first stage, the objective competitive situation, is where the individual is confronted with cues in the social environment that constitute a competitive situation (Martens, 1975). For example, Destiny will notice her competitors, the officials and spectators at the beginning of a race; this is where the athlete has entered what is referred to as the objective competitive situation. The objective competitive situation involves social evaluative situations in which competition can only occur when others present are aware of the comparison criterion (Martens, 1975). Martens excluded situations in which an individual attempts to better performance in the absence of someone to evaluate the comparison. For example, Destiny practicing alone and having a time trial for practice will not be considered competitive unless there is someone there to evaluate the performance. This stage emphasizes the social evaluative component.

The second stage of the competitive process is the subjective competitive situation (Martens 1975). It involves the interplay of individual differences and the objective competitive situation and was defined by Martens as the stage in which the individual appraises the situation (Martens, 1975). Individuals who are highly competitive will interpret the sport situation differently than those who are less competitive, and their perceptions of the situation influence behaviors in competitive situations (Gill, 2000). Athletes may perceive a competitive situation as threatening or as a challenge and some individuals eagerly approach competitive challenges and others shy away from it perceiving it as threatening. A highly competitive athlete will seek out what is perceived as a challenge whereas a less competitive athlete will avoid the objective competitive situation if possible. An individual's competitiveness also influences how she or he evaluates the objective competitive situation. For example, at the starting line, Destiny assessed her opponents and her own ability; in this case, she viewed the situation as challenging and she expected to perform well.

After subjectively evaluating the situation, in the third stage athletes respond physiologically, psychologically, and behaviorally (Martens, 1975). For example, individuals' responses may include hormones being released in their body, mentally processing the situation, and then physically reacting. At the start of the race, Destiny may have an increased adrenaline level and have high anxiety, which can negatively influence her performance (i.e., behavior). As the athlete decides to approach the

challenge, the body responds by producing the behaviors necessary to complete the competition. Two important factors that influence an individual's response are ability and motivational level. If the individual does not feel she or he has adequate ability to complete the task, she or he may choose to avoid the challenge (e.g., give up, not try hard). Also, how motivated the individual is relates to her or his response. If the individual has no desire to take part in the challenge, she may avoid it as well (e.g., not participate at all).

The fourth and final stage of competition, the consequence, arises when the individual's response is compared to the desired standard (Martens, 1975). For example, since Destiny felt she performed to her potential, the consequences would be positive. She will feel successful, have increased confidence, and be motivated for subsequent performances. If she had lost and did not feel that she performed to the best of her ability, the negative consequences may include decreased confidence, which can affect subsequent performance.

Competitiveness in Athletes

Based on Martens' conceptualization of competitiveness, Gill and Deeter (1988) developed the Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) to assess empirically competitiveness in athletes. Most research in this area has used this scale. Gill and Deeter (1988) defined competitiveness as the desire to enter, and strive for success in, sport situations or the desire to win in interpersonal situations. Early research has

shown that athletes differ in their competitiveness compared to non-athletes. Gill, Dziewaltowski, and Deeter (1988) compared competitiveness in participants of sport and non-sport activities. Among high school and university students, competitiveness scores on the SOQ distinguished between competitive sport participants and non-sport participants. The athletes had higher competitiveness scores than non-athletes.

Jones, Neuman, Altmann, and Dreschler (2001) explored competitiveness in college athletes and novice athletes. Novice athletes were defined as athletes who participated in less organized recreational sporting activities. They found that college athletes were more competitive than novice athletes. Similarly, Houston, Carter, and Smither (1997) found that professional tennis players were substantially more competitive than amateur players. Comparisons of competitiveness based on gender have differed across studies. Jones et al. found novice males reported being more competitive than novice females, and college females reported being more competitive than college males.

Martin and Eklund (1994) examined the relationships among age, ability and competitiveness of distance runners. Specifically, they wanted to see if faster runners were more competitive than slower runners. Their findings revealed that distance runners who had faster personal best times were more competitive based on SOQ scores than the individuals with slower personal best times. They suggested that faster runners had a stronger desire to achieve success and satisfaction in running compared

to runners with slower personal best times. Martin and Eklund (1994) concluded that competitiveness is one of a constellation of psychological factors contributing to successful performance. Two constructs of interest within this constellation are athlete goal orientation and perfectionism. The interconnections among competitiveness, goal orientation, and perfectionism can be explained through achievement goal theory.

Achievement Goal Theory

Since competitiveness has been defined as a sport-specific form of achievement motivation (Weinberg & Gould, 1999), motivational theory will shed light on athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. Currently, most research on motivation in sport is framed in the social cognitive paradigm. This framework maintains that there are important interrelationships among cognitive, affective, and value-related variables that are assumed to mediate and/or moderate the choice and attainment of achievement goals (Roberts, 1992). These interrelationships also can affect how athletes interpret competitiveness. The social setting and individual perceptions combine to influence motivation. The social cognitive approach is built around expectancies and values that individuals attach to achievement activities. For example, Roberts (2001) argued that to understand the motivation of individuals, the function and meaning of their achievement behavior must be considered. It also is important to understand the goals of their actions—what the individual sets forth to accomplish. Achievement goal theory can be used to understand goals that athletes set.

Achievement goal theory asserts that individuals are motivated to demonstrate competence (Nicholls, 1984). However, there are variations in how individuals judge their competence as well as variations in the definitions of success and failure (Nicholls, 1989). For example, in the opening scenario, Destiny and her coach were in conflict about how competitiveness was defined. This was because the coach defined competitiveness solely by winning whereas Destiny felt competitiveness meant competing to the best of one's ability. These personal meanings influence an individual's perceived success and failure; therefore, what one feels is successful is not necessarily successful to another person. For one person, being successful may mean winning while to another person success is equated with trying hard and doing one's best.

Goals guide the path to an individual's success or failure. They govern individuals' beliefs and subsequent decision-making and behavior in achievement contexts (Roberts, 2001). For example, before individuals get involved in any activity they set goals that determine behavioral intentions (Duda & Hall, 2001). These goals reflect the purposes underlying actions during the activity. Using the example from the opening scenario, Destiny's goals included performing to the best of her ability and using good technique. The goals she set influenced her race strategy and affected the outcome of her performance. Since one of Destiny's goals was to perform to the best of her ability, her race strategy would reflect putting forth high effort, which will lead her

to achieving an optimal time. However, the coach set goals based on the outcome of winning leading to the perception that Destiny was not successful since she did not win. Achievement goals are presumed to cognitively organize how individuals interpret, feel, and react concerning achievement related endeavors (Duda & Hall, 2001). The types of achievement goals an individual sets, such as putting forth effort or winning, will influence how individuals feel about their ability and performance.

Demonstration of competence is a primary concept in achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1989). Competence refers to an individual's aptitude or ability to perform or accomplish. Achievement goal theory proposes that individuals focus on demonstrating that they are capable of performing a task (i.e., they are competent) and they set goals to display these capabilities. Nicholls (1984, 1989) proposed that individuals adopt different goal perspectives as a direct consequence of the way in which they construe their capabilities. That is, people may be task-oriented or ego-oriented. This goal orientation will influence views about success and failure and views about their capabilities.

A task orientation emphasizes personal or self-referenced criteria to define success (Duda, 1993). This criterion includes factors individuals can control such as developing their own ability, gaining knowledge, and using effort. To develop their ability, task-oriented individuals tend to focus on making consistent improvement and acquiring the necessary skills needed to be successful. These individuals strive to

master or become an expert in tasks in which they are involved. Mastery to this individual is usually obtained through acquiring or learning a new skill. Learning, to a task-oriented individual, will be viewed as an end in itself (Nicholls, 1984). Refining and acquiring skills enables athletes to be more confident about their ability.

Task-oriented athletes display many productive behaviors in achievement contexts that enhance subsequent performance. Task-oriented individuals tend to put forth high effort and view high effort as leading to mastery and higher ability (Nicholls, 1984). Task orientation is presumed to result in behaviors conducive to long-term accomplishments and investment (Duda, 1993). Specifically, it is argued that the adoption of task-oriented goals will lead to a strong work ethic, optimal performance (given the capabilities of the individual), and high persistence (Duda, 1993). Task-oriented individuals are not likely to give up when faced with a challenge. They will persist through adversity and utilize the opportunity as a way to enhance their abilities. These individuals will work hard to achieve their goals when faced with a challenge.

Since Destiny, in the opening example, displayed characteristics of a task-oriented individual, she may have been likely to engage in productive behaviors prior to the meet. For example, she would have prepared herself in practice by refining her technique and working hard. In the previous meets leading up to the championship, Destiny would have run to the best of her ability each time, working towards improvement rather than focusing on defeating others. If she had faced adversity,

Destiny would have utilized effective coping strategies instead of backing down or giving up. Destiny's coach would not have emphasized these same facets of performance. Rather, his focus was on winning, displaying characteristics of an ego-oriented individual.

The major concern for an ego-oriented individual is to demonstrate ability in comparison to others and to avoid being judged incompetent (Nicholls, 1989).

Perceptions of ability, to an ego-oriented individual, involve social comparison in which the individual evaluates his or her performance by comparing it to others' performance (Duda & Hall, 2001). Ego-oriented individuals will only feel competent when their performance compares favorably with others (e.g., winning). Individual success and failure is based on other-referenced or normative standards (e.g., external factors, opponents); things they cannot control (Duda, 1992).

An ego-oriented athlete focuses on her own performance and ability in comparison to the ability of others. A task is judged more difficult by this athlete if few peers can do it; therefore, high ability is inferred when the ego-oriented athlete succeeds on tasks that few others can do (Nicholls, 1984). However, an activity that most peers can master easily will not offer significant feelings of competence to this athlete. This is because success can be attributed to the ease of the task and not the ability of the individual (Nicholls, 1989). The primary goal of ego-oriented athletes is to show their superior ability, often through winning or being the best. Ability is perceived to be a

direct result of innate talent. Effort is not perceived as essential for demonstrating this talent. Therefore, ego-oriented athletes often do not value practicing skills unless it leads to demonstration of their competence. When faced with adversity, these athletes often focus on factors they cannot control such as their competitors the officials or the weather.

Ego-orientation has been linked to a lack of persistence in the sport domain, and ego-oriented individuals are likely to give up when faced with adversity (Duda, 1993). Additionally, ego-oriented athletes feel that less effort equates to demonstrating high ability. When an ego-oriented athlete displays high effort in a task, this athlete tends to be concerned about possible failure and has thoughts of demonstrating lack of ability (Duda & Hall, 2001). Therefore, ego-oriented athletes prefer to avoid difficult tasks which may cause them to exert high effort and potentially could lead to demonstrating incompetence. Instead, they prefer to exert little effort while being successful in a task -- demonstrating high ability with little effort (Duda, 1993). These athletes tend to display unproductive behaviors and mental states -- those not conducive to achievement -- when she or he also has low perceived ability.

Perceived ability is a person's beliefs in his or her skillfulness. As explained in achievement goal theory (Duda, 1993), perceived ability is a primary determinant of achievement strivings. The level of ability individuals expect to be able to demonstrate reflects their perceived ability (Nicholls, 1984). Individuals with higher perceived ability

generally have higher expectations of demonstrating high competence. The more individuals feel they have learned, the higher their perceptions about their abilities (Nicholls, 1984).

Individuals differ in the cues and processes used to infer one's ability and one's chances of demonstrating or developing ability (Nicholls, 1984). Individuals with high perceived ability have moderate expectancies of success on normatively moderate to difficult tasks. When successful on these tasks, they infer high ability from success (Nicholls, 1984). In contrast, individuals with low perceived ability expect to fail in these similar tasks (Nicholls, 1984). Athletes' perceived ability will have direct behavioral consequences. For example, athletes who feel they are not capable of successfully completing a task will not put forth high effort, likely resulting in poor performance. When individuals with low perceived ability have moderate expectancies of success, they appear to see tasks as easy and do not infer high ability from success.

How the individual construes his or her level of ability interacts with goal orientation to influence subsequent mental states and behavior (Duda, 1992). Task orientation combined with high perceived ability will lead to productive behavior and mental states. Generally, these athletes have higher perceived ability than ego-oriented athletes because they perceive improvement as success and improvement further enhances perceived ability. Ego-oriented athletes with low perceived ability are most at risk of experiencing unproductive mental states and behaviors. When ego-oriented

athletes question their level of ability, a low achievement oriented behavioral pattern during performance is expected. These athletes will not put forth consistent effort, which leads to inconsistent performance. Though, an ego-oriented athlete can “look like” a task-oriented athlete, if she has high perceived ability. This high perceived ability will buffer the aspects of an ego orientation that leads to unproductive thoughts and behaviors.

Task and ego goal perspectives can be state-like or trait-like, in that situational factors and individual differences affect which goal perspective state predominates. Task and ego involvement refer to a state or the dominant goal perspective in a given situation. Goal involvement is situation specific and can vary across tasks and context. Task and ego orientation is assumed to be trait-like, in that goal orientation will be relatively stable across most situations. In this study, I will focus on goal orientations, which Nicholls (1989) suggested creates a “world view” about how the achievement context functions and what is important within and about that context to the individual. This overarching perspective will influence behavior, mental states, and values in sport.

Correlates of Goal Orientations

Achievement goal orientations provide a meaningful way of differentiating the beliefs and affect of individuals within competitive sport (Roberts, Treasure, & Kavassanu, 1996). Achievement goal orientations have been found to be associated with cognitive, affective, and behavioral variables. Task and ego-oriented athletes have

different beliefs about what causes success as well as exhibit different achievement behaviors and mental states.

Task and ego orientations are related to beliefs concerning the wider purposes of sport and individuals' philosophies regarding the purposes of sport (Nicholls, 1984).

Task-oriented athletes believe that sport involvement should foster intrinsic and prosocial ramifications (Duda, 1993). This means they believe that the purpose of sport is to foster the capacity to cooperate and strive for personal mastery (Duda, 1993). In contrast, ego-oriented athletes believe that sport is a means to an end, and that the function of sport is to enhance social status and recognition. White, Duda, and Keller (1998) found that youth sport participants who were high in task orientation believed that sport should enhance self-esteem and sport ethos, promote the value of increased personal mastery, and encourage a physically active lifestyle. The task-oriented participants also felt that sport participation should foster behaviors that made one a respectful and productive citizen in society-at-large. Similarly, Carpenter and Yates's (1997) study with English soccer semi-professional and amateur players revealed that the task-oriented athletes felt that the purpose of sport was to focus on prosocial behaviors.

Ego orientation is linked to the belief that the purpose of sport is to increase social and career status, enhance self-esteem, and instill a competitive attitude in athletes (Duda, 1993; Newton & Fry, 1998). Financial remuneration has been found as a

purpose of sport to ego-oriented professional athletes (Treasure, Carpenter, & Power, 2000). Interestingly, ego-oriented semi-professional soccer players also felt that demonstrating physical fitness and enhancing status among peers and with the coach were objectives of sport (Carpenter & Yates, 1997). To the ego-oriented athlete, demonstrating physical fitness is another means for them to be able to demonstrate her ability to others.

Nicholls (1989) suggested that beliefs about the causes of success and goal orientations form a “personal theory” with regard to how people operate in achievement settings. A task-oriented individual believes that effort, hard work, and motivation are critical determinants of success (Duda & Hall, 2001; Newton & Fry, 1998; Spray, Biddle, & Fox, 1999). These athletes are likely to perceive a sense of control over their athletic involvement. Lochbaum and Roberts (1993) examined the relationships among goal orientations and beliefs concerning the causes of success in high school athletes. The task-oriented athletes believed that success was the result of effort and persistence. An ego-oriented individual believes success is dependent on a favorable comparison of one’s own ability with the ability of others (Duda, 1992, Newton & Duda, 1993). Therefore, ego-oriented athletes believe that displaying their ability or talent will lead to success. They also endorse chance or luck as causes of athletic success (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993); they feel that one way to succeed in sport is through

cheating and bending the rules, and they are likely to utilize deceptive tactics (Spray et al., 1999).

The consideration of external factors in achieving success is usually associated with unproductive characteristics of an ego-oriented athlete (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993; Roberts et al., 1996). If ego-oriented athletes are not successful, they will blame failure on external factors such as the weather or equipment failure. Since ego-oriented individuals use normative standards as criteria of success, these individuals endorse social approval as a cause of success (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). Roberts, Treasure, and Kavassanu (1996) studied achievement goals and their relationship to beliefs about success and satisfaction in sport. The ego-oriented participants in the study believed that external factors such as impressing the coach were associated with success in sport.

Though an emphasis on external factors as a criterion for success is associated with an ego orientation, some studies have found that task-oriented athletes also use external factors (e.g., coach, parents) in a productive manner to assess success (Newton & Fry, 1998). Elite task-oriented Dutch soccer players (Van-Yperen & Duda, 1999) believed success was a result of cooperative and supportive relationships with others (e.g., one's team members, parents). In this study, task orientation was positively associated with the views that team play and parental support contribute to a soccer player's accomplishments.

Social cognitive theories of achievement motivation assume that goal perspectives differentially relate to the level of satisfaction and intrinsic enjoyment experienced in sport (Duda, 1993). Intrinsic motivation is participating in an activity for its inherent satisfaction as opposed to an external consequence (e.g., winning a trophy) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Task-orientation has been found to be positively related to satisfaction and interest and negatively related to boredom (Roberts et al., 1996; Van-Yperen & Duda, 1999). Task-oriented individuals experience satisfaction from experiences in which they try hard (Duda & Hall, 2001). This satisfaction motivates task-oriented athletes to participate in sport. However, when ego-oriented athletes are not winning or have to display high effort, they tend to be less satisfied with their sporting experience (Duda, 1993).

Stephens (1998) examined the relationships among goal orientation, perceived ability, enjoyment, and value in youth soccer. The task-oriented athletes in this study had high enjoyment related to playing soccer. Ego-oriented athletes were less satisfied with their sporting experience and were at greater risk of dropping out of sport compared to task-oriented athletes. It has also been found that ego-oriented individuals with high perceptions of ability report greater intrinsic motivation than ego-oriented individuals with low perceptions of ability (Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003). Therefore high perceived ability in ego-oriented athletes positively influences their enjoyment in sporting activities.

Task and ego-oriented athletes differ in their anxiety and confidence levels.

Individuals with high ego orientation have been found to experience high levels of competitive anxiety (Hall & Kerr, 1997; Newton & Duda, 1993; White, 1998).

Ommundsen and Pedersen (1999) examined the relationships among achievement goals, perceived competence, and competitive anxiety. Their analyses revealed that young Norwegian athletes with a high task orientation coupled with high perceived ability had low cognitive anxiety, worries, and concerns about potential failure. Also, all athletes with high perceived ability were less predisposed to experience somatic anxiety in the form of elevated physiological arousal when competing than those athletes with low perceived ability (Ommundsen & Pedersen, 1999). Ommundsen & Pedersen concluded that a high task orientation may give rise to an increase in perceived competence, which, in turn, counteracts the experience of anxiety.

Voight, Callaghan, and Ryska (2000) examined the relationships among goal orientation, sport self-confidence, and the three-trait anxiety dimensions of worry/concern, concentration disruption, and somatic anxiety. Their analyses showed that self-confidence mediates the goal orientation-trait anxiety relationship. Individuals with high ego-involvement and low self-confidence experienced high levels in each dimension of competitive trait anxiety. The highly task-oriented athletes reported low cognitive trait anxiety. Voight et al. suggested that since task-oriented athletes focus on

things they can control, these athletes experience less concern regarding the competitive environment.

Task and ego-oriented athletes also differ in their use of learning and competitive strategies (Duda & Hall, 2001). These differences will affect their views of practice and competition. A task-oriented athlete believes that practice is necessary to acquire skill; this individual understands the importance of practice (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). However, ego-oriented athletes believe that practice is important for demonstrating superior athletic ability, and satisfaction is derived from both mastery experiences and normative ability assessments (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). Therefore, this athlete is likely to avoid practice for any other reason (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993).

In regards to competitive strategies, a task orientation corresponds to the selection of challenging competitive levels, opponents, and tasks, which are conducive to improvement and personal satisfaction (Duda, 1993). These individuals will not shy away from competitive situations and will choose tasks that are moderately difficult. Ego-oriented athletes with low perceived ability are likely to reduce effort, cease trying, or claim a lack of interest when they are deemed incompetent (Duda, 1993). These individuals will avoid challenging competitive situations. They will select tasks or opponents that are easy or difficult. Choosing easy tasks or opponents will allow this individual to display high ability. Whereas choosing hard tasks or opponents will allow

this individual to attribute failure to external factors such as equipment failure (Duda, 1993).

Participants' sporting attitudes vary in relation to their achievement goal orientation (Lemyre, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2002). Nicholls (1984) stated that an ego-oriented person's focus on demonstrating their ability in comparison to others may result in a lack of concern about justice and fairness and the welfare of their opponents in a competitive setting. For example, in the sport of track and field ego-oriented athletes may not object to the use of performance enhancing drugs because it can help them display superior ability. Athletes with a high task orientation oppose cheating, purposely hurting an opponent, and taunting another player (Lemyre et al., 2002). Task-oriented athletes also respect social conventions, rules and officials; show full commitment toward sport (e.g., will not give up); and show concern for their opponent.

Researchers have investigated how goal orientation relates to perceptions of aggression, and sportpersonship in elite male youth ice hockey players with high ego-orientation were more inclined to approve of aggressive behaviors than task-oriented athletes (Dunn & Dunn, 1999). Further, ego-oriented individuals judge behaviors such as intimidating an opponent, faking an injury, or risking injuring an opponent as appropriate (Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001). Athletes with high task orientation generally had greater respect and concern for social conventions (e.g., shaking hands with

opponents), for their own personal commitment to participation, and for the rules and officials (Dunn & Dunn, 1999).

Overall, goal orientations are linked to various behaviors and mental states. A task orientation is related to striving for mastery, putting forth effort, working hard, and using self-referenced standards to determine success and failure. A task-oriented athlete will be intrinsically motivated to participate in sport, value the importance of practice, display low anxiety levels, select challenging tasks and opponents, and exhibit good sportspersonship. An ego orientation is related to demonstrating normative ability, displaying high competitive anxiety, putting forth little effort, and focusing on external factors to determine success and failure. An ego-oriented athlete will feel comfortable with cheating, attribute failure to external factors, view sport as a means of increasing social status, be less satisfied with her sporting experience, and avoid challenging situations.

Goal Profiles

Nicholls (1984) proposed that goal orientations are orthogonal or independent constructs. As such, much sport research examined goal orientations as independent constructs (Roberts et al., 1996). This early research inferred that an individual is either task-oriented or ego-oriented and not a combination of both. However, contemporary researchers proposed that task and ego orientations are not opposite ends of a continuum (Harwood, Cumming, & Fletcher, 2004; Hodge & Petlichkoff, 2000) and an

individual can adopt a goal profile. A goal profile considers the two goal orientations in combination to generate a combination of high or low in each orientation (i.e., high task/low ego, low task/high ego, high task/high ego, and low task/low ego).

Researchers have emphasized the need to examine these profiles rather than treat task and ego orientations independently because athletes have a degree of each goal perspective and are not solely task or ego-oriented. For example, Roberts et al. (1996) found elite athletes tend to have high task and high ego orientations. Treasure et al. (2000) found professional rugby players had a profile of high ego and high task. These high task/high ego-oriented elite athletes exhibited the same productive beliefs as the high task/low ego-oriented individuals (Roberts et al., 1996). Both of these groups of athletes believed that effort led to success. Additionally, high task/low-ego oriented athletes believe that hard work would get one ahead in sport and displayed high effort and were highly intrinsically motivated (Newton & Fry, 1998).

Many researchers emphasized the benefits of being task-oriented and the detriments of being ego-oriented (e.g., Duda, 1989; Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). Yet research with elite athletes suggested that ego orientation may not be detrimental if it is accompanied with high task orientation (Roberts et al., 1996). A high task/high ego-oriented athlete exhibited the same productive beliefs of a solely high task-oriented athlete (Roberts et al., 1996). This line of research suggested that there is no need to suppress ego orientation rather enhancing task orientation seems to moderate the

potentially debilitating effects of high-ego orientation (Roberts et al., 1996; Hodge & Petlichkoff, 2000).

Steinberg, Singer, and Murphey (2000) examined the benefits of adopting multiple goal orientations. They examined college students with both mastery (task) and competitive (ego) orientations. High task/high ego oriented students enrolled in a beginning golf class attained greater achievement benefits (i.e., success, satisfaction) than students with a single goal orientation (i.e., high task/low ego or high ego/low task,). Their results showed individuals who had high task and ego orientation had greater intrinsic motivation than individuals who adopted only one orientation. The high task/high ego students also had significant interest in the task and perceived effort as a function of training. High task/high ego-oriented students, compared to solely high task-oriented or high ego-oriented peers, had higher persistence, exhibited optimal achievement in a constantly changing sport environment, and had flexibility to garnish competence information from both the demonstration of superiority as well as personal improvement. These individuals displayed behaviors of both task and ego orientations. Participants who emphasized only one goal may limit their ability to determine competence from all possible settings (Steinberg et al., 2000; Williams, 1994).

Motivational Climate

According to Nicholls (1989), individual differences in dispositional goal orientations are a consequence of socialization experiences within achievement

domains. Motivational climate is the prevailing goal structure in an environment promoting achievement that affects the degree to which participants exhibit task or ego-orientation (Ames, 1987). The climate of practice and competition can be either task or ego-involving depending on cues from significant others. A task climate is characterized by an emphasis on learning from one's mistakes, skill mastery, exerting effort, and participating for the sake of participation (Ames, 1987). When involved in a task climate, improvement from performance to performance is emphasized by the coaching staff (Roberts, 1992). Interpersonal competition, social evaluation, and normative-based testing and feedback characterize an ego motivational climate (Roberts, 1992). Ego-involved climates exist when the coaching staff emphasizes winning (Roberts, 1992).

Achievement goal theory proposes that participants in a task or ego climate will adopt a task or ego orientation, respectively. A positive relationship between athlete's task orientation and perception of a task climate has been found in a variety of contexts (Duda, 1993; Duda & Hall, 2001). For example, Magyar and Feltz (2003) found task orientation was related to perceptions of a task-involved climate in female adolescent volleyball players. A positive relationship has also been found between an ego orientation and perceptions of an ego climate (Duda, 1993).

Perceived motivational climate can influence athletes' perceived ability, perceptions of success, and confidence. Ntoumanis and Biddle (1998) examined the

relationship between goal profiles and perceptions of motivational climates in sport. In university athletes, perceptions of an ego climate were positively related to ego orientation. Further perceptions of an ego climate were negatively related to a task orientation in high task/high ego and high task/low ego athletes. Perceptions of a task climate were strongly and positively related to task orientation. The results of the Ntoumanis and Biddle (1998) study showed that high perceptions of a motivationally productive climate (task-involving) are related to athletes high in task orientation as well as by those who are high in ego orientation, as long as they are high in task orientation as well (i.e., a goal profile). Similarly, in a study examining adolescent goal profiles and perceived motivational climate, findings showed that when a high task orientation is coupled with a high ego orientation, perceptions of the motivational climate were less ego-involving compared to solely having a high ego orientation (White, 1998).

Pensgaard and Roberts (2000) examined the relationship among perceptions of motivational climate, goal orientation, perceived ability, and sources of distress in elite athletes who competed in the 1994 Winter Olympics. Distress results from the lack of coping capacity to stress (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000). Pensgaard and Roberts (2000) found motivational climate predicted total distress more than individual goal orientation. The coach and the team were sources of distress in ego-involved climates (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000). Also, athletes with relatively low perceived ability

reported the coach and team to be a stronger source of distress than athletes with a relatively high perception of ability.

Balaguer, Duda, and Crespo, (1999) examined the relationship between goal orientation and the perceived motivational climate created by the coach of tennis players in relation to their perceived improvement, satisfaction with their competitive results, and ratings of their coach. Perceptions of motivational climate were primarily linked to the indices of subjective performance. When the environment created by the coach was deemed task-involving, the players felt they were progressing in the psychological facets of their game. The results also showed that in a task involved climate athletes felt that their coaches engaged in teaching and instruction and provided greater social support.

Motivational climate and goal orientations have been linked to athletes' confidence. Self-confidence in sport reflects a degree of certainty that athletes have about their ability to successfully perform sport skills (Vealey, 1986). The sources of confidence that were most salient to players who perceived a task climate were mastery, physical/mental preparation, and social support sources. These sources of confidence allow athletes to find solace in factors other than winning to boost their self-confidence. An ego climate does not provide many sources of confidence other than winning. If an athlete in an ego climate does not win, it will have a negative impact on her self-confidence.

Similar to research on goal profiles, motivational climate profiles also have been studied. Ommundsen and Roberts (1999) examined the effects of motivational climate profiles on motivational indices in sport. The findings of this study suggested that different climate profiles operate in a similar manner to the achievement goal profiles in terms of the motivational implications for the sport experience. Athletes perceiving the climate as high in task and high in ego oriented criteria reported more productive psychological responses to their sporting experience than athletes perceiving the climate as low in task and high in ego criteria. The athletes perceiving high task/high ego criteria endorsed mastery as a source of satisfaction, lifetime skills and the development of social responsibility as purposes of taking part in team sport. They also believed in the learning effect of sustained practice as well as used self-referenced conception of ability.

In a study of female handball players, when the environment created by the coach was perceived as task-involved, the players felt the team was improving the technical and tactical facets of handball (Balaguer, Duda, Atienza, & Mayo, 2002). In the task-involving climate, these athletes were satisfied with the level of individual and team play. Also, when athletes perceived a high task-involving and low ego-involving climate, they viewed their coach as closer to their “ideal” coach and as significant to the training process (Balaguer et al., 2002). These findings showed that female athletes view

the coaches as doing their job of helping the athletes get better and maximizing training when the created environment is task involving.

Goal orientations and motivational climate work in conjunction to influence achievement behaviors of athletes. These influences affect behavioral and psychological reactions to the sporting situation. A task climate reinforces a task orientation, which is related to high confidence, low anxiety, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction. An ego-orientation, if not buffered with high perceived competence and high task orientation can lead to low effort. An ego involved climate reinforces an ego-orientation and is related to distress, anxiety, and less satisfaction with the sporting experience.

As Nicholls (1984; 1989) theorized, goal orientations create a “world view” or a lens for perceiving achievement contexts. As such, it would be expected that athletes’ goal profiles and the motivational climate in which they participate can influence their perceptions competitiveness. A high task/low ego-oriented athlete likely will perceive competitiveness as focusing on skill improvement and mastery, wherein a high task/high ego-oriented athlete may perceive competitiveness as focusing on the outcome. These differing views about competitiveness also will influence mental states and behaviors associated with being competitive. Additionally, perfectionism also can impact how athletes interpret competitiveness. Recently researchers have considered the relationship between perfectionism and goal orientation.

Perfectionism

Some sport psychologists have proposed that perfectionism may be a hallmark of high-performance (Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996). Hewitt and Flett (2002) described perfectionism as striving to be flawless. More specifically, Frost, Marten, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1990) defined perfectionism as setting excessively high standards of performance in conjunction with a tendency to make overly critical self-evaluations. High levels of perfectionism have been linked both constructive and destructive psychological constructs including self-esteem (Gotwals, Dunn, & Wayment, 2003), and goal orientation (Hall, Kerr, & Matthews, 1998), eating disorders (Haase, Prapavessis, & Owens, 2002), and obsessive compulsive disorders (Frost, Novara, & Rheume, 2002). Accounting for this seeming contradiction, Hamachek (1978) distinguished between two forms of perfectionism: normal and neurotic.

Normal perfectionism describes is typified by individuals who set high personal standards and who exercise flexibility when monitoring and evaluating their performance. Individuals with high normal perfectionism strive for reasonable and realistic standards that lead to a sense of self-satisfaction and enhanced self-esteem (Hamachek, 1978). Normal perfectionism is positively related to positive achievement strivings in sport (Frost & Henderson, 1991). For example, these perfectionists are driven by a powerful need to succeed and are highly motivated to do their best on tasks they undertake (Hamachek, 1978). Normal perfectionists also put forth maximal effort

in pursuit of their high standards, yet they accept personal limitations and environmental obstacles that may detract from accomplishing their goal (Blatt, 1995). Therefore, I will refer to normal perfectionism as productive perfectionism.

In contrast to normal perfectionism, neurotic perfectionism is a tendency to strive for excessively high standards, which is motivated by fear of failure and concern about disappointing others (Hamachek, 1978). Individuals considered to be neurotic perfectionists set excessively high goals and these expectations are not flexible. Simply, making mistakes is not acceptable to these athletes. Because they adopt an overly self-critical perspective on performance, they rarely are satisfied with their level of achievement. These individuals strive to portray publicly a flawless image to others (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Neurotic perfectionists are overly concerned with mistakes; even minute mistakes are likely to result in perceptions of failure (Frost et al., 1990). According to Hamachek (1978), fear of failure rather than striving for success drives neurotic perfectionism. This can be problematic because the individual focuses on the negative outcome—failure and neglects the positive outcome—success. Neurotic perfectionism can be considered destructive because the behaviors (e.g., striving for unrealistic goals) associated with this form of perfectionism are not conducive to performance and can have a debilitating effect to an individual. Therefore, I will refer to neurotic perfectionism as unproductive perfectionism.

Frost and colleagues (1990) consider perfectionism as a multidimensional construct that has personal and interpersonal aspects. This conceptualization encompasses six primary components of perfectionism: personal standards, concerns over mistakes, doubts about actions, parental expectations, parental criticism, and organization. Personal standards reflect the extent to which people set excessively high standards for themselves and the importance of these standards for self-evaluation. Setting challenging goals (i.e., high personal standards) is associated with healthy experiences and positive achievement striving (Frost et al., 1990). Both productive and unproductive perfectionists set high personal standards, but it is the individual's latitude in accepting minor flaws in their performance that distinguish the two. The high personal standards characteristic of perfectionism has been described as productive (Frost et al., 1990) because behaviors associated with this characteristic are functional and promotes proficient performance. However, setting excessively high standards and disallowing mistakes is considered unproductive and debilitating to performance (Frost et al., 1990). Concern over mistakes involves the interpretation of mistakes as an indication of failure. The dimension of excessive concern over mistakes has been described as unproductive or non-functional and debilitating because making mistakes has an adverse affect on the individual (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Excessive concerns over mistakes lead unproductive perfectionists to strive for their goals by a fear of failure rather than a need for achievement (Frost et al., 1990). People with high

concern over mistakes are less willing to reveal mistakes to others (Frost, Turcotte, Heimberg, Mattia, Holt, & Hope, 1995). They may not acknowledge the mistakes, fearing that it will display inadequacies. Doubting oneself induces a vague sense of uncertainty about the quality of impending performance (Frost et al., 1990) and reflects low confidence which can impede performance further.

Parental expectations and criticism comprise the perceptions that parents set excessive high standards and that they are overly critical (Frost et al., 1990). Therefore, for perfectionist, self-evaluations of performance may be tied to assumptions about parental expectations and desire to gain their approval (Frost et al., 1990). This parental connection is described by Frost et al. (1990) as the core of perfectionism since parents are a strong source for learning perfectionistic tendencies. Organization, the sixth component of perfectionism reflects striving to maintain order (Frost et al., 1990; Frost, Novara, & Rheume, 2002). Organization deals with how the individual goes about day-to-day tasks related to achieving one's personal standards (Frost et al., 1990). For example, athletes may have a check list of different components of practice they want to work on that will aid in achieving their goals.

The components of perfectionism can be grouped as positive achievement striving and maladaptive evaluative concern (Frost, Heimberg, Holt, Mattia, & Neubauer, 1993). Positive achievement striving can be seen as a productive trait which enhances the likelihood of success. Positive achievement striving includes setting

challenging goals (i.e., high personal standards) and designing a protocol to evaluate progress (i.e., organization). Maladaptive evaluative concern is composed of the unproductive behaviors of critical self-evaluation and exhibiting extreme concern about mistakes, doubts about actions, parental expectations, or parental criticism (Frost et al., 1990). Unproductive perfectionists are motivated by a fear of failure and any evaluated performance is viewed as an opportunity to fail rather than to succeed (Hamachek, 1978).

Differences in perfectionism are primarily dimensional in nature; people differ in degrees of perfectionism rather than in kinds of perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Athletes' degree of perfectionistic tendencies is likely to affect their perceptions of competitiveness. Unproductive perfectionists may equate making a mistake with not being competitive. Poor execution of performance may be interpreted as not being competitive. In contrast, productive perfectionists are less concerned over making mistakes and set personal goals that they view will help them to be competitive.

Perfectionism in Sport

A certain degree of perfectionistic thoughts among elite athletes is common. They frequently believe there is a perfect performance in their sport and strive to achieve it (Koivula, Hassmen, & Fallby, 2002). Productive and unproductive perfectionism seem to influence individuals' perceptions, affect, and behaviors in a manner similar to achievement goal orientations; both influence how individuals

interpret achievement related endeavors (Dunn, Dunn, & Syrotuik, 2002). Hall et al., (1998) suggested some conceptual overlap between athletes' predispositional perspectives concerning the meaning of success in sport and the different dimensions of perfectionism. For example, task-oriented individuals, who judge subjective success and competence on the basis of personal improvement and mastery through effort, are similar to productive (adaptive) perfectionists who put forth maximal effort in the pursuit of their high standards (Blatt, 1995). In contrast, unproductive (maladaptive) perfectionists rarely feel good about their performance achievements even when they have given their best effort (Hamachek, 1978). These individuals are similar to high ego/low task-oriented individuals who prefer to display the least amount of effort to achieve.

Frost and Henderson (1991) examined perfectionism in female Division III athletes. They found that being concerned about making mistakes and having doubts about actions were related to a variety of negative reactions to mistakes. Specifically, concerns over mistakes was strongly associated with high competitive anxiety, low sport confidence, a failure orientation, negative reactions to mistakes during competition, and excessive images of mistakes prior to competition (Frost & Henderson, 1991). The athletes who displayed characteristics of an unproductive perfectionism had a distinct failure orientation toward sports, reacted negatively toward mistakes, and engaged in negative thoughts about performance 24 hours before competition. These

concerns can lead to an inappropriate focus of attention: thinking about the mistake rather than the current action. Such a focus will distract the athlete from task-relevant thoughts, and their performance may suffer (Frost & Henderson, 1991). Frost and Henderson (1991) also found that high personal standards were positively associated with a success orientation, which reflected a focus on self-referenced performance criteria, and emphasized success and accomplishment. The athletes who set excessively high goals reported having dreams of being perfect, had difficulty concentrating, and worried about audience reactions (Frost & Henderson, 1991).

Dunn et al. (2002) examined multidimensional perfectionism and goal orientations of Canadian football players. They found task orientation was positively correlated with a productive profile of perfectionism (i.e., setting of high standards. Ego orientation was positively associated with an unproductive profile of perfectionism (i.e., doubts about actions, high perceived parental pressure, concerns over mistakes, and high perceived coach pressure).

Hall et al. (1998) examined the relationships among pre-competitive anxiety, perfectionism, and achievement goals of high school student athletes. They found that although a combination of high ego orientation and moderate task orientation was related to each dimension of perfectionism, a strong task orientation was negatively associated with two of the dimensions considered to reflect unproductive perfectionism (concerns about mistakes and parental criticism). The athletes with an ego orientation

and unproductive perfectionism employed external reference criteria, focusing on external factors and their performance outcome to determine success (Hall et al., 1998).

Unproductive perfectionists who have high ego orientation will be concerned with making mistakes, view evaluation of performance as an opportunity for failure and will feel threatened in achievement contexts (Hall et al., 1998). They will be more prone to perceive competition as threatening if they also frame the meaning of achievement in normative standards (e.g., focus on winning or defeating competitors). This is because unproductive perfectionists will strive for exceptionally high goals and they will seek to fulfill high expectations, whether self-determined or imposed by others. They also will be concerned about making mistakes and will worry about criticism. These concerns will be heightened by the perception that to achieve success, they not only have to reach their high goals, but they must demonstrate normative or comparative ability. In contrast, task-oriented perfectionistic athletes will be less prone to perceive competition as threatening because they perceive a greater degree of control over achievement outcomes (Hall et al., 1998).

McArdle, Duda, and Hall (2004) studied perfectionism, goal orientation, and motivation in athletically gifted children. They separated the children into four groups: perfectionists with unproductive achievement characteristics, non-perfectionists with unproductive achievement characteristics, non-perfectionists with productive achievement characteristics, and perfectionists with productive achievement

characteristics. The perfectionistic children with unproductive achievement characteristics were characterized by high doubts about their ability and concerns over mistakes, set excessively high goals, expressed unproductive evaluation tendencies (e.g., focused on things they cannot control), and exhibited a high ego orientation and moderate task orientation. To these athletes, mistakes or failure were blamed on external contingencies such as the officials or the weather. Non-perfectionists with unproductive achievement characteristics endorsed an ego orientation and they struggled to remain motivated in their sporting endeavors. Non-perfectionists with productive achievement characteristics had high task orientation and high intrinsic motivation in their pursuit of moderately challenging goals. Perfectionists with productive achievement characteristics were high in both task and ego orientations, set high personal standards, had moderate concerns over mistakes, and expressed doubts about their actions. These results showed that the sporting experience of young athletes pursuing high standards of achievement varied depending on the manner in which achievement information was processed. The research indicates that perfectionism and goal orientation combine to influence achievement patterns. High task/low ego-oriented athletes tend to display characteristics of a productive perfectionist while high ego/low task-oriented athletes often display characteristics of an unproductive perfectionist. As McArdle et al. found, athletes' goal orientations and their proneness to adopt

perfectionistic tendencies impacted the individuals' perceptions of competitive situations.

Race, Stereotypes, and Sport

In sport and in society-at-large, race and gender affect how individuals interpret, evaluate, and respond to situations as well as influence interactions among groups. Individuals of different races and genders may have different experiences and perceptions of their realities. As such, athletes with different racial backgrounds are likely to have different perceptions of their sporting experiences. In this study, I am interested in understanding Black female athletes' perceptions of their competitive sport experiences. In the field of sport psychology, little research has examined Black female athletes, inferring a lack of interest in Black realities in sport or the belief that Black female experiences are the same as White female or Black male experiences. However, an athlete's race and gender can influence her or his sport experiences. Therefore, a Black female athlete is very likely will have different experiences and perceptions of her sport participation than other athletes.

Race in Western Society

To understand the influence of race on individuals' sport experiences, it is important to examine how race and ethnicity interact with sport. Coakley (2004) identified race as referring to a "category of people regarded as socially distinct because they share genetically transmitted traits believed to be important by people with power

and influence in a society” (p. 284). The term race first appeared in European languages in the sixteenth century to describe human physical characteristics (e.g., skin color) (Booth, 1998). Individual physical characteristics such as skin color, body size, nose size, eye shape and color, and hair texture soon were paralleled to social characteristics such as customs, morality, temperament, and intellect, which then led to the creation of a hierarchy among people (Booth, 1998). For example, an individual with a lighter skin color may be viewed as being smarter than an individual with darker skin. The study of race as a biological or genetic variable, especially with regard to sport, historically has an inauspicious and questionable reputation (Wiggins, 1997).

Ethnicity refers to cultural heritage of a particular group of people. It is based on characteristics associated with cultural traditions and background. An ethnic group is “a category of people regarded as socially distinct because they share a way of life and a commitment to the ideas, norms, and material things that constitute that way of life” (Coakley, 2004, p. 284). Ethnicity tends to be hard to define because it is a complex construct that includes skin color, nationality, and religion (Eisen, 1994). Within some groups there is overlap between above factors. For example, an African-American is different from an African, and even further a light-skinned versus a dark-skinned African-American. Race and ethnicity are often times conflated, but in this study, I will focus on the race of the participants.

As a society, we classify people according to their race (Malik, 1996). This classification is influenced by our social surroundings, culture, customs, beliefs, and political associations, which in turn guide our conceptions of ourselves as well as others (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999). We tend to use race in our assessment and perception of our own racial group as well as other racial groups. Race is used in the justification of bias, discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice (Hall, 2001). We have been socialized to use race to identify characteristics and behaviors of one particular group. As a result, people are type-casted as having characteristics that have been attributed to a particular group. In U.S. culture, Black skin color is defined as inferior, and rigid caste barriers are erected to maintain the low social status of Black people (Corbett & Johnson, 1993). The result is that Black people assume identities in an environment steeped in the symbolism of Black inferiority (Corbett & Johnson, 1993). Past research examining race and sport often has been biased in favor of the White athlete perspective (e.g., Sellers, Kupermine, & Damas, 1997) and has laid the ground work for many stereotypes.

A problem with the term race is that it is ambiguous and no consistent definition exists for it. Further, terms such as socio-culture or minority group often are used to refer to racial groups (Floyd, 1999) and race and ethnicity often are used interchangeably. For example, any Black person often is considered an African-American, which infers having African heritage. But African-American identifies an

individual born in America with African descent or ancestry. Not all Black people are solely of direct African descent nor are they necessarily American such as a West Indian (Caribbean). Further, in today's language, 'race' is synonymous with "color" (Malik, 1996) or skin color. With this understanding, anyone with brown skin color would be considered African-American. However, not all Black people in America are African-American. There are Black Hispanics, Africans, Black Asians, and individuals mixed with African-American and Caucasian descent. Because we tend to classify anyone with brown skin color as Black it further race as a social construct with a socio-political history (Malik, 1996).

Being Black can be viewed as a culture encompassing Hispanics, Africans, Asians, and Caucasians who may have an ounce of African descent and who identify with the "Black" culture. Being Black has more to do with shared experiences (e.g., beliefs, oppression) rather than shared genetic material (Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002). Throughout the Black culture, many people share the experiences of growing up in similar neighborhoods, attending the similar schools and churches, involvement in the similar activities, as well as feeling the effects of oppression and marginalization. At one point or another, Black people have come in contact with some form of racism. These shared experiences are the backbone for the bonds created among Black people and defensive barriers that are adopted. For this reason, in this study I will use the term

Black, instead of African-American, because it is more inclusive of individuals who also may have, for example, Cuban, Asian, and European heritage.

Isolating race or cultural identity can be problematic. Black female athletes carry multiple identities. They carry the identity of being a Black athlete as well as the identity of a female athlete. These identities of being Black and female shape their perceptions of their competitive sport experience. Therefore, when examining athletes' experiences, race and gender cannot be examined separately, but must be considered in conjunction with each other. This is because all people have multiple identities, based on characteristics such as gender, age, class, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. Individual factors and life situations also comprise these identities (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2001).

The Black Female Athlete

There are societal perceptions about Black female athletes' identities. These perceptions are constructed from perceived genetic advantages and images of resilient Black women faced with oppression. From this, society has constructed racial stereotypes and myths about Black athletes. One myth is that Black athletes have innate athleticism. It is believed that Black athletes have a superior body build that gives them specific advantages in sport, making them a natural athlete (Sailes, 1991). Another myth is allegedly genetic based and claims that Blacks dominate sports because they have

more fast-twitch muscle fiber, which give them an advantage in the sports where power, speed, agility, jumping, and sprinting are important (Sailes, 1991).

Research has supported that there are anatomical differences between Black and White athletes (Sailes, 1991). Black athletes have longer limbs, bigger hands, denser chest cavity, and narrower hips. One specific difference between Black and White females is Black females have significantly less body fat and had longer arms and legs than White females (Sailes, 1991). In track and field, the longer legs, denser chest cavity, and narrower hips were perceived to give the Black athlete an advantage in running activities. Specific to track and field, the Black athletes' narrower hips would aid him or her in running by providing less angular reaction to the ground during the forward stride (Sailes, 1991).

This preoccupation with racially linked genetic differences between Black and White athletes naturalizes the categories of "Black" and "White" (Davis, 1990). However, social factors typically are not considered in discourse about the success of Black female athletes (Gnida, 1995). Sailes, however, believes that Black athletic success is not a genetic phenomenon but is the result of the determination of Blacks to overcome perceived arbitrary and deliberately contrived social barriers (Sailes, 1991). Emphasizing Black athletic success as natural ignores Black athletes as active agents who work to shape their own performances (Davis, 1990). Though it is perceived that Blacks have physical advantages over White counterparts, the advantages are

insignificant unless they are fully developed through vigorous training and by participating in a nurturing and competitive environment that creates an opportunity for athletic success (Sailes, 1991). Social factors may compel Black athletes to train harder and break stereotypes with which they have been characterized.

In track and field, racial stereotypes are not fully supported. There are more than enough anomalies that negate racial stereotypes in sport. Many of the anatomical differences between Black and White athletes can also be applied to track and field; however it is not supported. When considering track and field at the national level and athletes indigenous to the U.S., these stereotypes do not hold true. In the U.S., Black athletes tend to dominate the sprints and horizontal jumps (long jump and triple jump) in terms of numbers; however, there are also White sprinters and horizontal jumpers who are exceptional. White athletes tend to dominate in the distance events, pole vault, and throws. In the high jump the numbers are split between Black and White athletes. However, the sport of track and field is an international sport which discredits some of the racial boundaries of events. In Africa, there are Black (skin color) athletes who dominate both the distance and sprint events. In Europe, there are White (skin color) athletes who dominate both sprint and distance events. These anomalies debunk the racial profiling in the sport of track and field.

Black Feminist Standpoint

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) explained Black feminist thought as a method for Black women to fashion a singular “voice” about Black womanhood. Black feminist thought was designed to oppose oppression, its practices, and the ideas that justify it (Collins, 2000). It enabled Black women to aim to find ways to escape from, survive in, and/or oppose prevailing social and economic injustice (Collins, 2000). Black feminist thought aims to empower Black women within the context of social justice sustained by intersecting oppressions (Collins, 2000).

According to Collins (1986), there are three common themes in Black feminist thought. First, though Black feminist thought often is recorded by others (non-Black), it is produced by Black women (Collins, 1986). Second, Black women possess a unique standpoint based on their experiences and that there will be certain common perceptions shared by Black women as a group (Collins, 1986). Third, while living as Black women may foster certain common perceptions, the diversity of age, class, region, and sexual orientation shaping individual lives has resulted in different expressions of these common themes (Collins, 1986). Therefore, Black women’s standpoint may be experienced and expressed differently by distinct groups of Black women (Collins, 1986).

The focus of combating oppression is central to Black feminist thought. Oppression describes any unjust situation where, systematically and over a long period

of time, one group denies another group access to the resources of society (Collins, 2000). Major forms of oppression in the United States are based on race, social class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, and ethnicity, as well as other identities, (Collins, 2000). These various forms of oppression have had multiple effects on Black women. For example, society has denied women the rights and privileges routinely extended to White male citizens (Collins, 2000). Historically, Black and White women have been excluded from voting and holding political office. Also, as Black individuals, they did not receive fair treatment in educational institutions and the criminal justice system. In the sporting world, Black lesbians having been ostracized from coaching positions, playing time, and sometimes received negative media portrayals. Also, Black women of low social economic class are not afforded some of the same sporting opportunities as their White counterparts. The oppression that Black women have faced encouraged negative stereotypes. For example, there are stereotypes of strong, superhuman Black women. These stereotypes are myths that allow ignorance to which Black women are likely victimized in this society because of the stereotypes (hooks, 2000). Assumed qualities attached to Black women have been used to justify the oppression that they have faced (Collins, 2000).

Black feminist standpoint conceptualizes the experiences of Black women. It asserts that Black women's social location among intersecting oppressions of race, gender, and class produce common experiences among Black women (Collins, 2000).

Being Black and female exposes Black women to certain common experiences such as racism and gender equality. Therefore, Black women as a group live in a different world from that of people who are not Black and female, which enables them to give the best interpretation of Black women's experiences since they are participants (Collins, 2000).

As a group, Black women are in an unusual position in this society because Black women's overall social status is lower than that of many other social groups (hooks, 2000). As a result, Black women bear the brunt of sexist, racist, and classist oppression (hooks, 2000). Black women often have a lived experience that directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology. Their experiences do not fall in line with the hegemonic society of a white, male, wealthy class. This lived experience may shape Black women's consciousness in such a way that their worldview differs from those who have greater social privilege. Black feminist thought acknowledges that Black women have a peculiar marginality that stimulates a distinctive perspective of society and their perceptions of their experiences within the society they live in (Collins, 2000).

Black women, who live with daily oppression, often acquire an awareness of patriarchal politics from their lived experiences (hooks, 2000). Collins (2000) further explained that many Black women are situated as "outsiders-within." The outsider-within perspective is used to describe Black women's semblance *within* a white society where they often are in a domesticated role; however, they are not viewed as equals and

are denied the same rights as their White counterparts that put them in an *outsider* position. Collins (1998) coined the term *outsider-within* to describe the location of people who no longer belong to any one group but belong to multiple groups. It describes social locations occupied by groups of unequal power (Collins, 1998). An example of an outsider-within is a Black, female student-athlete at a prestigious, predominantly white school. This individual appears to belong because she possesses the same credentials for admittance as the White students; as such, she has the privilege associated with being at a prestigious university and as an athlete. However, this individual will not have the same power as the White students. In this position, she not only knows the experiences of marginalized Black women, she also knows the ways of privileged White students. Thus, she understands both perspectives well. This outsider-within location describes a particular knowledge/power relationship, one of gaining knowledge about a dominant group without gaining the full power afforded to members of that group (Collins, 1998). Black women's standpoint, Collins' (2000) asserts, grows from an outsider-within position.

It is likely that many Black female athletes experience an outsider-within social location in sport, especially when these Black female athletes attend predominantly White schools. The Black athletes may be integrated into the same situation as the White athletes; however, they are not afforded the same positional status of White athletes. Black female athletes may notice racial injustice and other forms of discrimination while

in these environments; however, they also know that reticence and conformity are the expected behaviors, often necessary to survive, in sport (Wiggins, 1994). Because of their outsider-within social location, Black female athletes may interpret or perceive their lived experiences differently than other athletes. Therefore, research on Black female athletes is needed to describe their experiences.

It is far past time to break the silence about Black female athletes' experiences and make their experiences public and known. Applying Collins (1998) theory to sport, Black female athletes must reclaim their identity in a system that gains part of its strength by objectifying Black women. To achieve this, Black female athletes must voice their experiences as individuals and as a group. This action will challenge prevailing interpretations of Black women's experiences. By invoking the authority of lived experience, Black women can confront seemingly universal "scientific" truths by citing examples from their own experiences (Collins, 1998).

Black female athletes generally have been ignored or given only token attention in research and historical works (Williams, 1995). One way to explain this is that dominant groups often aim to replace subjugated knowledge with their own specialized thought (Collins, 2000). This is because they realize that gaining control over the knowledge and thought processes of subordinate groups' lives simplifies control (Collins, 2000). Society needs to know about how Black female athletes' experiences compare to those of other individuals.

Interconnections among Competitiveness, Goal Orientation, and Perfectionism

This study aims to provide a voice and bring light to Black female athletes' competitive sport experiences. More specifically, in this study the athletes were asked about the intersections between race and competitiveness. Many perceptions about Black athletes assume that they are supposed to be naturally competitive and have innate advantages over their competitors of other racial backgrounds.

Athletes who consistently seem to “play hard” and rarely concede defeat often are described as highly motivated or “competitive” by the media. These types of athletes are thought to perform better than their peers because of their competitive attitude (Martin & Eklund, 1994); athletes high in competitiveness are perceived as tenacious in their pursuit of excellence. In fact, competitiveness was considered by some coaches to be one of the most desirable traits an athlete can possess (Huddleston & Garvin, 1995).

Social and personality researchers view competitiveness as a relatively stable and enduring personality trait that covers the broad domain of all interpersonal activities (Gill, 1988). Sport psychology researchers who used the SOQ implicitly defined competitiveness as the desire to enter, participate, and win in competitive sport situations (Gill, 1988). Thus, competitiveness from this perspective was equated with a focus on the outcome. In a qualitative study examining college coaches' views about the development of successful athletes, motivation and competitiveness was a prominent

theme (Giacobbi, Roper, Whitney, & Butryn, 2002). The ten NCAA Division I coaches described athletes who made substantial progress as being highly competitive, motivated, and receptive to instruction. As such, being competitive was equated with being motivated.

However, the term “competitiveness” may be perceived as ambiguous and be defined differently by different individuals. For example, Marsh (1994) examined the relationship between goal orientation and competitiveness in high school students. Both high task and high ego-oriented students scored high on competitiveness assessed with the SOQ. Marsh suggested that because the term competitiveness was not defined on the SOQ, participants defined it according to their personal perspective. Thus, an ego-oriented individual may have considered competition as competing against other individuals whereas a task-oriented individual may have viewed competition as competing against one’s own personal standards.

This difference in definitions of competitiveness also was apparent in research with coaches and athletes. Huddleston and Garvin (1995) compared athletes’ competitive orientation and coaches’ perceptions of their athletes’ competitive orientation. These Division I-AA athletes perceived themselves to be significantly more competitive than their coaches estimated. Often the coaches did not accurately estimate their athletes’ competitiveness. These studies are examples of how people can differ in their definitions of competitiveness. As Huddleston and Garvin (1995) concluded,

incongruence in perceptions about what is competitiveness can interfere with communication between coaches and athletes, potentially negatively affecting athlete motivation and success as well as coaches' ability to motivate their athletes.

Learning more about how Black female athletes interpret competitive situations and what psychological constructs influence these perceptions can lead to the development of sport psychological strategies to enhance coach-athlete communication as well as to encourage productive achievement behaviors. The research previously reviewed suggests that the combination of goal profiles and perfectionism appear to be linked to athletes' interpretation of competitiveness.

Consistent with achievement goal theory, high task- and high ego-oriented athletes partake in achievement strivings differently. High task/low ego-oriented athletes focus on skill improvement, task mastery, and self-referenced goals, which may lead to an interpretation of competitiveness as including these components. High ego/low task-oriented athletes focus on displaying their ability, winning (especially with little effort), and comparing their abilities with others, and their interpretation of competitiveness may focus on trying win. Regardless of whether a task or ego orientation predominates, Duda (1993) emphasized that both highly task- or highly ego-oriented athletes can be considered competitive. Although intrigued with competition, task and ego oriented athletes are assumed to vary in their approach to competitive situations as well as in terms of their objective for the competitive experience—the

reason behind being competitive. These individuals will adopt different strategies to accomplish their goals as well as define success differently. Despite the fact that they are both interested in “winning,” it is the relative importance of the competitive outcome in relation to the competitive process and the psychological impact associated with “losing” that seems to discriminate between the two goal orientations (Duda, 1993).

Based on achievement goal theory and research on perfectionism, I anticipate that productive or unproductive profiles of perfectionistic tendencies will further influence perceptions of competitiveness. First, a high task/low ego-oriented athlete is expected to display characteristics of productive perfectionism. In contrast, a high ego/low task-oriented athlete will display characteristics of unproductive perfectionism. This combination of goal profile and perfectionism will lead to different interpretations of competitiveness. A high task/low ego-oriented athlete with productive perfectionistic characteristics most likely will interpret competitiveness as performing to one’s best and displaying high effort. A high ego/low task-oriented athlete with unproductive perfectionistic characteristics is expected to interpret competitiveness as winning.

This study seeks to understand how Black female athletes who differ in goal profiles and perfectionism define competitiveness. The specific research questions guiding this research were:

1. How do Black female athletes define competitiveness?

2. How do athletes' goal orientation and perfectionistic tendencies relate to their definition of competitiveness?
3. How do Black female athletes describe the intersections of race and their competitive sport experiences?

CHAPTER 2

Method

Participant interviews were used to identify the factors that influence Black female athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. Prior to the formal thesis study, I conducted preliminary, pilot interviews that aided in the structure and organization of thesis study.

Pilot Studies

Approval was received from the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) to conduct preliminary interviews. The preliminary interviews consisted of an exploratory focus group and pilot interviews. These interviews were beneficial to this study because they allowed me to gain insight about issues that athletes may raise concerning competitiveness prior to my thesis investigation. Based on the pilot interviews, I generated questions for my thesis interviews that I did not consider, tested the clarity of my interview questions, and bettered my skills as an interviewer.

Exploratory Focus Group

A focus group is an interview style designed for a group with a small number of participants (Berg, 2001). Focus groups are "either guided or unguided discussions addressing a particular topic of interest to the group and the researcher" (Berg, 2001, p. 111). Ideally, the group discussion encourages participants to speak freely and completely about behaviors, attitudes, and opinions they possess. I conducted one focus

group of former female collegiate athletes ($N=7$). These former athletes were current graduate students who had participated in intercollegiate athletics as undergraduates. The participants were recruited through personal contacts.

The focus group interview was scheduled at a time that was convenient for all of the participants. I began the session by telling the participants the purpose of the study, that the session was to be video-recorded, and they were given the option not to participate. I also informed the participants that the data would remain confidential. Only the researcher and her critical friend (i.e., my adviser) viewed the video-recording of the session; there was not a written transcript of the session. The participants read and signed an informed consent form (see Appendix A).

Immediately prior to beginning the interview, I informed the participants about my background and my role as the researcher and moderator (Berg, 2001). As the moderator, I asked the participants open-ended questions regarding the notion of competitiveness. Since this interview was exploratory, I used an unstructured interview format focused on three basic topics to generate a dialogue among the group members. I asked for participants' perceptions about (a) competition and their competitive experiences, (b) their goals and goal orientations, and (c) perfectionism. More specifically, the athletes were asked how they defined competitiveness, what their goals were as a competitive athlete, and how much they strived for a perfect performance. I asked probing questions when the dialogue went stagnant or to request elaboration on

the athletes' comments. A probing question asks participants to expand on their responses (Berg, 2001). This focus group interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

After the interview, I followed up with the participants in person to see if they had additional ideas that they may not have mentioned during the interview. None of the participants had any further input. The data gathered from the focus group was used to generate questions for the interview guide used in the thesis study.

Individual Pilot Interviews

To further test the structure of my interviews I had two pilot interviews. During these interviews, I was able to test my interview guide developed from the focus groups, test the structure of my interview session, and practice my interviewing skills. During the pilot interview sessions, the participants were also administered two questionnaires.

Developing the Interview Guide. Information gained from the focus group assisted in creating the interview guide for the thesis study. In general, an interview guide contains the topics to be discussed and suggests their sequence for the interview (Kvale, 1996). It helps guide the direction of the interview session.

Interview questions need to be relevant to the area of inquiry (Kvale, 1996). Four types of questions were utilized in the interview guide: "throw-away" questions, essential questions, extra questions, and probing questions (Berg, 2001). Berg (2001)

identified that “throw-away” questions may be found at the beginning of the interview and may include demographic questions or general questions to develop rapport between the interviewer and athlete. Because these questions often contain important information, for this study, I referred to them as rapport building questions (see questions 1-12 of interview guide in Appendix B).

Essential questions were concerned with the central purposes of the study (Berg, 2001). An example of an essential question for this study was “what does competitiveness mean to you”? Extra questions were used to ensure the credibility of the responses, which confirmed if the participants’ answers or views were consistent. For example, an extra question could be an essential question rephrased to verify if a participant responds in a similar way. Probing questions provided a way to draw out more complete stories from participants (Berg, 2001). I asked the athletes to elaborate on what they had already answered in response to a question by asking them “how” and “why” questions.

In developing my questions for the interview guide (see Appendix B), I needed to make sure I communicated well with the participants. To this end, I considered the following concerns when developing the interview guide: avoiding double-barreled and overly complex questions, and question sequencing (Berg, 2001). Double-barreled questions ask the participant to respond simultaneously to two issues in a single question (Berg, 2001). This may cause the participant to become confused or result in a

failure to answer one of the questions presented. I carefully examined each question and made sure it asked one thing at a time. Long, overly complex questions also can affect the interview process negatively. These questions can be confusing or misleading and the response to this type of question may not focus on the information desired. To avoid this problem, questions were brief and concise.

The arrangement of the questions in an interview may significantly affect the efficacy of the interview (Berg, 2001). It can make or break the study if the questions are not organized in a logical manner; the interviewer may lose the participant or miss pertinent information. To avoid this problem, the interview for this study began with non-threatening demographic questions followed by questions about the major focus (i.e., essential questions, extra questions, probing questions). Also, questions about a similar topic were grouped together and presented in a sensible order.

Interviewing. Kvale (1996) described interviewing as obtaining descriptions of the participants' world with respect to interpretations of their meaning (Kvale, 1996). The interview questions were open-ended in which participants are asked questions that have no definitive answers and they were able to elaborate as much as possible (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). This study employed semi-structured interviewing in which I used an interview guide and asked follow-up probe questions. There is openness in this format that allows for changes in the order of questions, and allows for follow up questions

(Kvale, 1996). With this format, when the participants stated something of interest, I was able to delve further into their statements to get a complete understanding.

Quantitative Assessment of Goal Orientation. I gave the participants the 13-item Task and Ego Orientation Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ) (Duda, 1989, see Appendix C) which measured individuals' proneness to task and ego orientation. Respondents indicated the degree to which they agree with items reflecting task and ego orientations on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Scores for task- and ego-orientation are obtained by computing the mean scores on items on the task and ego subscales respectively. Thus, scores range from 1 (low orientation) to 5 (high orientation). The task and ego orientation scales of the TEOSQ have been found to have acceptable test-retest reliability (Duda, 1992; Newton & Duda, 1993; VanYperen & Duda, 1997). The factor structure of the TEOSQ has been supported repeatedly across samples (e.g., Duda & White, 1992; Newton & Duda, 1993; VanYperen & Duda, 1997).

Quantitative Assessment of Competitiveness. The participants also completed a portion of the Sport Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) (Gill & Deeter, 1988, see Appendix D). The SOQ contains 3 subscales that assess goal orientation, win orientation, and competitiveness. In this study, only the competitiveness subscale was employed. The 25-items that assessed competitiveness reflect enjoyment of competition and the desire to strive for success in competitive situations. Respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed with items reflecting their reactions to sport situations on a

5-point Likert-type scale. The scores can range from 13 (less competitive) to 65 (more competitive). Reliability and validity of the SOQ has been established (e.g., Gill & Deeter, 1988; Gill et al., 1988).

Pilot Interview Sessions. I performed two pilot individual interviews. These pilot interviews gave me the opportunity to test my interview guide, determine if I was communicating effectively, and practice interviewing (Berg, 2001). The participants for the pilot interviews were two female former student-athletes. One athlete was a former track athlete and the other a former golfer. Both competed at NCAA Division I institutions. I asked these former athletes to participate in an individual interview session about their competitive sport experience. In the session, I explained the purpose of the study, ensured the participant's confidentiality, and informed the participant that the session would be video-recorded. After answering all the participant's questions, I provided her with a consent form to read and sign (see Appendix A).

After reading and signing the consent form, the participant completed the TEOSQ (see Appendix C) and the SOQ (see Appendix D). For the first pilot interview, I administered these questionnaires before the interview whereas for the second pilot interview I administered them after the interview. The time at which the questionnaire was administered was randomly assigned to the participants. This procedure was used to assess whether the responses to the questionnaire influence the interview and vice versa.

During the interview portion of the session, I followed the interview guide developed from the exploratory focus group. During these semi-structured interviews, I queried participants about their interpretations of competitiveness and I asked follow-up probe questions. These interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes.

After the interview, I asked the participant who completed the questionnaires before the interview whether the questionnaires influenced her responses to the interview. The purpose of asking this question was to test the structure of the interview session to determine the best way to organize the thesis interviews. This athlete felt that responding to the questionnaires first had no bearing on her interview responses. Similarly, I asked the second pilot interviewee whether the interview influenced her responses to the questionnaires. She responded that it did not. For the thesis study, I decided to alternate the order of administration of the questionnaire and the interview. After each pilot interview, my critical friend and I reviewed the videotapes and critiqued the effectiveness of the interview questions and my performance as the interviewer. Based on the pilot interviews, I added a few more questions to the interview guide, made some adjustments to the order of questions on my interview guide, and identified additional probing questions.

Thesis Study

Approval to carry out the thesis study was received from Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB), the head coach, the Athletics Department, and the Institutional Review Board at the athletes' university.

Participants

Twelve Black, female student-athletes participated in this study. These student-athletes competed in track and field at a NCAA Division I institution in the eastern United States. All of the athletes were enrolled in a Historically Black University, self-identified as Black, and were under the tutelage of a Black male head coach. The conference in which the team competed was comprised of other Historically Black Universities. The track program itself was developing a winning program; during the three years prior to the study, they were conference champions and three of the athletes were individual conference champions in their respective events. On the national level, prior to the study the team did not have any representation at the national championships. However, after the study, two of the participants became NCAA Division I All-Americans and one of the two became a National Champion. To be considered for participation in the study, the athletes had to have competed during the indoor or outdoor season immediately preceding the study (i.e., this excluded incoming first year athletes, but included redshirts).

The athletes were an average of 20 years of age. All but two of the women had partial or full athletic scholarships. The athletes competed in sprints, jumps, mid-distance, distance, multi-events, and throws. Only two athletes were in their first year of eligibility because they were redshirts but the rest of the sample had used at least one year of their eligibility. Outside of their four year collegiate eligibility, many of the athletes had been competing since adolescents and had more competitive experience than others. The range of competitive experience for athletes was four to eleven years.

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Eligibility Year	Competitive Experience	Scholarship	Events
Edwina	21	Senior	10	Full	Cross Country; Mid-distance; Distance
Nebula	21	Senior	8	Full	Long Jump; Triple Jump
Murphy	21	Senior	7	Full	Sprints
Donna	19	Sophomore	7	Partial	Multi-events; Throws; High Jump
Emily	20	Senior	11	Full	Sprints
Yolanda	19	Freshman	5	Full	Multi-events; Jumps; Sprints; Hurdles
Nicky	21	Senior	8	Partial	Triple Jump
Stephanie	19	Junior	7	None	Mid-distance; Multi-events; Cross Country
Kiwi	22	Senior	11	Full	Multi-events; Hurdles; Sprints
Cybil	20	Junior	6	Partial	Cross Country; Mid-distance; Distance
Candice	19	Freshman	4	None	Sprints
Caprice	19	Sophomore	5	Full	Hurdles; Sprints

Procedure

I contacted the coach at the Historically Black University and explained the purpose of the study and why I chose his athletes (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). I chose these athletes because I felt that they had unique experiences of being Black, females, and attending a predominantly Black university. I assured the coach that this study was non-threatening and would not influence or hinder the performance of the team (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). I requested permission to ask the athletes to participate in the study. With his consent, a team meeting was scheduled with all the female student-athletes meeting the inclusion criteria.

During the team meeting, I introduced myself to the student-athletes, some of whom already knew of me because I am an alumnus of the program. I informed the team of my former affiliation with the university and the track program. I also informed the team of my current endeavor of pursuing a Master's degree in sport psychology. I told the athletes that I was researching their competitive sport experiences as Black female athletes. I described to the athletes in detail what the research session entailed (i.e., interview, questionnaires). At that time, I gave them an opportunity to ask me any questions. All team members were given an interest form (see Appendix E) where they denoted whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. Athletes who chose to participate in the study were instructed to provide their contact information (e.g.,

telephone number, e-mail address). All of the eligible athletes returned the form affirming their interest in participating in the study.

I contacted the willing participants and individual interviews were scheduled at a convenient time and location. All of the interviews took place in a classroom at their university near the athletic offices. In the individual meeting, I reintroduced myself to the athlete and reiterated the purpose of the study. I also informed the athlete what the session would entail (i.e., questionnaires, interviewing). I told the athlete that the interview would be audio-recorded and I answered any questions she had. The athlete was assured that confidentiality would be maintained throughout this study. I let her know that everything said in this meeting would be used for research purposes only, the transcript would only be shared with my advisor, and information used in the write up of the study would be coded to conceal any identifying information. The athlete was given an informed consent form to read. Any other questions were answered and I asked her to sign the form.

Alternating between sessions, some participants completed the TEOSQ (Duda, 1989) and the SOQ (Gill & Deeter, 1988) which was followed by the interview whereas for some the interview took place first followed by the questionnaires. The focus of the interviews was on the athletes' interpretation of competitiveness.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the extent to which a researcher's observations and measurements are true descriptions of a particular reality (Ely, 1991). Trustworthiness in this study was supported through bracketing, rapport building, working with a critical friend, and reflexivity.

Bracketing. Bracketing requires that the researcher becomes aware of her or his own assumptions, feelings, and preconceptions (Berg, 2001). Bracketing allows for the basic elements and essential structure of phenomena to be defined by the participants (Berg, 2001). Through bracketing, the researcher is to locate personal experiences and beliefs that speak directly to the phenomenon in question. As such, I am aware that my role and presence can shape the interview and narrative. I realized that my expectations and experiences may influence the study. These things may cause the athlete to be apprehensive or prone to say things because they may be concerned with what I think. My preconceptions may also influence how I respond to the athlete's narratives. In this study, I am examining athletes' interpretations of competitiveness from their perspectives. Therefore it was important that I bracketed, or set aside, my own interpretations of competitiveness.

My own personal competitive sport experiences led me to this research this topic. I identified within myself my perceptions of competitiveness. I thought about how I defined competitiveness and my experiences with the term. I recalled the many times

my coach would tell me that I was or was not being competitive. Once I became aware of my personal position about the term competitiveness, I bracketed them so that I remained open-minded and receptive to what is being researched. I interpreted the meanings of the athletes' experiences and beliefs as an informed reader and obtained the participants' interpretation of these findings. To counter potential problems, while I was interviewing the participants, I refrained from informing the participants of my beliefs and probed them for complete descriptions of their beliefs. I also refrained from making any negative comments that would discourage the participants from revealing more information. In all, I acknowledged my preconceptions and separated them from the interview process. Acknowledging my perspectives and experiences helped me to separate my thoughts and feelings from the participants, to be less judgmental, and to appreciate experiences that deviated from my own (Ely, 1991).

Rapport Building. Building rapport also added to the trustworthiness of this study. As a researcher, it is important to establish a connection with the participants and to gain their trust and confidence (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). This process can occur through communicating empathy and sharing in the participant's world, language, and perspective (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). I established rapport with the athletes by sharing background information about myself. I expressed that, similar to them, I identify as a Black female athlete, and I am a former member of the track and field program at their university. For some of the athletes, we had competed in the same events. This allowed

them to feel that I understood their perspective. However, none of the information I provided should have swayed the participants' responses during the interview or negatively affected rapport building. I was careful not to give the athletes too much information and did not go into detail about my own personal competitive sport experiences. The similarities that the athletes and I shared encouraged them to open up to me and provide rich descriptions of their interpretations of competitiveness. The similarities also helped the interview flow more like a conversation among friends rather than feel like an impersonal interview.

Critical Friend. Dr. Krane, my advisor, was my critical friend (Ely, 1991) and further enhanced the trustworthiness of my study. A critical friend is someone that I looked to for advice and who encouraged alternate explanations of the findings. This individual acted as the auditor of the research process (Ely, 1991). She was a "devil's advocate" and critiqued the decisions I made when collecting and analyzing the data. When the themes were developed from the interview data, Dr. Krane made sure that the themes and codes were consistent and clearly portrayed what was intended.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to the understanding that the scientific observer is part of the setting, context, and culture that she or he is trying to understand and represent (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). The process of reflexivity required that I examined my epistemological stance and social positioning relative to the participants (Krane & Baird, 2005). I examined how simply being me potentially could influence the

research process. To locate my social position before beginning the research, I identify with the Black culture and I am a female.

Reflecting on and acknowledging my views and beliefs also will enable readers to understand the perspective from which I interpreted the data (Krane & Baird, 2005). I am a researcher working within a Black feminist standpoint perspective (Collins, 2000). Black feminist standpoint theory purports that there is specialized knowledge produced by Black women that clarifies a particular standpoint of and about Black women. It involves the interpretation of Black women's experiences by those who participate in the same experiences (Collins, 2000). I will utilize the Black feminist standpoint perspective to voice the experiences of Black female athletes.

It is important that the reader also knows my social position and personal experiences. These affect how I view the world and everyday life. I am a 24 year old, Black Master's candidate in developmental kinesiology specializing in sport psychology. My initial ideas for this thesis were drawn from my own experiences as a Division I track and field athlete.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis for this study was done in the following steps: (a) data preparation, (b) data familiarity, (c) open coding, and (d) axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first step in analyzing the data was to prepare the data for analysis. I transcribed each interview verbatim and any identifying information was coded prior

to printing to secure confidentiality. During data familiarization, I read each interview in its entirety several times. This allowed me to become well versed with each participant's experiences. I developed initial ideas that guided subsequent detailed analysis (Berg, 2001).

Next, I began open coding the data. Open coding can be described as an unrestricted coding of the data (Berg, 2001). The central purpose of open coding is to examine the meaning of all statements by identifying meaningful segments of data, attaching tags (codes) in a systematic manner, and coding the data minutely (Berg, 2001). There are four basic guidelines to open coding: never assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable until the data shows it to be relevant, ask the data a specific and consistent set of questions, analyze the data minutely, and frequently interrupt the coding and write theoretical notes (Berg, 2001). Though I am examining Black female athletes' perspectives, I did not assume that any variable such as race, age, or gender had any relevance to competitiveness unless it presented itself in the data. For example, although I am giving voice to Black female athletes, I did not necessarily assume a relationship between race and the athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. When analyzing the data, I asked the data questions such as does goal orientation play a role and how does this relate to the athlete's perceptions of competitiveness; while keeping in mind the objective of my study. Additionally, I was open to multiple or unanticipated results that may come from the data (Berg, 2001).

To analyze the data minutely, I allowed a broad set of codes to emerge. Data codes were established by identifying meaningful statements that were repeated in the data. As I went through the coding process, I wrote notes about ideas related to my research questions. These notes were helpful later in data analysis because they help me make connections among data codes. Ultimately, all the open codes were listed and compared to each other. When necessary, codes were consolidated and revised until my critical friend and I felt the open codes appropriately reflected the athletes' views and experiences.

Next, I axial coded the open codes. Axial coding refers to organizing all of the open coded categories into a hierarchical structure (Berg, 2001). It is a multileveled process that requires several successive sortings of all open codes (Berg, 2001). Initially, open codes were examined and compared with one another in more detail. I clustered related open codes and developed axial codes revealing conceptual links among related open coded data. Finally, a set of "higher order" themes summarized clusters of the axial codes (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). The axial codes served as labels indicating the participants' personal and cultural meanings bearing on each theme. Narrowing the open and axial codes within the higher ordered themes offered enough support to present a refined, tightly stated conclusion (Berg, 2001). After axial coding, I interpreted and organized the findings so that I could present the data to a reader in a manner in which they can understand the findings.

Throughout the coding process, my critical friend played an essential role. In the beginning stages of the coding process, open coding, the critical friend made sure the quotes included within the codes made sense. She made sure that I did not misinterpret quotes or force quotes into a code where they did not necessarily fit. She also provided alternative code names and categories. In the axial coding process, the critical friend made sure that axial codes and higher order themes adequately encompassed the open codes.

CHAPTER 3

Results

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of Black female athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. Data from 12 interviews presented many factors related to competitiveness. Through the interviews and TEOSQ scores, athletes' goal orientation was identified. Their views about competitiveness and perfectionism were considered relative to their goal orientations. Consistent patterns within the data revealed athletes with high task orientation focused on self-referenced criteria when defining competitiveness and discussing factors associated with competitiveness, whereas athletes with high ego orientation emphasized normative-referenced criteria to define competitiveness. More specifically, athletes' goal profiles translated into their perceptions of competitiveness, wherein the high task/low ego oriented athletes perceived that competitiveness was related to putting forth effort and focusing on skill and improvement. High ego-oriented athletes perceived competitiveness as competing against others and winning. Overall, athletes' interpretation of competitiveness was related to their goal orientation.

Athlete Goal Profiles

I assessed the athletes' goal orientation based on responses to the TEOSQ and what was said during the interviews. The findings from the responses on these two

sources then were compared. Ultimately, and consistent with previous research (Roberts et al., 1996), a goal profile was generated for each athlete.

TEOSQ Assessment of Goal Orientation

On the TEOSQ, a higher mean score indicated a stronger orientation. In this study, the range of scores for a task orientation was 3.9 to 5.0. The range of scores for ego orientation was 1.7 to 4.7. None of the athletes had a substantially low task orientation in comparison to the mean low score for an ego orientation. For the purpose of labeling these athletes as high or low on a goal orientation, scores above the midpoint of the scale (2.5) were considered high and scores below 2.5 were labeled low.

All of the athletes scored high on task orientation whereas half of them also scored high on ego orientation. Based on these data, 6 athletes were labeled with a TEOSQ goal profile of high task/low ego and 6 athletes had a profile of high task/high ego. None of the athletes in the study scored a high ego/low task orientation.

Interview Goal Orientation

Responses to the following interview questions were considered when making a determination about athletes' goal orientation: (a) what are your goals when you compete, (b) how important is winning to you, and (c) what is more important to you, running a good race or winning (see table 2). Athletes whose goals were to "win," "come in first," "be the best" were labeled as high ego-oriented/low task-oriented ($n=3$). Athletes whose goals focused on improvement, "to run a better time," "do my best," or

“PR” [personal record] were labeled as high task-oriented/low ego-oriented ($n=4$).

When athletes goals focused on both outcome (ego) and skill improvement (task), their goal profile was classified as high task/high ego-oriented ($n=6$) based on their responses to this question.

Task-Oriented Goals. Most of the athletes described goals that were consistent with a task orientation. These goals focused on personal criteria to define success such as skill improvement and performing up to their potential. These athletes with task-oriented goals specifically mentioned “running a better time” or “jumping better than the last jump.” For example, Edwina described,

My goals when I compete are to just run a better time than whatever I ran last week. I always try to run something better than what I ran the previous week.

For the eight [800m] this year I would like to go sub 2:10, but if that’s not the case I just want to keep going forward and not end up running slower.

Stephanie’s goals also focused on improvement. She wanted to “just improve my time and keep working on my time. Just keep dropping my time every time I step on the track.” Similarly, Nicky, a jumper, described “when I am jumping, I always try to make one jump better than my last one, regardless if it’s an inch or a centimeter.”

Improvement was a consistent theme of the task-oriented athletes.

Along with focusing on improvement, these athletes also talked about the importance of performing up their potential. Donna said her goals were to: “Just pretty

much do my best and get better at what I do. I know that I am not one of the best people on the team, but I try to do the best that I can." Nicky also made reference to performing up to her potential and using self-references to monitor her achievement. She said, "I always try to do my best and to PR [personal record]." Setting a PR is viewed as a way to self-monitor achievement wherein achievement is not necessarily winning, but improving on one's ability or previous performances.

For task-oriented athletes, when responding to the question how important is winning to you, focused on the enjoyment of sport and the lessons learned from competing. These athletes felt that performing well took precedence over winning. While they also enjoyed winning, they also wanted to see an improvement in their performance. They believed that performance improvement would lead to winning.

Donna described her views on winning, "As long as I do my best that's all I really care about. Winning is nice, but I like to do what I can do." She later went on the state "running a good race" is more important than winning. Edwina also valued "run a good race" over winning. She said, "if you feel like you ran to the best of your ability, then you'll feel better than if you ran a bad time but you won." This athlete receives satisfaction from seeing improvement from meet to meet. Similarly, Cybil recognized that winning was a means of receiving recognition. When she was asked to choose what was more important, she felt that "running a good race" was more important than winning.

These task-oriented athletes realized that winning is essential to progress to the next level in their sport. As Murphy described, winning was more important in certain situations.

It depends. Like at the conference championship it means a lot but in like a regular meet as long as I drop my time consistently it doesn't matter...Like as long as I work hard and put 100% into what I'm doing.

From a task-oriented perspective, winning is a byproduct of emphasizing performing well and using good technique. These athletes felt that if they performed to their potential and execute correct technique, winning is more likely to occur.

Ego-Oriented Goals. Athletes expressing ego-oriented goals focused on demonstrating their ability in comparison to others and on winning. When describing their goals, they forthright stated that they want to win. As Kiwi said "I always want to win. I'm real competitive, so I'm competitive in practice and on the track during competition. I always want to win." Candice also displayed an ego orientation when asked about her goals when she competes. She stated,

My goals are at least get first in my heat and to advance to finals. My goals are to qualify for MEAC championships. After that try to qualify for Regionals, and then on to NCAA.

These goals focusing on outcome are indicative of a win or ego-oriented individual.

Athletes with a high ego-orientation placed more emphasis on winning than the high task/low ego-oriented athletes. Ego-oriented athletes felt that winning was important. As Nebula said, "it's very important to me. I always try to win and I always want the team to win." When asked what was more important winning or running a good race, this athlete said "doing her best, jumping her best," revealing the influence of her high task orientation. Emily also described her goal was to "win. That's about my only goal. There's win and finish." Winning is this athlete's "top priority when it comes to competing." However, when asked to choose between winning and performing well her task orientation became apparent in her response: "well both, but most important would probably be running a good race and dropping my time."

Caprice explained,

winning is a big thing. I hate to lose, but of course you are going to lose when you're competing. But I just try to focus on how to improve what I did wrong this meet and what I can do better for the next meet.

Kiwi felt that winning was "extremely important." When choosing between what was more important, winning or running a good race, Kiwi said, "I'd rather run a good race. 'Cause sometimes you can win with no competition and it's like your time isn't that good. But running a good race, that's fine."

Yolanda's goals when she competed were "to win and do better each competition." Winning to her "is important 'cause like when you win, you strive to do

better. But if you lose you haven't been practicing really, so it shows in the meet." For this athlete, winning provided a source of feedback about her ability. Similar to rest of the sample, this athlete felt that "jumping good" was more important than winning.

Nicky presented another integrated view on winning. In regards to winning, it's very important, but I don't think it's more important than enjoying what you're doing or having fun. So I think winning is a priority, but I don't think that should be the focus of what you're trying to do. 'Cause then it probably can get you off track and take the fun out of it before then you'll start hating what you do.

Nicky receives enjoyment from sport and the pressure of winning can negatively impact enjoyment. When asked to choose between jumping well and winning, she preferred to have a good jump.

Only because I'll have that bit of self-satisfaction 'cause I could've won and jumped the worst I've ever jumped. So I think just having that bit of self-satisfaction of knowing that I jumped well and just being satisfied with myself.

This athlete's views on winning show that the outcome, winning, does not necessarily mean the same as an exceptional performance.

Combination of Task and Ego Orientation. Several athletes voiced responses indicating that they had a combination of both a task and ego goal orientation. These athletes' goals were other-referenced and self-referenced, focusing on the outcome

(winning) and the process (improving their skills). Murphy and Yolanda both wanted to win and perform well. Murphy stated that her goals were “to win the event, but to run a fast time.” Yolanda said she wanted “to win and do better each competition.” Caprice was another athlete who voiced goals consistent with task and ego goals. She described,

My goal is to set aside whomever I’m competing against. Whether it’s someone I don’t like, someone I do like, or even my teammates. I focus on myself what I need to do. And my goal is to like PR and to of course get first.

Cybil considered herself, her teammates, and the outcome when describing her goals. She said,

My goals when I compete [are] to always win, of course, and to be the best and just to push my teammates when I run. [I] make sure everyone is running together, that we all come out on top. I like to see us coming 1-2-3-4-5 in anything that we run. And just every time I step on the track, always running a personal best time. Not necessarily meaning if I get first, you know that I run a 2:20. I’d rather get third and run like a 2:13. So just always PRing that’s my goal and to get faster.”

Athletes who reflected task-oriented goals during the interview focused improving performance and putting forth effort when they performed. Athletes who expressed ego-oriented goals, emphasized winning or outperforming others. There

were athletes that also described both task and ego-oriented goals. All of the athletes in the study enjoyed winning. However, high ego/low task-oriented athletes placed more emphasis on winning than the others. The high task and high ego-oriented athletes had more varied explanations about the importance of winning. All the athletes in the sample felt that running a good race or jumping well were more important than winning, even the highly ego-oriented athletes.

Integrating Interview and TEOSQ Data

When responses to the TEOSQ were compared with interview responses to assess the consistency between the assessments, the results were varied. Four athletes consistently displayed the same goal orientation during the interview as on the TEOSQ. These athletes were all consistently high task/low ego-oriented. The rest of the athletes in the sample did not consistently display the same orientation during the interview and on the TEOSQ. Five athletes expressed a high task/low ego orientation during the interview, but scored a high task/high ego orientation on the TEOSQ. One athlete presented a high ego orientation during the interview and scored a high ego orientation on the TEOSQ.

Various options were explored to assess athletes' goal profiles. Originally, goal profiles were to be assessed solely by the interview data. From the interview data mostly all of the athletes appeared to be both task and ego-oriented. However, from the responses and the interview questions I was not able to apply a value to assess the

degree to which each athlete was either high or low on each orientation. Therefore the athletes were just task and ego-oriented which was not an accurate assessment. As a result, I decided to use the results of the TEOSQ because it provides an accurate assessment of the athletes' goal profiles. In total there were six athletes whose mean score equated to a high task/high ego orientation; they are Caprice, Kiwi, Nebula, Nicky, Stephanie, Yolanda, and six athletes whose mean score equated to a high task/low ego orientation; they are Candice, Cybil, Donna, Edwina, Emily, Murphy. The following table shows each athlete's quantitative goal profile assessed from the TEOSQ and qualitative responses to goal profile questions during the interview.

Table 2

Quantitative/Qualitative Goal Profile Data and Competitiveness Scores

	T.E.O.S.Q.		T.E.O.S.Q. Goal Profile	Goals		Run a Good Race or Win	Importance of Winning	S.O.Q. Competitiveness
	Task score	Ego score		Task	Ego			
Candice	5	2.3	High task/Low ego	qualify	win	Run a good race	Important	65
Caprice	5	3.5	High task/High ego	improvement	win	Run a good race	Less important	57
Cybil	5	2.2	High task/Low ego	improvement	win	Run a good race	Important	54
Donna	4.5	2.8	High task/Low ego	do her best/improvement		Run a good race	Important	59
Edwina	3.9	1.7	High task/Low ego	improvement		Run a good race	Less important	54
Emily	4.9	2.3	High task/Low ego	finish	win	Run a good race	Important	65
Kiwi	5	4.7	High task/High ego		win	Run a good race	Important	64
Murphy	4.1	1.8	High task/Low ego	run fast/work hard	win	Run a good race	Situational	65
Nebula	4.1	3.7	High task/High ego		outcome/achieving certain performance	Run a good race	Important	65
Nicky	4	3.3	High task/High ego	do her best/improvement		Run a good race	Important	60
Stephanie	4	3.5	High task/High ego	improvement		Run a good race	Less important	16
Yolanda	4	4.3	High task/High ego	improvement	win	Run a good race	Important	65
	4.46	3.01		Mean				57.42
	0.48	0.97		Standard deviation				13.75
	1.1	3		Range				49

Dimensions of Competitiveness

Table 2 also shows the athletes' scores on the competitiveness scale of the SOQ. The scores ranged from 16 on the low end to 65 the highest possible score. All of the athletes except one scored high on the competitiveness scale of the SOQ. Five athletes scored perfect scores of 65. The athletes who scored high on the competitiveness scale belong to goal profile groups, high task/low ego or high task/high ego. The one athlete who scored very low on the competitiveness scale adopted a high task/high ego goal profile. These scores were examined in conjunction with how the athletes in the study described what it means to be competitive. Through these descriptions emerged the various components that aid in describing competitiveness. Their descriptions reflected the influence of both ego and task goal orientations. The task-oriented perceptions of competitiveness focused on effort and improvement while the ego-oriented descriptions referred to being the best or winning.

Task-Oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness

Task-oriented perceptions of competitiveness in this study were described in terms of controllable, self-referenced factors such as attitude, effort, and ability. Athletes with both goal profiles described task-oriented perceptions of competitiveness. Donna (high task/low ego) said, "I basically looked at myself for what I can do, not what others can do." Edwina (high task/low ego) explained,

To be competitive is to put your best foot forward. I mean you're competing against other people, but you're also competing against yourself. And I just feel like if you go out and you run your own race, then it's not really about the other people. If you run your own race then you'll probably run a whole lot better 'cause a lot people when they don't run their own race, they mess up. They end up going out too fast and dying or whatever.

Putting forth a high level of effort was a consistent theme in these athletes' task-oriented views of competitiveness. They felt that having the "right attitude," "working hard," and "giving your best" were necessary to be competitive. Murphy (high task/low ego) felt that to be competitive means, "just go out there with a positive attitude, to run well, work hard, and just give 100%." Other athletes described, to be competitive one must "give it your best. Give it all your heart. Don't give up (Candice, high task/low ego)" and "[to] compete to the fullest. Go all out and don't hold nothing back. (Yolanda, high task/high ego)" These views of competitiveness included being driven and working hard. Emily (high task/low ego) described,

to be competitive to me would be to put up a fight. And when I say put up, [I mean] run the best race possible, since I run track, run the best race possible, and just always be ready to step up. In the end, it is about being competitive, because they have to in order to get to the next level. You have to work harder to get there.

Improvement also was an important component of a task-oriented view of competitiveness. Stephanie (high task/high ego), a middle distance runner, stated, “when I go out there on the track, I just try to run. Like I don’t really worry about who I’m running against or who’s doing what, what time everybody is running. I just worry about dropping my time.” Similarly, Emily (high task/low ego) explained,

If I didn’t PR, I wasn’t competitive enough. If I ran the same time I ran last week I wasn’t competitive enough. My goal at each meet is to drop a second off my time. If I can’t drop the second then I wasn’t competitive enough.

To these task-focused athletes, being competitive did not necessarily mean to win. Edwina (high task/low ego) explained,

No you don’t have to win. I mean from what I’ve seen being here, some of the people that don’t run as well are more competitive than the people that are running better than them. And I’m like that’s good because it keeps them motivated to keep wanting to get better and to keep striving to get better. So I don’t think winning really has to do anything with your competitiveness.

Nicky (high task/high ego) also felt that winning does not necessarily mean being competitive. She said,

I think winning is great. It’s a great feeling to win. But I think you can be competitive and lose. Like I said, competitiveness isn’t always being number one. You can be competitive and give your best and be number two. I guess you have

to work that much harder, but you're still being competitive. So I don't think competitiveness is necessarily winning.

Cybil's (high task/low ego) description of competitiveness reflected primarily a task focus:

To me, to be competitive means you have to be determined going out there; not so much an arrogant attitude, but just knowing that you are the best and that anyone who steps foot on the track next to you is going to have to work hard to try to beat you. And just having that drive, willing to go the extra mile. Lifting a little bit more when your teammates leave the weight room or running that extra lap after practice or doing extra stretches or going to rehab more than once a day. Just to be dedicated. Like I never do anything that I am not going to finish and I never do anything not to the best of my ability. I always have to give 110% and even if I get to a point where I don't wanna do it anymore, I'll do it just to finish.

Overall, task-oriented views on competitiveness focused on self-referenced values such as effort and improvement. Athletes who adopted both a high task/low ego goal profile and a high task/high ego goal profile both viewed competitiveness as putting forth their best effort. Putting forth effort also included an air of perseverance in which one "puts up a fight" and does not give up. A task-oriented view on competitiveness does not ignore winning; rather, if the athlete displays the above characteristics then she is being competitive. A task-oriented perception of

competitiveness does not view winning as solely determining whether one is being competitive or not.

Ego-oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness

Two athletes felt that to be competitive, an athlete must “compete against another person,” “be better than another person,” or be “the best.” These views emphasized social comparison and the importance of winning. According to Stephanie (high task/high ego), being competitive “means that you compete against someone else. You go out and put your best forward and try to beat that team or that other person.” Interestingly, Donna, who had a high task/low ego goal profile, also described what seems to be an ego-oriented perception of competitiveness. She stated that being competitive is “just striving to be better than other people...to be the best.”

These athletes’ did perceptions of competitiveness were consistent with an ego orientation. Their views on competitiveness were other-referenced, focusing on the self in comparison with others. The outcome of the performance was very important in these ego-oriented perceptions of competitiveness.

Combination High Task and High Ego-oriented Perceptions of Competitiveness

Some athletes defined competitiveness from both task and ego-oriented perspectives. This perspective was true for both high task/low ego and high task/high ego goal profiles. Nicky (high task/high ego) was one of these people. She said,

I think it means to always try your best and to always try to do better or work harder than another person. I guess competitiveness isn't necessarily winning all the time. But it's just having, it's just wanting not to get last. That's always a motto I've had, just beat somebody. And I think that drives me because no matter what race I do, like I did the hurdles for the first time ever last year, 400 hurdles. I never hurdled [before]. But when I was running it was just, I was just saying in my head 'don't get last, don't get last' and I didn't. So I think being competitive is just having that drive to want to do better to want to win."

Interestingly, Donna, who had a high task/low ego goal profile, description of competitiveness included an ego-oriented component. She stated that being competitive is "just striving to be better than other people...to be the best."

Overall, the athletes' explanations of competitiveness seemed to integrate effort, motivation, and confidence into their definitions. Most of them stressed the task-oriented aspects of competitiveness, yet the high ego-oriented athletes also noted the importance of demonstrating their superior ability.

Effort and Competitiveness

These athletes equated putting forth effort with being competitive. The athletes, regardless of goal profile, felt that exerting high effort and being competitive are one in the same. Murphy (high task/low ego goal profile) explained,

Just the fact that most people when, especially in like the 200 [meters] and the 400 [meters], once somebody passes them they tend to back down. They just tend to back down. They just tend to doubt themselves like well 'she's already past me she's going to win.' But that's not what I do.

Donna (high task/low ego) also described that effort and competitiveness were the same. She said "I think I'm still being competitive because I'm still putting forth effort as far as trying to accomplish what I'm doing."

The high task/ high ego goal profile athletes also felt that putting forth effort was the same as being competitive. As Kiwi said "they [effort and competitiveness] all tie in." Similarly, Caprice said, "basically they go hand in hand. I don't think you can do one without the other." Nicky described a direct relation of effort to competitiveness. She explained,

I think they coincide. Like usually when I'm being competitive I try to put up a high effort um...to win or like I said to PR to beat somebody. So I think that they go together. Usually what I do, I do for both.

For all the athletes, being competitive was equated with high effort, reflecting a characteristic of their high task orientation.

Mental States Associated with Being Competitive

The athletes described several psychological components of competitiveness. Being focused was one of the most common psychological attributes discussed. Also, being excited, anxious, and relaxed was associated with being competitive.

Attentional Focus. The athletes described that when being competitive, they needed to be focused on the task at hand. Narrowing attention on the race/event was important irrespective of athletes' level of ego orientation. Both high task/high ego and high task/low ego goal profile athletes emphasized the importance of concentrating on the competitive event and blocking out irrelevant information.

Murphy (high task/low ego) talked about focus in practice and during races. She said,

when I get ready for practice I try to stay focused. I listen to what my coach says. I try not to argue or complain. And I just have to go out there with the right mind set.... When I get to a meet, it's the same thing. I stay focused, I listen to what Coach says, and I just, like, I'm focused on that event I'm doing...

Yolanda (high task/high ego) explained, "like [I] don't let nothing get in the way of thinking about what you're gonna do on the track and how you're gonna do it. And 'stay strong.'"

Nebula (high task/high ego) described, "I try to stay focused, try to block out anything that shouldn't be there, and try to stay focused on the jump." When describing

her mental preparation for racing, Murphy (high task/low ego) said, “I don’t say much.

I kind of stay to myself and I stay focused on what I’m doing and why I’m at the meet.”

Caprice (high task/high ego) also talked about the importance of being focused before a race:

I don’t say much, I’m very quiet. Some people say I look mean, but that’s just how focused I am. Like I don’t let nothing get in the way. I like to listen to music and before I race I always say a prayer.

Caprice created an inner dialogue with herself:

Mentally I kind of talk to myself like whatever I need to work on. ‘You need to get your leg up; you need to get your leg up, or move your arms.’ [I] just like to prepare before I run.

Nicky (high task/high ego) explained how she changed her usual demeanor to become more focused for competition: “I’m usually a joking person, but I guess when it comes to track meets and stuff I try to put all jokes aside and concentrate on what I need to do.” Emily (high task/low ego) explained, “I’m not really, I don’t brag a lot but I’m very quiet. I don’t say a lot when it’s time for me to compete. Even afterwards, if I run well I sit down.” Cybil described a series of behaviors she exhibits when being competitive including being quiet.

I don’t really say much before a race I kind of keep to myself...I smile, I tell my competitors good luck and make sure my teammates are straight. Make sure that

everyone is stretched properly. But I don't say much I like to be able to keep everything that I 'm feeling inside and then when I step up on the line and the gun goes off that's when I let it out.

The athletes also expressed having a self-focus—that is, they focus on themselves as opposed to focusing on extraneous variables such as others or things they cannot control. Kiwi (high task/low ego) stated that she needs to “just focus on my race and not the competition, not who's there. Just focus on my 10 hurdles or my quarter [400m] or whatever I have to do.” Donna (high task/low ego) and Stephanie (high task/high ego) also felt that they have to focus on themselves.

Being focused was a “mental mode” the athletes adopted when they were being competitive. Most of the time when athletes were being focused they tended to be reserved, quiet, and focused on the strategy or skills they needed execute in the event.

Anxiety. The athletes expressed excitement or facilitative anxiety as well as debilitating anxiety that needed to be controlled. Edwina (high task/low ego) explained, “mentally, I'm excited. I'm always excited when I run. So I'm kind of excited and anxious. I like to get the race started to see what happens and just see what goes from there.” During her outdoor conference championships, Murphy (high task/low ego) described, “I was excited. I knew what was getting ready to happen. I was just amped. I was like 'all right ya'll.' I'm saying to myself 'I felt indoor (championships) but not this time, this is my race.'”

Caprice (high task/high ego) felt “good” as well as “hyped and ready go.” Nicky (high task/high ego) described feeling “hyped” prior to competition. At the outdoor conference championships, she described saying to herself,

‘Ok come on you can do it. You go this, you got this. Let’s give them something to look at. All season you haven’t been jumping well, so here is your chance to shine. Let them know that you do have it.’ So I was just a real pumped up and hyped mentally. Just to go out there and do it.

Other athletes described having debilitating anxiety, such as feeling “nervous,” or “scared” which could have an adverse effect on performance. For example, Emily (high task/low ego) explained that sometimes she was “scared of losing, scared of disappointing the coaches and teammates. Especially at championships last year, I was able to go out there and run at championships, but I didn’t break out for me.” Stephanie (high task/high ego) also felt nervous when she competes. She said,

I feel nervous. Sometimes you feel like if you don’t run good this time, then what’s going to be your chances next time as far as getting on the track. You gotta make sure you do well ‘cause it’s college, it’s not high school no more.

Nebula (high task/high ego) said “sometimes I get really nervous, but then I just try to focus on what I have to do and that gets me through because I have a goal for myself.” She explained, “like if I get too nervous I can make myself sick like physically.

Like my mental is very strong. If I think really that I'm going to be nervous then I start to feel sick."

Nicky (high task/high ego) also described the debilitating somatic aspects of anxiety: "physically, sometimes I feel weak. Like I get butterflies and sometimes like if I get too nervous, I actually feel like I have to throw up." Interestingly, Nicky also described feeling mentally feeling relaxed. She asserted,

I don't feel stressed out because I don't think that helps me. I think just staying relaxed and just concentrating on what I have to do is the main thing. Mentally I just try to stay relaxed that's the main thing.

Candice (high task/low ego) directly connected anxiety to her performance outcome. She explained,

Mentally, if I'm able not to think about the race, then I'll just be ready for it. My adrenaline will start going up and then the race comes, I'll be thinking about just something else instead of the race. But if I, say we're sitting in the blocks and then he takes forever for the gun to go off, then my mind will start going 'okay how do I run this quarter [400 meters]? How do I run this two [200 meters]? Should I sprint first? Should I stride out? Should I do this? Should I do that?' And then I'll start getting nervous and then my whole focus is on just the race and I just can't [do it].

Two athletes noted both positive and negative effects of anxiety. Candice (high task/low ego) described how she feels nervous when she was being competitive. She explained,

Nervousness, it really affects me a lot. Like if I'm nervous, I'll start thinking about 'oh I hope I do really, really well.' And then I'll be like, 'I don't think I can do this' or something like that. But sometimes, nervousness is good because then there goes your adrenaline. But sometimes it's really not that good.

She furthered, If I'm too nervous I'll probably be more sluggish at the start of the race. And then when I finally get into it and then I'll start trying to pick up. But then, usually sometimes it's too late.

Emily (high task/low ego) also described debilitating somatic anxiety. She expressed,

Like I start shaking, and I get scared, and my reaction time is a lot slower. But then I think at the same time if I don't have my nerves, like if I'm not nervous, then something's wrong. Like I might not perform well that day because with me just going out there just knowing that I can beat everybody you might sleep on your opponent and then you lose or won't run a fast enough time. So I just had to find my balance. I had to find that in between. Not being too nervous and not being nervous enough.

Some athletes talked about their need to control their anxiety. Emily said, "I think in the past I could've, looking back to a lot more races, if I had been more competitive and not so much afraid then I would probably ran in the Olympics this past year. Emily went on to say, "I need to know how to handle my nerves cause things get to me when I'm on the line." Candice described her attempts to control her anxiety as,

"I kind of like to laugh a lot so I won't have to think about the race. I like to joke around and have fun, but I don't waste a lot of energy, don't like run around, but maybe tell jokes or something, something to get my mind off the race."

There were not any consistent pattern between goal orientations and anxiety. Both high task/low ego-oriented and high task/high ego goal profile athletes displayed both facilitative and debilitating anxiety. Both described feeling either excited or nervous mentally when being competitive.

Mental Preparation for Competition. In their explanations about competitiveness, the athletes also revealed how they mentally prepared for competition. As they described, better preparation led to being more competitive and putting forth high effort.

Cybil (high task/low ego) explained her mental preparation, which included using imagery:

I think that if I can find way to mentally prepare myself to a point where I am not really thinking too much about my race. I guess what I mean by that is just

basically thinking, seeing a time I want to run and seeing myself run that time.

Maybe not so much not thinking about the mechanics or who I'm going to pass and at what specific time, but for me 'ok you wanna run 2:10, well just seeing myself run the two laps and then getting off the track. "

Nebula (high task/high ego) also described using imagery to prepare mentally to put forth effort. She said "mentally, like see myself in my head, doing my best like jumping and I picture in my head, I go through the motions, and I try to put forth what I have in my head [and] to do it."

Cybil (high task/low ego) provided the most comprehensive description of her mental preparation, which reflected task and ego-oriented ways of thinking. She lamented,

It's really tough for me to compete mentally, just because that's always been something I've struggled with. My dad has always tried to get me to mentally prepare myself before a race and it's really hard for me to do that because if I focus too much I might mess up. I feel like if I got out there to run and then worry about what I did later that's better for me than to sit down and really just think about every aspect of my race cause I feel if I do that it's mess me up. But I think mentally a lot of times, I think that I can just walk up to the line and I see my opponents and I'm like 'oh crap, oh no,' but ok if I tell myself I'm going to lose I feel like I've defeat myself. But I think there's times when I'm just honest

with myself and I'm 'okay I know these girls are better than me but if I stay with them the worst thing that can happen is that I lose but might run my best time.'

So as long as mentally I'm not over-confident or under-confident, like ok I don't even want to be at this line I know I am going to lose, I'm probably going to get lapped and I'm probably going to have to run extra next week and I won't be able to go to Chapel Hill's meet or something if I get too overwhelmed, then I'm just shot. So I tried to stay somewhere in between.

Candice (high task/low ego) described this preparation as "instead of being ready to run during the race, I need to be competitive before the race. I'm more like when the race is going, that's when my competitiveness starts." She goes on to assert, that she wants to "probably be more confident before the race. Like I know sometimes before I get ready to start, sometimes I look at the competition and I'll be like 'oh never mind.'"

In summary, these athletes described various mental states associated with competitiveness. Attentional focus emerged as a key factor that influences competitiveness. The athletes felt that being focused on the task led to being competitive. The athletes also described displaying facilitative and debilitative anxiety. Athletes who displayed facilitative anxiety were "excited" about being competitive. While others exhibited debilitative anxiety in which their anxiety interfered with

performance. Although some found it difficult to prepare mentally, the athletes felt that mental preparation was an important component to being competitive.

Physical States Associated with Being Competitive

For some athletes, competition can be physically straining on the body. For others it is exciting and feels effortless. The athletes in this study described feelings along the whole spectrum of feeling very good to feeling awful; they were strong, weak, and tired.

Physically Ready to Compete. Kiwi (high task/high ego) expressed, “I love the feeling of competition. I love it. It’s so much fun.” Nebula (high task/high ego) described physically feeling an “adrenaline rush and strong” when competing. For Edwina (high task/low ego),

it all depends on the day. Like if I had a good week at practice and I’m rested, I feel well. But if it’s been rough week and a really hard week of practice and we get off the bus, like there have been times where we’ve gotten off the bus ten minutes before our race. And so you just kind of have to do that rush warm up and get out there on the track. Then those times I’ll just be like ‘ugh...just gotta run.’ So it all depends on the day.

Murphy (high task/low ego) felt physically prepared when putting forth effort. She explained, “physically I felt like my body was well rested. I felt just ready to run. Like I

felt like could nothing hold me back at all.” Athletes feeling physically rested felt that it was optimal for them to competitive.

The Strain of Physical Effort. Some athletes in the study described that while being competitive, they experienced physical feelings such as fatigue and pain. Most of the high task/low ego goal profile athletes described feeling pain and fatigue when putting forth effort. Donna (high task/low ego) said when she put forth high effort physically, “I was tired. It [the heptathlon] was over three days and it was in the hot sun so I was tired.” Cybil (high task/low ego) went into more detail about how she felt physically when putting forth effort. She explained,

Physically I felt like an old woman. I mean my knees were hurting. Just the pain that I felt in my back is indescribable. Just the back spasms, I mean my left leg had completely went numb and I couldn’t stop thinking what was going on because it was the first time that something like that had happened. So, the only thing I was thinking was ‘what’s going to happen to me when I stop,’ if I was going to have to go to the hospital? Or if I was going to have to stop running?’ So I couldn’t stop thinking about the aftermath when I was going to stop if I did finish. And so I was just physically, I was just, I should’ve sat down.

Emily, a high task/low ego profile athlete, described physical pain when putting forth effort. She said, “it’s painful at times, but then a few days later it feels great. But a lot of times it’s very, very painful.”

The high task/high ego goal profile athletes shared some of the same feelings physically when putting forth effort as the high task/low ego goal profile athletes. Kiwi (high task/high ego) said when putting forth effort she felt “tired and sore.” She went on,

I just had to block it out of my mind because I know it’s a mental thing that I was tired. But sore, it was probably a little physical, but I had to just block it out and keep going.

Stephanie (high task/high ego) described pain as a response to exerting effort. She said “I feel like it hurts to me. My body is tight. But I just feel like when I see, like I’m almost finished, I see the line [and] I just feel like ‘hurry up and get over cause then I’ll be done.’ That’s all I look forward to.”

Injury and Competitiveness. Some of the athletes talked about situations when they were injured and how it affected their competitiveness. Plagued by injury and not being able to practice consistently, Emily (high task/low ego) expressed,

It feels good when you’re able to get back out there. When I’m able to get back out there and I’m able to practice with them it feels very good. It’s satisfying to me. But it hurts me when I can’t go out there because I’m having a bad day or its raining or something like that. But being able to put forth effort feels good to me.

Some athletes described feeling anxious due to an injury. Cybil, a high task/low ego goal profile athlete, described a situation in which she was hurt and she felt that she

put forth high effort. When asked to describe a situation in which she put forth high effort she expressed,

I'll probably have to say this past week when we ran at Norfolk State because I have chronic back pain and I get back spasms and everything because I have a couple of herniated discs. It sometimes gets tough for me to run hills and I know we had to go to Mount Trashmore this week. We had to run up some hills and I just felt like I was giving effort only because I didn't stop and I wanted to so bad. I just wanted to just start walking and just walk over to the can, get in the van, and lay down. But I felt like I gave the effort because I was like 'okay I don't wanna let my teammates down and I don't [want to] let my coach down.' Even if I don't run the time I had set out to run, I'm going to finish this race. So I felt like for me whenever I may feel like physically incapable of doing something or I'm injured, if I just finish the race to me that's effort just to persevere.

Cybil went on to describe how she felt mentally when putting forth effort during this cross country meet. She said,

Mentally, I think I was drained mentally. Just because I know a lot of times, for me, I can let the way I feel physically affect me mentally. Because I started feeling the pain, I started feeling the back spasms come on. I just mentally tell myself 'ok, I don't wanna do this anymore. I just wanna stop.' And I think it was just the fact that I was so close to, about 800 meters left in the race, that I may have

stopped somewhere back in the woods where no one can see me and then came out about two minutes later.

Injury can have an affect on competitiveness. These two athletes felt that putting forth effort when injured equated to being competitive.

Overall, the athletes described how the demands of competition felt physically. Some described their body as feeling good and physically prepared to be competitive while others described the feeling of being competitive as painful and fatiguing. Ultimately in a physically demanding sport, athletes have varied physical responses when being competitive.

Becoming More Competitive

When the athletes were asked “do you feel you need to be more competitive?” many of them responded affirmatively. To become more competitive, the athletes described many things that they could improve or change.

Two athletes in the study described how they needed to alter their team focus into more of a self-focus. Edwina (high task/low ego) felt she needed have “more of a drive for myself to win versus just the whole team winning.” She went on to describe a situation when she placed more emphasis on the team.

‘Cause like I was MVP last year, but I didn’t care. I was like ‘alright I’m MVP, so what.’ ‘That’s fine, I don’t care.’ I was like I did what I had to do for us to win

and that's just how I felt about it. But I guess if I was more 'I need to win first place' then I'll probably be a lot more competitive.

Caprice (high task/high ego) also pointed out that even though the team is a priority, she tries to focus on herself and what she can do.

Some athletes felt that they needed to change their attitude to improve their competitive self. Nebula (high task/high ego) stated, "like sometimes people say that like you're worst enemy is yourself. Sometimes you have to beat yourself, like your bad attitude. You have to try to beat that." Nicky (high task/high ego) also described how she needed to change her attitude. She explained, "sometimes I'm just like, 'ok I jumped'. I didn't jump bad, but I didn't jump my best, but I didn't jump bad. Sometimes I'm just passive, I'm like 'ok it wasn't a bad jump, I mean I didn't win, but I didn't jump bad.'"

Many of the athletes felt that they needed to be more competitive and there were things they needed to change within themselves in order to achieve this. Some of the athletes felt they need to focus more on themselves and some felt that they need to improve their attitude to be more positive.

Describing a Competitive Performance

The athletes in the study were asked to reflect back on a performance they considered to be highly competitive. The factors that made those performances competitive included perseverance, effort, and winning against more experienced

athletes. High task/low ego goal profile athletes mostly associated perseverance and effort with a competitive performance and high task/high ego goal profile athletes considered winning as a competitive performance.

High task/low ego goal profile athletes emphasized effort. Donna (high task/low ego) described her performance during the conference championship as competitive because “I was really trying to get in the top three of the hep [heptathlon] but that didn’t work out. In the high jump, I guess I was just trying to do my best. I knew I could beat the other girls, but it was just a matter, it came down to the misses.”

Edwina (high task/low ego) described her performance at the conference championships as competitive due to “the fact that I didn’t give up at the end because I was getting tired or whatever. I just kept moving, kept pumping my arms. So just trying to keep from getting passed at the line.” Emily (high task/low ego) describes her competitive performance as:

I’m constantly fighting with myself. It’s almost like me running a race and if I don’t do what I need to do to get back out there, I lose that race each time. I don’t run a fast enough time. Even though I know I have the talent and I can probably go out there and run just as fast as a lot of people that are training right now. Matter of fact, I have, last year when I came back I took a spot or two on the relay. But I want to be better than that. I don’t want to settle for less.

When describing a competitive performance, many of the athletes expressed that they had to overcome the strain of competition. Kiwi (high task/high ego) described performing at the conference championships and competing in many events as her competitive performance. She said,

It's competing just over three days. It's competing, competing, competing, and I want to do well. And it's not necessarily for me but for my team. And I know other MEAC teams; they're always gunning for us, so you have to always just stay on your toes. Anything can happen. You just got the like just keep going and going and pushing and pushing.

Consistent with research on high task/high ego-oriented athletes, two athletes described a competitive performance based on social comparison. Nebula (high task/high ego) described a competitive performance as one where she is running head-to-head with better athletes. When talking about the competition, she explained, "there is a lot of good jumpers from other schools [at the meet]. So I have to compete against them to try to make a spot into the finals try to get in and then just try to place points at that point." Yolanda (high task/high ego) felt the same way. She said the performance was competitive "because I'm competing against like older people that's been jumping before I have and beating them."

High task/low ego goal profile athletes described a competitive performance as a performance in which one puts forth effort and perseveres through adversity. High

task/high ego goal profile athletes felt that a competitive performance was defined by winning.

Competitive Spirit

During the interviews, the term “competitive spirit” was used often. When involved in a competitive performance, the athletes talked about having an air or demeanor that drove them to be competitive. Kiwi (high task/high ego) provided an illustrative description of competitive spirit:

Competitive spirit is just the way that you hold yourself, the way you carry yourself. It's like on the track, like you can be lazy or you can have that fire in you. And you gotta have the fire to have a competitive spirit because everybody else is going to have something. 'So what do you have that makes you extra?'

Cybil (high task/low ego) incorporated the team when describing a competitive spirit.

She described,

To me a competitive spirit is you don't compete for yourself it's a team thing. It's like when you step on your track you're not just competing to win or to run your best time, but it's all about your teammates as well. And I think having a competitive spirit is also when you can be on the sidelines you might be cheering on your teammates or say you're injured but you're still there and you're still rooting and it's just having that fire inside of you. Whether you're on the track or you're not on the track or you're on the runway or you're jumping over the high

jump bar, you just have that edge about you, but it's not just for you it's for your whole team. You can be competitive for yourself and for everybody.

Two high task/high ego goal profile athletes in the study described a competitive spirit as being perseverant, focused, and giving high effort. Nebula described a competitive spirit as "I challenge myself and I never give up." Caprice mentioned that she felt that she wasn't being competitive when she did not have a competitive spirit. When asked why she felt she did not have a competitive spirit, she explained "I wasn't focused. I didn't give my all into it. And I didn't care." Competitive spirit was described as an attitude and a motivator. The athletes felt that competitive spirit was a disposition that comes out when they are being competitive.

Physical Preparation and Competitiveness

Along with mental preparation, the athletes in the study described the physical preparation necessary to be competitive. A main component of physical preparation came prior to competition during practice and some athletes described their physical preparation the morning or night before the meet. As Edwina (high task/low ego) described,

Now since I'm a senior, I try to put forth, I don't want to say more effort than I did last year, but I try to do a lot of extra things that I know [Coach is] not gonna have us do. And if I see that the other girls need something, like a lot of our cross country girls they're good runners but they don't have any speed work, so I try

to be like 'ok we need to get up in the morning and do this or whatever. You should get up in the morning and do this.' And then if they decide to get up in the morning and do it, then that's fine. I mean I have no problem getting up with them and going out there with them and just doing something in the morning.

Candice (high task/low ego) described her preparation and the things she does prior to competition. She explained,

I know at practice I'll be kind of calm before we start practice. I don't really talk to my teammates. But when I [am] at the meets the night before, I'll get enough amount of sleep. Sometimes I can run off of like four hours of sleep, sometimes I can run off of eight. It just depends. I eat a good meal and then the day of the meet I don't really eat much. I just drink water or Gatorade or something like a snack or something.

When asked what steps does she take to put forth high effort Emily (high task/low ego) answered,

Right now, a lot of weightlifting. I lift weights a lot. On and off the track, trying my best and put forth the best effort possible. When I say that I have to do a lot of work in the weight room and I also have to do the treadmill, the Stairmaster, and go out there and run with the girls. To them it may not seem like I'm doing a lot, but they don't know what's going on behind the scenes, but the coaches know.

Stephanie (high task/high ego) gave an example of a how she pushes herself in practice:

On Tuesdays and Thursdays we run to Fort Monroe and I just try to drop my time. I put the whole; I think it's a mile and a half-2 mile, into segments. And once I get to a certain point I pick it up a little more. And once you cross the bridge and about to go over to where we are about to end and stuff, I'd say it's about a little more over a quarter and I just try to like sprint and push my all. And ever since I've been doing that, my time has been dropping every time, probably about 10 seconds, 20 seconds. So I think from starting out from the beginning I was running may be 18 [minutes] and now I think it's down to like 16 minutes.

Stephanie (high task/high ego) talks about the steps she takes toward putting forth high effort. She described,

I try to eat good. Breakfast is important 'cause being that I'm a jumper, we usually jump early. So I try to get up, get breakfast. [I] try to wake myself up so I'm not sluggish. When I'm warming up I usually try to warm up pretty hard. Do my warm up laps a little faster to get my legs warmed up quicker. I do a lot of drills and try not to sit 'cause when you sit your legs tend to tighten up, especially with jumping. That's the main part that I'm using. So I try to stay loose and to focus on what I have to do...If the temperature is real high I try to stay hydrated. I try to stay warm and keep stretching and keep moving. [I] try to walk

after I run so I won't get tight...I practice every day. I put forth my best effort and it shows. It's like I'm blocking out everything else that's outside of track and once I'm on the track it's just I keep pushing myself even more, try to find my max.

A common response to being physically prepared was to link feeling physically prepared or in shape with being ready for competition. As Yolanda (high task/high ego) described, "My body feels good. It feels as if I'm in shape" which was associated with feeling physically prepared and "ready" for competition. Cybil (high task/low ego) connected her physical preparation with feeling confident:

Typically I don't really feel anything just because people have told me I'm physically prepared for anything. It's just that I have to tell myself that I'm physically prepared. Because I know the training that we do, I know I could go out and run anything at a time my coach would want me to. But I think, just for me knowing that I'm physically prepared and ready, it's better than anything else.

Athletes of both goal profiles shared similar steps in how they physically prepared for competition: by working hard in practice and being well rested prior to competition. Many of the athletes also talked about the psychological benefit of feeling physically prepared for competition.

Effort, Practice, and Competitiveness

Practice is a precursor to competition. All the athletes felt that practice was important to be competitive. Most of the athletes also felt that performance in practice translates into, and predicts, performance during competition.

Task Orientation and Practice Behavior. The high task-oriented athletes emphasized that practice was a means to acquire skills and improve technique. All but one of the high task/low ego goal profile athletes said that they put forth high effort in practice. Murphy, Candice, Cybil, and Emily all put forth high effort in practice. Cybil explained,

I feel like every time I go to practice I definitely put forth effort only because I've finally grown to understand what people have been trying to tell me in the past few years of my life. That if I put forth the effort in practice, going to a meet will be a breeze. And even though I'm still trying to get to the breeze part of the meet, I do feel like training extremely hard in practice and just putting everything on the line in practice makes competing feel like 'oooh I can do this. You know I ran 8 miles on Monday I can definitely breeze through three at 19 minutes.' I definitely feel like giving effort every time I go to practice.

Edwina explained that she needed to see the point of a particular workout which determined how much effort she put forth. She said,

Practice...it all depends on what the workout is. If I think that the workout is something crazy and off the wall and it doesn't serve any purpose then no [I

don't give any effort]. But if it's something that I feel like ok well we're doing this and this so it's working then yes. But if it's something ridiculous or he expects us to make some ridiculous time that I just, then like ok I just do it if I make the time if I don't then I don't cry about it.

Some of the athletes felt that it was important to be competitive in practice.

Donna described practice as being competitive because she and her teammates push each other. She expressed,

We sometimes, in practice, push each other. I guess you could consider that being competitive. In practice, we push each other so you know we get better and I guess that is a form of competitiveness in a way...Running against other people in practice as you would run a track meet [is competitive].

Two high task/low ego goal profile athletes expressed that practice led to being competitive in meets. Cybil explained,

It helps me to see past practice. Like it helps me to know that putting forth that extra effort in practice is going to help me to compete that much better when I do go to my cross country meets or when indoor starts.

Similarly Emily, felt

You have to compete wherever you go, against your teammates. Because if you don't push each other, then how are you gonna run in a meet and compete

against the other females that are out there. So you're competing all the way around.

High task/low ego goal profile athletes felt that it was essential to put forth high effort in practice. They also felt that practice can be competitive because their teammates were there to push them.

Ego Orientation and Practice Behavior. Three high task/high ego goal profile athletes described that their effort in practice was not consistent. Caprice felt that it was essential to put forth high effort in practice. She said,

Whatever you do in practice will show in competing. Even though we're not basically competing with our team, but in order to do good, you have to force yourself and get with someone you think is good such as Kiwi. Like she's ranked number one so I try to not necessarily beat her, but I'm trying to give her a run for her money as well as mine.

Consistent with a high ego orientation, some athletes described how they are selective with putting forth effort in practice. Though Yolanda felt that it was important to put forth high effort in practice, she did not always do so. Yolanda explained "at practice you be tired. I mean I can be competitive for like the first seven to eight races but all ten of them -- I can't go all hard on ten of them." In regards to exerting effort in practice, Yolanda said,

not all the time. Sometimes, 'cause I don't really put everything in to practice every time...I guess I just don't do it. That's a problem. I put like, if you say like you got one more left or like two left, then I'll go hard. But if you're like ten 200 [meters] or like six 300 [meters] I'm not going to run all of them hard.

In practice, Nebula said she does not put forth as much effort as she should. "But when coach starts to say stuff to me, it motivates me to do better."

Two other high task/high ego goal profile athletes described changes in their practice effort. Caprice said "in the beginning I try. And I try to finish but sometimes your spirits are just not up, especially when you hear what you have to do. It depends on what you have to do." Nicky said she just began putting forth high effort recently during her senior year. "Yes, this year," she explained,

This year, like I said, is my senior year and I want to do better. And last year I was coming off injuries, so it was kind of just to see what I could do. I was kind of skeptical. And I wasn't sure...like I didn't want to get injured again, so I wasn't pushing myself to that limit. But now, I know what I can do this year and I'm like I have nothing to lose. It's all or nothing. So this year is kind of an all or nothing year.

The athletes were asked whether they can be competitive in practice and whether practice can be competitive. Some of the athletes felt that practice can be competitive and that the competitiveness sometimes occurs from competing against their

teammates. They described the importance of being competitive in practice. As Kiwi explained,

I learned that your muscles react off memory so if you can treat every day like a race situation your body will be prepared for when it's a race situation. So you don't have to convert over to that mode; your body will just be ready to go. So I try to, I don't say I race my teammates, but I definitely push the pace.

Yolanda also talked about working off her teammates as motivation. She said "in a way like being competitive with your teammates. Trying to pace off each other and running with each other."

Contrary to Kiwi, Nebula said, "I'm not very competitive at practice, but I should be." When asked why, she explained,

Because it's just how I am. I put forth more effort at the actual event than at practice...right now we're just doing running stuff at practice and I'm not really a runner so I'm not going to try to beat everyone else because I can't do it. But when we do jumping drills I do my best at that.

Three high task/high ego goal profile athletes had different perceptions on why practice can be competitive. Caprice flip-flopped on whether practice could be competitive. For Caprice, practice couldn't be competitive because it was repetitive and "because of the quantity" of what they did in practice.

I would kind of think of it not as much because sometimes when you do stuff over and over and over and over, like, you know what's basically gonna happen. And you're like now here it is 'cause basically we do the same workouts every week. And it takes a toll on your body. Your body's like let's do something else. It's like 'oh here's a 200 [meters].'

She then went on to say,

Because it's every week you know what you're supposed to do and being competitive because over the weeks our time drops. So you have to stay focused at least even though we're doing 10. At least, I try to get at least my first three first, four in those times. But after that my time slowly decreases.

Nicky and Stephanie both felt that motivation from their teammates brings competitiveness to practice. Nicky explained

Because even with my teammates, like I'm not the favorite triple jumper on the team. So I can sense favoritism or whoever I'm running with coach is cheering for her which is fine because that only motivates me. Like when I'm running I'm like 'he's cheering for her to break this time, but I'm a show him that I can break the time.' So even though she's on my team I feel like a lot of competitiveness between the two of us.

Many of the high task/high ego goal profile athletes felt that it was important to put forth high effort in practice; however, contrary to their beliefs they were selective

when they chose to put forth high effort. Similar to high task/low ego goal profile athletes, high task/high ego goal profile athletes also felt that practice can be competitive.

Similarities of Practice and Competition. Some of the athletes in the study described how practice translates to competition and how practice should replicate competition. Murphy (high task/low ego) said, “well basically the way I run at practice is the way I should be running at a meet. If I get out hard in practice I need to get out hard at the meet.” Kiwi (high task/high ego) described the relevance of practice as:

well first I prepare for practice like every day, just make sure I give all I have so when competition occurs I know I’m ready and I’m in shape and I just trust my training and trust my coach and just relax...it’s like the steps I take everyday and then like my competition it all goes together because without my everyday steps in practice, the competition like I wouldn’t have the confidence in myself to know that I can perform to the highest ability.

Candice (high task/low ego) also agreed by saying “yeah, cause the way you practice is the way you compete. And the more you practice, the better you get, and if you put forth effort then everything will play out.” Stephanie (high task/high ego) similarly described the transfer from practice:

Because if you're putting forth all your effort trying to compete with your teammates, that same adrenaline you have in practice will go towards in the meet or something like that. The same effort you put forth will transfer over.

To these athletes, practice emerged as an influential factor in being competitive. Many of the athletes regardless of goal profile felt that it was important to put forth effort in practice because practice translates into competition. Though some high task/high ego goal profile athletes did not follow what they believed in terms of putting forth effort in practice they felt that it was important.

Socialization and Becoming Competitive

Throughout the interviews, the athletes described the ways in which they learned to be competitive. There were various agents of socialization that emerged as contributors to the athletes' insight about competitiveness. The agents of socialization included family, coaches, teammates, as well as learning through their general sport participation. The athletes talked about how these agents of socialization shaped their competitive sport experiences. They illustrated how, where, and when they learned what it means to be competitive. They also described changes in their competitiveness as their experiences changed.

General Sports Participation

Involvement in sport shaped these athletes' views about sport and competition. For the athletes in the study, much of this learning occurred through participation in

track and field as well as in other sporting activities. This was true for both goal profiles. Learning also occurred through observing other athletes participating in sport. Early sporting activities such as field days, physical education activities, and recess provided the impetus to understanding competitiveness for some of these athletes. Nicky (high task/high ego) referenced the first time she experienced sport-related competition as:

...in elementary school at field day. And you would just run your relay and you know when you finished your relay, you're gonna get a ribbon, whether it's the blue, the red one, or the yellow one. And I think that's where it all started, when you know, you have to beat that other class and you just look forward to getting that ribbon at the end. I think that's where competitiveness started.

Donna (high task/low ego) said that she learned "just in sport altogether...I mean in games and everything." Candice (high task/low ego) learned about being competitive through the motivational climates while playing "street football in the neighborhood, gymnastics, swimming, and basketball." While participating in these sports, she learned about "winning and going against others, how much capability [and] skill you have, how much more endurance, like with swimming, endurance and technique." Caprice (high task/high ego) expressed, "I learned just [from] having myself involved with other people playing games. You always have offense and defense, so it's going to be competitive and I guess that's how I learned."

Some athletes participated in sports other than track and field and learned what it means to be competitive from those experiences. Stephanie (high task/high ego) learned about competitiveness from her high school basketball experiences. She explained,

I learned it [competitiveness] because I got more dedicated to the game and it was like championships and it was a team that we knew we could beat. And we knew that the team, we should be number one and they shouldn't. The referees, we could not count on them, they were cheating. So we just had to step up our game and be more competitive and not just go off our skills and technique because the other team had stepped up their game.

This athlete described how being put in a competitive situation enabled her to learn what it means to be competitive.

Two athletes learned about competitiveness through their track and field experiences. Yolanda (high task/high ego) described,

In eighth grade we had a track meet and I was just running and I didn't really think about winning or anything. And then after like in the ninth grade when I got to high school, I learned that you had to really strive. You got to compete against other people, and be real competitive... [Now] I feel like more competitive. Like at each track meet, my competitiveness gets better.

Similarly, Emily (high task/low ego) described her high school experiences as,

I just had a lot of support from my [track] teammates. And everybody was aggressive in practice [and] in the [track] meets. Because to be competitive enough is to be a fighter and that's what it was at our school. We fought through practice and we fought at the meets. And if you didn't, it was like football, if you didn't leave without a scar, you ain't run hard enough.

These athletes described that participating in sporting activities from grade school up to their current experiences shaped their perceptions of competitiveness. Many of those experiences motivated the athletes to be the competitors they are today.

Socializing Agents

Some athletes discussed learning what it means to be competitiveness from socializing agents such as family members and teammates. Family members had a strong influence on the athletes' knowledge about competitiveness. For many athletes, they followed in the footsteps of family members who also participated in sports. This is true for Kiwi (high task/high ego) who said, "sports [have] always been in my family. So I guess it's just everybody just does sports, so you just want to win. So it's just in my background." Nebula (high task/high ego) said, "[my dad] taught me how to play sports when I was younger. I learned everything from him. He taught me never to give up." Similarly, Cybil recalled, "when I was growing up my dad used to always say that I need to be determined, dedicated, and to have a drive." She elaborated,

My father was the professional athlete and I was practically born into a competitive family. Just my mom and my older sister, just watching [my sister] compete. And competitiveness is just throughout my family, so it's kind of like in my genes. But I really learned it from my dad he was always instilling something in me that made me want to be competitive not towards sports but just for everything but I do in life.

Murphy felt that she learned what it meant to be competitive in college. She explained that she learned competitiveness from

running with the people on my team and stuff. Because in high school I was probably the only one out there, so I didn't really have anybody to run against. But once I got here I just saw, I looked up to the seniors and the upperclassmen and the way they did it and the fight they put out. And I'm like 'oh this is what it's supposed to look like. This is what you're supposed to do.' So [I learned it] definitely here.

At first Edwina (high task/low ego) felt that she has not learned what it means to be competitive. Edwina answered,

I don't think I've actually learned what it means to be competitive. 'Cause I'm just a really laid back person. It's either I'm a get out there and do it, put 100% in to it and that's it. Or I'm just going to be like 'all right' just chill out and do whatever.

She further explained,

No, I never really learned what it is because all the sports that I played, they were either team sports and we never really got to like that next level where you have to be really competitive in order to win. In high school basketball, we didn't even make conference. And then track, we were always district champions and then we went to States, it was kind of like whatever. My coach would always be like we're just here for the experience.

However after further thought, Edwina felt that her collegiate track experiences shaped her perceptions about competitiveness. She said,

I'm more competitive than what I was my freshman year when I got here. So that's a good thing. And it's just I just learned to be a little more competitive. I'm not super competitive, but I'm competitive enough to where when it's time to get down to business then, I do what I have to do. So whereas in high school I'll just be like okay, alright she beat me.

She explained that she learned about competitiveness through everyday life experiences:

I guess more or less through life and trying to get what you want. And realizing that it's other people; it's 10 other people trying to do the same thing that you're trying to do. And in order for you to get the job you want or whatever, you have to be 10 times better than the next person.

Family members and teammates served as examples of what it means to be competitive for the athletes in this study.

Competitive Motivation

Some of the athletes described the things that influenced or motivated them to be competitive. Teammates often influenced them through their attitudes, performance, or effort. Some athletes described they are motivated to avoid disappointing other people.

Nebula (high task/high ego) described that her teammates provided her with support when she was doing badly. She said, “if I’m doing bad, then my teammates can cheer me up and encourage me to do better and that will make me more competitive.”

When asked what could help her to be more competitive, Yolanda (high task/high ego) replied, her “teammates” could by “encouraging me.” Edwina (high task/low ego) described how the presence of certain teammates affects her performance. She explained,

there’s people on the team that if they’re, I’m not even going to say if it’s proven that if they’re not at a meet, and I don’t feel or I’m not ready to run and they’re not there, then I don’t really run as well. And if they are there, I’ll be like ‘I got to run well.’ Like ok she is depending on me to do this so I’m a do this and I’m a run my best because I don’t want her to be disappointed.

Later Edwina also explained that her teammates were a major source of support for her to be competitive:

My teammates are the ones that are standing on the side of the line cheering for me and telling me you can do this, you can do that. Whereas with coaches, some coaches if you don't run well they're not gonna speak to you until you run well again. So it's just like I can't depend on that, I have to depend on the support of my teammates, or other people, who ever else comes to the meet whether it's my teammates or people from another team.

Cybil [high task/low ego] felt that her teammates affected her performance. She explained,

If I'm about to run the 4 x 8 [hundred meter relay] and I see the 4 x 4 [hundred meter relay] and they're running prelims and they blow everybody out that's going to give me and my teammates hyped to go blow everybody out. So I think it's almost a domino effect; you know, once one of us get hit with it, it kind of affects every body.

Three athletes described that their competitors influenced their effort. Donna (high task/low ego) said,

I mean when people walk around like when you're at a track meet people walk around talking like you know 'I'm the best.' 'I can beat you.' You know that kind of amps you up like 'ok you think you can beat me, maybe I can beat you.' It gets you pumped up.

Candice and Yolanda both described how their competitors motivated them. Candice [high task/low ego] expressed “I mean, in a race, if you’re trying to be competitive, of course the other person is going to try to out beat you, and then you’re going to try to outrun them and everything.” Similarly, Yolanda [high task/high ego] stated, “they [opponents] try to beat me every time at a track meet. It makes me work harder.”

Two athletes with high ego orientation felt that they were not influenced by other people in terms of being competitive. Kiwi (high task/high ego) and Nicky (high task/high ego) both described how they have a self focus. Kiwi expressed,

I don’t say I don’t care about people, ‘cause I care about my teammates and what they do, but it comes a point when you gotta just do what you gotta do for yourself. And my races are individual besides the relays. So I don’t let anybody affect that. I just do what I gotta do.

Similarly when asked does anyone affect her competitiveness, Nicky answered,

sometimes, most often I say no because I try not to let that happen. If I’m ready to jump, then I don’t care if you’re over there yelling and screaming because I’m going to focus on what I have to do. I’m not going to let your hype or your anger or whatever you’re doing affect the way I feel about how I’m about to jump because I’m calm or whatever. I’m ready to do what I got to do. So no, for the most part no, I don’t think somebody else’s competitiveness will affect me.

The athletes gained knowledge about competitiveness from many different mediums. Some learned through life experiences and participating in sports, as well as influences of family members and teammates.

Coach Influences

A coach plays a very important role in the lives of athletes. She or he influences athletes in many ways, directly and indirectly. In this study, the athletes described how their coach motivated them, whether they shared the same goals with him, and whether they had similar perceptions about competitiveness. Themes that emerged were coach competitiveness, coach goal orientation and goals, coach-athlete congruence, and feedback from the coach.

Athlete Perceptions of Coach's Competitiveness

The athletes in the study were asked how they think their coach would define competitiveness. Various definitions emerged: some athletes felt that the coach would define competitiveness consistent with an ego orientation whereas other athletes felt that the coach would define competitiveness consistent with a task orientation.

The athletes perceived the coach to place a lot of emphasis on winning; therefore, they felt the coach defined being competitive as winning. Edwina (high task/low ego) said, "I guess he would define it as winning. That's all I can think. That's all I ever really hear him talking about is winning, winning the MEAC, winning your conference." Similarly Donna (high task/low ego) said the coach would define competitiveness as

“being the best, being number one, being the fastest.” Caprice (high task/high ego) felt that the coach would describe competitiveness as “if we do what we need to do individually, we can come together and as a team win and continue to win.” To Stephanie (high task/high ego), the coach would define competitiveness as “just beating the top person.”

Two of the athletes interpreted the coach’s competitiveness as relating to effort or performing to one’s potential. As they described, he stressed preparation, effort, perseverance, and assertiveness. Nebula (high task/high ego) interpreted that the coach wanted her “to put forth more effort.” Yolanda (high task/high ego) interpreted the coach’s competitiveness to mean “go fast or be focused. Like go out there and take it.”

Three athletes interpreted the coach’s competitiveness as performing to one’s potential. Murphy (high task/low ego) said, “...indoor, when I start off, I’m not really running to my capability. It’s like I’m holding in, and he tells me all the time ‘you have to get out. You have to beat everybody to that cone when you break in. So you have to be competitive and you have to get ready when that gun goes off, just to be out.’”

Caprice (high task/high ego) expressed,

I think he would define it as mentally and physically, it has to be all in one. You can’t do one without the other. You can say ‘I’m going to win this, but if you’re not physically able and physically fit, then of course you’re not going to perform

or be the best. And say you are the best but you don't have the mentality or the focus and the drive. So it goes hand in hand.

Nebula (high task/high ego) stated that the coach would define competitiveness as "doing your best, never giving up, and working hard as a team." She also felt that he would define competitiveness as "putting forth as much as you can as an individual to make the team better as a whole." Candice (high task/low ego) felt that the coach would define competitiveness "as being aggressive... at the start of my race ... be[ing] aggressive getting out of the blocks. And if somebody were to come up and challenge me, to hold them off." Yolanda (high task/high ego) felt that the coach would define competitiveness as "working hard and being strong." Similarly, Murphy (high task/low ego) said the coach would define competitiveness as "like when the gun goes off, you're out. There's no falling behind. There's no slacking off. You get out and you finish hard."

Overall, the athletes perceived their coach to have both task and ego-oriented perceptions of competitiveness. They felt he emphasized winning, or a combination of winning and improvement. Some of the athletes felt that the coach emphasized a winning focus. Others felt that the coach emphasized both winning and improvement.

Coach Goal Orientation

Whether a coach reinforces winning or skill improvement will differently influence athletes' perceptions of competitiveness and their experiences on the team.

This notion emerged in the interviews. The athletes in this study were asked what their

coach's goals were for them when they competed and whether they felt their coach emphasized winning or improvement. Many of the athletes described that the coach's goals reflected both task and ego-oriented goals. The coach's goals were described to include winning, competing well, and performing to one's potential. The outcome appeared to be his ultimate goal, but the athletes also should run a fast time or jump a good distance/height, and perform to one's potential.

Candice (high task/low ego) described her coach's goals for her as "number one to win and probably give my best effort. " She also said his goals included "making progress" and "winning championships." Yolanda (high task/high ego) said the same: "to win, to do my best, and try hard. To compete." Supporting the coach's outcome focus, Kiwi (high task/high ego) said her coach's goals for her are "to always win. He wants me to be the best. Be the best in the MEAC." Kiwi (high task/high ego) also described that the coach emphasized both winning and improvement. She said,

he likes when I drop my time and I keep improving and improving. But he always expects me to win. Even if it's like a small meet, he's just like 'run your race.' 'Run fast, run fast, do what you got to do.'

Cybil (high task/low ego) agreed, stating,

I think he emphasizes both at the same time. But I think more of improvement just because he knows that if we see ourselves improving that's going to

motivate us even more to want to win. So I think he emphasizes both, but more of improvement.

Two athletes explained that the coach's goals for them were situational. Murphy (high task/low ego) said,

Depending on the meet, he wants me to get first, but not so much to win but to run a good time. Like for each meet, he kind of has like a standard time he wants me to run. So like in the beginning of the season, it might start off at like 56 [seconds] but by the end of the season he wants me to be at 53 or 52 [seconds]...mainly he wants us to run fast and get these times down. It doesn't matter if you come in second, third, or fourth, but as long as your times keep dropping and you're doing what you have to do. But by the time MEAC championships come, it's all about you getting first, second, or third, but mainly first.

Cybil (high task/low ego) described,

The goals Coach sets for me depends on the race. I think if we're at a very competitive race, he's like 'just go out here and run your best time. Just run against the clock. Don't worry about anybody else but you know PR today'. But I think if we're competing against people who he knows are just not physically up to par or in the same physical category that we are and if he knows that we are

like in better shape, he's going to say 'you better go out there and not let these girls beat you and run your best time.'

One athlete felt the coach solely wanted her to win. Caprice (high task/high ego) expressed "his goals are very high. He wants you to aim at first place. He thinks that every meet is supposed to be a good meet." Ultimately, the athletes felt that coach wanted them to win, however most also felt he also wanted them to make performance improvements, put forth effort, and work hard.

Coach-Athlete Congruence

During the interviews, some of the athletes described that they had the same goals as their coach. Similarities in goals between the coach and athletes, influences the motivation level of the athletes and can therefore affect performance. Murphy (high task/low ego) said "I think we have the same, like we set the same type of goals. Like he wants me to qualify for NC's indoor and outdoor [NCAA Championships], I do too. He wants me to gain some weight, I do too. So you know we're on the same [page]."

Nebula (high task/high ego) explained, "they [goals] don't really differentiate. They're both the same basically. Because he wants me to jump far and I want to jump far."

Nicky (high task/high ego), Yolanda (high task/high ego), and Caprice (high task/high ego) all stated they have the same goal as their coach, "to win." Most of the athletes who said they had the same goals as their coach described ego-oriented goals—to win. Cybil (high task/low ego) said,

I think right now coach and I are pretty much on the same level which is weird because we we've never been before. But I think for right now, just for example for this cross-country season, he wants me to win and I want to win. And so we're both focused on me winning and neither one of us wants to settle with me just running a great time. I think that in this situation he wants me to win and run a great time and I want to win and run a great time. And we both want this team championship so I can say for right now for these past couple of weeks since I've been back since the season started we've been on the same page.

Cybil (high task/low ego) continued to explain that this congruence helped motivate her:

It makes me want to try that much harder just to know, it makes me feel good that my coach, we see eye to eye. Coach is like 'I want you to run your best time and I want you to win. I want you to give forth your effort.' And since were on the same page, it makes it easier to compete and that way my effort is just that much more visible.

Coach and Athlete Interactions

In the dynamic of sport, the coach and the athlete spend a lot of time interacting with each other. During this interaction, the coach provides the athlete with instruction, feedback, and motivation. From these interactions, the coach can have both a productive and unproductive affect on the athletes. These athletes described the ways

in which their coach tried to motivate them and how it affected them. The coach's means for motivation was viewed as both productive and unproductive. For example, productive motivational strategies included keeping the athletes focused on the task they are engaged in and being encouraging. Whereas some athletes felt the coach used unproductive motivational strategies that used did not encourage them.

Murphy, Edwina, Emily, and Donna, all with a high task/low ego goal profile, described that the coach tries to keep them focused on their competitive goals whether its team goals or individual. Murphy (high task/low ego) expressed, "He knows that I want to go professional, so at practice he always lets me know that. And he really helps me to stay focused and just keep my spirits up." Edwina (high task/low ego), Emily (high task/low ego), and Donna (high task/low ego) all relayed that the coach often said, "we have things to do" and "ya'll know what ya'll gotta do, do it." Emily explained,

...and everybody knows what that means. We have things to do. We have things to do when we get out there at practice. We got to work hard because if we don't work hard somebody else is. And if somebody else is working hard, we have to work harder because that's the only way we're going to win championships.

Edwina said the coach motivates her, "if like we are in trouble during championships, he'll be like 'all right ya'll aren't doing this and this and this. Ya'll need to step it up, talk to your teammates, do what you gotta do.'"

Other athletes who felt that coach motivated them in a productive manner described the coach as encouraging. Caprice recollected, "I know like during MEAC's, he gives us poems and insight and just helps [with] encouragement to kind of ease the pressure off of us." Yolanda described, "He tells me that this year goin' to be my first year competing, so he was like that I'm ready for it and that a lot of people out there [are] trying to beat me. So he [said] I need to try harder, work to be stronger." Yolanda said her coach "makes me go harder. Like run harder and jump farther."

Cybil [high task/low ego] described that the coach constantly reminded her how talented she was. She said,

My coach motivates me just [by] telling me how good he knows that I am and how he doesn't want to see my talent go to waste. And I think that for me, that's the best thing that he can do, just telling me, 'I know you can do it. All you need to do is believe that you can do it.' And he says that to me all the time. Whether we're at practice or before [a] meet, after [a] meet, during a meet, just always telling me that he believes in me. He [is] always like 'I know you can do it if you believe you can do it. A lot of people are going to be shocked.'

Nicky (high task/high ego) expressed that the coach would provide positive reinforcement when she put forth high effort.

If he sees me working hard, sometimes he [would] be like 'ok [Nicky] I see you.'

And it feels good to know that my coach notices how hard I'm working. Even

when I'm about to fall out, its good to hear 'I see you. I see what you're doing. I see that you're trying.' And if he wants me to lower my time sometimes and he says 'I know you can do it.' I guess it's like the little things that encourages.

Sometimes it's good not to say anything and if he's rooting for the other person that I'm running against, that motivates me too. Because if I am ahead and you're telling the other girl to catch me, if I'm falling out I'm a find a way not to let her catch me. So sometimes that can be motivating too.

Candice [high task/low ego] said that the coach tries to motivate her "by yelling." She furthered, "To me that kind of gives me a good sign. If you're yelling at me, telling me what I need to correct, then obviously you see something in me as far as my potential and you're trying to bring it out." Though it may seem unproductive, Candice interpreted the coach's yelling in a productive way.

Some of the athletes described that the coach used unproductive actions in an attempt to motivate them. Unproductive actions include "negative reinforcement," and behaviors that may not be conducive to athletic achievement. Nebula (high task/high ego) described, "He'll be like I'm going to make you into a shot putter. He threatens me and that helps me too though. It makes me mad, but it helps me." What Nebula described can be viewed as an unproductive motivational technique, but she believes that it motivated her. In regards to how that affected her she said, "it just makes me

wanna put forth as much effort as I can to try to reach it. It makes me want to do better.”

Other athletes did not feel the same way. Stephanie lamented, “he tries to motivate us by threatening us. That’s it and talking negative.” Kiwi (high task/high ego) described:

He does a negative reinforcement thing. Like he tries to motivate me by putting me down. And it used to bother me. It used to not motivate me. But now I don’t care. But he’ll just be like ‘oh well this girl runs faster than you so you better run in there.’ ‘Murphy’s doing such and such and such so you gotta...’

Kiwi described how the coach’s actions were unproductive. She said,

Coach has a funny way of motivating people. He creates competition within the team and I don’t think that’s very healthy because it creates problems. And I don’t want to compete against my teammates. Because if they beat me [in a] race then the points go to [our team]. And he creates this real unhealthy competition between us. And I don’t like it.

Kiwi felt that the coach’s motivational strategies tended to affect her in both productive and unproductive ways. Kiwi (high task/high ego) described, “I let coach get to me all the time. So it’s just more like frustrating. It was frustration like I did not feel appreciated at the time. It used to make me just not want to run.” She continued, “it used to affect me a whole lot. I guess I have matured and grown up a whole lot. It

would affect me it would bother me. It would make me I guess not want to try so hard.”

Kiwi, later said, “[now] actually it motivates me more because I know like somewhere inside him, he doubts me, so I like when he doubts me so I can prove him wrong.”

Overall, many of the athletes described their coach as being a highly ego-oriented coach. Some athletes described some task-oriented characteristics but emphasis was placed on ego-oriented criteria for evaluating success. Some of the athletes felt that they were on the same page as their coach in terms of their goals. Most of the time, the coach played an important role as a motivator, providing feedback that enabled them to perform well and make improvements.

In summary, various socialization factors emerged that aided in the development of each athlete’s perceptions of competitiveness. Ultimately the athletes’ goal profile provided a basis of how they defined competitiveness. In many instances both high task/low ego goal profile and high task/high ego goal profile athletes shared similar opinions about competitiveness. The athletes felt that effort was related to competitiveness. Though some felt they did not consistently put forth effort, they recognized that to be competitive one must put forth effort. When describing a competitive performance, the athletes consistently described it in relation to their goal profile. They felt that a precursor to having a competitive performance was to be competitive in practice. Perceptions about competitiveness materialized to be a socialized process. These athletes received examples from their environment and

interactions with family and teammates that helped shape their perceptions about competitiveness. The athletes' coach also created an environment where they were able to continue to develop their perceptions of what it means to be competitive.

Perfectionism

When involved in an activity that evaluates performance in terms of success, athletes adopt perfectionistic tendencies to obtain that success. Perfectionistic tendencies included setting high personal standards, having concerns over mistakes, and being motivated by fear of failure. Productive perfectionists set high personal standards and allow flexibility when they do not achieve their goals. In this study, when these athletes did not achieve success or standards set for a performance, they adjusted and tried to improve on subsequent performance. Conversely, unproductive perfectionists set high personal standards without flexibility, are highly concerned with making mistakes, and are motivated by fear of failure. In this study, unproductive perfectionistic athletes were aware when they made a mistake and were driven to avoid failure. When they made a mistake, they felt distress which potentially had a negative effect on upcoming performances. Both high task/low ego goal profile and high task/high ego goal profiled athletes displayed productive and unproductive perfectionistic tendencies.

Defining a Perfect Performance

Striving for perfection during a performance can lead to a personal best, a fast time, and even a win. The athletes' goal profiles were evident in their descriptions of a perfect performance. That is, some athletes described a perfect performance in terms of improving skills or tactics for an event, improving their time, accurately executing technique, and performing to their potential. Many of the athletes in the study described a perfect performance as a combination of both self-referenced and other-referenced criteria, where they focused on both the process and outcome of the performance. These athletes also described how important it was to have a perfect performance. Some said that it was very important while others felt that perfection was unattainable. Three athletes described a perfect performance in terms of self-referenced criteria. They emphasized the process of achieving a goal, such as executing an optimal race plan, as well as the unlikelihood of actually achieving perfection. As Edwina (high task/low ego) described,

A perfect performance would be, I guess for me, since I have been turned into an 800 meter runner, would be just getting the start right, staying relaxed, and being able to maintain the right pace for the first lap, and then being able to kick the last 200 like you're supposed to.

Nebula who has a high task/high ego profile, said a perfect performance was her goal. She said "It's very important to me. It's like a goal that I have for myself. When I

do my absolute best and I work really hard and I don't exactly have to meet my goal but come close to it." Nicky (high task/high ego) said a perfect performance for her would be achieving "a goal that I set that I want to do and executing it the way I want it to be done, not to scratch all six jumps. And to get better on every jump." Nicky also recognized the improbability of having a perfect performance. She said,

I don't strive [for it]...well perfect is a strong word to use for it. I try to do good. I try to do great. I try to do better. But perfect is something that's going to take a lot of time to do a perfect triple jump. So I wouldn't say perfection is my aim right now. My aim is to get better. It's to put my legs out in front of me. To break my form down, work on one thing at a time. So I wouldn't say perfection is at the top of my list. I would say it's more like improving and getting better; making my form look better.

To Cybil, perfection is

not that important because I know that I'm not going to be perfect. I know that even if I step on the track and I run 2:08, something probably could've been done better and I may have been able to run a 2:06. And especially since I have so many technical difficulties with the way I run. I know that it'll never be perfect.

Other athletes described a perfect performance as having a combination of both ego- and task-oriented characteristics. These athletes focused on process, outcome, and performance goals in their definition of a perfect performance. For them, a perfect

performance was described as improving time, obtaining a certain place at a meet, using correct technique, and feeling physically capable. For example, Kiwi (high task/high ego) described a perfect performance as:

...executing everything that I worked on in practice and PRing, would be nice like to drop my time. I guess it's the execution of everything that I've worked on because I don't see the point of continually working on something and then not doing it in a race. You know not doing it right. So I guess just perfect would be getting everything done and feeling good, no injuries.

Murphy (high task/low ego) described a perfect performance as having task and ego-oriented components. She felt that a perfect performance, "it's very important; very, very important." To her, a perfect performance would be "to make top eight at the NC's [NCAA championships]. That's a perfect performance. To go out there with the right mindset and just stay focused 'cause I know I can run with them." Although focused on the outcome (the influence of her ego orientation), she also expressed how her task orientation led her to achieve that outcome:

just getting out hard which is something that indoor and outdoor I don't like.

Not that I don't like doing, but I guess I'm afraid of doing because I don't want to burn out at the end. So getting out hard and finishing hard. Not getting out easy and then having to work all the rest of the way just to catch up.

Yolanda who also has a high task/high ego orientation felt that a perfect performance occurs when one is in shape. She described a time when she had a perfect performance.

It was my first indoor meet for that year and when I jumped it didn't even feel like I jumped far 'cause I was really in shape and I ain't even feel like it. So when I turned and it said 44 feet and I was jumping up. I was so much in shape; it really didn't feel like I went that far.

She added "it gets more points for the team. And it helps out my teammates when I strive to give more effort."

Cybil described a perfect performance as one when she competed through adversity. This high task/low ego-oriented athlete said the performance was

perfect because I was being competitive and I put forth effort. This past spring season, my sophomore year I got food poisoning at the outdoor championships and Coach made me run anyways and I had to run 5000 meters...And I ended up getting fourth in the 5000 and I ran like my best time ever. And to me [that] was perfect because I looked like crap, I felt like crap. I was probably running like crap, but I was just like 'oh my gosh I can't wait to get off this track' and that's how I ran.

Perfectionism and Reactions to Mistakes

How athletes react to mistakes or when they do not achieve their goals provides insight into their perfectionistic tendencies. Unproductive perfectionists have adverse reactions when they make a mistake. Whereas, productive perfectionists learn from their mistakes, make adjustments to improve subsequent performance, or increase their effort.

Unproductive Perfectionistic Tendencies. Athletes of both goal profiles described unproductive perfectionistic tendencies when describing their reactions after making a mistake. They described feeling “down” when they made a mistake or fell short of their goals. Nebula (high task/high ego) explained,

It just messes my head up when I do something wrong. I get disappointed in myself...Like when I jump, sometimes I'll jump behind the line. Like you have the line that you have to jump at and they mark it at the line. So if you jump behind the line, then your jump is going to be measured off. It's little things like that.

Nebula further explained, “It makes me feel mad at myself. And that can [negatively] affect the way I jump later on.” Candice (high task/low ego) expressed,

I feel kind of, not like depressed, but very upset at myself. And I started thinking about the race like I should've done this. I could've done this in the start. I wish I could go back in time and fix what I did.

Emily (high task/low ego) reacts to mistakes with disappointment and embarrassment: "I'm very hard [on] myself. And sometimes I really don't want to show my face. If I don't run well, I feel like I let the team down. I let myself down." As a result, she said,

[I] stay in my room. Stay to myself. I don't really want to talk to anybody. And even though some people might try to cheer you up it's still not the same. You just feel like you didn't do your job. Sometimes it's a little depressing. Most of all it's like a disappointment to me. I don't really want to tell anybody what I ran and how I did at that meet. I probably won't mention [it] when people ask questions. Sometimes I feel like I'm going to hide within myself but I can't.

As these athletes explained, unproductive perfectionism was expressed through negative emotions after disappointing performances. While three athletes specifically described an unproductive emotional response to mistakes, only the athlete with high ego orientation in her goal profile, Nebula, expressed that these emotions then interfered with subsequent performance.

Productive Perfectionistic Tendencies. Athletes of both goal profiles displayed productive perfectionistic characteristics where they did not dwell on the negative aspects of their mistakes. Instead, when these athletes made a mistake or fell short of their goals, they were motivated to correct the mistake or to work harder to achieve their goal. Murphy (high task/low ego) described,

It'll upset me. I'll probably be upset for the rest of the meet. But you learn from the mistakes you make. And I'll make sure that the mistake that I made at this meet, I won't make at any of the other ones.

Murphy also stated that when she did not achieve her goals "it hurts. I feel as though I'm not doing something right and that I have to work harder on whatever I didn't do well."

Edwina (high task/low ego) described how she reacted when she made a mistake. She explained,

Since I do so many events I can't just let one event stop me and I'll be all depressed and whatever. Because I still have to go out and do the next event on the track. So I kind of just brush it off. I might think about it later on, like after everything is completed. But I mean, if I have something else to do then I kind of like just push it off to the side and be like 'well you gotta do this next race.'...It affects me [but] it doesn't really affect me that much because I always know that I can try again or at least I try to practice harder in practice and try to work on whatever I saw was wrong in my race.

Donna (high task/low ego) also tries not to let making a mistake bring her down. She said "umm...it throws me off a bit...I mean when you make a mistake, sometimes it brings you down, but I think that's still think of it as I can still do my best." She later

gave an example of how she makes up for making a mistake in one event. She explained,

I'm not very strong in the hurdles. During the hep [heptathlon] my time was a little slow. But I know that was the first event, so I know I still had 7, well 6 more events where I can get points from the other events.

Donna added, "I just feel like I can do better and that I need more practice or maybe I just was having an off day."

Some of these athletes described how they compensated or made up for a mistake that they made while competing. Emily (high task/low ego) specifically said this about making a mistake,

I think that if I messed up, then I have to know how I'm going to recuperate.

Where in my race do I need to make up for what I just did wrong and it's a lot of quick thinking.

She furthered,

I guess it would be a negative influence on my effort because you're like 'ahhh, I messed up, where am I going to make it up.' And you just think of something real quick. But if I messed up and I still don't end up on top or still don't run a good time, then it hurts me in a negative way. And if I messed up and I'm able to bounce back from it and still do what I need to do, then that was an experience

that I mean your going to learn [from] either way negative or positive. But [bouncing back] would be more a positive side.

Emily (high task/low ego) elaborated on the notion of working harder after making a mistake.

In the one situation where I didn't do what I needed to do after I messed up, I will, I guess in both situations [as mentioned above] it [effort] increases because now you gotta work harder because you didn't get out of the blocks fast enough. So now you have to work harder to get back in the race. You didn't go around the girl when you're supposed to, so now you got to work harder to get back in front of her so [in any situation] my effort would increase.

Yolanda (high task/high ego) uses making a mistake as a motivator. She said, "well it makes me want to do better on the next jump." She gave an example of when she made a mistake. She described,

While I was triple jumping, in my second phase I came down too hard. And I had to stop 'cause it hurt my ankle. So I had to go back and try it again. I had to adjust my steps.

Yolanda linked her poor performance to her lack of training. She explained "[it makes me feel] like I didn't really practice a much as I should've... [and as a result] my jumps and my performances are not that good on the track."

Cybil (high task/ low ego) described that thinking about a mistake interferes with her performance. She explained,

It depends if I notice. Like I think a lot of time when I'm running because I'm so nervous, I didn't notice if I make a mistake. Like if I feel like in the 800 and if I'm like 'oh darn I'm supposed to start sprinting now.' And I sprint 100 meters after I was supposed to be sprinting, if I don't notice it [the mistake], it doesn't really affect me. But if I do then [and] if I start thinking about it while I'm running it totally throws me off. My form starts falling apart I don't [want to] run anymore and I feel like moving to the side and letting everyone else finish.

As expected, athletes with a high task and low ego profile viewed mistakes as something from which to learn. However, the high task/high ego profile athletes expressed a similar response to mistakes, perhaps reflecting the positive influence of their high task orientation. As Nicky (high task/high ego) described, she felt disappointed when she did not achieve her goals, but there were some exceptions. She explained,

Sometimes [I feel] disappointed, sometimes upset. I guess it depends. But it's sort of a motivation to want to do better. To know what I have to work harder.

Sometimes you need to fail to know what you're not at your best and you can do better. And just because you're working hard doesn't mean that you gonna be the best. So you need to put in that extra effort...Sometimes I feel like I did my

best that day. And I just, that was all I have that day. So okay, next most hopefully I'll have more. Then other times it's like I could've given a little more effort and maybe I could've jumped a little further, but yeah I think it does have an affect.

Caprice (high task/high ego) described her reaction to making a mistake as "I think it affects your effort to become, to improve and to do better because your flaws or your mistakes would always be a reason and a lesson. You should learn from your mistakes to become better." Later on in the interview, she said this about making a mistake.

I think it [making a mistake] affects in a good way, for me to see what I'm doing wrong and what I need to improve. Like I like to get videotaped so I can actually see what I'm doing wrong 'cause sometimes when somebody tells you 'oh you need to pick up your leg,' but I like [to see] what am I doing, what am I actually doing and what do I need to be doing.

Caprice continued to describe the affect of not achieving her goals. She expressed,

It takes a toll. But I try not to get so depressed on it. I try to think, 'well there is next year. There is another time where I can improve this.' And it's just a lesson that I needed to learn in order to get better. So like when I get all big and famous I can tell all the struggles I went through and how I overcame them.

Later in the interview Caprice talked about her optimism in regards to not achieving her goals.

Okay, for last year I wanted to make it to the NC's [NCAA Championship] and I didn't. And what kind of made me a little depressed is that I didn't do, I didn't like PR, like my times before, I came in, were better than when I came in here. But I have to think, freshmen you have to get used to it. You have different coaches, you have a different team, a whole different sources, everything. So I was like I'm starting off new. So whatever I did in the past doesn't matter because I say you're only your best when you get on the track, you put the time at 00 it's not at the time where you had ran the meet before or your PR. It's at 00, everybody's at 00. So whatever you run, that meet that's your best for right there... And I think I did from all the things that I've been through like new workouts, things that I've never done before. I didn't lift weights so I was like starting off fresh. So I applaud myself for the effort that I did do. Even though I didn't make it to the NC's, so I was like, 'I'll just try next [time]. 'Cause I know what I need to do.'

When Stephanie (high task/high ego) was asked how a mistake affects her effort, she answered, "when you make a mistake, [you] usually get discouraged and everything just breaks down once you get discouraged." She added,

I always feel like I could've did better than that. But like I cut myself short and maybe that day was that day for me to do by best and really not cut myself short, maybe I won't get another day like that. Who knows what might happen tomorrow...most of the time it makes me want to push harder. And [I think] 'this is what I'm going to do next time. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that.' Just like give myself constructive criticism or try to correct it. And clear my mind before I go out there and do it the next time.

All of these athletes displayed productive perfectionistic tendencies. High task/low ego goal profile athletes set high personal goals, yet viewed mistakes as an opportunity for growth and learning. Not surprisingly, these athletes expressed concerns over mistakes, yet typically did not allow mistakes to negatively affect subsequent performances. The high task component of the athletes' goal profiles seemed to facilitate a focus on increasing effort and improving as they prepared for the next track meet.

Racial Stereotypes and Competitiveness

This study also sought to examine the experiences of Black female athletes and how those experiences affected their perceptions of competitiveness. Some athletes in the study described that race and racial stereotypes affected their competitiveness. Some of the racial stereotypes the athletes came in contact with related to innate speed and some related to the physical differences between Black and White athletes.

Some of the athletes expressed that they were aware of racial stereotypes about Black athletes. The most common stereotype described by the athletes was that Black women were naturally fast. One athlete described being compared to two prominent and successful modern Black female track athletes, Florence Griffith Joyner (Flo Jo) and Gail Devers. Both of these athletes are United States Olympians and American record holders in the sprints and hurdles events, respectively. Kiwi (high task/high ego) said, "I guess I get stereotyped because I'm a Black woman, so I'm supposed to be superfast. You know you get called FloJo or Gail Devers just because we're Black." Another athlete described how she felt type casted in to sports participation because she is Black. She said, "I mean society sees that because I'm African-American I should be able to do some kind of sport, especially running. They think that we can all run." Stephanie expressed the stereotype of Black women being fast and naturally being muscular,

I think Black females are, as far as track and field, are really looked down upon as like being the fastest and having the most, they [are] more muscular and things like that. I think that's kind of like a stereotype. When people see like an African American female running track they're like 'I know you fast.'

These athletes described how the assumption that they are fast influences them mentally. One athlete expressed that this assumption made her feel that she has an advantage over her opponents mentally. As Cybil said,

I think that people think that Black people are just faster. You know, they make the jokes that we are used to running from cops or something. But I mean I just think that they, people just think that Black people are going to be faster. So I think it just affects me because sometimes I feel like maybe the people I'm competing against make me feel that way and then I have one leg up on them because they already thinking 'she's Black she's going to beat me because she can run.' So I feel like if I can defeat them mentally by the way I look, just being, just by being Black and a female and running something that they don't think that I can run, then I've already got my competitor defeated.

As these athletes discussed stereotypes, the notion that Black and White athletes were expected to do well in specific events also emerged. Cybil discussed her experiences as a Black distance runner. She said,

...a lot of people don't think that Black females are built or can run distance. My experiences have been difficult at times because you get the looks and the stares and you get 'oh my gosh she's about to run the 5000,' but that makes me just want to work much harder.

Edwina further described event specific stereotypes. She said,

Like if I ran the 100 and I got beat by a White girl, I'd be like 'what I know, this White girl just didn't beat me.' I'd be like 'she's a fast White girl.' But with the distance events, because it is mostly dominated by White people, it's kind of like

'all right Suzy beat me' but that's only really true as far as college and high school. Because when you look at the Olympics, then the top 800 meter runners are African-American women. But still I just be like 'alright she beat me, ok, I don't care.'

Some of the athletes played into some of the racial stereotypes of Black women athletes and used the stereotypes to dictate how they competed against individuals of other racial groups. For example, two athletes said that they would not let a competitor from another racial group beat or outperform them. Kiwi said,

I will not let a White girl beat me. I'm sorry. [I] can't do it. Like if she's foreign, maybe it's different. But like a White girl from the states, I don't know maybe she shouldn't be faster than me. I know that's terrible to say but...I guess just because Black people are supposed to be faster than White people unless you are Jeremy Wariner [a White athlete] I guess maybe I was brought up that way too.

Stephanie stated,

When you run against someone that's a different race, you feel like everybody is already looking at you, like 'I know they not gonna let that race beat them.' So you automatically feel like I'm not going to let this person beat me from a different race. So it affects [me] because you make sure you are going to beat them.

Other athletes did their best to downplay the influence of racial stereotypes. For example, Emily said “you got to be prepared for everything. Speed comes in every color that’s there. You can’t sleep on anybody.” Nicky felt that

if somebody wants to make general observations or conclusions about a race then that’s their problem. But I’m going to be who I am wherever I am. It matters what other people say, but it doesn’t matter to the extent where I’m going to change who I am.

Many of the athletes were conscious of stereotypes of Black female athletes especially that of being naturally fast athletes. Some athletes used the stereotypes as a mental advantage over opponents. For some of them, it affected their competitiveness to where they were motivated not to let someone from another race beat them.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine relationships among goal orientation, perfectionism, and perceptions of competitiveness in Black female, collegiate track and field athletes. Of primary interest was how the athletes defined and discussed competitiveness. I then considered these descriptions within the conceptual framework of achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1989; Duda, 1993). Finally, perfectionism was examined to see how it influenced views about competitiveness.

Defining Competitiveness

In the literature, competitiveness is defined as a disposition in which one strives for satisfaction when making comparisons with some standard of excellence in the presence of evaluative others in sport (Marten, 1976). Overall, for the athletes in this study, competitiveness was described as putting forth effort, improving, executing technique, competing against others (social comparison), and winning. More specifically, athletes' goal orientation appeared to influence their perceptions about competitiveness. In general, the athletes with a high task orientation described competitiveness based on self-referenced goals whereas athletes with high ego orientation used social comparison when describing their competitive goals. Athletes with high task orientation defined competitiveness as putting forth effort, improving, and persevering. This finding is consistent with other research framed in achievement

goal theory that found that task-oriented athletes believe that effort, hard work, motivation, and persistence are determinants of success (e.g., Duda & Hall, 2001; Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993; Newton & Fry, 1998; Roberts, Treasure, & Kavassanu, 1996; Spray, Biddle, & Fox, 1999). The athletes with high ego orientation defined competitiveness as winning and out-performing others in agreement with research showing highly ego-oriented athletes defined success based on other-referenced or normative standards they can not control (Duda, 1992; Duda & Hall, 2001).

Comparing this definition of competitiveness with past research on competitiveness (Marten, 1971; Marten, 1975; Martin & Eklund, 1994) proved difficult because of differences in the interpretation of competitiveness. Past research on competitiveness focused on the outcome and one's performance in comparison to others (i.e., winning or out-performing others) to define competitiveness (Marten, 1975; Gill, 1988). However, athletes in this study, focused on the process of the performance to evaluate competitiveness. They felt that they were being competitive if they put forth effort, set a personal record, or improved from previous performance. Winning was not a sole determinant of being competitive.

Sport orientation questionnaire. The competitiveness scale of the SOQ was administered to compare the athletes' levels of competitiveness and how they defined what it means to be competitive. To be successful in Division I track and field, all the athletes are presumed to be highly competitive. To reach the ranks of an All-American

being competitive is a prerequisite. All of the athletes except one scored high on the competitiveness scale. This could be explained by the various interpretations of what it means to be competitive. Especially in the sense of the athlete that scored very low, she may have not interpreted competitiveness in the same way as the questionnaire. When examining the questions on the SOQ, its easy to see how the athletes scored high on the questionnaire. The questions are ambiguous and utilize the term competitive and competition when posing the questions. This vagueness allows room for various interpretations. Gaining a concise, consistent definition of competitiveness will aid in the development of a more accurate scale to access athletes' competitiveness level. This scale should also include references to goal orientation which has also emerged as being related to competitiveness.

Goal Orientation

This study supported the need to examine goal profiles rather than treat task and ego orientations independently (e.g., Roberts et al., 1996). That is athletes have a degree of each goal perspective and are not solely task or ego-oriented. The athletes in this study did not solely adopt one orientation, but exhibited a combination of task and ego goal orientation. They had a goal profile of high task/low ego or high task/high ego. The athletes who were high task/low ego expressed their goals as doing their best, running a better time (improvement), and executing correct technique. High task/high ego athletes expressed the importance of winning as well as having task oriented goals.

Mirroring the findings of Roberts et al. (1996), in this study, the high task/high ego goal profile elite athletes exhibited the same productive beliefs as the high task/low ego-oriented athletes. In this study, both high task/high ego goal profile and high task/low ego goal profile athletes wanted to win when they are competing. For high task/high ego goal profile athletes, their desire to win showcases an ego orientation, but they emphasized improving, executing correct technique, and putting forth effort as a means to achieve success. A high task/low ego-oriented athlete believes that hard work would get one ahead in sport and that outcome and other external factors play a role (Newton & Fry, 1998). Some studies have found that task-oriented athletes utilize external factors such as outcome and other-referenced criteria in a productive manner to assess success (Newton & Fry, 1998). Wherein task-oriented athletes use a combination of focusing on the process of achieving goals and the outcome, but the outcome of the performance does not supersede the process. This was true for the high task/low ego goal profile athletes in this study. Conversely, research (Newton & Fry, 1998) has found that ego-oriented athletes want to win and utilize social comparison to determine their success; however, the high task/high ego goal profile athletes in this study considered performing well as more important than winning.

A high ego orientation can foster some debilitating effects on achievement strivings, such as low intrinsic motivation, low perceived competence, being less satisfied with their sporting experience and focusing on things beyond their control

(Duda, 1993). To counteract the debilitating effects of a high ego orientation, research suggests the task orientation should be enhanced to moderate the potential debilitating effects of high-ego orientation (Hodge & Petlichkoff, 2000; Roberts et al., 1996). In this study, the athletes' task orientation appeared to buffer their ego orientation, especially in regards to determining a successful performance. All of athletes wanted to win however satisfaction was received from self-referenced criteria such as having a personal best performance. Within the sport of track and field, there are many factors that are deemed successful within the elite portion of the sport. The ultimate elite status of course is to be the champion. However, success for many of the athletes in this study was achieved by being a participant in the national meet, becoming an All-American, and even making the U.S. national team. Success for these athletes also was not ground in winning. Some of these athletes did not want to win and run a slow time or a poor jump. They wanted to win and also run a fast, jump far, and/or set a personal record.

That most of the athletes had a combination of high task and high ego orientations was not surprising when one considers the nature of the sport of track and field. Athletes received very specific performance feedback (in time or distance), which makes comparisons to previous performances obvious. Yet, qualifying for the next level of competition is dependent upon event outcomes (e.g., the top 3 in the final advance to the national championship). Therefore, it would be expected that winning is important to all of the athletes in the study. However, whether or not they also had high task

orientation had important implications for their performance and mental states. This is because a task orientation fosters positive achievement strivings, promotes intrinsic motivation, and high self-confidence. Similarly Hardy, Harwood, and Swain (2000) described a similar situation with a high task/high ego-oriented swim athlete in which Hardy stated that the goal structure of the sport and the nature of competition promoted the importance of both self-referenced and normative-referenced goal structure. Achievement structure of swimming is very similar to track and field.

A rationale for how an ego-orientation can be productive can be explained by Hardy et al.'s, (2000) concept of "self-referenced ego orientation." Self-referenced ego orientation occurs when an athlete is focused on the adequacy of current personal skills, irrespective of the skills of others (Hardy et al., 2000). A self-referenced ego-oriented athlete is focused on the adequacy of her or his personal ability associated with the level of her or his own current skills (Hardy, Harwood, & Swain, 2000). In the sport of track and field, most of the athletes know what a good performance is and what a good performance is not in terms of time or distance, depending on the event. Many times success to the athletes is a direct comparison of their performance to times or distance that are considered "good." The concept of self-referenced ego orientation can be aptly applied to the sport of track and field because these athletes focus on outcome, but outcome is relative in terms of performance (e.g., run a fast time, jump a far distance). These athletes are most satisfied with winning when challenged. In this study, running

a fast time, jumping far, improving performance, and setting a personal record is a means in which track and field athletes evaluate success and achievement. So these athletes want to win in terms of outperforming their competitor but they also want to run fast or jump far.

Measurement of Goal Orientation

An issue that arose in this study was the assessment of goal orientation. In this study, goal orientations were assessed through TEOSQ responses. Originally, goal orientation was to be determined based on responses to interview questions, however, after examining the interview data and realizing that I could not accurately assess the athletes' goal profiles, I decided to define athletes' goal profiles based on TEOSQ scores because the interview did not provide a consistent basis to identify profiles. Athletes who scored higher than a 2.5 on any subscale were considered high and anything below 2.5 was considered low. That number was defined to give a clear cut off as to what was considered high and what was not. The TEOSQ have been found to be a reliable assessment of elite individual sport athletes and often is used to assess athlete goal orientation (e.g., Duda, 1992; Newton & Duda, 1993; VanYperen & Duda 1997).

Initially, the athlete's goal orientation was to be assessed based on the interview responses. Questions asked during the interviews provided a general sense of the athletes' goal orientations. However, responses were not consistent across key

questions. Primarily, the interview was designed to assess competitiveness wherein goal orientation could also be inferred from some of the responses. Asking different questions specifically to identify goal profiles may have yielded greater confidence in generating goal profiles.

All the athletes in the study displayed qualities of both task and ego orientation during the interview but a value could not be placed on their degree of each orientation. For example, an athlete who said she wanted to win and wanted to run better each meet expressed both task and ego orientations. From this information it could not be determined how high the task orientation was relative to the ego orientation. Therefore I decided the TEOSQ allowed for a more accurate assessment of goal profiles. The TEOSQ quantitatively assessed the athletes' goal orientation and assisted in understanding the degree of task and ego orientation.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism was assessed in this study to examine its relationship to athletes' definition of competitiveness. Unproductive achievement striving occurs when behaviors have a negative effect on performance. Conversely a productive achievement striving occurs when behaviors have a positive impact on achievement striving. Concerns over mistakes and fears of failure lead to unproductive or negative achievement striving and personal standards are related to productive or positive achievement strivings (Frost et al., 1990). Interview questions about perfectionism were

tailored to examine three components of perfectionism—concerns over mistakes, fears of failure, and personal standards. Other components of perfectionism were omitted from the interview guide because they are not really examined in sport. The components I chose also were analyzed because I felt these components would have more of an influence on competitiveness.

In this study, athletes embraced productive perfectionistic tendencies in which they set high goals, yet they were flexible when evaluating their performance. For example if an athlete did not achieve her goal for a particular competition, productively her reaction would be to focus on the positives about the performance and strive for that goal at her next opportunity. Athletes who displayed productive perfectionistic tendencies focused on improvement and increased effort when they did not achieve their goals. In contrast, unproductive perfectionism was evidenced when athletes set excessively high goals that lacked flexibility, were motivated by fear of failure, and were concerned about letting others down. Along with unproductive perfectionism, some athletes described emotional distress when they did not achieve their goals and not achieving their goals affected subsequent performance.

The relationship between perfectionistic tendencies and goal orientation in the study did not develop as expected. Theoretically, task-oriented athletes would display characteristics of productive perfectionism (Blatt, 1995; Dunn et al., 2002). In contrast, high ego-oriented athletes would be expected to exhibit characteristics of unproductive

perfectionism (Dunn et al., 2002). In this study, this distinction was not so clear. Both high task/low ego and high task/high ego-oriented athletes exhibited productive and unproductive perfectionistic tendencies. For example, some high task/low ego goal profile athletes displayed concerns over mistakes and a fear of letting their teammates down. Some high task/high ego goal profile athletes were not concerned over mistakes. Some high task/low ego goal profile athletes were concerned over making mistakes when competing and had negative reactions when they did not achieve their goals whereas some high task/high ego-oriented athletes were not concerned over mistakes and were flexible when not achieving goals.

Consistent with achievement goal research (Roberts et al., 1996; Hodge & Petlichkoff, 2000), productive qualities associated with task orientation appeared to buffer the unproductive qualities of an ego orientation for some high task/high ego-oriented athletes. This was also apparent when analyzing goal orientation and perfectionism. McArdle et al. (2004) found that perfectionists with productive achievement characteristics were high in both task and ego orientations, set high personal standards, had moderate concerns over mistakes, and expressed doubts about actions. In my study, some high task/high ego-oriented athletes were distressed when they did not achieve their goals or when they made a mistake. Consequently, these reactions affected subsequent performance where some athletes did not perform well on their next jump or race because they were dwelling on past mistakes. Hall et al.

(1998) found that a strong task orientation was negatively associated with concerns over mistakes. However, in this study, some highly task-oriented athletes expressed concerns about mistakes. Individuals' goal orientations and their proneness to adopt perfectionistic tendencies impacted the individuals' perceptions of competitive situations (McArdle et al., 2004).

Competitiveness is also influenced by their social climate. Competitiveness emerged as learned through the athletes' environments and their interactions with others. Individual differences in goal orientations are a consequence of socialization experiences within the achievement domain (Nicholls, 1989). Interactions with socializing agents (parents, coaches, teammates, etc.) who reinforce a goal orientation that manifests in a particular motivational climate are believed to result in athletes' proneness for task or ego orientation (Duda, 1993). Similarly, the athletes' perceptions of competitiveness in the study were influenced by the environment created by their coaches, teammates, family, and role models. For example in this study, the coach emphasized an environment focusing on putting forth effort and executing correct technique an athlete will adopt that as their belief about what it means to be competitive. Involvement in the sporting environment also influenced the athletes' perception of competitiveness. The athletes in this study described how participating in sporting activities such as running track, playing basketball, field day activities also shaped their perceptions of competitiveness.

Mental States and Behaviors Associated with Being Competitive

Athletes' descriptions of competitiveness were associated with the mental states and behaviors they exhibited. The athletes felt that to be competitive one must be focused, excited, confident, and relaxed. On the other hand, some athletes described feeling anxious as having a negative effect on being competitive. According to past research, high ego orientation is related to high levels of competitive anxiety (Hall & Kerr, 1997; Newton & Duda, 1993; White, 1998). Yet in this study, some of the high task/low ego-oriented athletes described feeling so anxious that it negatively affected their competitiveness whereas some of the high task/high ego-oriented athletes did not. Possibly perfectionism influenced this relationship where high task/low ego-oriented athletes are concerned over making mistakes.

To get in shape, practice was important (i.e., high effort in practice led to better performances during competition). Past findings showed task-oriented athletes believed that practice is necessary to acquire skill and they understood the importance of practice (Lochbaum & Roberts, 1993). Regardless of goal orientation, the athletes felt that practice had a direct effect on competitiveness. An interesting find was that high task and high ego-oriented athletes felt that practice is competitive and putting forth effort in practice led to competitiveness.

The athletes' definitions of competitiveness were connected to both their goal orientation and perfectionistic tendencies. Achievement goals are presumed to be the

organizing principle influencing how we interpret, feel, and react toward achievement related endeavors (Duda & Hall, 2001). Definitions of competitiveness almost mirrored athletes' goal orientation. At the same time, a perfect performance, according to the athletes, yielded being competitive. From this study, competitiveness can be defined as a productive achievement striving in which an athlete sets flexible personal goals for achievement. These goals focus on putting forth effort, executing correct technique, and improving each performance. Winning will sometimes result as a byproduct of being competitive but not an important component of being competitive.

Race and Sport—the 21st Century

In the 21st century, the interactions between race and sport are still prevalent. Many of the racial stereotypes from the past still permeate today and influence the competitiveness of Black female athletes. The most prevalent racial stereotype about Black female athletes that emerged in this study was the notion of Black female athletes having the innate ability to be “super fast.” Sailes (1991) described this as a myth that is genetically based and claims that Blacks have more fast-twitch muscle fibers, which gives an advantage in sports where power, speed, agility, jumping, and sprinting are important.

Beliefs regarding myths and stereotypes about Black athletes have evolved into a socialized phenomenon. These myths and stereotypes are handed down from generation to generation and are broadcasted in the media. As a result, many people,

regardless of race, believe that Black athletes have innate, superior athletic ability. In this study, a couple of the athletes believed that because of their superior athletic ability, they should not let someone from another race outperform them.

Perpetuating the myth of Black women being naturally “super fast” takes away from the emphasis on how much effort and determination these athletes put toward perfecting, refining, and improving their skill. In the sport of track and field, natural ability will only take you so far. Neglect of the technical aspect of the sport results in a stunted potential for success. The sport of cross country/track and field tends to be a year-long sport. Many of these athletes put in countless hours and days to perfect their craft to compete at an optimal level.

In this study, several anomalies emerged when examining racial advantages in the sport of track and field. Since track and field is an international sport, when trying to attribute success in the sport to race, other factors such as environment, cultural influences, and social influences should also be examined as attributes to success. Some of the athletes in this study discussed some of the anomalies as it relates to race. One was that there are fast White athletes who are successful in the sprint events. Another athlete described how in America, Black women are not viewed as being successful in distance events because of their physical build whereas another athlete refuted this notion because, as she stated, Blacks are successful in distance events internationally. These anomalies show that many of the myths and stereotypes about Black female

athletes are baseless. Ironically, exposure to stereotypes about Black people having superior athletic ability led some of these Black female athletes to be more competitive.

Practical Implications

Many coaches use the term competitiveness in the sport environment. However, coach and athlete may not interpret competitiveness differently. Knowing an athlete's views about competitiveness can help them motivate athletes. If an athlete believes to be competitive she must focus on technique, the coach should use technical cues to motivate the athlete. The coach should also create a productive environment that transfers to the competitive setting. Identifying goal orientation and perfectionistic tendencies will also help identify traits that influence competitiveness. This study shows in a track and field environment, competitiveness is achieved by emphasizing both a task and ego involvement. When emphasizing both a task and ego involvement, setting flexible goals should be encouraged. Focusing on concerns of mistakes should be eliminated and fear of failures should be minimized. This can be done by setting multiple goals such as goals for practice, competition; goals that emphasize technical aspects of performance and goals focusing on a desired outcome. Utilizing multiple goals can also minimize concerns over mistakes. If athletes make a mistake, they should be encouraged to focus on other goals they set.

There is transference of skill between practice and competition; therefore, the practice environment should emulate that which is conducive to competition (i.e.,

competitive practice). Since putting forth effort is essential to being successful in competition, putting forth effort in practice should also be emphasized. If a coach expects an athlete to be competitive in competition; competitiveness should also be instilled in practice. Acknowledging the characteristics that influence competitiveness can help the coach identify cues that will promote competitiveness.

Future Research

Overall, results of this study showed that goal orientation and perfectionism influences athletes' perceptions of competitiveness. Specifically, high task/low ego and high task/high ego when coupled with productive perfectionistic tendencies felt that being competitive was a result of putting forth effort and self-referenced standards of achievement. Research on developing goal profiles of athletes tends to use quantitative formats. However, for future research, the qualitative method can provide rich descriptions of athletes' goal profile. The qualitative method will provide the opportunity to why an athlete fits into a particular goal orientation. Structuring interview questions that can give a more accurate assessment of goal profile would have been essential in this study.

Most research in goal orientation does not assess goal orientation during competition but tend to gather data out of competition. Hardy et al. (2000) also suggested future research could identify orientation during a competitive situation as oppose to pre-competition. With gathering data during competition, the measurement

of goal involvement would appear to be highly complex and sport specific. During competition athletes may display various combinations of goal orientation throughout performance. At one moment they may appear highly task-oriented and as the situation may change they may alter to a highly ego orientation (Hardy et al., 2000). This may explain why there was some dissonance in the athletes' responses in this study during the interviews and on the TEOSQ. The TEOSQ asks athletes to consider when they feel most successful in sport and did not aim towards a specific competitive situation. The interview questions I used triggered responses specific to a competitive situation. Possibly, the results may have been different if the TEOSQ was administered immediately pre-competition, during competition, or post-competition and the questions aimed towards competition specific scenarios.

From this study, I have learned that competitiveness appears to be directly related to goal orientation. As research in achievement goal theory advances, so too will research in competitiveness because achievement goal theory will provide the underpinnings as to why and how an athlete is competitive. Many of the constructs of achievement goal theory can be applied to competitiveness research. These include influences of mental states such as anxiety, arousal, and attentional focus as well influences of motivational climate and perceived ability. These constructs also can influence how much and why a person is competitive. Since the term competitiveness is used so widely, identifying a succinct, consistent definition will impact sporting

language. Some major benefits of examining competitiveness are enhancing the ability to motivate athletes and fostering better coach-athlete communication, which in turn may enhance performance outcome.

References

- Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, J. M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 485-499). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Balaguer, I., Duda, J. L., Atienza, F., & Mayo, C. (2002). Situational and dispositional goals as predictors of perceptions of individual and team improvement, satisfaction and coach ratings among elite female handball teams. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 3, 293-308.
- Balaguer, I., Duda, J. L., & Crespo, M. (1999). Motivational climate and goal orientations as predictors of perceptions of improvement, satisfaction and coach ratings among tennis players. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 9, 381-388.
- Berg, B. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A phenomenological approach to the social sciences*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Booth, D. (1998). *The race game*. London: Frank Cass.
- Carpenter, P. J., & Yates, B. (1997). Relationship between achievement goals and the perceived purposes of soccer for semiprofessional and amateur players. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19, 302-311.

- Coakley, J. (2004). *Sports in society: Issues & controversies* (8th ed.). NY: McGraw Hill.
- Collins, P. H. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. *Social Problems*, 33, 14-32.
- Collins, P. H. (1998). *Fighting words: Black women and the search for justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Corbett, D. & Johnson, W. (1993). The African-American female collegiate sport: Sexism and racism. In D. Brooks & R. Althouse (Eds.), *Racism in college athletics: The African-American athlete's experience* (pp. 179-204). Morgantown: FIT.
- Davis, L. R. (1990). The articulation of difference: White preoccupation with the question of racially linked genetic differences among athletes. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7, 179-187.
- Duda, J. L. (1989). Relationship between task and ego orientation and the perceived purpose of sport among high school athletes. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11, 318-335.
- Duda, J. L. (1992). Motivation in sport settings: A goal perspective approach. In G. C. Roberts (Ed.), *Motivation in sport and exercise* (pp. 57-92). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Duda, J. L. (1993). Goals: A social-cognitive approach to the study of achievement motivation in sport. In R. N. Singer, M. Murphey, & L. K. Tennant (Eds.), *Handbook of research on sport psychology* (pp. 421-436). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Duda, J. L., & Hall, H. (2001). Achievement goal theory in sport: Recent extensions and directions. In R. N. Singer, H. A. Hausenblas, & C. M. Janelle (Eds.), *Handbook of sport psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 417-443). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Dunn, J. G. H., & Dunn, J. C. (1999). Goal orientations, perceptions of aggression, and sportpersonship in elite male youth ice hockey players. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 183-200.
- Dunn, J. G. H., Dunn, J. C., & Syrotuik, D. G. (2002). Relationship between multidimensional perfectionism and goal orientations in sport. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 24, 376-396.
- Eisen, G. (1994). Early European attitudes toward Native American sports and pastimes. In G. Eisen & D. K. Wiggins (Eds.), *Ethnicity and sport in North American history and culture* (pp. 1-18). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Ely, M. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circle within circles*. London, England: The Falmer Press.
- Flett, G. L., & Hewitt, P. L. (2002). Perfectionism and maladjustment: An overview of theoretical, definitional, and treatment issues. In G. L. Flett & P. L. Hewitt (Eds.),

- Perfectionism: Theory, research, treatment* (pp. 5-31). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Floyd, M. F. (1999). Race, ethnicity, and use of the National Park System. *Social Science Research, 1*, 1-24.
- Frost, R. O., & Henderson, K. L. (1991). Perfectionism and reactions to athletic competition. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 13*, 323-335.
- Frost, R. O., Marten, P., Lahart, C., & Rosenblate, R. (1990). The dimensions of perfectionism. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 14*, 449-468.
- Giacobbi, P. R., Roper, E., Whitney, J., & Butryn, T. (2002). College coaches' views about the development of successful athletes: A descriptive exploratory investigation. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 25*, 164-180.
- Gill, D. (1993). Competitiveness and competitive orientation in sport. In R. N. Singer, M. Murphey, & L. K. Tennant (Eds.), *Handbook of research on sport psychology* (pp. 314-327). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Gill, D. (2000). *Psychological dynamics of sport and exercise* (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Gill, D., & Deeter, T. E. (1988). Development of the Sport Orientation Questionnaire. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 59*, 191-202.

- Gill, D. L., Dzewaltowski, D. A., & Deeter, T. E. (1988). The relationship of competitiveness and achievement orientation to participation in sport and nonsport activities. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 10*, 139-150.
- Gnida, J. J. (1995). Teaching "nature versus nurture": The case of African-American athletic success. *Teaching Sociology, 23*, 389-395.
- Gotwals, J. K., Dunn, J. G. H., & Wayment, H. A. (2003). An examination of perfectionism and self-esteem in intercollegiate athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 26*, 17-39.
- Hall, R. L. (2001). Shaking the foundation: Women of color in sport. *The Sport Psychologist, 15*, 386-400.
- Hall, H. K., Kerr, A. W., & Matthews, J. (1998). Precompetitive anxiety in sport: The contribution of achievement goals and perfectionism. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 20*, 194-217.
- Hardy, L., Harwood, C., & Swain, A. (2000). Achievement goal in sport: A critique of conceptual and measurement issues. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 22*, 235-255.
- Harrison, L., Harrison, C. K., & Moore, L. N. (2002). African-American racial identity and sport. *Sport, Education, and Society, 7*, 121-133.

- Haslam, S. A., Oakes, P. J., Reynolds, K. J., & Turner, J. C. (1999). Social identity salience and the emergence of stereotype consensus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 809–818.
- Henderson, K. A., & Ainsworth, B. E. (2001). Researching leisure and physical activity with women of color: Issues and emerging questions. *Leisure Sciences*, 23, 21-34.
- Henwood, K., & Pidgeon, N. (2003). Grounded theory in psychological research. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspective in methodology and design* (pp. 131-156). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Hodge, K., & Petlichkoff, L. (2000). Goal profiles in sport motivation: A cluster analysis. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 22, 256-272.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center* (2nd ed.). London: Pluto Press.
- Houston, J. M., Carter, D., & Smither, R. D. (1997). Competitiveness in elite professional athletes. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 84, 1447-1454.
- Huddleston, S., & Garvin, G. W. (1995). Self-evaluation compared to coaches' evaluation of athletes' competitive orientation. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 18, 209-215.
- Jones, J. W., Neuman, G., Altmann, R., & Dreschler, B. (2001). Development of the sport performance inventory: A psychological measure of athletic potential. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 15, 491-503.

- Koivula, N., Hassmén, P., & Fallby, J. (2002). Self-esteem and perfectionism in elite athletes: Effects on competitive anxiety and self-confidence. *Personality and Individual Differences, 5*, 865-875.
- Krane, V., & Baird, S. M. (2005). Using ethnography in applied sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 17*, 87-107.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lemyre, P. N., Roberts, G. C., & Ommundsen, Y. (2002). Achievement goal orientations, perceived ability, and sportpersonship in youth soccer. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 14*, 120-136.
- Lochbaum, M. R., & Roberts, G. C. (1993). Goal orientations and perceptions of the sport experience. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 15*, 160-171.
- Malik, K. (1996). *The meaning of race: Race, history, and culture in Western society*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Marsh, H. W. (1994). Sport motivation orientations: Beware of the jingle-jangle fallacies. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 16*, 365-380.
- Martens, R. (1975). *Social psychology and physical activity*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Martin, J., & Eklund, R. C. (1994). The relationships among competitiveness, age, and ability in distance runners. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 17*, 258-267.

- McArdle, S., & Duda, J. L. (2004). Exploring social-contextual correlates of perfectionism in adolescents: A multivariate perspective. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 28, 765-788.
- Newton, M., & Duda, J. L. (1993). The relationship of task and ego orientation to performance cognitive content, affect and attributions in bowling. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 16, 209-221.
- Newton, M., & Fry, M. D. (1998). Senior Olympians' achievement goals and motivational responses. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 6, 256-270.
- Nicholls, J. G. (1984). Achievement motivation: Conceptions of ability, subjective experience, task choice, and performance. *Psychological Review*, 91, 328-346.
- Nicholls, J. G. (1989). *The competitive ethos and democratic education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ntoumanis, N., & Biddle, S. (1998). The relationship between achievement goal profile groups and perceptions of motivation climates in sport. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 8, 120-124.
- Ommundsen, Y., & Pedersen, B. H. (1999). The role of achievement goal orientations and perceived ability upon somatic and cognitive indices of sport competition trait anxiety. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 9, 333-343.

- Ommundsen, Y., & Roberts, G. C. (1999). Effect of motivational climate profiles on motivational indices in team sport. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 9, 389-397.
- Pensgaard, A. M., & Roberts, G. C. (2000). The relationship between motivational climate, perceived ability and sources of distress among elite athletes. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 18, 191-200.
- Robert, G. C. (1992). Motivation in sport and exercise: Conceptual constraints and convergence. In G. C. Roberts (Ed.), *Motivation in sport and exercise* (pp. 3-30). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Roberts, G. C. (2001). Understanding the dynamics of motivation in physical activity: The influence of achievement goals on motivational processes. In G. C. Roberts (Ed.), *Advances in motivation in sport and exercise* (pp. 1-50). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Roberts, G. C., Treasure, D. C., & Kavassanu, M. (1996). Orthogonality of achievement goal and its relationship to beliefs about success and satisfaction in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 10, 398-408.
- Sailes, G. A. (1991). The myth of Black sports supremacy. *Journal of Black Studies*, 21, 480-487.

- Sellers, R. M., Kuperminc, G. P., & Damas, A. (1997). The college life experiences of African-American women athletes. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 25, 699-720.
- Spray, C. M., Biddle, S. J. H., & Fox, K. R. (1999). Achievement goals, beliefs about the causes of success and reported emotion in post-16 physical education. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 17, 213-219.
- Standage, M., Duda, J. L., & Ntoumanis, N. (2003). Predicting motivational regulations in physical education: The interplay between dispositional goal orientations, motivational climate and perceived competence. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 21, 631-647.
- Steinberg, G. M., Singer, R. N., & Murphey, M. (2000). The benefits to sport achievement when a multiple goal orientation is emphasized. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 23, 407-422.
- Stephens, D. E. (1998). The relationship of goal orientation and perceived ability to enjoyment and value in youth sport. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 10, 236-247.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Treasure, D. C., Carpenter, P. J., & Power, K. T. D. (2000). Relationship between achievement goal orientations and the perceived purposes of playing rugby union for professional and amateur players. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, 18, 571-577.

- Van-Yperen, N. W., & Duda, J. L. (1999). Goal orientations, beliefs about success, and performance improvement among young elite Dutch soccer players. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 9, 358-364.
- Voight, M. R., Callaghan, J. L., & Ryska, T. A. (2000). Relationship between goal orientations, self-confidence and multidimensional trait anxiety among Mexican American female youth athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 23, 271-289.
- Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (1999). *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology* (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- White, S. A. (1998). Adolescent goal profiles, perceptions of the parent-initiated motivational climate, and competitive trait anxiety. *The Sport Psychologist*, 12, 16-28.
- White, S. A., Duda, J. L., & Keller, M. R. (1998). The relationship between goal orientation and perceived purposes of sport among youth sport participants. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 21, 474-483.
- Wiggins, D. K. (1994). The notion of the double-consciousness and the involvement of Black athletes in American sport. In G. Eisen & D. K. Wiggins (Eds.), *Ethnicity and sport in North American history and culture* (pp. 133-156). Westport: Greenwood Press.

- Wiggins, D. K. (1997). Great speed and stamina: The historical debate over Black athletic superiority. In S. W. Pope (Ed.), *The new American sport history: Recent approaches and perspectives*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Williams, L. (1994). Goal orientations and athletes' preferences for competence information sources. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 16, 416-430.
- Williams, L. D. (1995). Before Althea and Wilma: African-American women in sports 1924-1948. In K. M. Vaz (Ed.), *Black women in America* (pp. 276-297). London: Sage.

Appendix A

Athlete Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to examine female athletes' interpretations of competitiveness. This thesis will provide an opportunity to extend our knowledge about competitiveness. Ultimately I hope this study will provide information that may help coaches and sport psychologists effectively communicate with and motivate their athletes. Participation in this study also will provide you an opportunity to discuss and examine your competitive experiences.

This study plans to have 10-15 different individual interview sessions. Your involvement in this project includes participation in an individual interview session and completion of two short questionnaires. This interview will last 60-90 minutes and will focus on your perceptions of your collegiate sport experiences. The interview will be audio taped. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will have no effect on your standing on the team or with the university.

Confidentiality is guaranteed. To maintain this confidentiality, the audiotape and transcripts of the interview will only be viewed by my advisor and me. Your name, names of other people, name of your university, and any identifying information you mention will be removed or coded in the printed transcripts of the interview. The audiotape and transcript will be kept secured and only will be accessible to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, the tapes will be erased and the original transcriptions that include identifying information will be destroyed.

Additional questions about this study can be directed to Amy Henry (419-354-0811 or aeHenry@bgnet.bgsu.edu) or my advisor Vikki Krane (419-372-2620 or ykrane@bgnet.bgsu.edu). You may also contact the Chair, Rich Rowland, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University (419-372-7716) or Dr. James Forbes, Chair, Hampton University Institutional Review Board (757-727-5419) with any problems or concerns.

Your signature below indicates:

- you are providing your voluntary consent to participate in this study,
- you are over the age of 18,
- you have been informed that the interview will be confidential,
- you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time during the project,
- you have the option not answer any questions you chose not to answer,
- you have been informed of the study procedures,
- upon request, you can receive a summary of the findings from this study, and
- you can have copy of the consent form.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background/ Demographic questions

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Year in school?
4. How do you identify your race or ethnicity?
5. Are you on a scholarship?
 - a. full or partial scholarship?
6. Events you participate in?
7. What are your personal best performances in these events?
8. Overall, how many total years have you competed in track and field?
9. How many years of college eligibility have you used?
10. How did you end up at your university? Were you recruited?
11. What was your team standing at the end of the past season?
12. What is your ranking on the team? in the conference or NCAA?

Thinking about your experiences at (school name) in track and field...

1. What are your goals when you compete?
 - a. How important is winning to you?
 - b. What is more important to you, running a good race or winning?
2. What happens when you fall short of your goals?
3. What does it mean to you to be competitive?
 - a. How do you act when you are competitive?
 - b. How do you feel mentally when you are being competitive?
 - c. How do you feel physically when you are being competitive?
4. What steps do you take to prepare to be competitive?
 - a. What can help you to be more competitive?
5. Describe a situation in which you felt you were being competitive?
 - a. What about the performance makes it competitive?
 - b. How would you describe how you felt mentally?
 - c. How would you describe how you felt physically?
6. Describe a situation in which you felt that you were not being competitive?
 - a. How would you describe how you felt mentally?
 - b. How would you describe how you felt physically?
7. Can you be competitive in practice? By yourself?
8. Would you say that you strive for a perfect performance when you compete?

9. Can you describe a perfect performance?
10. If you make a mistake (technique) does that affect your competitiveness? How?
Give an example.
11. If you do not achieve the goals you set for a competition, does that have any influence on whether you felt you were competitive or not?
12. Where did you learn what it means to be competitive?
13. Do you feel that your competitiveness is affected by other people?
 - a. How? Give an example.
14. Describe how your coach tries to motivate you.
15. What is your coach's goal for you when you compete?
 - a. Does she/he emphasize winning or improvement?
16. How do your goals differ from your coach's goals?
 - a. How does this affect your competitiveness?
17. How would your coach define competitiveness?
18. Has your coach ever told you that you were not being competitive?
 - a. If so, what did she/he mean?
 - b. How did that affect you?
19. How would you describe your track and field experiences as a black female athlete?
20. There are a lot of stereotypes about black athletes; does race affect your competitiveness?
 - a. How? Give an example.
21. How would you describe your competitive experience up to this point in your career?
22. Is there anything else about your competitive sport experiences that we have not talked about that you would like to share?

Appendix C

Task and Ego Orientation Questionnaire

Directions: Please read each of the statements listed below and indicate how much you personally agree with each statement by circling the appropriate response. (SD= Strongly disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neither disagree/nor agree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree.)

When do you feel most successful in sport? In other words, when do you feel an activity has gone really well for you?.

I feel most successful in sport when

	1	2	3	4	5
1.I'm the only one who can do the play or skill.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. I can do better than my friends	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. The others can't do as well as me.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. I learn something that is fun to do.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. Others mess-up and I don' t.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. I learn a new skill by trying hard.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. I work really hard.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. I score the most points/ goals/hits etc.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10.Something I learn makes me want to go and practice more.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11.I'm the best.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12.A skill I learn really feels right.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13.I do my very best.	SD	D	N	A	SA

Appendix D

Sport Orientation Questionnaire

The sport orientation questionnaire yields a competitiveness score. Each item is scored from 1 to 5 (A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5).

The following statements describe reactions to sport situations. We want to know how you usually feel about sports and competition. Read each statement and circle the letter that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement on the scale: A, B, C, D, or E. There are no right or wrong answers, simply answer as you honestly feel. Do not spend too much time on any one statement. Remember choose the letter that describes how you usually feel.

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I am a determined competitor.	A	B	C	D	E
2. I am a competitive person.	A	B	C	D	E
3. I try my hardest to win.	A	B	C	D	E
4. I look forward to competing.	A	B	C	D	E
5. I enjoy competing against others.	A	B	C	D	E
6. I thrive on competition.	A	B	C	D	E
7. My goal is to be the best athlete possible.	A	B	C	D	E
8. I want to be successful in sports.	A	B	C	D	E
9. I work hard to be successful in sport.	A	B	C	D	E
10. The best test of my ability is competing against others.	A	B	C	D	E
11. I look forward to the opportunity to test my skills in competition.	A	B	C	D	E
12. I perform my best when I am competing against an opponent.	A	B	C	D	E
13. I want to be the best every time I compete.	A	B	C	D	E

Appendix E

Interest Form

I am interested in communicating with Amy Henry to participate in her study about female athletes. By providing the following information below, I am indicating that I am interested in talking to Amy Henry about my sport experiences for her thesis.

Signature

Print Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Amy Henry
aeHenry@bgnet.bgsu.edu
419-354-0811