The Role of College Coaches in Advocating for Social Change

Thesis

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Abstract

Throughout history, sport has been used as a vehicle for social justice—a core value of the social work profession. Athletes, for example, have used their platforms in various ways to engage in advocacy for many different causes. Little research, though, has examined the role of college coaches within advocacy. Thus, the present study, framed by the ecological systems theory, aimed to explore the experiences, facilitators, and barriers of college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Semi-structured interviews were completed with a diverse sample of 16 college coaches in Divisions I and III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Using grounded theory analysis, several themes emerged from the data, indicating participants engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice in numerous ways. For example, participants reported engaging in advocacy through team conversations, recruitment, committees related to social justice, community organizations, and social media. Several themes also emerged highlighting the facilitators and barriers influencing engagement in advocacy among the participants. Some prominent factors included a sense of responsibility, the goal to create a supportive culture, clear institutional support, access to advocacy-related resources, awareness of power dynamics, and major protests.

These findings demonstrate college coaches may use their platforms to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice in a variety of ways. Findings also suggest college coaches may be helpful policy champions in fights against social injustice. Implications for practice are discussed for college coaches, sport administrators, sport social workers, and current and prospective college athletes.

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Social Work

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1. Introduction

Social justice advocacy is a response to systemic inequalities and social oppressions that marginalize individuals in society. Historically, the rights of individuals from marginalized communities have been minimized at the hands of those with the most privilege. Although society has taken several strides forward to improve attitudes toward and policies impacting those with marginalized identities, several barriers exist and remain unaddressed for specific populations. Discriminatory macro-level policies, interpersonal biases, and prejudiced behaviors continue to negatively impact individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other gender and sexual minority (LGBTQIA+) and Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

At the policy level, there has been increased legislation targeting the rights of certain groups. In particular, individuals identifying as LGBTQIA+ have been the targets of policies impacting sport participation, access to healthcare, and use of bathrooms, among others. In fact, over thirty states in the United States have introduced anti-transgender policies designed to ban transgender individuals from accessing gender-affirming healthcare, bathrooms, locker rooms, and/or sports (Freedom for All Americans, 2021). Of the 30 states that have introduced anti-transgender laws, states such

as Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee have passed legislation enacting these policies into laws.

In addition, biases and discriminatory policies and practices both throughout history and in current practice disproportionately harm BIPOC individuals, including those related to school discipline, incarceration rates, and violence with police, among others. To date, 19 states have enacted restrictive voting laws disproportionately impacting the voices of BIPOC individuals (Voting Rights Lab, 2021). Many of these bills strengthen identification requirements to vote, limit the ability to vote-by-mail (i.e., absentee voting) or by provisional ballots, and prevent others from providing service (e.g., food, water) to people waiting in line to vote. Restrictive laws also may discourage Black people from voting and allow White people to maintain political superiority (see Combs, 2016; Pitzer et al., 2021). According to Rothstein (2015), some policymakers and their constituents believe racial disparities are circumstantial, or coincidental, rather than intentional and systemic. Denial of systemic exploitation absolves leaders from accountability for discriminatory behaviors and sustains patterns of inequity. These examples demonstrate how LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals and communities experience marginalization through discriminatory policies, actions, and behaviors.

The effects of systemic oppression on marginalized individuals and communities are well-documented. Disparities in access to high-quality resources and healthcare contribute to poor health outcomes, such as greater risks for preterm birth, maternal mortality, and child mortality (Grobman et al., 2018; Manuck, 2017; Mendez et al., 2014; Vilda et al., 2019). Disparities also increase problem behaviors and decrease self-

regulation and social and emotional competence (Blair & Raver, 2016). Discrimination, whether systemic or interpersonal, can worsen mental health, substance use, risky sexual behaviors, and suicidal ideation, attempts, and completion (Gerrard et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Symons et al., 2017; Willoughby et al., 2010), as well as impact sleep quality, cortisol response, and cardiovascular health (Cedillo et al., 2020; Fuller-Rowell et al., 2021; Hatzenbuehler & McLaughlin, 2014; Hill et al., 2017). Combined, scholars suggest disparities and discriminatory behaviors result in negative outcomes that exacerbate poverty and put individuals and families at risk for health problems, unemployment, school dropout, and other unfavorable conditions (e.g., Carter et al., 2017; Cech & Rothwell, 2020; McWhirter et al., 2018).

Advocacy to Combat Marginalization

Advocacy, defined as any set of actions with the purpose of promoting social justice, provides an opportunity to impact the policymaking process and to address social injustices (see Hoefer et al., 2019). With such a broad definition, advocacy can consist of a range of activities including, but not limited to, displaying a poster or bumper sticker, donating to a social or political cause, participating in or organizing a protest, addressing microaggressions or other inappropriate statements, signing a petition, or testifying for or against a particular policy. Throughout history, advocacy has been leveraged to improve conditions, address civil rights, and enhance social liberties for marginalized individuals from marginalized. For example, advocacy efforts have influenced policing practices (e.g., Brown & Wright, 2020), LGBTQIA+ equality (e.g., Mundy, 2013), attitudes

toward poverty (e.g., Engler et al., 2020), mental health policy (e.g., Hann et al., 2015), and environmental policy (e.g., Pacheco-Vega & Murdie, 2021).

In the current political context, advocacy is central to advancing social change efforts. Black Lives Matter protests have urged for police accountability related to BIPOC individuals, and LGBTQIA+ communities have encouraged the passage of non-discrimination protections related to healthcare, education, employment, credit, jury eligibility, housing, public accommodations and facilities, and federally funded programs. Collective power and social organizing among organizations, groups, and individuals provide platforms for the public and its leaders to learn more about and engage with social justice issues.

Sport is one context where advocacy has historically emerged to support and advance social change efforts. Specifically, the platform of sport has been used to both exacerbate and combat oppression. For instance, rugby was historically used to suppress BIPOC South Africans and solidify the existing power structures that benefited White people (Black & Nauright, 1998). As Black and Nauright (1998) describe, rugby was later used to unify members of different races under a common goal: win the World Cup. By collaborating as a team, rugby was used to challenge racist stereotypes and power structures and to highlight the power of diversity and inclusion (Black & Nauright, 1998). That is, Nelson Mandela, then-President of South Africa, encouraged South Africans to put aside racial differences and prejudices to focus on national pride throughout the quest for the World Cup title. By doing so, Mandela was able to show South Africans that

people of different races can work together and be successful doing so. As such, sport can be leveraged as a platform for social good, outreach, and education on social issues.

Sport as a Platform for Advocacy

Recently, major sport organizations have engaged in advocacy for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ individuals specifically. Examples include the Major League Baseball moving All-Star celebrations to protest voter suppression, as well as the International Olympic Committee creating safe spaces in the Olympic Village to protect LGBTQIA+ athletes. Athletes participating in sport also have a history of engaging in advocacy. Examples include Tommie Smith and John Carlos who both used their Olympic success to raise awareness for racial injustice and police brutality when they raised their fists in the air while being honored on the podium. Billie Jean King used her success in tennis to advocate for fair compensation and gender equality. She also has served in organizations that promote physical activity among youth, women's rights, HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and support.

More recently, athletes such as Maya Moore, LeBron James, Colin Kaepernick, Chris Mosier, Sue Bird, Megan Rapinoe, Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka, Kurtis Gabriel, Patrick Mahomes, Ibtihaj Muhammad and several others have leveraged their platforms in different ways. Some have raised awareness for various causes (e.g., racial, LGBTQIA+, women's and environmental justice issues), rejected invitations to the White House during Donald Trump's presidency, encouraged voting, submitted testimony, filed amicus briefs, and developed non-profit organizations to address disparities in their communities. As scholars have suggested, advocacy efforts of athletes have the potential

to reach the masses given their national and international sport platforms (Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Jarvie, 2012; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007).

In addition to being a platform for advocacy, sport also is a context that contributes to and replicates patterns of marginalization. Research suggests LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals do not always have equal access to safe sport opportunities. For instance, transgender individuals are more commonly being pushed away from sport teams and locker rooms that match their gender identity (see Ronan, 2021). Sport federations also have instituted policies that disproportionately affect BIPOC athletes. For example, the International Swimming Federation banned Soul Caps that are mostly used by BIPOC athletes (Peavy & Shearer, 2021; Ward, 2021; Wiltse, 2014). Similarly, the International Olympic Committee more recently banned athletes from protesting during the Olympic Games, yet experts such as Yannick Kluch, whose interview is featured in Martinez's (2022) work, suggest this move makes the organization complicit with social injustices.

Meanwhile, other sport stakeholders, such as coaches, also possess high levels of social influence that can be leveraged to inspire social change for racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights. Using their voices to combat such policies and practices suppressing LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals in and out of sport, coaches can have powerful impact on sport and society.

The Role of the Coach in Advocacy

Sport coaches have a role to play in advocating for social change given their considerable influence and visibility. Specifically, coaches are some of the most

influential role models in athlete lives and society at-large (e.g., Hardman et al., 2010; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Coaches serve many roles, including mentors, substitute parental figures, academic tutors, strategists, and friends (e.g., Christensen et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2015; Gould et al., 2007; Hoffman & Loughead, 2016). Coaches also play roles in the social, emotional, and moral development of athletes on and off the field (e.g., Collins et al., 2009; Gould et al., 2007). However, only seven studies to-date have explicitly explored the role of coaches as advocates.

Prior research relates to the role of college coaches as social justice advocates within sexual assault prevention (Kroshus et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). For example, Steinfeldt and colleagues (2011) interviewed ten college coaches and found that participants recognized part of their jobs was to address gender norms and masculinity to decrease sexual assault perpetration among college athletes. Relatedly, high school coaches provided positive feedback toward a program designed to train them to be stronger advocates for sexual assault prevention (Jaime et al., 2015). Meanwhile, focus groups with youth sport coaches revealed coaches want to be advocates for positive mental health and help-seeking, but feel inadequately trained to do so (Ferguson et al., 2019). Importantly, only one study by sport social workers has investigated NCAA Division I coach advocacy (Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Yet, social work broadly includes values related to promoting social justice. Therefore, more research, especially from sport social work scholars, is needed to understand the role of coaches as advocates. Indeed, social workers have values and theoretical orientations that align with social justice. In response, social workers are well-situated to explore how, if

at all, various ecological factors, including individual factors, interpersonal relationships, organizations, communities, and societal norms influence coaches' involvement in advocacy.

Although only a few studies have examined coach advocacy, many high-profile coaches choose to engage in advocacy. For example, Steve Kerr, head coach of the Golden State Warriors (i.e., a franchise in the National Basketball Association), has consistently advocated for non-violent protests in response to police murders of BIPOC individuals and for gun violence reform. Meanwhile, Collette Smith, former defensive coach for the New York Jets (i.e., a franchise in the National Football League) has advocated for girls and women inclusion and empowerment in sport. American soccer legend—and current head coach of the San Diego Loyal Soccer Club (i.e., a franchise in the United Soccer League)—Landon Donovan also has raised awareness for mental health and help-seeking. These examples, though, represent coaches in professional sport leagues. Yet, coaches at other levels, such as college coaches, also may be interested in engaging in advocacy.

College coaches, in particular, can have considerable influence on sport and society and on the lives of athletes (Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Of relevance here, college coaches may have unique interests in engaging in advocacy as they often directly work with young athletes who identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or BIPOC. Many of these young people may be challenged by various forms of discrimination advocacy can address. For example, athletes competing in Division I football and men's basketball are predominantly men of color. Specifically, according to the National Collegiate Athletic

Association's (NCAA, 2021) Demographic Database, 63 percent of athletes in Division I football were BIPOC and 77 percent of athletes in Division I men's basketball were BIPOC. The Demographic Database also showed 34 percent of all NCAA athletes identified as BIPOC in 2021. This included as much as 41 percent in Division I to as little as 24 percent in Division III. Additionally, athletes competing in football tend to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Huffman & Cooper, 2012). Meanwhile, estimating the number of LGBTQIA+ college athletes is difficult as many athletes may not be out. Nevertheless, recent national estimates indicate approximately 15.9 percent of all college-aged individuals identify as LGBTQIA+ (Jones, 2021). If national trends are reflected of athletic departments, approximately 78,000 NCAA student-athletes in 2021 may have identified as LGBTQIA+. As college coaches work with athletes from all sexual orientations, gender identities, and races/ethnicities, they may become interested in engaging in advocacy and other related work to boost the livelihoods of their athletes.

In addition, college coaches are employed at institutions of higher education, which may give them additional incentive to engage in advocacy. McCarthur (2011), for example, argued higher education institutions are meant to foster creativity and benefit everyone in society. Lagemann and Lewis (2012) further insisted higher education institutions are purposed with not only deepening intellectual curiosity and innovation but also with addressing social issues. Similarly, Astin (1985) claimed higher education institutions should aim to maximize the potential of all students. Thus, those who work at higher education institutions, such as college coaches, may have added responsibilities to

contribute to the purposes of higher education institutions by engaging in advocacy to support student learning and development.

Further, there also are opportunities to better understand the role of college coach advocates in their local communities. College coaches tend to have considerable reach and power given their media coverage, pay, and public recognition (Druckman et al., 2019), and in turn, can have broad reach through potential advocacy efforts. Past research, in fact, showcases how college coaches have been effective advocates for sexual assault prevention on college campuses (Kroshus et al., 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). As such, they also may be helpful as advocates for marginalized groups. Prior research even suggests the messenger may be more influential than the message when advocating for social justice (e.g., Mundy, 2013). Thus, given college coaches' high levels of social power and visibility (Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021), they may be in positions where their voices may be significantly influential for advocacy (especially as compared to the general population). Research to-date, however, has not yet explored the role of college coaches in engaging in advocacy to advance racial justice or LGBTQIA+ rights. College coaches, however, may be powerful voices in combating discriminatory practices and policies and promoting diversity and inclusion. By using their platforms to engage in advocacy, college coaches may have significant impacts on improving the health, well-being, and performances of athletes that identify as LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC.

Given the potential role college coaches may have in advocacy on behalf of LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities, the present study explored coaches perceived

roles as advocates for racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights—two prominent areas of advocacy. In addition, the study examined the facilitators and barriers influencing advocacy behaviors among college coaches. Specifically, the present study sought to answer the following questions:

RQ_1: What are the experiences of college coaches who have engaged in racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

RQ_2: What factors, if any, facilitate advocacy among coaches who have engaged in advocacy for racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

RQ_3: What barriers, if any, prevent advocacy among coaches who have engaged in advocacy for racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

Chapter 2. Literature Review

In sport, athletes, organizations, and coaches all have potential to advocate for improved policies and practices. Coaches, in particular, are key stakeholders who can use their platforms to engage in social justice efforts, especially given their status and far reach in society. They also have an invested interest in improving the health, well-being, and performance of their athletes, many of whom might identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or BIPOC. College coaches also have specific roles aligned with higher education goals and priorities. Indeed, college coaches are employed at institutions of higher education, which aim to address social issues and advance the lives of all people through research, teaching, and service (Astin, 1985; Lagemann & Lewis, 2012; McCarthur, 2011). As such, college coaches can encourage athletes to be successful, not just in sport, but also in academics (Christensen et al., 2021). They also have roles related to enhancing the life skills and development of athletes as productive members of society (Harvey et al., 2018; Krueger, 2019). Thus, college coaches may engage in advocacy to address social issues impacting their athletes' abilities to be successful students and productive members of society. For a deeper understanding of the role of coaches in advocacy, a strong awareness of discriminatory policies and practices in sport and the effects of discrimination are warranted.

Discrimination in Sport

Discrimination and social issues permeate sport. As such, sport can be both a context for positive athlete development, as well as one that perpetuates athlete marginalization (Bruner et al., 2016; Merkel, 2013). For instance, marginalized young people may find refuge in sport, but also are more at risk for bullying, discrimination, and victimization both within and outside of sport (Bruner et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2017; Super et al., 2018). In fact, policymakers and sport administrators have proposed and implemented several discriminatory policies that target, whether explicitly or implicitly, marginalized athletes, limiting their ability to experience the positive impacts of sport participation.

For instance, policymakers across the United States have focused their attention on banning transgender athletes from participating in sports that align with their gender identities and from receiving gender-affirming healthcare (see Ronan, 2021). Buzuvis (2012) suggested these bills give potentially unfair disadvantages for cisgender women and cisgender girls. Transgender women and girls, though, must meet certain testosterone thresholds before being permitted to compete with cisgender women and girls (Handelsman et al., 2018). Nonetheless, some transgender athlete bans include reinstating gender verification examinations. In fact, Wiesemann (2011) has deemed this practice as unethical, noting how gender verification increases risks for gender identity crisis, social isolation, unnecessary sport disqualification, worsened mental health outcomes, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts among athletes.

Several sport organizations also have introduced discriminatory policies. For example, the International Swimming Federation recently established a uniform policy which serves as another example of discriminatory practices in sport. Specifically, the Federation banned swimmers from wearing Soul Caps and other larger swim caps that are made to fit over thick and big hair. Ward (2021) suggested, however, banning large swim caps is a form of institutional discrimination as it disproportionately affects BIPOC swimmers who are more likely to have Afros, dreadlocks, extensions, and thicker hair. As several authors suggested (Peavy & Shearer, 2021; Wiltse, 2014), banning large swim caps and other institutional forms of discrimination are especially problematic as swimming tends to be most accessible to White individuals. Therefore, such policies decrease the accessibility of swimming among BIPOC communities. Put differently, there is some evidence that a lack of access to swimming among BIPOC people and communities contributes to the exclusion of BIPOC people, forcing them to adapt to White Eurocentric ideals or disengage from the sport (Peavy & Shearer, 2021; Wiltse, 2014).

In addition, LGBTQIA+ athletes are challenged by interpersonal discrimination in sport. For instance, Gill et al. (2010) showed LGBTQIA+ athletes experience discrimination at disproportionately higher rates compared to their cisgender heterosexual peers. Although Anderson and colleagues (2016) indicated homonegativity and discrimination in sport have been gradually decreasing and attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport have been gradually improving, others (Denison & Kitchen, 2016; Denison et al., 2021a; Sartore-Baldwin, 2013) suggested discrimination continues to

persist in sport. For example, at least 70% of student-athletes continue to hear or experience homophobic and homonegative comments from their teammates and coaches, and straight teammates tend to not intervene when they witness homophobia or homonegativity (Toomey et al., 2018). In another study, Denison and colleagues (2021b) found that 53.8% of male rugby and ice hockey players in their study admitted using homophobic language. Given the commonality of homophobia and homonegativity in sport, there is a need for advocacy to protect LGBTQIA+ athletes. Thus, advocacy is needed to urge organizations to implement non-discrimination protections for LGBTQIA+ athletes to make a safer sport environment for all participants.

Another marginalized group experiencing discrimination in sport includes BIPOC athletes. For example, research found Black women athletes in the media tend to be subject to hyper-sexualization and fetishization, are often portrayed as less feminine than white women, and are othered and rejected (Cooky et al., 2010; Litchfield et al., 2018). Moreover, Prewitt-White (2019) recently reflected on their experience as a sport psychology consultant when athletes identified racism as a barrier to their performance. Specifically, Prewitt-White prepared a two-hour session on self-talk and imagery to address a lack of confidence, but the athletes disregarded the training and informed the author that fans at one tournament chanted like monkeys at them, taunted them, and threw banana peels at them. Through open dialogue about race, Prewitt-White (2019) learned that racism, not lack of confidence, is what de-motivated the volleyball players from participating. Additionally, compared with White communities, low-income Black communities often lack access to many sports such as swimming, leading to the erasure

and lack of inclusion of Black people in many sport domains (Norwood et al., 2014). Non-discrimination policies and greater funding for programs might help alleviate these disparities.

In review, non-discrimination policies are needed to protect LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals from discrimination in and out of sport. Indeed, the existence of discrimination throughout society permeates sport and leads to several disparities. These disparities then hinder certain groups of individuals (e.g., LGBTQIA+ and/or BIPOC individuals) from safe and equitable sport participation. Not only do these disparities create negative experiences in sport, but discrimination also may harm athletes' physical, social, and mental health.

Effects of Discrimination in the General Population

The effects of discrimination in sport and life, in general, go beyond limiting access to safe and equitable opportunities for athletes. Both explicit and implicit discriminatory policies, as well as the lack of non-discrimination policies and supports, can have lasting effects. However, there is limited research on the long-term effects of discrimination among athletes in general. Nonetheless, information regarding the effects of discrimination has been widely documented in non-athlete populations and can be used to inform our understanding of the implications for athletes. The consequences are clear.

For instance, discrimination among LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals has been linked to poorer mental health, physical health, academic success, and other problem behaviors. Indeed, discrimination among this population has been connected to worsened mental health, including increased risks for distress, negative self-identity, mental health

problems, suicidal ideation, and suicide (Johns et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2009; Willoughby et al., 2010). LGBTQIA+ individuals also commonly experience bullying and victimization which further compacts distress, mental health problems, and suicidality (Russell et al., 2011; Toomey et al., 2011). Further, previous trauma related to discrimination, compared with trauma not induced by discrimination, also has been more strongly associated with attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, emotional dysregulation, post-traumatic stress disorder, and dissociation (Keating & Muller, 2020).

In addition, discrimination negatively impacts the physical health of LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals. Fuller-Rowell et al. (2021), for example, showed discrimination can lead sleep quality. Cedillo et al. (2020) further found discrimination was associated with increased cortisol levels, diastolic blood pressure, pulse, and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol oxidation. Discrimination also decreases heart rate variability (Hill et al., 2017). Moreover, growing up in environments filled with discrimination has been shown to blunt the cortisol response in gay and lesbian individuals as adults (Hatzenbuehler & McLaughlin, 2014). Thus, discrimination has several negative consequences related to physical health.

Others also have examined the relationship between discrimination and various academic outcomes. Peer discrimination and victimization, for instance, have been connected to poor academic outcomes for young LGBTQIA+ people such as increased truancy, decreased grades, and lower expectations of completing high school and continuing to college (Aragon et al., 2014). In fact, bullying, repeated victimization, and low levels of social support increase risks for school dropout and decrease the likelihood

a student will further their education (Kosciw et al., 2014). Additionally, school environments that students perceive are unsafe result in poorer peer relations, focus, academic performance, motivation, and attendance and greater aggression and grade repetition (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Ursache et al., 2012). Interestingly, these impacts also decrease the perceived sense of safety and has negative effects on learning and engagement among other students who are not the direct targets of discrimination (Perry & Morris, 2014). Together, these findings indicate discrimination is consequential for all people, including those without marginalized identities. Further, this suggests discrimination should alarm everyone and not just those who are directly disadvantaged.

Furthermore, experiencing discrimination can increase risks for problem behaviors. When researching LGBTQIA+ youth, Denton et al. (2014) noted victims of discrimination have the tendency to blame themselves for being discriminated against. The authors shared blaming oneself for being discriminated against increased internalized homophobia and expectations for future rejection, which worsened coping self-efficacy and physical symptom severity. Johns et al. (2019) also showed discrimination increases risks for substance misuse and risky sexual behaviors. Further, discrimination may have long-term effects on Black people as they enter parenthood. Lansford et al. (2016) explained that young people who experience racism internalize these experiences, directly impacting their worldviews and coping mechanisms which can then be indirectly passed down to their children, leading to generational effects of discrimination.

In essence, the existence of discrimination comes with several negative consequences—at least among the general population. Discrimination has been

associated with worsened mental health (e.g., increased suicidal ideation), physical health (e.g., increased cortisol levels), and academic outcomes (e.g., increased truancy). Discrimination has been connected to poorer coping strategies and increases in other problem behaviors (e.g., increased substance misuse). Some research has recently begun to examine the impact of discrimination on athletes, suggesting discrimination may have similar negative consequences for athletes as for the general population.

Effects of Discrimination on Athletes

An evolving body of research is beginning to explore discrimination among athletes. Early evidence suggests athletes are similarly challenged by discriminatory experiences. In fact, discrimination can lead to negative outcomes for athletes and non-athletes (Brown et al., 2021; Ohlert et al., 2018; Symons et al., 2017). For example, discrimination has been connected to increased feelings of sadness, anger, distress, and shame among athletes (Symons et al., 2017; Utsey et al., 2008) as well as detachment, exclusion, and separation (Sato et al., 2017). Additionally, discrimination has been shown to increase anxiety, depression, hostility, and anger, which then increases problematic drinking behaviors among athletes (Brown et al., 2021; Gerrard et al., 2018).

More specifically, research has specifically examined the relationships among discrimination and various outcomes on BIPOC college athletes. For instance, BIPOC college athletes are at higher risk of suicide (Rao et al., 2015) and social isolation (Cooper et al., 2017) than White college athletes. Both authors suggested discrimination may be one significant factor causing these disparities. In addition, other scholars have mentioned university professors have the tendency to discriminate against BIPOC college

athletes, treating them like they are dumb for being both BIPOC and student-athletes (Comeaux, 2010). The author argued such discrimination against BIPOC college athletes results in decreased sense of belongingness in school. Relatedly, BIPOC student-athletes have lower graduation rates (Harper et al., 2013).

As another example, Ohlert et al. (2018) suggested the threats of discrimination put LGBTQIA+ athletes in vulnerable positions where they are more likely to be victims of sexual violence perpetrated by coaches or team doctors. Without clear policies and social support, LGBTQIA+ athletes may be more likely to remain silent about experiences with discrimination, including sexual violence, preventing them from help-seeking and recovery (Armstrong et al., 2018; Scheadler et al., 2022). In fact, this has been found to be the case in research on transgender athletes. Specifically, Munson and Ensign (2021) found lack of both explicit support and non-discrimination policies discouraged help-seeking behaviors among this group. Furthermore, discrimination in sport can worsen attitudes toward sport, leading some athletes to contemplate leaving and avoiding their sport (Symons et al., 2017).

As such, LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC athletes are at risk of being negatively affected by discriminatory practices and policies, just as is the case for non-athlete LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals. Because discrimination exists in and out of sport and disproportionately harms LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC athletes, sport should be examined as one possible platform for advocacy.

Sport as a Context for Advocacy

Given discrimination exists in sport and often impacts athletes, sport is a context primed for advocacy-related efforts. There also are other reasons sport may be a good context for advocacy. Sport, for instance, is highly valued by society, giving sport stakeholders great societal power they can leverage to benefit society (Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Jarvie, 2012; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007). Additionally, Newman et al. (2019) and Scheadler et al. (2022) insisted sport stakeholders, including coaches, sport social workers, and other sport leaders, have ethical responsibilities to embrace social justice.

Indeed, sport possesses high societal value, giving those in sport a large platform that reaches a broad audience. Many scholars (Frey & Eitzen, 1991; Jarvie, 2012; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007) have noted sport gives those involved great prestige and a unique platform to amplify social justice messages and initiatives. That is, many sport stakeholders influence not only the athletes on their respective teams, but also influence the many fans and community members watching their actions. For example, John Calipari, Head Coach of University of Kentucky's men's basketball team, has a platform that not only reaches the athletes on his current team, but also extends to other students, staff, and faculty at the institution as well as other community members and fans. He used this platform to encourage athletes, other students, and fans to vote in the presidential election to spark social change for what he believed was appropriate (Gershon, 2020).

Moreover, openly supporting and advocating for athletes may create a perceived safer environment for athletes from marginalized backgrounds to explore their identities

in healthy ways and buffer them from many consequences of discrimination. Cunningham and colleagues, for instance, have previously argued that openly embracing diversity and inclusion, rather than rejecting diversity inclusion or remaining silent, can strengthen creativity (Cunningham, 2011a), organizational performance (Cunningham, 2011b, 2015), and team performance (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004). Murchison et al. (2017) argued affirming environments may protect LGBTQIA+ young people from sexual violence. Further, Seelman and Walker (2018) used secondary data from 286,568 cases in 22 U.S. states and found non-discrimination policies decrease bullying victimization and fear-based truancy among gay, bisexual, and questioning boys. An emphasis on multiculturalism and non-discrimination, opposed to colorblindness or assimilation, also may decrease belonging and achievement gaps between ethnic groups (Celeste et al., 2019). Therefore, by advocating for affirming environments that emphasize multiculturalism and non-discrimination, college coaches may be able to decrease bullying and truancy, make athletes feel more included, improve performance, and promote other positive outcomes.

Others further insist sport stakeholders have ethical obligations to engage in advocacy related to discriminatory practices and policies. For instance, Newman et al. (2019) recently urged for social workers and sport psychology practitioners to collaborate to provide better services to athletes and to address issues of social injustice. The authors even highlighted social work and sport psychology share ethical values focused on athlete well-being, which inherently suggests experts in both professions have a duty to address all the issues impacting athlete well-being, including issues related to social justice. In

their introduction to a special issue of *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, Anderson-Butcher and Bates (2021) also called upon the field of sport social work to explore how the platform of sport can be leveraged for social justice advocacy. Scheadler et al. (2022) similarly called upon sport leaders to analyze organizational and legal policy and advocate for shifts toward more inclusive protections to ensure the safety of LGBTQIA+ athletes and to facilitate their identity development.

Meanwhile, silence about issues of social injustice contribute to the continued disenfranchisement of individuals from marginalized communities (Irving, 2014; Olson & LaPoe, 2017; Placek, 2017). For instance, both discrimination and silence about social justice make some athletes feel unsafe, disrespected, and ignored (e.g., Munson & Ensign, 2021). Other researchers surveyed college athletes and found participants preferred coaches who are either straight allies or gay opposed to coaches who display homophobic attitudes (Scheadler et al., 2021). To ensure athletes feel safe, respected, and welcomed to the team, coaches may be interested in actively supporting and advocating for athletes with marginalized identities. A sense of belongingness is even revered as one of the most important moderators to promoting positive developmental outcomes among young athletes (Anderson-Butcher & Fink, 2005; Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Warner et al., 2017) and could be the same in the college environment. Indeed, sport coaches play an important role in the lives of athletes. They may have a unique opportunity to help alleviate barriers to sport and encourage policy change that facilitates the healthy development of marginalized young people.

As such, there are many reasons for sport stakeholders, including coaches, to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Among them, sport stakeholders may engage in advocacy to shift attitudes and behaviors of fans, increase belongingness, and create more opportunities for individuals from marginalized communities. This has been the case for some athletes and coaches involved in sport at high levels. Colin Kaepernick, for example, used his platform as a professional athlete to increase awareness for police violence against BIPOC community members. Megan Rapinoe also used her platform to raise awareness for issues related to race, gender, and sexual orientation. Coaches, too, have engaged in advocacy. Steve Kerr, for example, encouraged non-violent protests to combat police violence against BIPOC communities. Meanwhile, Dawn Staley, Head Women's Basketball Coach at University of South Carolina, actively speaks out against institutional and interpersonal racism, especially against BIPOC women in sport.

Indeed, coaches have prominent platforms for advocacy, and some coaches—including college coaches—have shown they are willing to utilize their platforms to call for social change. However, little research exists related to college coach advocacy. An overview of the general roles of college coaches may help us learn how they might leverage their platforms for social change. After understanding the general roles of college coaches, a review of barriers and facilitators impacting advocacy may then help identify possible facilitators and barriers of college coach advocacy. Afterwards, a discussion on the limited research related to coach advocacy is then warranted.

Roles of College Coaches

Given limited research on advocacy among coaches, and specifically college coaches, the potential role they may have for addressing discrimination and disparities in sport remains unclear. College coaches are, however, highly influential role models who have unique opportunities to impact the healthy development of marginalized young people.

For instance, college coaches have roles related to teaching life skills and are charged with boosting the self-perceptions of college athletes. Indeed, interviews with 12 college volleyball players unveiled various acts of confirmation (e.g., being challenged to grow, getting recognized, receiving encouragement, developing personal relationships, investing in the team) are important to the development of perceived self-efficacy, self-worth, and value (Cranmer & Brann, 2015). In one case study, another coach, Nikki Izzo-Brown (Head Women's Soccer Coach at West Virginia University), said player development is the most important role she has (Harvey et al., 2018). Coach Nikki Izzo-Brown sees herself as a life coach and aims to connect with each athlete on a personal level. She said this allows her to learn which communication strategies work best for which players and allows her to help each player come closer to reaching their full potential in sport, academics, and other areas of life. Moreover, Krueger (2019) recently found college coaches recognize their roles as educators. More specifically, college coach participants in this study shared they believe they have the responsibility to develop relationships with their athletes and use storytelling as a mechanism to teach important

life lessons among athletes. These studies demonstrate ways in which college coaches accept their responsibility in preparing their athletes for life beyond college and sport.

Other scholars have suggested college coaches have roles related to advocating for concussion management. For instance, Baugh et al. (2014) found greater perceived social support from college coaches was related to fewer undiagnosed concussions as well as a smaller likelihood of returning to play while still experiencing concussion symptoms. In other words, social support from college coaches encouraged athletes to honestly report concussion symptoms. Another study corroborated these findings, showing college athletes sometimes continue playing even with persistent concussion symptoms when they believe their coaches do not want them to report such complications (Kroshus et al., 2015). These findings suggest college coaches play important roles in encouraging full injury rehabilitation to prevent further brain damage by engaging in sport before it is safe to return. However, interviews with 14 college coaches revealed most participants lacked knowledge about concussions and did not feel concussion management and communication were within their coaching responsibilities (Chrisman et al., 2021). Instead, some college coaches defaulted concussion management and communication to sports medicine staff (e.g., athletic trainers) and maintained a focus on winning. Despite these findings, Chrisman et al. (2021) insisted college coaches do play strong roles in providing supportive communication to athletes with concussions.

Relatedly, coaches have roles in identifying warning signs of and preventing unhealthy behaviors among college athletes. For instance, Sherman et al. (2005) surveyed 2894 college coaches and provided evidence that college coaches play important roles in

the identification of disordered eating and eating disorders among women athletes. Coaches in the study recognized that disordered eating behaviors posed serious threats to the health and performance of athletes. Similarly, other research suggest college coaches may impact substance use among their athletes. Indeed, a survey of 3155 college athletes found perceived approval of alcohol and other substances from college coaches was associated with increased use (Seitz et al., 2014). In fact, a mixed methods study of 519 college coaches showed participants perceived that they hold an important role in addressing and preventing alcohol use among college athletes (Chow et al., 2019). Specifically, results showed college coaches in the study believe they have a responsibility to educate athletes about the effects of alcohol use, regularly enforce a team policy regarding alcohol use, build relationships with athletes, manage the complex schedules of athletes to prevent alcohol use and misuse among their athletes. Together, these studies imply college coaches have roles related to decreasing substance use among athletes.

Another area demonstrating the importance of the role of college coaches is in the promotion of mental health. Specifically, recent survey research examines college coaches' roles as first responders to mental health problems among athletes. Rahill (2020) found college coaches frequently encounter college athletes with various mental health problems and take responsibility as their coaches to support them as necessary. The author revealed college coaches connect athletes with appropriate resources, promote safe environments to discuss mental health problems, and meet with athletes individually

to address mental health concerns. Indeed, college coaches play important roles in addressing health concerns among college athletes.

Additionally, another role of college coaches relates to building winning programs. In fact, college coaches hold explicit contractual obligations related to winning and recruiting. Their primary role is to win, which is evidenced by the race to upgrade facilities and opportunities available to athletes and the associated focus on recruitment (Holmes, 2011; Judge et al., 2018; Tsitsos & Nixon, 2012). Thus, college coaches have roles connected to life skill development, relationship building, concussion management, identification and prevention of mental health problems and substance use, winning, and recruiting.

Another important consideration is that college coaches are employed at higher education institutions. This is important to consider because higher education institutions have responsibilities to advance society and address social issues (Astin, 1985; Lagemann & Lewis, 2012; McCarthur, 2011). As such, college coaches may have additional responsibilities related to engaging in social justice efforts. Despite having added responsibilities, many barriers may prevent college coaches from engaging in advocacy. Some evidence of barriers to advocacy may help us develop a stronger understanding of college coach advocacy.

Barriers to Advocacy in Sport

Various barriers may prevent coaches from engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. No research, though, has yet examined barriers to advocacy among college coaches. Nevertheless, there has been some research on advocacy in sport

exploring barriers preventing high school coaches from engaging in polarized social issues. Findings from these studies may provide insights in relation to college coach advocacy.

For example, Lyndon et al. (2011) found high school coaches and sport administrators lacked an awareness of accurate information related to sexual violence and held on to traditional gender biases. Miller et al. (2015) then corroborated these findings with youth cricket coaches in India. Other research suggests coaches may be simply unaware of the challenges LGBTQIA+ and other marginalized athletes face. For instance, in their study of 10 high school coaches, Halbrook and colleagues (2019) found coaches in their study had positive attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ athletes but lack knowledge about the struggles these athletes encounter. In a quantitative study with 128 youth sport coaches, Newman et al. (2021) found coaches believe issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice were not among the top five most important issues for them to address with their teams. A better understanding of barriers related to knowledge and values are important next steps in the research.

Apart from coaches, additional research has examined the barriers impacting athletes' engagement in advocacy that may have relevance here. Findings from these studies may shed light on barriers college coaches might face in relation to advocacy. For instance, research on attitudes toward athlete activists points to fan threats as potential barriers for involvement in advocacy. Specifically, Litchfield et al. (2018) analyzed social media comments about Serena Williams from 24 different sites to examine fan-athlete interactions during the 2015 Wimbledon Championships. This study found Serena

Williams was subjected to taunting, offensive language, and threats from sport fans and community members. Relatedly, scholars have highlighted how other professional athletes are concerned about not receiving public support or fear losing their jobs, sponsorships, prestige, and privilege. For instance, Cunningham and Regan (2012) conducted an experimental study with 73 White undergraduate students and found that the participants were less likely to support athletes' endorsement deals when they engaged in controversial activism (i.e., anti-war activism). Frederick et al. (2017) analyzed Facebook comments responding to the boycott against racial injustice from the University of Missouri football team in 2016. Findings revealed many social media users called for athletes to be kicked off the team. These concerns are especially true for those who possess one or more marginalized identities such as Black lesbian women as they may be more closely scrutinized by others (e.g., Litchfield et al., 2018; Powell, 2008).

Perhaps, college coaches—especially those who possess one or more marginalized identities—are concerned about being subjected to similar criticisms and threats. If so, college coaches might worry that engaging in advocacy will result in losing public support and/or their job. Research is needed to examine the barriers college coaches actually face that deter their likelihood of advocacy on behalf of social issues.

Facilitators of Advocacy in Sport

There also is a lack of knowledge about the factors that facilitate college coach advocacy, yet this information is critical to understanding what is needed to encourage college coaches to engage in advocacy. Research outside college coach advocacy,

though, can be drawn on to brainstorm possible facilitators of advocacy among college coaches.

Indeed, research unrelated to college coach advocacy has demonstrated how social support is a critical facilitator of advocacy. For instance, interviews with 10 Black college athletes revealed perceived social support from coaches encourages athletes to engage in advocacy (Fuller & Agyemang, 2018). Others outside sport also have supported social support as a facilitator for advocacy. Fingerhut and Hardy (2020), for example, surveyed 355 White people who were members of organizations focused on racial justice advocacy. Mediational analyses supported the role of social support in directly predicting engagement in racial justice advocacy and boosted well-being. Further, the authors showed a sense of community indirectly predicted engagement in racial justice advocacy (Fingerhut & Hardy, 2020). Given these findings, college coaches with social support from other powerful stakeholders and who have a strong sense of community with their team may, in turn, be more likely to engage in advocacy. Limited research, however, exists examining facilitators of college coach advocacy.

Other research not related to sport notes additional facilitators of racial justice advocacy among groups of White people, which may have implications for college coach advocacy. Specifically, Tropp and Uluğ (2019) completed a two-part study first surveying 296 White women about their attitudes toward and experiences with non-White people. The authors then surveyed 222 more White women who had participated in the 2017 Women's March about their attitudes toward and experiences with non-White people, as well as their motivations and behaviors related to gender and racial advocacy.

Findings suggest close relationships with Black people, and not just positive contact with Black people, predict racial justice advocacy among White women (Tropp & Uluğ, 2021). Uluğ and Tropp (2021) extended upon these findings in a three-part study. This included an online survey of 581 White Americans, another online survey of 99 self-identified White racial justice allies, and an experiment with 258 White Americans where participants either viewed two videos displaying racism or were shown photographs from the videos but without any audio, video, or captions. Findings revealed exposure to Black people is not enough to increase racial justice advocacy. Instead, results suggest increased awareness of racial injustice and privilege facilitates racial justice advocacy (Uluğ & Tropp, 2021). Therefore, social support, sense of community, strong relationships with those impacted by discrimination, and awareness of marginalization and privilege facilitate racial justice advocacy. College coaches with strong social support, as well as exposure to and relationships with diverse athletes, may, in turn, be encouraged to engage in advocacy. Research is needed to see if this is true among college coaches.

There also may be other factors that facilitate college coach advocacy such as having athletes initiate advocacy or having a significant other who engages in advocacy. However, these factors have yet to be studied. In fact, no studies have examined facilitators of college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. More research is needed to identify facilitators of advocacy among college coaches and to explore ways in which they advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice as they can be influential champions for social change. Indeed, an integral aspect of promoting policy change is identifying and leveraging policy champions to advocate for reform

(Cullerton et al., 2018; Mundy, 2013). Specifically, policy champions have positive reputations marked by high degrees of influence throughout their community. As college coaches are revered as experts in the field of sport and have immense public visibility, the platform of college sport may be another facilitator of coach advocacy. In turn, college coaches roles as policy champions and advocates may be important when addressing broader discrimination and prejudices both in and out of sport.

Coaches as Advocates

Despite being in college sport, a platform with a high level of influence, little is known about the role of college coaches as advocates. In fact, only seven studies exist that are explicitly related to coach advocacy, and only three of these studies relate specifically to college coach advocacy. Among these three studies, only one sampled college coaches themselves (Steinfeldt et al., 2011) while the other two sampled college athletes (Kroshus et al., 2018; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Table 1 provides an overview of these seven studies, including the advocacy area, design, sample, primary findings, and limitations reported within the study. Each also are described below.

Table 1: Current Research on Coach Advocacy

Authors	Advocacy Area	Design	Sample Size	Sample	Primary Findings	Limitations
Lyndon et al. (2011)	Sexual violence prevention	Interviews with 5 participants and one focus group with 6 participants	11	High school coaches and sport administrators	Participants reported knowing they have high levels of influence on athletes but lack knowledge of sexual violence prevalence and prevention strategies.	Small sample; focused on only one geographic region; only examined sexual violence prevention; only examined high school coaches and administrators but not those from other levels; lack of racially diverse sample; exploratory; only examine men
Miller et al. (2015)	Gender norms and violence	Semi-structure interviews with coaches and focus groups with athletes	24 coaches and 47 athletes	Youth cricket coaches in India and male youth cricket players	Coaches recognized their influence on athletes but were unsure of the limits to their role. Some coaches also believed teaching respect for women was not their responsibility. Coaches also had limited knowledge of	Only examined gender norms and violence; only included cricket; only examined boys and coaches of boys; only focused on one geographic location; exploratory

Continued

Table 1 continued

Miller et al. (2015) continued					gender discrimination and upheld gender norms. In addition, athletes wanted coaches to engage in conversations about aspects of their lives not related to sport. Athletes also lacked knowledge of gender discrimination and upheld gender norms. Athletes also believed coach advocacy for violence prevention would help them control their anger.	
Steinfeldt et al. (2011)	Gender norms	Semi-structured interviews	10	Assistant college football coaches	Participants recognized they can play a role on macro-level change. They were aware they can educate athletes about gender norms, masculinity, accountability,	Possible selection bias related to voluntary participation; relatively young sample; lack of racial diversity throughout sample; only examined gender norms; only examined college

Continued

Table 1 continued

Steinfeldt et al. (2011) continued					and responsibility	football coaches and not those from other sports or levels; only included men; small sample size
Kroshus et al. (2018)	Sexual violence prevention	Cross-sectional survey	3,281	college football players	Athletes reported higher rates of intended bystander intervention when their coaches openly and directly discussed player expectations and bystander intervention and whose coaches consistently upheld disciplinary policies for those who violated these expectations.	Cross-sectional design prevented authors from making causal inferences; information related to validity and reliability of expectations of coach behavior item was not available; subjective self-reporting; measures may not have been adequately specific for correct participant interpretation; the study measured intentions but not behavior; frequency of coach communication was not reported; only examined sexual violence prevention; only examined college

Continued

Table 1 continued

Kroshus et al. (2018) continued						football players and not athletes of other sports or levels; cross-sectional and exploratory
Tredinnick & McMahon (2021)	Sexual violence prevention	Secondary data of cross-sectional survey	175	College athletes	Participants with coaches who advocated for sexual violence prevention by discussing prevention strategies and resources with their players reported greater knowledge of campus resources related to sexual violence and a higher likelihood of participating in sexual assault	Exploratory study with small sample size; evidence of self-selection bias with greater number of female participants compared to male participants; lack of clarity about what coaches said when they discussed sexual violence prevention strategies; only examined sexual violence prevention; only included NCAA Division I college athletes in one geographic region prevention programs.
Jaime et al. (2015)	Sexual violence	Cluster-randomized	176	High school coaches in the	The program increased the confidence of	Self-reporting can result in socially desirable

Continued

Table 1 continued

Jaime et al. (2015) continued	prevention	control trial, pre- and post-surveys, and interviews		Coaching Boys into Men Program completed surveys and 36 completed interviews	coaches related to sexual violence prevention. Also, coaches reported they recognize their high level of influence over athletes	and overestimations of skills; small size that was likely biased toward the program; only examined sexual violence prevention; only examined coaches of male and co-educational sport teams; only examined high school coaches
Miller et al. (2013)	Sexual violence prevention	Cluster-randomized control trial and pre- and post-surveys	1513	high school athletes whose coaches either did or did not complete the Coaching Boys into Men Program	Coach participation in the program decreased negative bystander behaviors among athletes. Dating violence perpetration also was lower among athletes with coaches who completed the intervention. There were no significant effects of the program on intention to	Lack of generalizability; selection bias as youth only participated upon parental consent and attendance at school; retention bias toward prosocial youth; self-reporting can result in socially desirable responses; only examined sexual violence prevention; only examined male athletes;

Continued

Table 1 continued

Miller et al. (2013) continued	intervene, gender-equitable attitudes, recognition of abusive behaviors, or positive bystander behaviors.	did not ask coaches

Lyndon and colleagues (2011), for example, examined the perceived influence and knowledge of coaches and sport administrators regarding sexual violence. More specifically, the authors completed five interviews and one focus group with 11 total high school coaches and sport administrators. They found participants believed they had a strong influence over athletes' lives but lacked knowledge of sexual violence prevalence and prevention strategies. Similarly, interviews with 24 youth cricket coaches and focus groups with 47 male youth cricket players showed coaches recognize their influence on athletes but lack knowledge of gender discrimination and even uphold gender norms (Miller et al., 2015). In fact, the youth athletes reported interests in their coaches engaging in violence prevention advocacy on and off the field. Athletes in this study indicated they believed such advocacy would help them learn to manage their anger.

The role of the coach in advocacy also has been showcased through coach training efforts in sexual violence prevention. Specifically, in an attempt to engage high school coaches in advocacy and violence prevention efforts, Jaime et al. (2015) evaluated 176 coaches who participated in the Coaching Boys into Men program. The program is an intervention designed to increase coaches' competence in advocacy and violence prevention. Through a cluster-randomized control trial with baseline and post-test surveys with all participants and interviews with 36 coaches, the authors found that the Coaching Boys into Men program increased coaches' confidence in violence prevention strategies. Coaches also perceived the program as valuable for their athletes (Jaime et al., 2015). The authors suggested that high school coaches recognize their roles as advocates for violence prevention. These findings were supported by another cluster-randomized

control trial of the same program. Miller et al. (2013) analyzed the behaviors of 1513 high school male athletes of coaches who participated in the program. Findings suggest coaches successfully used the skills they learned in the program to decrease negative bystander behaviors (e.g., laughing, encouraging abusive behaviors) and dating violence perpetration, suggesting coach advocacy can have a significant impact on athletes' bystander behaviors and violence perpetration.

Other research has more recently examined coach advocacy behaviors of college coaches. Specifically, in a cross-sectional study of 3,281 college football players, Kroshus et al. (2018) found that openly and clearly discussing team and player expectations regarding relationship violence and bystander intervention and by implementing a consistent disciplinary policy for athletes who violate these expectations increased the likelihood of bystander intervention intentions among athletes. Tredinnick and McMahon (2021) recently surveyed 175 college athletes to examine the impacts of coach advocacy on college athletes' knowledge of sexual violence. Findings suggest athletes were more knowledgeable about campus resources about sexual violence and were more likely to participate in sexual assault prevention programming when their coaches actively discussed the roles athletes can play in preventing sexual violence. Last, another study of ten college coaches similarly revealed that coaches know they play a role in macro-level change by educating student-athletes on gender norms, masculinity, accountability, and responsibility (Steinfeldt et al., 2011). Findings suggest coaches are aware of their role in advocacy, even though they may not regularly engage in these efforts.

Combined, these seven studies show coaches recognize they have a high level of influence on athletes and society. The findings also suggest some coaches engage in conversations and connect athletes to resources to decrease gender discrimination and sexual violence perpetration and increase bystander intervention. Studies on coach advocacy, though, are limited to a coach's role in interpersonal violence prevention and gender discrimination and have not yet explored other areas of advocacy. In particularly, research has not yet examined the role of coaches as advocates in promoting LGBTQIA+ rights or racial justice.

In fact, only seven known studies have examined coach advocacy to-date. Among these, only three known studies by Jaime et al. (2015), Lyndon et al. (2011), and Miller et al. (2015) focused on high school coaches explore involvement in advocacy amongst coaches to date. Meanwhile, only one known study by Steinfeldt et al. (2011) specifically examined college coaches' participation in advocacy. However, this single study only examined the experiences of college football coaches and not the voices of college coaches from other sports. In addition, none of these seven studies included women coaches or LGBTQIA+ coaches. More research is needed to explore the experiences of these coaches.

Research on coach advocacy have utilized a variety of methodological designs including cluster-randomized control trials (e.g., Jaime et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2013), cross-sectional surveys (e.g., Kroshus et al., 2018; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021), and interviews and/or focus groups (e.g., Lyndon et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2015). None, though, have used mixed methods. These studies are largely limited to sexual assault

awareness and interpersonal violence prevention. More research is needed on other areas of coach advocacy that have been ignored. Specifically, there is a need for research on coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice, as LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities are two marginalized groups who have historically been discriminated in sport and the broader society.

There are several possible reasons why researchers have not studied college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. For example, sport researchers may be more interested in the experiences of athletes than others in the sport ecosystem. Indeed, more is known about athletes than about coaches, referees, and parents/caregivers of athletes. Also, sport researchers may be avoiding politically controversial issues such as LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. However, silence about LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice is symbolic of the homophobia, transphobia, and racism that exists in and out of sport (cf. Douglas, 2005; Griffin, 1992; McDonald, 2005). Specifically, lack of actions and discussions on LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice allow injustices to continue to exist. Given sport social work has values related to social justice and human rights, sport social work researchers should study how to address these issues through sport.

Additionally, few studies have examined the barriers and facilitators of coach advocacy. Those that have look at knowledge, or lack thereof, related to sexual violence as well as gender biases preventing coaches from engaging in sexual violence prevention (Lyndon et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2015) but have not yet looked at barriers or facilitators to engaging in LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice advocacy. Thus, more research is

needed on college coach advocacy related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Further, there also is a need for research to examine coach advocacy at different levels as experiences, barriers, and facilitators may be different when considering the context of the self, team, institution, conference, community surroundings, and other societal events, norms, and values.

Ecological Systems Theory

One way to examine the role of college coaches in advocacy is through ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Specifically, ecological systems theory, which posits that bidirectional relationships exist between various levels, can be used as a framework to develop an understanding of coaches' relationships with the various actors (e.g., athletes, athletic departments, policies) throughout the different levels in the model. A deeper understanding of these relationships can then be used to explore how college coaches can engage in advocacy to encourage change at each level.

Ecological systems theory includes five main levels (see Figure 1). At the innermost core is the individual, consisting of one's knowledge, attitudes, skills, race, gender, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics. Next, the interpersonal level includes others connected to the individual. This involves families, friends, and other significant people within one's social network. The organizational level exists beyond that and includes organizations and other social institutions such as athletic departments and entire universities. Relationships between organizations and groups exist at the community level. Finally, the societal level involves policy and other societal factors. An awareness of these many contexts (e.g., historical, political, social, familial, etc.) is

critical especially for engaging with athletes from diverse and marginalized backgrounds (Parham, 2005).

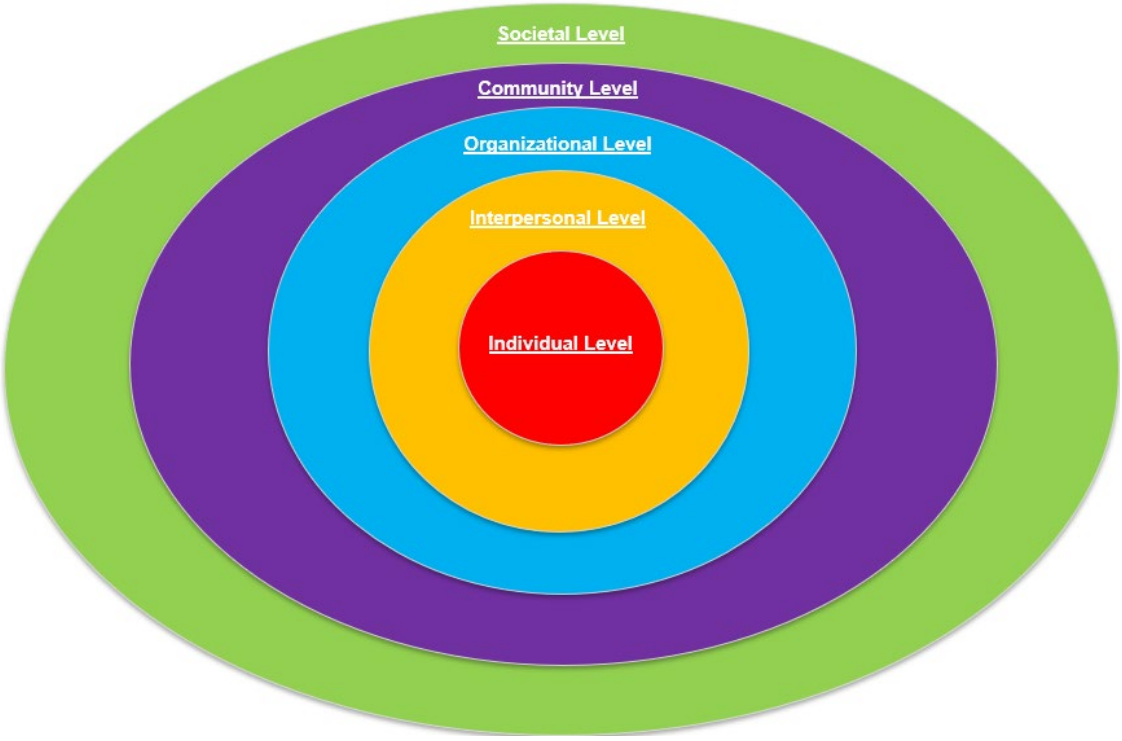

Figure 1: A Model of the Ecological Systems Theory

Indeed, the ecological systems theory can be used to develop a stronger understanding of the many individuals, groups, and factors that impact the development of athletes. Recently, Dorsch et al. (2020) centered athletes in a heuristic model similar to the ecological systems theory and explained how others exist throughout different levels to impact athlete development. The authors argued youth coaches exist in the team subsystem and influence athletes by providing them with sport and social knowledge and by enhancing their confidence, competence, and character. Peers also were included in the team level, which resembles the interpersonal level in the ecological systems theory. The authors also added a family subsystem in the interpersonal level to incorporate

parents and siblings as they can pressure and role model sport participation and behavior. In the environment subsystem, the authors included organizations, communities, and societies. In sport, organizations may demand a set of requirements from athletes and other sport stakeholders, such as certain training certifications or testing. In the context of college coaches, the college itself, needs to be included in the organizational level and the conference and league the institution is a member of needs to be included in the community level.

More broadly, society might establish the norms and policies of the environment, determining which sports are accessible, where, and to whom. In fact, Dorsch et al. (2020) argued, like in ecological systems theory, athletes enter a feedback loop where they are both affected by the other key personnel (e.g., coaches, family) and also affect them. That is, relationships within the model are reciprocal and each individual affects each other. For example, organizations set the agenda, mission, and policies impacting athletes and others throughout the model. Meanwhile, coaches and other sport administrators often serve as leaders in these organizations, and therefore, facilitate policy creation and implementation (Dorsch et al., 2020). Indeed, college coaches can influence other individuals, groups, and factors throughout the ecological system. In other words, college coaches' impact on athletes are not limited to the interpersonal level of the ecological system; rather, college coaches may influence individuals, groups, and factors at each level of the ecological system. Thus, ecological systems theory is a good framework to examine college coach advocacy.

Another way of investigating the utility of the ecological systems theory for college coach advocacy is by examining how college coaches play a role in decreasing sexual violence on college campuses. For example, Tredinnick and McMahon (2021) incorporated college coaches in both the interpersonal and organizational levels of athletes' ecological system. According to the authors, college coaches have interpersonal relationships with athletes that coaches can leverage to educate their athletes on and prepare them to engage in bystander prevention of sexual violence. By educating athletes and connecting them with campus resources, the authors also urged college coaches play a role in the organizational level within the ecological system. Their findings suggest college coaches also may advocate and create change at other levels in the ecological systems theory. For example, college coaches can practice advocacy by becoming more self-aware of how their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, experience, and other relevant factors impacts their life and coaching practices. Additionally, college coaches may consider becoming more knowledgeable on social justice topics.

At the interpersonal level, college coaches may advocate through discussions with individual athletes, teams, coworkers, bosses, and other colleagues about social justice topics. This may involve emotional support, behavioral interventions (e.g., encouraging decreased drug use), affirmations, or education. At the organizational level, college coaches might advocate for athletes by connecting them to other campus resources that can improve their well-being and/or empower them to create further change (e.g., sexual assault prevention programs, mental health counseling). At the community level, college

coaches can engage in advocacy by creating partnerships between their team and other groups. For example, college coaches might lead their team through volunteer and philanthropy efforts. This may resemble hosting a clinic to increase access to sport for vulnerable youth in the community and using it as an opportunity to teach them social skills. Finally, college coaches can practice advocacy most directly at the societal level. At this level, college coaches may consider urging the school to pass non-discrimination policies, contacting their representatives, or testifying at legislative committees on bills that impact the well-being of their athletes.

Additionally, considering coaches are often focused on team dynamics without recognizing the influential role of diversity work in promoting inclusivity (Newman et al., 2021) and lack knowledge of issues related to diversity and inclusion (Halbrook et al., 2019), college coach advocacy likely needs to be examined at the aggregate behavior level. That is, college coach advocacy is not common and therefore likely does not represent the norm among coaches. Understanding how some college coaches deviate from these norms and accept advocacy as part of their role, though, may allow researchers to investigate pathways to encourage more college coaches to use their platform to advocate for sociopolitical change. Combined, an understanding of how college coaches may impact the ecological system and how these behaviors, among others, can influence organizational performance may help guide an exploration of college coach advocacy behaviors, facilitators, and barriers.

When examining how a college coach can impact various levels in the ecological system, power, privilege, and marginalization also must be considered. College coaches

with greater power from various privileged identities may be able to affect the most change as they may be more likely to enter decision-making spaces with less risk. On the contrary, college coaches with less power and privilege (i.e., greater marginalization), may have to take greater risks to become advocates. Indeed, sport is entrenched with racism (Douglas, 2005; McDonald, 2005), hypermasculinity (Castaldelli-Maia et al., 2019; Cooky et al., 2013), homophobia and homonegativity (Griffin, 1992), ablism (Giese & Ruin, 2018), and other forms of sociopolitical oppression that suppresses the voices of those who experience marginalization. These forms of oppression, therefore, may act as barriers hindering the ability for some college coaches to advocate. Yet, these barriers might simultaneously motivate some college coaches to dismantle injustice and utilize sport for social change.

Although described here are ways in which past sport research is explored through ecological systems theory, along with other ways in which the role of college coaches and college coach advocacy could be explored using this theoretical lens, no research to-date has explored college coach advocacy specifically through this theory. Specifically, little is known about how college coaches envision their roles as advocates and what facilitates and/or prevents them from engaging in advocacy at various levels. Exploring how college coaches perceive they can impact the different levels of the ecological system and what facilitators and barriers encourage or threaten their advocacy, respectively, can be used to develop a stronger understanding of college coach advocacy. Thus, the present study adopted a qualitative approach guided by ecological systems theory to explore the various experiences, barriers, and facilitators of advocacy for

LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice among a sample of college coaches. Specific details about the qualitative approach and analysis are shared in Chapter 3.

Present Study

Exploring the perceived roles, barriers, and facilitators of college coach advocacy related LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice is important to develop a better understanding of what is needed to promote advocacy for human rights. Additionally, both social work and sport research are lacking an understanding of how to empower college coaches to become advocates (e.g., policy champions) for sociopolitical change. Social justice work by college coaches has implications for all their athletes and for the broader community as they hold the potential to influence attitudes and policies in and out of sport. This research is important because it has potential to discover the barriers and facilitators to coach advocacy, as well as create a better understanding of where college coaches are coming from in relation to their knowledge and value of their role as policy champions.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to use a grounded theory approach to understand the experiences, facilitators, and barriers of advocacy among college coaches. As such, the present study asks the following questions:

RQ_1: What are the experiences of college coaches who have engaged in racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

RQ_2: What factors, if any, facilitate advocacy among coaches who have engaged in advocacy for racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

RQ_3: What barriers, if any, prevent advocacy among coaches who have engaged in advocacy for racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights?

The present study is designed to respond to gaps in the literature on the advocacy behaviors of college coaches by looking at advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides a useful framework to do this. Specifically, ecological systems theory considers how the experiences, barriers, and facilitators of college coach advocacy might be different when considering the context of the self, team, institution, conference, community surroundings, and other societal events, norms, and values.

Chapter 3. Methods

To explore the experiences, facilitators, and barriers of college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice, the present study adopted a qualitative design. More specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed using procedures outlined by grounded theory scholars (e.g., Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Bryant, 2010).

Context & Positionality

Constructivist grounded theory was used to develop an understanding of college coach advocacy (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory utilizes a systematic approach that can be used to reveal the processes that facilitate or prevent individuals from engaging in certain behaviors (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010). By addressing the data through constructivist grounded theory, I recognized there was no one reality. As such, more than one explanation can be provided for the existence of any given phenomenon. In other words, constructivist grounded theory accepts that the context of an individual's experience influences their experience and was considered when analyzing the data. This principle allowed me to critically examine the complexities of each participants' lived experiences to develop a heightened understanding of coach advocacy.

Another critical element to constructivist grounded theory is an acknowledgement of the positionality of the researcher. Indeed, my own experiences, identities, and biases likely influenced relationships with the participants and the interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2014). As a former college athlete and someone with a graduate degree in sport psychology, for example, I was able to develop rapport with college coaches

quickly due to my common experiences and background. My identity as a gay activist also facilitated rapport building with coaches engaged in social justice work. Relatedly, I was a social work student with an emphasis on community and social justice during the data collection and analysis stages. Through social work, I adopted anti-oppressive and empowerment philosophies, which involves a commitment to strengthening the rights and well-being of marginalized groups. However, I was careful to not expect others to have the same concepts and hopes with activism as I did during data collection. Instead, I maintained an open mind and allowed participants to share their stories with me. Additionally, I recognized that my identity as a White cisgender man is among my most visible identities. This is especially important to recognize when engaging in social justice work as White cisgender men have historically held privilege and power over others, resulting in many of the systemic discrimination that continues to exist today. Therefore, I was patient and emphasized rapport-building prior to diving into deeper discussions with participants. Doing so encouraged a sense of safety and allowed participants to share their experiences with me.

Participants

Participants included 16 college coaches (ages 34-64) from Divisions I and III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) who previously displayed some form of advocacy behaviors related to LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice in the last five years. To maintain a broad and diverse sample, the inclusion criteria remained broad: (a) be at least 18 years old; (b) be a college coach during the 2021-2022 school year; and

(c) engage in advocacy related to LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice in the last five years.

Participants were mostly White (*n* = 10), but also identified as Black/African American (*n* = 4), and Latina/Hispanic American (*n* = 2). Notably, one White participant, Morgan, was born in Ireland and was not a U.S. citizen and one Latina/Hispanic American participant, Sofia, was born in Venezuela and was a U.S. citizen. Additionally, participants identified as cisgender men (*n* = 8) and cisgender women (*n* = 8). They identified as straight/heterosexual (*n* = 6), gay (*n* = 4), lesbian (*n* = 5), and queer (*n* = 1). Participants also identified as Christian (*n* = 2), Catholic (*n* = 2), Jewish (*n* =1), Quaker (*n* = 1), and Atheist/Non-Religious/Non-Spiritual (*n* =3). One participant said they were spiritual and others did not share their religious beliefs. Most participants had earned a Master's degree (*n* = 9) while others had a Bachelor's degree (*n* = 2) or a Ph.D. (*n* = 2). One participant completed some graduate training, and two others did not report their highest level of education. Most participants were full-time head coaches (*n* = 11). One of these coaches, Nathan, resigned within two weeks prior to the interview and more recently accepted a job as a quarterbacks coach at a different institution. One coach was a full-time associate head coach, one was a full-time assistant coach, and two were part-time assistant coaches. One of the part-time assistant coaches was previously the head coach but recently accepted an offer as an athletic director and part-time assistant coach (Caleb). Meanwhile, Heather was a voluntary assistant coach and more recently resigned to become an assistant professor. Participants also coached in NCAA Divisions I (*n* = 9) and III (*n* = 7). Participants coached track and field (*n* = 3), women's tennis (*n* = 2),

women's soccer (*n* = 2), swimming and diving (*n* = 2), women's lacrosse (*n* = 1), women's field hockey (*n* = 1), fencing (*n* = 1), men's rowing (*n* = 1), softball (*n* = 1), women's basketball (*n* = 1), and football (*n* = 1). Finally, participants had eight to 39 years of experience as college coaches (*Mean* = 18; *Median* = 15). Table 2 presents demographics paired with the participant's pseudonym.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Study Participants

Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation	Sport	Division	Experience
Everett	51	White	Man	Straight	Rowing	I	15
Bradley	51	White	Man	Gay	Swimming & Diving	III	29
Eliza	34	White	Woman	Queer	Lacrosse	III	12
Nathan	45	White	Man	Straight	Football	III	21
Bryce	39	White	Man	Gay	Field Hockey	I	15
Oliver	57	White	Man	Gay	Softball	I	39
Darius	64	Black/African American	Man	Straight	Fencing	I	Did not answer
Nora	43	White	Woman	Lesbian	Soccer	III	21
Rose	42	Latina/Hispanic American	Woman	Lesbian	Tennis	I	19
Caleb	47	White	Man	Gay	Swimming & Diving	III	21
Heather	33	White	Woman	Straight	Track & Field/Cross Country	I	8
Morgan	38	White	Woman	Lesbian	Soccer	III	11
Laila	Did not answer	Black	Woman	Straight	Track & Field/Cross Country	I	Did not answer
Sofia	38	Latina/Hispanic American	Woman	Lesbian	Tennis	I	11
Vanessa	36	Black/African American	Woman	Lesbian	Basketball	III	12
Aaron	45	Black/African American	Man	Straight	Track & Field/Cross Country	I	Did not answer

Procedures

Ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board at The Ohio State University was first obtained. Then participants were recruited via press releases, expert consultations, social media, and snowball sampling. One hundred forty-seven college coaches who had engaged in advocacy within the last five years were first identified through press releases describing situations when college coaches engaged in advocacy over the last five years. Specifically, Google was used as a search engine to identify college coaches who have engaged in advocacy by using search terms such as "college coach advocacy," "college coach activism," "college coach social justice," "college coach Black Lives Matter," and "college coach LGBT." Ten other college coaches were identified by consulting with experts in the field of sport activism. This resulted in a list of 157 possible participants. All 157 possible participants had emails and/or office phone numbers listed on their institution's athletics website. Possible participants were then contacted via email (see Appendix A for the email recruitment script). This strategy was used to recruit 12 of the participants.

Social media recruitment also was used to identify possible participants who had engaged in advocacy related to LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice but were not identified through an examination of press releases. One college coach was recruited through social media posts on Facebook groups (e.g., Equality Coaching Alliance) and Twitter (see Appendix B for social media recruitment posts). These posts briefly described the study and eligibility requirements and encouraged interested individuals to contact the researcher to schedule an interview via Zoom. Finally, three coaches were

found through snowball sampling, as participants interviewed for the study connected the researcher with other who they thought met the inclusion criteria.

Theoretical sampling also was applied throughout the recruitment process (Charmaz, 2014). This meant participants were not recruited all at one time. Instead, after each interview, the full list of possible participants was revisited to identify who to invite to participate next until saturation was reached. This allowed the researcher to purposefully recruit a diverse sample of participants. For example, the first six participants were all White, encouraging the researcher to intentionally invite more BIPOC college coaches. Therefore, the researcher specifically recruited (via email) more BIPOC college coaches opposed to White college coaches. This intentional process was used to expand and refine categories that emerged from the data as interviews were conducted. In other words, participants were recruited to help fill gaps in the data as they were collected. Although saturation was seemingly reached (i.e., when no new information was uncovered with subsequent interviews), two additional interviews were conducted to ensure saturation was reached. Thus, recruitment ended after completing interviews with 16 participants.

After expressing interest in participating in the study, a Zoom interview was scheduled at an agreed upon time between the researcher and interviewee. Prior to starting the recording but after the start of the Zoom session, the interviewer obtained verbal consent from the participant (see Appendix C). After obtaining verbal consent, the interviewer started the Zoom recording and began the interview based on the semi-structured interview guide. On average, interviews lasted one hour 11 minutes and 56

seconds. At the end of the interviews, participants were asked to complete a brief online demographics questionnaire powered by Qualtrics Survey Software (see Appendix D). This tool was used to collect information related to a participant's age, current occupation, sports coached, years of coaching experience, education level, income, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation.

Questions during the interview asked participants about how they engage in advocacy at different levels of the ecological system and the facilitators and barriers that affect such advocacy (e.g., "How, if at all, have social or political factors facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?"; "What, if any, barriers made it difficult to engage in advocacy?"). See Appendix E for the semi-structured interview guide. They were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim prior to data analysis. Identifying information was replaced with pseudonyms prior to data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in a cyclic process using grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014; DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). Grounded theory analysis is often used to help scholars uncover key elements of a phenomenon that has been understudied. Indeed, given little research exists related to college coach advocacy, grounded theory was suitable for the present study.

Data were analyzed as participants were interviewed. Additionally, data from transcriptions were compared to memos kept during the interview and data analysis processes, and the data informed future interviews (Charmaz, 2014; DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). Specifically, when a certain pattern emerged or a given topic was not mentioned

after several interviews, later interviewees were asked more questions about those aspects of the phenomenon of coach advocacy. This helped develop a stronger understanding of coach advocacy.

When analyzing data, abductive analysis was used (see Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). That is, data were organized into existing categories based on the ecological systems theory. More specifically, codes were placed into either the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, or societal level based on ecological systems theory. Initial coding, therefore, involved inductively assigning each datum a descriptive code and then deductively assigning a code into an existing level within each system (Charmaz, 2014; Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). This stage helped ensure each datum was examined individually to promote greater objectivity. Importantly, some codes related to experiences of coaches after engaging in advocacy. These were not described as facilitators or barriers, but as impacts of coach advocacy; thus, these codes were analyzed within RQ_1, which examined the advocacy experiences of college coaches. In addition, data related to research questions two and three were analyzed together as many facilitators and barriers were interconnected, and at times, identical. This was explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Focused coding was then used to identify common categories, as well as gaps, throughout the data. Next, as recommended by Charmaz (2014), axial coding was used to explore similarities among initial and focused codes. This stage began to identify and explain relationships between categories and allowed for the distillation of salient themes and subthemes based on the frequency of a given concept mentioned by participants.

Furthermore, per recommendations from scholarship in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), theoretical coding was used to identify a central theme and to develop a model that explains the links between the various categories. Thus, all themes and subthemes emerged from grounded theory analysis.

Steps also were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data. Auditing, memo writing, peer feedback, and member checking were used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016; Padgett, 2017). First, clear records were maintained of each research step in an online journal (i.e., Microsoft Word Document) so the research team could go back to review the process without any confusion. This step increased the transparency of data collection and data analysis processes and allowed others to provide guidance. Specifically, if anything was unclear or illogical, those steps could be revisited and potentially redone, if that would have become necessary. Second, researcher reflections were recorded after each interview and throughout analyzing the data into memos. These memos helped to identify patterns and gaps to facilitate theoretical sampling and initial coding. Put differently, memos reflected on key findings and remaining questions that arose from interviews and analyses. This step provided greater awareness of the data.

Third, peer feedback on interpretations of the data was sought from two experts engaged in sport social work. This involved two individuals who have obtained graduate level degrees in sport communication and sport social work and have conducted research in sport for social justice and activism. They reviewed a summary of the data analysis and example quotes and engaged in a discussion with the researcher about the data analysis.

These individuals asked some clarifying questions and ultimately agreed with the analysis. This permitted the researcher to continue to the fourth and final step to increase data trustworthiness.

This final step consisted of 2 participants engaging in member checking. Specifically, participants were selected by using a random number generator to review the lay summary of the data analysis. Member checking was completed via Zoom. This allowed participants to provide feedback on interpretations of their experiences and to clarify gaps in the researcher's understanding. Participants agreed with all interpretations of their experiences and provided clarity around some of their examples they shared during the initial interviews.

Chapter 4. Results

This study aimed to develop a stronger understanding of the experiences, facilitators, and barriers of advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice among college coaches. Grounded theory analysis was used to examine the experiences of college coaches engaging in advocacy and the factors affecting coach advocacy at various levels of the ecological systems theory. Grounded theory analysis allowed themes and subthemes to emerge abductively. That is, themes and subthemes emerged within each level of the ecological system.

Results from RQ_1 exploring the experiences of college coaches who have engaged in racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights were shared first. Then, results from RQ_2 and RQ_3 examining the factors facilitating or deterring advocacy for racial justice and/or LGBTQIA+ rights were presented. Findings were reported at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal levels. The individual level consisted of the individual coach; the interpersonal level consisted of relationships with others, including family, friends, advocates, athletes, and the team; the organizational level consisted of the athletics department and institution; the community level consisted of the conference and governing body the institution belongs in as well as other sport governing bodies and the geographic area the institution resides in; and the societal level consisted of cultural and political beliefs, norms, and structures. In addition, tables were included in each section. These tables describe the themes, subthemes, and the number of

participants and references associated with each respective theme and subtheme. Example quotes from participants were also shared under each section.

College Coaches Experiences in Advocacy

The first research question examined the experiences of the participants when engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. Experiences were coded at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal levels.

Individual Level

Six major themes emerged from the data in relation to the ways participants reported engaging in advocacy at the individual level (see Table 3). At the individual level, overall, these participants had positive experiences with advocacy as ten participants mentioned experiencing positive individual impacts. Some positive individual impacts included increased sense of purpose, agency, humility, confidence, and hope. Most positive experiences, though, related to authenticity and peace of mind. For example, Nathan said:

> It's changed me quite a bit…I had to be front and center with my own personal views of things, but it forced me to be authentic. It forced me to say right, wrong, or indifferent, this is what I believe, and this might not be best for the football team right now, and this might not be what you want to hear, but in order for me to keep leading you, in order for me to keep loving you, and in order for me to be able to go home and sleep at night, I'm going to be authentic. I'm going to be real.

He then added:

It's easier to sleep. I struggled initially with some of this stuff. How's it going to fit their team, and all that, but once, man, like you just don't know how to put it into words. It is comforting. Everything authentic is the best. I didn't feel fake.

Nine others offered similar insights. Rosie said, “anything we’re doing is not for our benefit. It does provide that sense of at least we’re trying to do something that helps put your head down at night and go to sleep.” Eliza also added, “I wasn't having these conversations and it literally would keep me up at night. I'm like, ‘am I being the coach and educator that I really want to be?’ And so, I think that's a part of it.”

Table 3: Experiences of Coach Advocacy at the Individual Level

Theme	**Number of Participants**	**Number of References**
Positive Individual Impacts	10	25
Makes me feel more authentic	4	9
Peace of mind	4	5
Sense of purpose	3	3
Sense of agency	2	2
I feel like I made a different	2	2
Humility	1	2
Confidence	1	1
Hope	1	1
Role model appropriate behavior	4	6
My visibility	3	7
Wearing equality-themed clothes	1	1
Reflecting on biases	1	1
Putting up signs	1	1

In addition to having positive experiences, coach advocacy at the individual level largely focused on role modeling, increasing visibility, and reflecting on one’s biases. That is, four participants discussed role modeling appropriate behavior for their athletes.

Everett, for example, briefly shared, “I’m just trying to model appropriate behavior.” Indeed, participants implied advocacy is appropriate behavior.

Three participants also described increasing their visibility as an LGBTQIA+ person and wearing equality-themed clothing. Sofia, as mentioned earlier, wrote an Outsports article to increase her visibility as an LGBTQIA+ coach. Others, such as Bradley, also wrote articles in Outsports to increase their visibility. Similarly, Oliver discussed how he advocated for LGBTQIA+ inclusion through clothes. He said:

> The other day I had put on a Nike “Be True” sweatshirt was their new version which had the flags on the back—all the different pride flags—and then the rainbow on the front and I had just worn it and we had all the girls on the team were all asking, “when are we getting that sweatshirt? When can I get that sweatshirt? That's a cool sweatshirt! How do I get that sweatshirt?” And this was people that I know solidly are not in the LGBT community and I just sitting back and laughing. Everyone's running to me saying they want this sweatshirt because it's cool which is not surprising. They always want free stuff but more importantly, they wanted it because they saw their ability to wear that there was no like insecurity about, “oh, I love that sweatshirt. It's great, but I don't know if I want to wear that because that's going to make people assume that I'm gay.” They could care less. They're so comfortable in their own sexuality and who they are, they could care less what other people think and to me that is huge. So, it's not even like I want to wear it, so I can be an ally. I don't need to say ally on it. It's just it's a cool sweatshirt. It sends a great message. I love to wear it and so that, to

me, is like I didn't initiate that conversation. I just happened to be wearing a sweatshirt, but all my athletes were inspired by that and wanted to have that opportunity to do the same thing.

One other participant mentioned reflecting on their biases and one other participant said they put up signs to support LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Interpersonal Level

All 16 participants reported engaging in various forms of advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice at the interpersonal level (see Table 4). At this level, four major themes emerged, including conversations, team events and team structure, recruiting, and stronger relationships. Please note the last theme is descriptive of experiences participants had which resulted from their engagement in advocacy. The last theme was not described as facilitator or barrier of coach advocacy, but as an impact of coach advocacy.

Table 4: Experiences of Coach Advocacy at the Interpersonal Level

Theme	**Number of Participants**	**Number of References**
Conversations	13	77
Conversions with team	10	52
Conversions with individual athletes	5	5
Conversations – general	8	20
Team events and team structure	10	30
Team norms	3	8
Team committees	2	3
Pride games	3	7
Team fundraiser	2	2
Other team events	4	10

Continued

Table 4 continued

Recruiting	7	23
Recruit diverse athletes and increase access to sport	4	8
Recruit social justice-oriented athletes	4	9
Advocacy reveals who I don't want	3	5
Lack of advocacy hurts retention and recruitment	1	1
Stronger Relationships	7	14

Conversations.

Thirteen coaches described how they deliberately had conversations with their team, individual athletes, and their coaching staff, among others, about social issues. Three participants even said they plan to spend some practice time each season to have conversations about LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Caleb, for example, said, "being intentional and spending two practices a semester and trying to do something like this isn't going to mess your season up." Relatedly, Caleb and others explained that having conversations about LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice earlier, rather than later, in the season so athletes know the team environment is a safe space to discuss important, and often polarizing, topics.

Two coaches, though, said having conversations away from practices was one way they engaged in advocacy. Heather shared:

> There are our normal team leadership meetings but we shifted more towards splitting it from the standard team meeting that we would have to having additional separate meetings that were entirely voluntary outside of standard team time. I mean, you hope that everybody wants to come along, but you can't force people along.

Regardless of whether conversations were during or outside of practice, coaches used conversations as opportunities to encourage understanding, address falsehoods, and foster team cohesion. Nathan, who hosted conversations via Zoom with his football team, said:

> You saw Black and White, you saw rich and you saw poor, but you also saw guys are not afraid of the conversation like they weren't afraid to be who they were and were comfortable talking about this. “Oh, I was brought up like this. This is what I believe and they shouldn't be rioting and shouldn't be destroying their own stuff,” and then to hear the other end of that and get those guys, “man, like I haven't thought of that like I’ve never been in an environment where I’ve ever had that brought up. That kind of makes a little bit of sense,” and let them go and I probably took another hour and a half before they were done getting that off their chest, and I thought it brought our team closer. I really did.

Moreover, six participants discussed the importance of inclusive language during conversations. Sofia said:

> So, making sure that there is always very inclusive language there so that they feel like, “okay, coach is not just assuming that I’m heterosexual.” So, I think that has been a big one, and I’ve asked the people around me on my support stuff to be very aware of that to make sure that they're also using that language as well.

Using inclusive language also was a form of advocacy when coaches committed to honoring others’ pronouns. These six coaches shared examples of players or staff

switching pronouns during or between seasons and said respecting their pronouns was an important form of advocacy to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. Nora said:

> I have an athlete that uses they/them pronouns. This particular person used she/her pronouns last year, so this year they're using they/them pronouns, and it's been a challenge for me and I've made mistakes and I had to correct myself, but when I make those mistakes, I intentionally correct myself and apologize and recognize that. I'm not going to be perfect. No one's perfect, but we have to do this.

Team Events and Team Structure.

Ten participants reported they engaged in advocacy by restructuring the team and hosting team events. Restructuring the team included establishing team norms and committees. The three participants who discussed establishing team norms as a form of advocacy explained they did so, in part, by creating a call to action. More specifically, they collaborated with their team to create a call to action where athletes and staff agreed to a set of norms. Among these norms, the call to action included an agreement to engage in certain advocacy-related behaviors (e.g., self-reflection, addressing inappropriate behaviors). Nora, for example, said:

> We have a call to action that we've put together and it talks specifically about BIPOC student-athletes and the things that we cannot expect our BIPOC student-athletes to do for us and how we have to learn on our own, and we have to be aware of our own biases and we need to be advocates and allies for those in those spaces. Even where we're not being watched, we have to be able to stand up and

> speak out when we see something or hear something that we know is wrong. It is our job to speak up and say that we think this is wrong and so we talked about it. We're very intentional in our program.

Two coaches discussed the importance of including athletes in decision-making roles when establishing team norms and organizing events. For example, Heather had athletes lead presentations on social issues and equity, including some presentations on famous Black athletes during Black History Month. Another participant, Morgan, empowered athletes and engaged in advocacy by creating team committees, which among other committees, included one focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion on and off campus. Nathan also created a team committee to promote conversations about racial justice. He said:

> We built a subcommittee. We call it our Social Justice Action Committee and really just started conversations and I picked people as polar opposite as we could to try to get everybody—people I thought were Republicans, Democrats, somewhere in the middle, you know, pick some of our most educated guys, some of our least educated, some of our office guys, some of our richest guy, and just really try to pull them all in and then I just was trying to moderate conversations.

Six coaches reported they engaged in advocacy with their teams by hosting or joining events. Events included solidarity marches for racial justice and pride celebrations. For example, Bryce mentioned his team partnered with a LGBTQIA+ athletes' club to host a pride game. Nora then shared about creating supportive videos to share on social media. The videos shared messages about the meaning of pride. She also

mentioned her team wore rainbow-themed laces and other gear. Caleb described organizing a Silent Pride Wall. He said, “we had like a Silent Pride Wall where we asked student-athletes to put their own coming out story on a timeline.”

Recruiting.

Seven coaches reported how they leveraged recruiting as an advocacy tool, specifically in relation to how they saw recruitment as a way for increasing diversity and access to sport among marginalized communities. As an example, Everett said:

> I wanted our team to more closely reflect society and our university and our city as best I could, so we made this commitment a couple years ago, and then we got an epidemic happened. We weren't allowed to have walk-ons. We weren't allowed to have our leaders and every kid on the team out to find somebody to bring an athlete. You pick somebody that doesn't look like you, pick somebody that you overheard in class, you know, whatever. Pick somebody that looks like an athlete. Bring them in. Have them try out and see what happens. Our worst-case scenario, then, is we find 20, 30 athletes. Twenty of them make the team. [The others] have been exposed, and that's all we can do really. Made comfortable for them. Make them feel they are welcome here…Normally, each guy on the team goes out and he finds one or two guys and brings them to a meeting.

As another example, Laila said, “I try to hire people with diverse backgrounds, and I think that's one of the major ways to promote advocacy. and I think it's a beautiful way to promote advocacy.” Eliza, similarly, said, “I’m intentionally bringing in as diverse of a population as I possibly can.”

Four coaches also said they not only use recruiting to diversify their team, but to ensure their teams consist of social justice-oriented athletes and staff. For instance, Vanessa said:

> In terms of recruiting, these are the student-athletes that I'm going to have to recruit. These are the people who are going to mesh well with me and so, in my recruiting process, I am very transparent and who I am and what this program is going to be about. That's how I get buy in so quickly from our student-athletes.

Eliza, like Vanessa, recognized recruiting social justice-orientated athletes felt natural because they get along best with those who care about social justice. Thus, she used recruiting as a tool for advocacy by attracting players who are social justice-oriented like herself. Eliza said:

> The theory called homologous reproduction. It's the idea that we like people like us, and then we're going to recruit people like us, and so I want to name that because I do think that that's a part of it. I like athletes who are like me, you know? I like athletes to care about the world beyond what's happening in their everyday lives and that's something that I wouldn't say I explicitly bring up, but it's definitely something that I probe for. I think I personally place a lot of value on those people because I am, in some ways, well positioned to coach those people.

Three coaches reported how recruiting was helpful for identifying athletes they do not want to join their respective programs. These coaches explained they did not want athletes who were not social justice-oriented on their teams. In other words, they engaged

in advocacy by not recruiting athletes who would not contribute to the social justice-orientation the team had embraced. Oliver, for instance, described this as an advantageous form of advocacy when he said:

> If [my identity and advocacy] are going to affect them, that's on them. Like, it's not a barrier to me. If that causes them to get awkward and uncomfortable, that's on them. I'm not more uncomfortable, they are. I'm still authentically me…If they've jumped over and said, "oh, gosh. I'm not really comfortable in this situation," like, okay, I don't want you to be uncomfortable because I need you to be committed, and if you're uncomfortable, we're going to be better without that. So, even if you're the best pitcher in the country or the best hitter in the country, it's not going to be a good situation, so I'm going to be uncomfortable trying to keep you happy trying to hide who I am. It's a lot of wasted energy.

Similarly, Nora suggested prospective athletes who disagree with her advocacy work will not be comfortable—or contribute to the sense of community—in her program. Indeed, Nora engaged in advocacy by not providing athletes who lack a social justice-orientation with positions in her program. She said:

> To those who have a negative reaction, our feeling was we don't want you on our program. So, like if you're having a negative reaction to the statement or using whatever you think you're not going to fit here. You're not going to. This is a space that you will not be happy in and so go somewhere else. That's what we're trying to say is like, I mean, obviously, I think there's certain degrees to sort of commitment to some of these issues within our program, but like the baseline is

> we care. So, if you're below the baseline, it's probably not going to go so well to come here, but the baseline is like we care and we're committed to being better.

In addition, Nora also said advocacy shows prospective athletes they care about them. She said:

> It's as simple as changing my signature in my email to put my pronouns. That seems like a really small thing, but like it can make a difference. I think it shows recruited athletes that that's something that we care about in our program.

For these coaches, advocacy was a tool coaches in the present study used to showcase their support for prospective LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC athletes. Advocacy also allowed these coaches to not allow people on the team who were not open or welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Stronger Relationships.

Seven participants mentioned experiencing stronger relationships due to their involvement in advocacy. According to Oliver, "[advocacy] made me feel more connected to a larger group of people, and selfishly, those are all great things, as a human being, that we want to feel." Nora explained how she developed stronger connections with others, including her athletes. She said, "because I'm a part of these spaces, I end up interacting on a deeper level with people, and people are more willing to share their authentic selves." Aaron also explained how advocacy allowed him to learn more about his athletes, allowing him to develop closer connections with them. He said:

> Some people could have been in foster care, some people could have been adopted, so we don't have a story name. I say I want to do some [advocacy] with

> foster care, I want to do some stuff in adoption, and we're not knowing that they was themselves adopted or in foster care, and now they're really truly passionate about the work in which they're doing. So, to me, I think that's where the beauty of it comes in.

That is, Aaron reported how athletes were more willing to share their personal experiences with him because they saw him advocating for a cause they were deeply connected to (in Aaron's case, improved foster care services). Although this was not necessarily a form of advocacy, he believed his athletes appreciated his commitment to a cause and this, in turn, strengthened his relationships with his athletes.

Organizational Level

Thirteen participants identified a few different ways they engaged in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice at the organizational level. They joined, and sometimes started, committees, influenced department policies, and connected athletes with resources throughout the department and university. See Table 5 for a list of these themes along with the number of participants and references associated with each theme. Each also are described below.

Table 5: Experiences of Coach Advocacy at the Organizational Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Committee Participation	8	20
Influencing Department Policy	8	21
Fundraisers	3	5
Recruiting	3	4
Black National Anthem	2	5
Merchandisers	2	2
Other – General	3	5
Connecting Athletes to Resources	5	6

Committee Participation.

Half of the participants described joining or chairing department or university committees on diversity, equity, and inclusion, LGBTQIA+ rights, and/or racial justice. Through committees, participants were able to encourage discussion on LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice and suggest policy change and actions the department and/or university should adopt. Caleb said:

> I was part of a subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice Committee that was focused on gender identity and expression…We created a report basically talking about a lot of these issues that then ended up being used…to create a trans inclusion admissions policy, an explicit one, because there was a lot of best practices, but there wasn't anything sort of explicit.

Vanessa also shared why she joined the strategic planning committee instead of other possible committees she could have joined. She said:

> I want to actually be in strategic planning, maybe on a subcommittee. That's where I know I can make the most change. I don't want to be in communications. I don't want to do bios. I want to be where I can affect the most change, so strategic planning is where I chose to go.

Committees also were opportunities to identify a group of like-minded individuals who could hold each other accountable to engage in advocacy. Caleb, for example, said:

> I'm a part of the White accountability group at [the college] to where we're continually reflecting on White supremacy, cultural norms, and how they impact

our daily practices, and doing reading and equity challenges with each other and sort of holding each other accountable in spaces.

Influencing Department Policy.

Eight participants talked about influencing department policy. Five subthemes emerged from this theme: fundraisers, recruiting, Black national anthem, merchandisers, and other (i.e., a general subtheme).

Three coaches influenced the department to host fundraisers for local non-profit organizations focused on LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Bryce discussed how his subcommittee sold t-shirts to support a LGBTQIA+ youth organization: "buy these t-shirts and a portion of that was meant to go for fundraising so each different kind of [subcommittee] was able to put some money towards a specific charity that they just chose."

Three participants also influenced department policy to affect changes in the recruiting process. Many participants, like Heather, urged the department to adopt recruiting forms with inclusive options. She said:

> Inclusive recruiting forms. So, it's things like asking people if they want to share their pronouns to put them on the recruiting form, to have a place for preferred names. Using terms like parents and siblings and letting people like fill in the pronouns that they use instead of just having like a couple of checkboxes.

Morgan also advocated for the founding of a Black student-athlete organization that could be used to help recruit Black prospective athletes. She said:

> It's a great tool for essentially trying to help us recruit more diverse student-athletes, so whenever we are talking to a student of color and we look super White…we mention, 'do you want to speak to a member of the [Black student-athlete organization] to find out what it's really like because how am I going to give you those perspectives as a white woman?'

Two participants advocated for the department to incorporate a policy where the Black national anthem would be played before each game. At the time of the interviews, Morgan was still advocating for this change while Nora was successful at getting the athletics department to play the Black national anthem before every home competition. Nora said:

> My boss called me and was like "we made a decision to play the Black national anthem before everyone's home opener," and it was like "just the home opener?" She's like, "yeah," and like, "so, you're gonna play on the home opener but then next game you're not gonna play it but you're still going to play the Star Spangled Banner?" She's like, "correct." I was like "no, you're not." I was like, "you're either not going to do it at all or you are going to do it all season long because, let me tell you what is going to happen if you just try to appease [the college diversity coalition], it is not going to go well. I can tell you that right now," and I was like, "you are going to make that edit if you don't want to like lose any progress that we've made at all in the last however many months." Fortunately, our athletics director, who is very committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and so she heard me and took that to heart and had discussions wherever she

needed to have discussions and one of the things that were pushed back with was, "well, what do we do when the Asian student-athletes want to play a song, and now the Latino athletes want to play a song, and now we're playing like 16 songs before games?" I said, "we haven't been asked for that. If we get asked for that, we cross that bridge when we get to it. We've been asked to play the Black national anthem and we're either going to do it or not do it. You can't just do it once." So, my boss took that to heart and did the necessary thing, and now we play it before all home contests all year-round for all sports.

In addition, two coaches in the present study advocated for changes with the merchandisers the department was supporting. Eliza simply said she questioned "who our athletic department uses as vendors so like, who are we supporting?" That is, coaches pressured departments to use merchandisers who supported LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Connecting Athletes to Resources.

Five participants discussed how they engaged in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice by connecting athletes with resources throughout the university. Bryce and Laila, for instance, shared how they connected athletes with affirming mental health support. Morgan further discussed how she and her committee raised money to create new resources for athletes and other students. She said:

We raised about $10,000. So, everything from helping the programs that we already have on campus like…helping students from certain areas that are coming into the program that really are here on bare bones to try to find things like books

and pencils that are not cheap. So, like many scholarships, such as that, as well as even purchase in you know more resources for the library that represent those groups as well, because obviously on the liberal arts campus the majority of the artwork that you see in the books and it's very much through a White lens.

Community Level

At the community level, participants described two primary methods of engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice: community organizing and NCAA and conference actions. These two themes, along with the number of participants and references associated with each, are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Experiences of Coach Advocacy at the Community Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Community Organizing	14	50
Partnering with Existing Organizations	13	29
Resources and Trainings	9	15
Diversify Sport	3	8
Volunteer Opportunities	3	6
Creating New Organization	5	21
NCAA & Conference Actions	3	4

Community Organizing.

The primary way in which these coaches advocated at the community level was through community organizing, which was mentioned by 14 participants. Two subthemes emerged, including partnering with existing organizations and creating new organizations.

Thirteen coaches provided examples of how they engaged in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice by partnering with community organizations that already exist. Within this subtheme, three smaller subthemes were identified. These included: resources and trainings, diversify sport, and volunteer opportunities. Nine participants said partnering with existing organizations provided them with the platform, resources, and connections to engage in advocacy. For example, Heather said one organization facilitated her advocacy by providing her with the platform, resources, and connections to develop an equality index institutions can use. She said:

> We're working with their coaches on developing their policies and practices related to our athletic equality index, and then, more recently, we released a coaching resource for creating a more inclusive culture for LGBTQI+ athletes…That has been a first kind of piece that has been explicitly for coaches…The athletic equality index that's a set of specific metrics. It's specific policies that we asked that departments have and specific practices. We asked for the engagement. Those things are really important. It's one thing to have a policy and there's another thing to demonstrate your investment in that policy through your everyday actions, creating an actual inclusive culture rather than just checking the box. And so the idea of this coaching guide is it's about creating a culture where the conversations that you're having every day with your team organization you're having on the phone with recruits, clearly demonstrated that you're not just checking the boxes, that you're intentionally like really thinking

about how you're creating a space inclusive for everybody and making them feel supported in that space.

Three participants joined sport organizations where they advocated for social justice by helping the organization to diversify sport. Darius said that he collaborated with others in one fencing organization to increase access to fencing, allowing more people from more diverse backgrounds to benefit from sport. He shared:

> A combination of exposure, allowing young people who may not have the economic resources to normally participate in a sport like fencing, allowing them to pay like $10, $20 a year for a whole year of Saturday morning classes or providing the financial resources for them to compete at the highest levels of the sport as they move through the cadet, junior, national, and then international ranks…One of the things that we did was try to make sure that tournaments could be accessed by those who may not have as much of the economic resources sometimes, offering discount scholarships when it was needed, working with certain clubs to create their outreach program.

Three participants then discussed how partnering with existing organizations facilitated their advocacy by connecting them to volunteer opportunities. Bradley, for instance, said partnering with the Human Rights Campaign, an organization focused on LGBTQIA+ equality, gave him the opportunity to "volunteer for the national dinner and try to get sponsors."

Moreover, five participants reported that they found their own organizations to foster LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Interestingly, most of these five participants'

organizations were sport-based and youth-focused. Aaron, for example, created an organization to encourage running and prepare high school students for college. He said:

> The program is set up in which I'll work with that individual [or] that group and get them to go in that direction. It's been more like mostly cater to individuals trying to get to college. It comes natural to some of us on how to go to college, how to take their SATs and ACTs and GPA and but everybody don't know that.

Everett also created an annual rowing camp to increase access and exposure to rowing, especially among inner-city youth. He said:

> We do a middle school rowing camp because [our university] sits right in [the city]. Our boathouse is two miles west of campus and there are kids that go to school, right up that hill, that have never been down to the river or don't know what this is all about. We just bring them down for a week…They get t-shirts. In the end, they race each other. It's playtime, but if one or two of those kids thinks, "now there's an opportunity for me beyond my high school because I know what this is and I know where it exists," maybe they come to [our university]. Maybe they try out then that's doing something good for people.

Vanessa's organization also was focused partially on increasing access to sport, but in rural areas. She explained she uses basketball as a marketing tool to get youth interested in participating. That is, she advertises how local youth can strengthen their basketball skills by attending her camps. She then leverages the opportunity by also teaching youth about agriculture, working to prevent gang violence, and encouraging civic responsibility. For example, she shared, "we brought in State Representatives,

because what a part of our nonprofit is deals in agriculture, so we brought in the political candidates…to talk to our community." Vanessa continued by describing how she helps youth, along with other community members, learn how and what to ask political candidates. Oliver also co-founded a sport-based organization, but his organization was not targeted at youth. Instead, He co-created an organization for LGBTQIA+ coaches and other sport leaders to meet and support each other. Bradley also founded his own organization, but his organization was not sport-based. Rather, his organization connects community members with other organizations in an attempt to make it easier for individuals to engage in volunteerism and advocacy.

NCAA & Conference Actions.

Three participants also provided examples of how they engaged in advocacy within the NCAA and/or their conferences. Sofia, for instance, signed a petition to urge the NCAA to support transgender athletes and not host championships in states that have passed laws banning transgender athletes from competing. Caleb collaborated with the OneTeam program also to promote transgender inclusivity. He said:

> Right now, the group is really focused on trying to get the NCAA to kind of make a stand on all the anti-trans legislation that's happening and how putting championships in states where there is anti-trans legislation is really problematic. We're asking them to kind of look at that practice and to either tell us exactly how they're going to protect students and/or staff or people that are perceived to be such or to not put championships in states where these laws are in place.

Societal Level

Twelve participants in the study also described ways in which they participated in advocacy at the societal level. Two themes emerged: using social media and involvement in politics. The two themes, along with the number of participants and references associated with each, are shown in Table 7, and are described next.

Table 7: Experiences of Coach Advocacy at the Societal Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Using Social Media	12	32
Social media connects people and resources	6	7
Social media is full of negativity	5	11
Social media amplifies stories	3	5
Social media to show social justice orientation	2	6
Do not use social media but recognize its influence	2	2
Positive reactions on social media	1	1
Involvement in Politics	4	7
Voting	3	3
Campaigning	2	3
Other	1	1

Using Social Media.

Twelve participants described how they used social media to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Six subthemes emerged: social media connects people and resources; social media is full of negativity; social media amplifies stories; social media to show social justice orientation; do not use social media but recognize its influence; and positive reactions on social media. Importantly, social media transcends across cultural and societal boundaries as social media offers connections to information

and people across the globe. Indeed, this theme is represented in the societal level as social media has transformed how people across the world interact. Six coaches said they use social media to connect people and resources. Sofia, for example, said:

> [I use] all of my platforms—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—to not only share the information that I think it's important, whether that's education resources or stories or just kind of using examples for not just my student-athletes, but just in general. So, whoever follows me on social media or whoever I have contact with, just advocating for what I believe is right.

Five participants, though, believed social media could be unhelpful and even harmful. These five participants included the two participants who did not use social media but recognized its potential. In other words, they argued social media is both good and bad. These five participants said social media is complicated and full of negativity. They also suggested having conversations is difficult on social media, making advocacy challenging. For instance, Rose said:

> I feel like you have to be unbelievably active with social media. Meaning, if I put something out there but I'm not ready to respond to somebody else's response quick enough, then next thing you know you got freaking fire on your hands and it's only been two and a half hours later…If you and I are having a conversation, you disagree with something I've said, we can have a conversation about it. That. to me. is good. That's beneficial. That's helpful, even if you walk away still believing what you believe, and I walk away believing what I believe, but there

was a conversation that was mature, and it went back and forth. That, to me, is very helpful. That doesn't happen, in my opinion, on social media.

Three other participants used social media to amplify stories as a form of advocacy. Nora, for example, said she uses social media to share stories to combat attacks against transgender athletes. She said:

> It's incredibly challenging for trans athlete to be who they are. There are rules across the country that maybe don't allow certain trans athletes to participate, so we just do a lot of like outreach advocacy, like I'm sharing stories on social media.

Bradley then explained the importance of sharing his story and amplifying others' stories on social media. He said this allows other people who see his posts to feel less alone. That is, they might connect to these stories and recognize they are not the only individual experiencing a certain problem. He said:

> I think it's just really amazing how the voices have been able to be amplified and I know that it can work against you too. There's negative voices being amplified as well, but I think when you look at if somebody's struggling with an issue, they don't feel as alone, and I think there's always going to be voices heard now and available for those people, and that's something that 30 years ago was not true, and I think that's a huge.

In addition, two other coaches did not use social media to advocate but recognized the influence social media has on society. Caleb, for example, said:

> I totally judge social media like I don't have it. I don't like it. I don't participate in it, and yet I also know that it really can be really powerful and really valid and be a way to kind of prove advocacy or to help support advocacy or to make connections. It's just not my thing.

One other participant discussed having positive reactions from other social media users. More specifically, Nora said her experience with using social media to advocate has been only positive. She said responses have been:

> Overwhelmingly positive. Some people writing things like, "so glad," or "aren't you so fortunate to have someone so brave." And then just lots of loves, likes, you know, that kind of thing but mostly just an overwhelmingly positive great reaction.

Involvement in Politics.

Four participants discussed being involved in politics. Three subthemes emerged, including voting, campaigning, and another general subtheme. Three participants, for instance, discussed voting as a form of advocacy. Vanessa was involved with voter education efforts and campaign efforts. More specifically, she regularly attended town hall meetings and addressed politicians with her concerns while also teaching others what kind of questions to ask political candidates during their campaigns. She said:

> On a local level, I have become a lot more political. People are actually trying to get me to run for City Council Mayor in my hometown and I just don't have the time to do it, but I attend town hall meetings, I address the candidates with

> questions, I read their platforms, do my current nonprofit. We do a voter education. We do those type of things.

Laila similarly stressed the importance of local elections. She said she advocates for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice through voting and encouraging others to vote. She said:

> You know I think it's important that they understand you got to vote…What's happening right now—if we don't wake up and understand how important it is to vote—not just in the national elections, but the local elections because that's what's happening now. Local elections are determining the judges that are now being put on the bench who's going to decide, you know, some of the conflicts that we as normal citizens come in contact with.

Relatedly, two participants engaged in campaign efforts. Vanessa, as mentioned, engaged in voter education and addressing political candidates during their campaigns. Darius also advocated for change by joining Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2012. He said:

> I've been very politically active from the standpoint of I have worked on some campaigns. I had worked on Barack Obama's campaign, not heavily, but just making sure we go to as a poll watcher or just doing the civic duty kind of thing.

Summary of College Coach Experiences in Advocacy

Participants in the present study had various experiences related to engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Figure 2 shows these various themes and subthemes within their respective level of the ecological system. The innermost

circle of the figure shows the individual level in red. This level includes experiences such as positive impacts and role modeling. The next level, which is in orange and is outside the individual level, is the interpersonal level and includes experiences related to conversations and recruiting. The organizational level is in blue and includes experiences such as committee participation and playing the Black national anthem. The fourth level is in purple and represents the community level, which includes experiences such as partnering with existing organizations and creating new organizations. Finally, the societal level is in green and includes using social media and voting. Also, there was a need to understand what influences coaches to advocate. Thus, research questions two and three sought to identify facilitators and barriers of college coach advocacy.

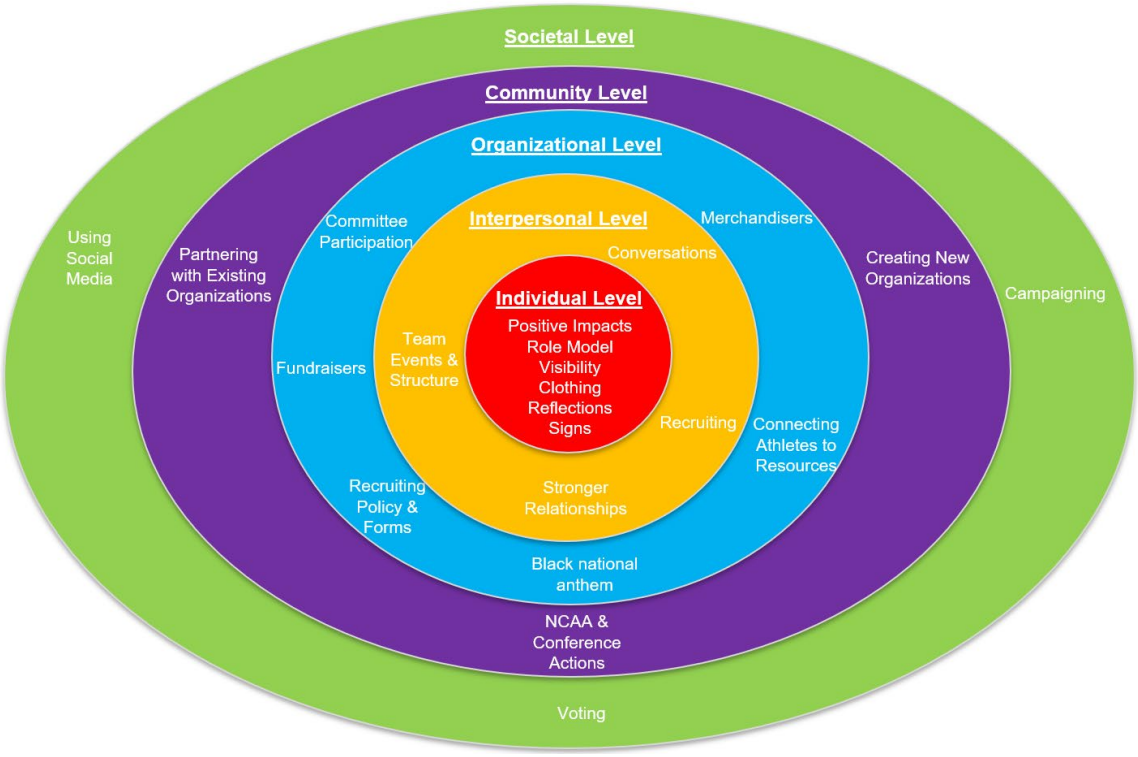

Figure 2: Experiences of Coach Advocacy in the Ecological System

Facilitators and Barriers to Coach Advocacy

The second research question was related to facilitators of coach advocacy whereas the third research question was related to barriers of coach advocacy. Facilitators and barriers of coach advocacy were recorded at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal levels.

Individual Level

Four major themes emerged from the data in relation to facilitators and barriers of coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice at the individual level. These include sense of responsibility, self-awareness of one's identities, confidence/competence, education, and passion/drive. The number of participants and responses for each of these are shared in Table 8.

Table 8: Facilitators and Barriers of Coach Advocacy at the Individual Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Sense of Responsibility	14	58
General sense of responsibility	6	9
Coaches are in a position of power	6	11
Success in sport	2	2
If not me, then who?	2	4
Have to help other minorities	2	2
Have to because I am a White man	1	1
Have to do it even if not a coach	1	1
Otherwise, the problem to persist	1	1
Having time to do so	1	1
Switched jobs to be more influential	1	1
Coaches wear many hats	1	1
Lack of time	3	8
Not a head coach	1	2

Continued

Table 8 continued

Self-Awareness of Identities	13	41
Sexuality and Gender Identity	9	28
Religious Beliefs	4	5
Race/Ethnicity	3	5
Citizenship	1	1
Confidence/Competence	12	35
Comfort with mistakes	5	9
Confidence in addressing issues and using skills	4	4
Problem-solver	3	5
Unsure of skills/lack of confidence	7	17
Education	10	21
Major in school	7	9
Goal to learn	4	5
Attended a social justice school	1	2
Backup plan	1	1
Diversity training	1	1
Continuous reflection	1	2
Education creates connections	1	1
Passion/Drive	7	19
Passionate and driven	6	9
Fearless	2	4
Excited to get involved	2	5
Competitive	1	1

Sense of Responsibility.

Fourteen coaches in the present study described a sense of responsibility to engage in advocacy. Thirteen subthemes emerged. The two most noteworthy subthemes were a general sense of responsibility and coaches are in a position of power. Participants, for instance, explained they felt they had an obligation to use their platform as a college coach to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Aaron said, “I feel like I have the information to give them, and if they don’t get it, it is kind of my

fault." Similarly, Bryce said, "just to be supportive. I think that's my role as a coach. I'm here as a servant." Nora articulated these same sentiments in greater detail:

> I think it's my responsibility, honestly. Like I said when I talked about what I think is a successful career is like we're not just here to win and lose games. We're here to develop people, prepare them for the world, expose them to think, challenge to help them grow and learn, and so I have a certain level of responsibility to not just some of my players, all of my players. So, to me, being a coach and being an advocate go hand in hand. You can't separate those two things out, and you're not a good coach, in my opinion, if you do.

Similarly, six participants described coaching as a platform that gives them the opportunity and responsibility to engage in coach advocacy to make a difference. Oliver, for example, said, "[accepting a job at a different university] was a great opportunity for me because of the visibility of [the institution] to kind of keep expanding on not necessarily my story, but the issues around LGBT inclusion in sports."

However, some participants described having too many responsibilities, making it challenging to engage in advocacy as a coach. Darius shared, "when you're running a program and you're already spread so thin, it's hard to have time for advocacy, especially if you have a family or, with me, other roles and responsibilities." In other words, college coaches have various responsibilities limiting the time they have available to accept the additional responsibility of advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Other subthemes were nearly verbatim. That is, participants provided different reasons they felt a sense of responsibility. For instance, Nathan said, “if we weren't advocates as a football staff, I don't know who else was doing it.”

Self-Awareness of Identities.

Related to self-awareness from demographic identities, nine participants described how self-awareness of their sexuality and gender identity, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, religious beliefs, and the intersectionality of these identities and related biases influenced their engagement in advocacy. Nine participants, for example, described how coming out as LGBTQIA+ made them more comfortable with themselves and with engaging in advocacy. They explained they wanted to be a voice for other LGBTQIA+ people. Sofia mentioned:

> Maybe the last couple of years since I kind of maybe started feeling really comfortable with my voice and you know came out kind of publicly to the rest of my team and pretty much everyone. I ended up writing a story for Outsports and use that platform to kind of tell my story and, I think from that moment on, I think I’ve experienced a big shift in my approach to how comfortable I am with my sexuality and, most important, I think advocating for those who for myself, obviously, and my story, but I think most important for people who need some help or don't feel maybe comfortable having that voice or don't feel comfortable at all.

Similarly, Bradley shared:

> I had decided when I came out that I was no longer going to be a second-class citizen or let things slide anymore, and I think that was such a big line in the sand for me that…being an openly gay coach and trying to be more of an advocate.

Four others discussed how their religious beliefs encouraged them to engage in advocacy. Rose, for example, said:

> Part of the Jewish religion is helping others and making sure that you're fighting for those who aren't able to fight for themselves. I've not necessarily called or picked up the phone [to] call and say, "how can I help you?" But when you are around people as much as we are in athletics and you're familiar with the departments, every day there's an opportunity to do something to help better our community.

Indeed, Rose insisted she engages in advocacy more often because of her Jewish heritage. That is, her Jewish values motivated her to help others whenever and however she can. Sofia, though, also discussed her religious beliefs, but insisted moving to the U.S. from Venezuela decreased her affiliation with Catholicism and allowed her to have a more open mind. More specifically, living in the U.S. exposed her to other religious beliefs and cultures that she felt were more aligned with her values. Moving to the U.S. resulted in her becoming less religious, and thereby, less constrained by the values and traditions of Catholicism. Being less constrained then allowed her to feel more free to engage in advocacy.

Three participants also directly discussed how awareness of their racial/ethnic identity impacted their advocacy. Noteworthy, though, all participants indirectly

discussed the role of race and ethnicity. Laila, for instance, said, “I think maybe Black coaches, I think we do a better job of being able to talk about our differences.” Laila suggested the lived experience of being BIPOC makes one more aware of racial diversity and the associated privileges and marginalization with different races. Others reflected on their whiteness. Morgan stated:

> Sometimes just brings a little discomfort because I am White and always trying to be aware of that White savior piece, and I think I read something the other day. I don't know if it was New York Times, or something, but just how much White liberal women have benefited from all of this advocacy, and it just feels very strange to know that.

Morgan also discussed how citizenship could be a facilitator or barrier of coach advocacy. Specifically, not being a citizen in the U.S. prevented herself and other coaches from being able to vote or donate blood, limiting the impact she and others can have on society. Meanwhile, being a citizen in the U.S. facilitated coach advocacy by allowing other college coaches the rights to vote and donate blood.

Confidence/Competence.

Confidence/competence was another theme mentioned by 12 participants. Four subthemes emerged: comfort with mistakes; confidence in addressing issues and using skills; problem-solver; and unsure of skills/lack of confidence. For example, participants said they recognize they are not perfect and accept that mistakes do happen within advocacy work. Participants also described feeling knowledgeable enough and

comfortable with their advocacy skills to engage in advocacy. Heather, whose comment captured both these subthemes, said:

> I've developed a lot more confidence in my ability to facilitate team conversations around social issues. I'm still growing in that area, but I think initially that was really, really hard and I also have seen coaches really passionate about issues, but then not reach a point of really being able to step up and truly facilitate anything because they didn't feel like they could do it right. Like the fear of doing it right like recognizing like I really had to embrace recognizing that it's not always going to be right, but at least we're having conversations and addressing issues when they do come up, but I think that's a major thing is just comfort levels, whether you think you're informed enough, whether you have the ability to talk about it properly.

Three participants also described themselves as problem-solvers. They said being a problem solver encourages them to engage in advocacy. Everett, for instance, said, "there's a problem, I want to solve it." He suggested if a problem exists, he does not want to ignore that problem. He equated problems to social issues and his problem-solving to his advocacy.

Meanwhile, a lack of confidence and fear of making a mistake were barriers to coach advocacy for some participants. Bradley and Morgan both discussed this dilemma. Bradley said, "you always feel yourself catching your words like I don't want to say the wrong thing." A lack of confidence was also expressed when coaches discussed their participation in the present study. Nora stated:

> I learn so much every day so I'm not really sure what I'm actively doing to advocate but I definitely care deeply and passionately about creating safe spaces for people—all people of all kinds, from wherever they are, however, they identify—and so that's always been something that's really important to me.

Nonetheless, as highlighted in this example, a lack of confidence in identifying as an advocate did not stop these participants from engaging in advocacy. In fact, Nora was invited to participate in the present study for receiving an award for her advocacy efforts.

Education.

Ten participants mentioned their prior education as an important facilitator of coach advocacy. Seven subthemes emerged. The two most salient subthemes were major in school and goal to learn. Participants, for instance, described earning degrees and/or taking courses related to cultural studies, social work, counseling, sociology, history, and coaching. Their degree paths introduced them to concepts previously unexplored or under-explored. Eliza, for example, described the impact her graduate education had on her:

> It's a small liberal arts school and, because it's an all women's institution, there's really a pretty serious focus on gender justice. There's a real value placed on women's voice there, and I think that is pervasive across the campus. I would say generally the institution is very liberal or the student body is pretty liberal, and I would also say that the student body is more open and accepting of the LGBTQ community than most institutions I've been at. Now, of course, like, I say that with a grain of salt because I have a very particular perspective and, but I also

> think, in addition to that, the master's program at [the graduate school] is focused on collegiate coaching and so a lot of the conversations that we would have would be about how you navigate team dynamics and really when you're working there and you're seeing it these are conversations that come up a lot. Well around me they do, and so I think that kind of gave me the space to learn how to have those conversations with athletes and to be able to learn from coaches who have been doing this work for a long time.

In addition, having a formal education provided at least one participant with a backup plan. More specifically, Vanessa explained coaches feel more comfortable engaging in advocacy because they could use their degree(s) to find a new job if engagement in advocacy cost them their job. Vanessa said:

> If people want to fire me for who I am, I went back to school to get my Master's, so if that was the case, I also worked as a psychotherapist in private practice, so I had a backup plan if I got booted out of coaching for who I was. I still had a career that I can fall to so that gave me the confidence to be bold and to be who I am and not worry about the backlash much because I had another means of income that I could depend on.

Passion/Drive.

Passion/drive was yet another theme that emerged from the data and was mentioned by seven participants. Four subthemes emerged, including passionate and driven, fearless, excited to get involved, and competitive. Two participants described feeling passionate about and driven to support LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Morgan succinctly said, “I’m pretty passionate and fiery and pretty empathetic and I want to hear people’s stories.” Laila also said, “you can be passionate about being a racist, but I’m passionate about being an anti-racist.”

Two participants discussed being fearless, suggesting they were not concerned with negative repercussions associated with advocacy. Morgan, for instance, briefly stated, “I’m not afraid to speak up. I’m not afraid to speak up on behalf of others.”

This passion and drive also was displayed when two participants got excited about opportunities to be more involved in advocacy. For example, Rose said she has been driven to be as involved as she can be, so she likes to say yes to opportunities to advance LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. She said, “someone like you call and I’m going to say, ‘yes.’ If this research is going to help whoever else, then yeah.” Rose was excited to participate in the study because of her passion and drive to advance advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

One participant also discussed their competitive nature. Morgan succinctly said, “it's because I’m competitive. I kind of want to see this as a bit of a challenge.” She compared advocacy as a challenge and suggested she wants to make a goal to accomplish that challenge.

Interpersonal Level

Ten theme areas emerged in relation to facilitators and barriers of coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice at the interpersonal level. These included the goal to create a supportive team culture, relationships with family, relationships with and among athletes, relationships with advocates, gratitude and support from others, exposure

to diversity, experiences with interpersonal discrimination, athletes' readiness and willingness, no pushback, and negative experiences. Each are described in more detail and are shared in Table 9.

Table 9: Facilitators and Barriers of Coach Advocacy at the Interpersonal Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Goal to create a supportive team culture	15	59
Belief that advocacy is supporting athletes	14	39
Belief that advocacy boosts performance	8	8
Belief that advocacy makes people feel less alone	4	7
Desire to create a space where athletes can be more authentic	4	5
Want better buy in among athletes	2	2
Problems off the field enter the field	1	1
Relationships with and among athletes	14	52
Athletes inspire and teach me so I advocate	8	19
Athletes are younger	8	14
Athletes sharing stories	7	11
One-on-one relationships with athletes	2	6

Continued

Table 9 continued

Collaborate with athletes so I advocate	1	1
Spending time with athletes so I advocate	1	1
Exposure to diversity	13	31
Diverse team	2	3
Exposure to BIPOC People	4	6
Exposure to LGBTQIA+ people	6	11
Exposure to international athletes	1	1
Exposure to farmers	1	1
Exposure to others – general	6	9
Relationships with family	7	23
Significant others who engage and support	4	8
Parents are liberal	3	6
Family is conservative and lack exposure	3	9
Children	3	6
Gratitude and support from others	7	16
Support from other coaches and former teammates	4	6
Affirmation from others about doing the right thing	4	5
Gratitude from athletes	3	4
Visiting team in awe of advocacy	1	1

Continued

Table 9 continued

Relationships with advocates	7	7
Experiences with interpersonal discrimination	6	10
Homophobia	3	4
Religious discrimination	1	1
Sexism	1	1
Sexual violence	2	4
Athletes' readiness and willingness	6	10
Athletes are insensitive	1	1
Athletes are uncomfortable	3	4
Athletes wear Trump memorabilia	1	1
Some athletes disagree	1	1
Athletes lack education about root causes	1	1
Negative Experiences	5	8
No Pushback	4	5

Goal to Create a Supportive Team Culture.

Fifteen participants believed advocacy was a way to show athletes they support them and create a more supportive and inclusive team environment. Several subthemes emerged, including the belief that advocacy is supporting athletes, belief that advocacy boosts performance, belief that advocacy makes people feel less alone, desire to create a space where athletes can be more authentic, want better buy in among athletes, and problems off the field enter the field.

Coaches, for example, discussed how they believed advocacy is a means to show current and prospective athletes they support them. Although this was a large subtheme, all the codes were similar, so no other subthemes emerged. Bryce, for example, shared:

> Just having people share things be up front, talk about it, make kind of make it visible, I think that makes it easier to feel supported. So like this past season, for example, I mean I'm going to a committee within the athletics department. We talked about just having like a pride game and just having a space where we put some flags out. We talked about what it means to our team, the department, ways we can support.

Bryce also explained:

> It trickles down. A first-year that might be shy, might be intimidated at some point, now they feel like, "okay, this is okay for me to talk about this. This is okay for me to go through what happened to me in my life," or things that they've maybe it hasn't directly affected them, but maybe they've seen it, and I think that that really helps facilitate just genuine relationships.

Eight of the coaches mentioned advocacy has the potential to boost performance. Thus, the belief that advocacy boosts performance facilitated advocacy among these coaches. According to Everett, advocacy creates a sense of psychological safety throughout the team, which he said is needed to permit his team to succeed athletically. Put differently, Everett is motivated to engage in advocacy by the need for psychological safety. He said:

> We won the varsity eight, we won the freshman eight, we won the lightweight eight. Three other boats medaled, and we won the men's point trophy for the first time ever. I bring that up only because I feel like an organization like ours, a school, a culture, you can only have real success like real success if you have psychological safety, so we try to create you know just an open sort of forum where we defend each other and we learn about each other.

Similarly, three other coaches mentioned winning is still possible and advocacy is not a distraction from athletic performance. In other words, their belief advocacy would not hurt the team allowed them to feel comfortable advocating, facilitating their engagement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Rose said, “I still want to win. I want out team to win. I want our university to win.” Notably, though, the two participants with doctorate degrees recognized that research does not exist to show that advocacy boosts performance, but they maintained the belief that advocacy can facilitate greater performance. Heather stated:

> We're still working on concrete research-based evidence behind it. I would always argue that, while it is possible to win and not have an inclusive team, I think, if you have an inclusive team, it's going to be much more likely that you're going to win because people are willing—people are able to focus on their sport and succeed. And when they're not worried about what they can't share when they don't have the stress of not being able to be their full self.

Four participants then argued their advocacy makes others feel included, and by default, feel less alone. In other words, these participants suggested athletes need to feel

included and less alone, which encouraged them to engage in advocacy. Bradley, for instance, insisted that advocacy and feeling less alone may prevent suicide. He said:

> It's like you're not alone and I think that really is the driving force. It's why that message is so important, so that people don't feel alone because I think that's really where you talk about suicide prevention…I do believe people feel less alone.

Relatedly, four participants said the need to make athletes feel more authentic facilitated their engagement in advocacy. Sofia said her advocacy provided some athletes with the support they did not receive elsewhere, allowing them to be more authentic. Specifically, she shared:

> It has made the people around me—my student athletes—more comfortable. I've had several now student-athletes who have come to me to share about their sexuality and how they're feeling, or the lack of support from their parents, and maybe me being the only adult in their life who makes things kind of normal in their environment.

Two participants then mentioned they engage in advocacy to create better buy in among their athletes. They explained advocacy creates a welcoming and collaborative environment, which then allows athletes to put forth more effort and "buy in." Morgan, for example, said:

> I would hope that they see as a welcoming environment that is willing to allow the players to have a say in how they want things run because it is their program. I'm not a big dictator. Like I said, I want to build relationships with them. I want

> to treat them as another person and not a subsidy of just because they're maybe 20 years younger than me…So yeah I think it's just an opportunity really for that collaborative piece. I'm a very collaborative person in general. And yeah, I think it creates better buy in for the things that we make them do when you know they don't want to do it.

Further, one participant said she is motivated to engage in advocacy because problems off the field become problems on the field. Rhetorically, Eliza asked, "if you can't have a conversation with somebody who's different than you, then that's going to be a problem for us on the field and off the field, right?" She suggested advocacy was important to her to create a harmonious and supportive team environment opposed to a divisive team environment.

Relationships with and Among Athletes.

Fourteen participants mentioned their relationships with and connections to athletes was influential in their engagement in advocacy. Six subthemes emerged: athletes inspire and teach me so I advocate; athletes are younger; athletes sharing stories; one-on-one relationships with athletes; collaborate with athletes so I can advocate; and spending time with athletes so I can advocate.

Eight participants said their athletes inspire them and teach them. Oftentimes, their athletes initiated the advocacy, encouraging their coaches to get involved. Nora said her athletes drafted a call to action for their team and encouraged her to review it, offer edits, and provide her endorsement. She then described how her athletes influence her:

> I'm so lucky they're so smart. So much smarter than I am. Much more in touch with the world, and it makes me very, very hopeful for our future. Sometimes, especially, as you know, now our country is so divided, and it seems like was never gonna get better and then I realized I've got 30 women on my team that are amazing and strong and smart. It's gonna get better. Has to.

The age of athletes also played an important role in determining if a coach advocated for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. In fact, eight coaches perceived young adults were more capable of having challenging conversations than young children. Although these coaches did not discuss experiences coaching youth athletes, they suggested college students have stronger critical thinking skills allowing them to understand and appropriately engage in conversations about social justice. In other words, the age of their athletes facilitated advocacy. Bradley said:

> I am very fortunate because I deal with really adults. I know they're still learning, but they are adults, so I can have those really much more open conversations about things, and maybe somebody that's dealing with eight- and 10-year-olds like you're really mentoring at a different level at that point.

Relatedly, these eight participants explained the age of athletes was an important facilitator for other reasons. They recognized how younger generations will be tomorrow's leaders. That is, the desire to raise tomorrow's leaders facilitated advocacy among these participants. Laila said:

> I am relying on these young people. I tell them that all the time, "I rely on you for my medical success." If I get sick, I want to see you out there as my doctor or as

my surgeon. I want to make sure that you all understand that the lives of my generation are in your hands and I and I'm hoping that we're in good hands.

Seven participants said athletes sometimes were willing to share their stories, making them more aware of problems in society and within their own team. Nora, for example, described how one athlete opened up to her team and how it made her more aware of issues she needed to address:

> It started with our rising senior captain at the time. She is a Person of Color. Her mother is Black. Her mother's African American. Her father's White. She is amazing and brave and confident and basically called a team meeting and was like, "I'm going to share with you all of the microaggressions that have happened in our locker room in the last three years," and she, in front of not just our current team, but our incoming first-year students who she had not even really built a relationship with yet at this point, she went through and listed every single microaggression that she has heard within our locker room and you can see, like the faces, not because it's always on zoom, unfortunately because of COVID. You could see the faces like the eyes and head dropping and, like the person who knew that they were the person who said what was being said it was like mortified and like oh my gosh. I can't believe I hurt her in this way, and I didn't even know was like didn't even realize how I had offended or upset or whatever and it was like brutal. I mean it was so good, though I mean it was so good, because everyone had an opportunity to learn from that. It's like how lucky are we that we have

somebody in our program is brave enough to share all those things with us? So, it was just awesome.

Two participants then said one-on-one relationships with athletes influenced their advocacy. For example, Morgan described how she created a snack drawer in her office as "a conversation starter." Her athletes would stop by for snacks, and she would start up conversations with them to learn more about their experiences and then that information about her athletes made her more aware of what she needed to advocate for.

One participant shared about the importance of collaborating with athletes. Specifically, Heather said collaborating with athletes allows for richer conversations and more learning. She said:

> They teach me a lot, too, and so I think the co-facilitation is necessary, and so there has to be some sort of interest from the team as well, and maybe it starts with me suggesting something, but then there's something that's of interest to you.

One participant then explained college coaches spend a lot of time with athletes. According to Eliza, more time spent with athletes resulted in more opportunities to have conversations about social justice. She said:

> In your coaching, you have the benefit of spending a lot of time with these people. Like coaches, I spend the most time with my coaches by and far compared to any other person on my college campuses…so I do think there's a lot of space for those conversations.

Exposure to Diversity.

Thirteen participants reflected on the importance of exposure to diversity, with six subthemes emerging, including: diverse team; exposure to BIPOC people; exposure to LGBTQIA+ people; exposure to international athletes; exposure to farmers; and exposure to others (i.e., general subtheme). Rose explained how having a diverse team influenced her advocacy while also encouraged her athletes to open their minds, allowing for conversations to take place:

> The reality is when you have those small-town kids who come into our team, now, all of a sudden, these are their best friends now. So, now you have these conversations and now for the first time in their life they're introduced to a belief system that is totally different than what they have known. Not to say they're going to go home and argue with mom and dad but now they're at an age where they could have a mature conversation with mom and dad at the dinner table next time their home.

Nathan then reflected on how having both Black friends and White small-town farmers in his family were helpful for him. Having exposure to diversity, he shared, allowed him to understand opposing viewpoints to formulate his own opinions, which made him more likely to engage in conversations and other forms of advocacy. He said:

> That group of guys going through some stuff, I grew up with guys like that. Those are some of my best buddies ever grew up with, and I have some compassion, some empathy if they're going through that right now. I can relate, and then I can hit the other side of it too, man. Like my aunts and uncles and my grandparents on

> this dairy farm like they see things a little bit different and I get where they're coming from like I get like I know those conversations at the breakfast table and that's a pretty sheltered world. There is nothing outside of that farm there.

Similarly, Darius explained how having family members and friends who identify as LGBTQIA+ facilitated his advocacy. He said:

> Many members of my family that identify LGBTQ and who are very close to me that in and of itself, who I love very dearly and care about and grew up with, and so I think that in and of itself makes you not only aware, but also sensitive and also protective so that I think helps from an identification standpoint, to make sure that I move forward.

Darius and others even discussed how exposure to diverse populations can come from coaching. Indeed, coaching exposed participants to athletes from various backgrounds, which influenced their advocacy. Indeed, exposure to diverse athletes made coaches more aware of social injustices and more empathetic toward social justice, which made them more willing to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Darius recalled when he met a non-binary person for the first time:

> Almost a year and a half ago, I had one of our athletes come in, and it was the first time that I had an athlete that identified as non-binary and that in and of itself was sort of an education process for me. For one, I wanted to make sure that I understood exactly what that meant from the textbook standpoint from athletic training and medical, but then what was more important was really connecting

with the athlete, so that they knew that however they identify they were part of the team.

Further, one participant described how exposure to international athletes facilitated advocacy for her. Specifically, Rose said:

> We had Australian fires a couple years ago and we had three Aussies on the team, including our coach, two more on the men's side, so we participate in a fundraiser that gave back to Australia to help the wildlife there.

Relationships with Family.

In addition, seven coaches described the importance of relationships with family that contributed to their advocacy behaviors. Specifically, several subthemes related to relationships with family emerged, including significant others who engage and support; parents are liberal; family is conservative and lacks exposure; and children. For example, Morgan shared that her significant other encourages discussions on social justice, which makes her more motivated to learn more about social injustices and do more to address them. She said:

> When I'm around my partner, we holistically are kind of on the same page about what we would like to see happen and how the institution or the department or whomever these you know bigger stakeholders can do more. So, I think when we're chatting we certainly get fired up and that always maybe leads me to seek more knowledge or maybe go down that route, or that path at that particular time.

Rose then shared how her parents influenced her engagement in advocacy, saying, "mom and dad have just always raised us to be incredibly open-minded and to help." Children

also facilitated engagement in coach advocacy. Nathan said his children "serve as an ethical check." More specifically, he mentioned wanting to create a better world for his children.

On the contrary, conservative family members acted as barriers to engaging in coach advocacy. Everett said:

> There was an Italian neighborhood over there. We never went there. We never left, so it was a weird thing, and that was a big barrier for me because I had as much as a 14-year-old kid, I had my mind made up about what the world looks like.

Gratitude and Support.

Seven participants then described the importance of gratitude and support within these relationships. They said that receiving gratitude and support for their advocacy motivated them to continue engaging in advocacy. Rose, for example, said her parents were prouder of her advocacy than any of her athletic or coaching accomplishments. Aaron also said:

> We get so amazed with somebody else, and here it is our girlfriend or boyfriend or best friends are amazed with us, and we lose track of that, and so I think sometimes we need to sit back and have an accountability partner, have a mentor, have a coach, have a consultant that reminds us, because we can't see ourselves.

Relationships with Advocates.

Moreover, relationships with experienced advocates and other coaches who were engaging in advocacy also inspired seven participants to engage in advocacy themselves. Bradley discussed how their expertise fueled him:

> Having people that are experts in their fields really gives you that extra push of information that you're not just relying on hearsay. You're not relying on nonscientific work. You're relying on people that actually that's their passion and that's what they're doing day to day.

Meanwhile, Rose shared how the visibility of other coaches engaging in this work inspired her:

> To be a part of that council with coaches who are winning national championships, winning conference championships, unbelievably successful, to know that those coaches are taking time out of their schedule to figure out how we can help the next generation of student-athletes really like propel their career and athletics, or whatever it is, they want to do, that means a lot.

Experiences with Interpersonal Discrimination.

Experiencing interpersonal discrimination was another influential factor to coach advocacy among the participants. Although discrimination sometimes posed as a barrier, the participants ultimately used these experiences as motivations to engage in advocacy. This theme was mentioned by six participants. Subthemes included homophobia; religious discrimination; sexism; and sexual violence.

Three coaches discussed experiences related to homophobia. Vanessa, for example, described how another coach used her sexuality against her as a recruiting strategy. She said:

> I was afraid of the horror stories. Other coaches now just hating on others, finding any little thing that they can negatively recruit against another institution, and a lot of times, sexuality was definitely used and personally has been used. I was coaching at a place one time…and [my friend] heard one of the coaches I don't—I didn't necessarily know him personally…we knew for a fact that coaches were talking to parents, "we know that coach is LGBTQ. Like, is that what you want for your kid?" It was ridiculous. I think it's childish. I think it's unprofessional. If I were to know that someone was doing that to me now, I would definitely say is the information yeah, it's true that I'm LGBTQ, but it's not true that I want to be harmful to your child or to anyone and now, at this point, you are now affecting my career because word of this parent has this fear, and this mom is now going to be afraid of, "well, I kind of already had this sense my kid may be LGBTQ if they go to their coach or that's definitely they're going to bring him out. You're going to recruit them to be gay."

Although this was a challenging experience, Vanessa now uses this as motivation to continue her advocacy in hopes to end such discrimination.

One coach also discussed experiencing religious discrimination. Specifically, Rose recalled what Evangelical Christians would say to her for being Jewish when she was an athlete at the same institution. She said, "I'm Jewish, so coming over here as an

athlete 20 years ago, I got told many times that I was going to hell." She said this facilitated her advocacy because she recognized "it is coming from a good place in their heart." She suggested that this discrimination helped her recognize religious differences and see the good in others.

One person also discussed sexism. This same person was one of two people who described experiencing sexual violence. She said these experiences increased her awareness of social injustices. Heather shared, "I identify as a feminist, so like a lot of my initial awareness of social issues came out of awareness of sexism, experiencing sexism, and I've also experienced sexual violence, and that's another social issue that impacts me." Heather, though, did not elaborate on these experiences. Nonetheless, she believed experiencing both sexism and sexual violence facilitated her advocacy.

Athletes' Readiness and Willingness.

Another challenge for coaches involved the readiness and willingness of their athletes. Six coaches in the study recognized that the athletes they need to have the most conversations with also were the athletes unwilling to have conversations. Thus, when athletes were not ready or willing to engage in advocacy, these six coaches felt more pressure to decrease how much they engaged in advocacy in an effort to keep those athletes who were not ready or willing comfortable with the team. Although this was a barrier for these six coaches, they also recognized there was still a need to advocate. In other words, these coaches perceived athletes' lack of readiness and willingness was a barrier to coach advocacy. However, this did not stop their coach advocacy. For instance,

Eliza, who had an athlete who wore clothing supporting Donald Trump's presidential campaign, said:

> She just intentionally would wear pro-Trump clothing right before games or going to practice and I think the bottom line is she's her own person. So for us, we decided to have a conversation as a team about how we support each other off the field. And I think a lot of it was beyond my own discomfort. The team was incredibly uncomfortable and some of the outspoken leaders on the team are uncomfortable, particularly our leaders who were BIPOC and members of the LGBTQ community, so a lot of that really just looked like we're going to facilitate a conversation and potentially bring in third party folks to help facilitate those conversations.

Even though coaches had athletes uncomfortable with social justice advocacy on their team, their very presence also led to coach willingness to advocate and host greater discussions about the importance of caring for and respecting each other on the team.

No Pushback.

Four participants could not recall experiencing any pushback from engaging in advocacy. Notably, though, the four participants who could not recall experiencing any kind of notable pushback were all White men. Oliver, for instance, said, "I can't say I had anything negative or pushback or that's kind of hurt me. Now, that's to my knowledge. There haven't been a lot of things that I haven't been able to accomplish in our in sport." Everett also said, "I never got any pushback in terms of advocacy or standing up for anybody." Nevertheless, these four coaches did describe other barriers to their advocacy;

they did not experience any notable consequence limiting further engagement in advocacy.

Negative Experiences.

Meanwhile, five participants recalled having negative experiences due to their advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. Importantly, all four women who identified as BIPOC discussed negative experiences. One White man experienced any negativity. Laila, for instance, said advocacy can be exhausting, especially for BIPOC individuals. She said:

> Black people who have been engaged in the civil rights movement, social justice, political, equity, educational equity, just fairness across every spectrum of our lives, we've been doing it since birth, and we're exhausted, but that doesn't mean that we're gonna stop fighting.

Bradley similarly mentioned advocacy can be tiring, asking a rhetorical question: "who wants to fight their entire lifetime? But at the same point, you kind of do need to continue to advocate." Put differently, advocacy, according to Laila and Bradley, has been necessary to progress society forward, but comes at a cost. For Rose, the cost was some of her relationships. She said, "there's actually been certain friends in my life and coworkers who have just chosen to stop being friends with because it's not always been good." In addition, Sofia received some hurtful emails after signing a petition to support transgender athlete inclusion. She said:

> I was getting like—I wouldn't say threatening because that's not a threat—but they were very hateful emails, or people that wanted to meet me in person, so they

could convince me why their view was different and how much I was affecting women athletes…and that was pretty hard.

Although Sofia said the emails were not direct threats, she also was unsure of the intentions of those who emailed her. Indeed, meeting up with those who emailed her may or may not have been dangerous for her.

Organizational Level

Three primary themes emerged related to organizational facilitators and barriers to engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Themes included institutional characteristics and actions, job security, and donors. The themes, along with the number of participants and references are listed in Table 10.

Table 10: Facilitators and Barriers of Coach Advocacy at the Organizational Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Institutional Characteristics & Actions	15	115
Trainings & Resources	11	27
Institutional Characteristics	9	24
Clear Support & Guidance	8	12
Lack of Support	8	11
Collaborations	6	11
Engaging Me in Advocacy Efforts	3	3
Other Institutional Actions	11	27
Job Security	7	8
Donors	3	5

Institutional Characteristics & Actions.

One major theme described by almost all the coaches (15) involved institutional characteristics and actions that facilitated advocacy. Seven subthemes emerged, including

available trainings and resources, characteristics of the institution, clear support and guidance, lack of support, collaborations with others, engaging me in advocacy, and other actions.

Eleven participants said institutions and athletic departments facilitate coach advocacy when they offer trainings and resources related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. However, these 11 coaches recognized there is a lack of training opportunities and resources. They suggested the lack of trainings and resources act as a barrier to other coaches from engaging in advocacy. Nora said:

> In our department, we are a lot of coaches who want to be better, want to advocate for the players, and they just don't know how. It's just not something that they've engaged in or had to practice, so they just don't know. “What do I do? How do I show support? How do I engage in these difficult conversations with my team? Someone show me what to do,” and I think an example is really helpful right now. We're doing something called Return on Inclusion, which is a program that has like several chapters that we have to run through and the whole entire department is doing it, so we're sort of learning as a group, together.

Institutional characteristics, mentioned my nine participants, mostly related to working at a liberal school and the diversity of the staff and students. That is, coaches said liberal schools and greater diversity were facilitators of advocacy whereas more conservative schools and a lack of diversity were barriers discouraging advocacy.

Eight participants discussed the importance of clear support from the athletic department and university administrators as facilitators of coach advocacy. Vanessa

described how the president of her prior institution vocalized support for Black Lives Matters and the racial justice efforts of coaches and athletes:

> We kneeled for the national anthem. All types of backlash. All types of backlash. Well, our president doubled down and said, “we actually honor veterans and here's how we want to honor them, and here's how our team is going to honor them, and here's what it means. Here's what our student athletes [are] advocating for, standing up for.” Like, they doubled down on it.

Additionally, the willingness of the athletics department to collaborate with others was a facilitator for one coach, whereas the lack of collaboration with others made engaging in advocacy more challenging for four participants. Everett, for example, said:

> The sports themselves are pretty siloed, so unless I see the women's varsity coach periodically—and have a text from her right now—but the lacrosse coach, football coach, like the basketball coach was a player here when I was at [here] back in the day, but I never see that guy. They have their own facility up in the third floor. Football’s across campus, so the sports are very siloed. I feel like learning from the other coaches would be invaluable.

One other participant also described the lack of collaborations with others outside of athletics as a barrier to coach advocacy. Eliza said:

> I don't have the time to make sure that I’m up to date on this, so I got to like call somebody else and then you're like, “but who do I call?” I don't know if I know somebody on campus. I guess what I’m saying is like athletic departments need to unsiloh themselves. I get the appeal. I do it too like because I think athletic

> departments are under more scrutiny than any other department on a college campus, and so I think there's a tendency to want to keep everything internal, but I think that does serious harm.

Eight participants said university presidents, directors of athletics, and others in superior roles showed support for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice, facilitating the participants' involvement in coach advocacy, by directly engaging the participants in advocacy. Rose said, "what made a big difference is them actually reaching out to me…when your boss comes to you, you know that they're supportive." Morgan similarly shared:

> Our athletic director essentially asked a couple people to come together and, initially, it was [another coach], myself, and maybe two others, and then we had a department meeting and tried to recruit some more additional staff…So, I think it was formed initially by our athletic director, but then we recruited based on who was interested and really wanted to do the work.

Institutions engaged in various other advocacy-related actions allowed some of the coaches in the study to recognize that advocacy was acceptable. For example, four coaches discussed how universities and athletic departments established committees on diversity, equity, and inclusion, or adopted inclusive language. Two other participants discussed including questions related to diversity, equity, and social justice in interviews and performance reviews. Eliza recalled how another institution included social justice in their performance reviews:

> You have to create and sometimes force coaches to take that time to be educated and one of the coolest models I've seen this is…part of their annual performance review for coaches or anybody in the department is a question of how you've extended your diversity inclusion knowledge. They don't have like mandatory trainings, but they do say, "your contract will not be renewed unless you are doing this work." And so it feels a little heavy handed, but I do think it allows for there to be a reason and sort of an excuse for coaches to get educated and then, of course, you have to like offer them actual trainings or like free resources, but I do think there's a lot out there and it's just a matter of really creating a climate where coaches feel like they should, but also can spend their time doing that work.

Caleb even recalled how he was asked about social justice when being interviewed at his current institution:

> During the interview process, there was some questions specifically around supporting lesbian athletes. I think the question was something like, "you give out your room assignments, you're on your away trip, and someone comes up to you after the room assignments, and says 'I don't want to room with Susie because she's a lesbian and I don't feel comfortable with that." I was, I think, honestly, taken aback and still pretty young. I had never been a head coach in college, but it also really piqued my radar and interest around like wow. They're talking about these issues, right? Obviously, if they're bringing it up in an interview.

Job Security.

Seven participants discussed job security as a factor influencing their advocacy. These coaches identified the fear of losing a job as a barrier to their advocacy as a coach. Laila said:

> I get it because our livelihood depends on [our job]…We may not be as a tune to it because that's not the priority. The priority is to get our young people to help us achieve success in the sporting arena.

Nathan also talked about this fear when he said:

> Selfishly, with my position, I mean I got a family to feed. This is stuff that gets people fired if they say the wrong thing, if you say the wrong stuff that isn't in line in college values and preaching this to 120 guys. This is stuff that can come back and bite you, so I'm trying to toe the corporate line. I'm trying to toe at what I really believe in personally. I'm trying to make sure everybody feels safe and comfortable, take care of my assistant coaches, because they have different views, and I don't want them running wild with it either.

On the contrary, three participants said they are not worried about their job security because they would rather work somewhere else than at an institution that does not support LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Vanessa said:

> If I have to dial myself down in terms of where I stand with racial inequalities and LGBTQ rights, that is not the institution for me. I will not last there because I'm not dialing myself down. I've dialed myself down for almost 30 years of my life and I refuse to go back.

In fact, Nathan, who recognized job security as a barrier, resigned from his job as head coach at one institution less than two weeks prior to the interview because the lack of administrative support for social justice issues.

Donors.

Similarly, three coaches described the fear of losing donors as a barrier that initially prevented them from engaging in advocacy. However, they later recognized many donors appreciate their advocacy. Rose said:

> You just never know. So, with us, with our donors, the one thing that for me with being in a same-sex marriage, like one thing for me I was nervous about is like is the athletic department going to accept my wife coming to different functions with us or am I going to have to not bring my wife? …Nothing has changed in terms of losing support. If anything, we've actually gained a lot of support and fans will come up to me, at some point, in private, and just say, "I appreciate you and your wife being here and being supportive. You know, my cousin is going through this, my sister in law's going through this," so you go back to advocate to see conversations like those things come up.

Vanessa even argued some donors not only appreciate advocacy but encourage advocacy. She said, "we're afraid of the money we'll lose from donors, and I get it, but we tend to not remember that there are a lot of donors who want to be aligned with progressive [diversity and inclusion] work." Remembering and focusing on donors who appreciate and want coaches to engage in advocacy was an important facilitator of coach advocacy for Rose and Vanessa.

Community Level

Data analysis revealed five community level themes related to facilitators and barriers affecting coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. The themes include region, community safety, access to advocacy-related resources, NCAA divisions and policies, and conference activities. See Table 11 for the number of participants and references associated with each of these themes.

Table 11: Facilitators and Barriers of Coach Advocacy at the Community Level

Theme	Number of Participants	Number of References
Region	12	32
Urban and Liberal Cities	8	17
Rural and Conservative Areas	7	14
Living in the City and Farm	1	1
Access to Advocacy-Related Resources	11	34
Partner with Community Organizations	10	22
Lack of High-Quality Community Organizations	4	8
Resources in the Community	1	3
Community Safety	6	12
NCAA Divisions and Policies	5	8
Division III	3	4
Division I	1	1
Other	3	3
Conference Activities	3	8

Region.

Twelve participants mentioned how regions impacted advocacy. Specifically, eight participants agreed liberal cities facilitated engagement in advocacy whereas seven participants said rural areas in the South was a barrier to engaging in advocacy. They noted larger cities have more diversity and are more LGBTQIA+ friendly whereas

smaller cities and urban areas—particularly those in the South—are more conservative, filled with Evangelical Christians, and lack diversity. Bradley said living in an urban and liberal area exposed him to other advocates, which then boosted his advocacy. He said:

> One of the benefits of living in [a big city] that I had was that I became friends, colleagues, influenced by very intelligent people that made those things their priority…I think part of being in an advocacy role, in any kind of leadership role, is surrounding yourself with people that may have not necessarily better or more knowledge, but more focused information.

Caleb also shared the neighborhood in which his university sits "has a really strong history of advocacy." He then said, "I think that does sort of influence the students and some of the people that come here."

Others, like Sofia, though, mentioned being in a conservative area came up with the concern of making community members uncomfortable. She said:

> I live in [a Midwest state] which is, as you know, a very conservative state, and my experience, sometimes with athletic departments is, you know, we all want to be supportive, and I think people consider themselves very inclusive, but I don't think that we're doing a lot to actually advocate or have the conversations that I think could make some people uncomfortable, especially where I live.

Similarly, Rose discussed how the area where she lives and works has a large Christian following, making it challenging to engage in advocacy sometimes out of fear of backlash. She said:

> My concerns were, you know, we're in the South, and it's very different than even the Midwest. The people here are outstanding and it's tough to figure out the perfect way to say this, but probably, I don't know, 95% of the families here are Christians and they want to lean in a helping hand, but at the same time, they have their mind made up about what it means to live the Christian life.

That is, the seven participants who discussed rural and conservative areas were concerned about not receiving support from the community because of the demographic makeup of the community. Moreover, one participant, Nathan, discussed growing up with connections to both a city life and a farm life facilitated his advocacy as he was able to learn more about people from different areas.

Access to Advocacy-Related Resources.

Eleven participants explained how access to advocacy-related resources resources influenced their engagement in advocacy. Three subthemes emerged from the data, including partnering with community organizations, lack of high-quality community organizations, and resources in the community.

Ten participants, for example said partnering with community organizations facilitated their advocacy. Please note that, although this subtheme was larger than other subthemes, no other smaller subthemes emerged within this subtheme. All references within this subtheme related to how community organizations provided coaches with tools, resources, and expertise needed to increase their advocacy. Aaron, for example, described how knowledge of and access to Athletes for Hope made engaging in advocacy and other community organizing work easier. He said:

> I started working with Athletes for Hope when I was a professional athlete, and I think that the mission at that time was to get professional athletes to work and do volunteer work with different types of then students, and so the beauty was you got to choose which group you want to work with. So, maybe you want to work with people that are in the hospital or are young kids, the Boys and Girls Club or whatever it may be, and so what they was doing was they was encouraging professional athletes to give them an opportunity to give back in a different level where you get to kind of be more excited about the area in which you work with, and so I really enjoyed that when I was a professional working for Athletes for Hope, and what ended up happening is, as I split it coaching on the collegiate level they implemented a program where you would take student-athletes…you ask them what they're passionate about, and what way do they want to give back, and the student-athletes decide they want to go to a hospital or school or whatever activities they want. Athletes for Hope stands for people and to help train them and give them the training and resources and stuff that they need, the tools they need, and then the student-athletes can go out and implement the program.

For some of the coaches in this study, partnering with community organizations also facilitated training, policy development, and programming. Caleb, for instance, mentioned that partnering with one organization granted him greater access to experts in anti-racism, which helped him create a training program in his athletic department. Meanwhile, Heather said partnering with another organization helped her create an index universities and colleges can use to make sure their policies are inclusive and supportive

of LGBTQIA+ athletes. Nora also shared how United Soccer Coaches makes rainbow-colored shoelaces available to any team interested in hosting a pride game, making it easier for her team to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights. Oliver also discussed how partnering with Nike made advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights in sport easier. He said:

> Nike was trying to figure out how to amplify the work we were doing, and they came to us after that first year, in year two, and shared with us that they had an initiative that they had done once before that they were thinking about bringing back and they wanted to do that. It was called the "Be True campaign," and so the Be True campaign was really kind of relaunched under Nike with the profits and the revenue that was generated from that was all used by the coalition to fund work, fund projects.

Four coaches in the present study further recognized the lack of access to high-quality resources and organizations related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice likely hindered some coaches from engaging in advocacy. Nonetheless, the lack of available resources and organizations simultaneously served as a facilitator of advocacy among some coaches in the present study. That is, they advocated for more resources in their communities. Caleb said:

> I even reached out to this group maybe 10 years ago—the Positive Coaching Alliance there at Stanford. I just started asking them like, "do you all do anything that people talk to you about LGBTQ resources or whatever?" We had this really interesting kind of discussion and then I think they were able to put something up on their website that was at least something that recognized it because I'm like,

> yeah, it's just interesting if you use the language 'Positive Coaching Alliance' and like to talk about your mission values, but they have not had anything explicit or on this topic, like anywhere to be found.

One participant also discussed how access to resources such as books, videos, podcasts, and research papers facilitated the conversations they were having with their athletes and teams. Heather said:

> We had a specific conversation—it was optional—where we had a targeted conversation around White privilege. We read *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and then had a conversation around that, and I think that was one of the most impactful things for a number of athletes. Like, there was a lot of feedback about, "wow. There's a lot of things I had not thought about." So, just like I think that, to me, stood out as a conversation that we had.

Community Safety.

The lack of safety for certain populations was both a facilitator and barrier for some of the coaches. More specifically, six coaches were motivated to engage in advocacy to increase safety, but the lack of safety made these six coaches fearful. Rose, for example, spoke about needing to act as if her wife was her sister to protect their safety, preventing her from engaging in advocacy. She said:

> Being on campus is a bit of a bubble from the rest of the city. I would say that I feel like we're way more protected on and around campus, including the downtown area, but there's some areas only 35 miles from here. We bought a little RV during quarantine and we would pull up to dump spots or whatever and be

like, “you are my sister right now. Like, you're not my wife and we need to make sure that we are safe.” Instead, it would be great to, one day, not have to worry about that, but we still do.

Sofia also was hesitant to engage in advocacy out of fear for her own safety. She said she was fearful of community members “breaking into my windows.” She said this fear originally prevented her from putting up signs to support LGBTQIA+ rights and Black Lives Matter.

Nathan also said he was fearful community members would harm his Black athletes. He said, “I was fearful of, man, that five Black kids in a car going to Walmart, like man, they got to make it through town… They're going to handle themselves at Walmart and in a very, very hostile environment.” This, though, encouraged him to engage in advocacy in hopes of creating safer spaces for his Black athletes. Similarly, knowing that unsafe environments exist for some LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals, motivated Nora to continue advocating for change. She said:

> There are a whole lot of roadblocks, but I know that for people who live in Mississippi, it's different and it's not until everyone feels like they can move through with no roadblocks and just be their true authentic selves I think we have work to do, and so that's sort of where I am. Like, there's still more work to do. There's still more people to support. There's still more awareness that needs to be brought to these issues, and so until that changes, we all have work to do.

NCAA Divisions and Policies.

Five participants discussed the role the NCAA played in facilitating or preventing advocacy. Themes were different depending on whether the coaches were discussing Division I or Division III athletics. More specifically, three coaches talked about how Division III institutions seemed to have less pressure to win than Division I institutions; thus they tended to think coaches in Division III were expected to do more outside of athletics and winning, and this, in turn, facilitated advocacy. Nora said:

> I also think that I'm at the Division III level, so I have a little bit more freedom with that. I think it's understood here that my athletes will go on to be professional in something other than soccer, and so there isn't that "you must win at all costs" kind of feeling.

Moreover, these three coaches also talked about how Division III is the only division in the NCAA that hosts awards and offers specific training for LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport. According to some of the coaches in the study, access to training and awards for LGBTQIA+ inclusion shows Division III coaches are encouraged to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights. Put differently, these three coaches believed NCAA Division III prefers LGBTQIA+ inclusion and wants coaches to engage in advocacy-related actions to foster LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Caleb, who was involved with the OneTeam, the Division III program that offers training and awards for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, said:

> The first division in the history of the NCAA to actually intentionally create a working group focused on this topic. [We] did a kind of a climate survey and then came up with some policy suggestions and templates…They have the bandwidth

> to put money and effort buying things, but we created the OneTeam facilitator program where we train, I think 60 people across the country in order to be OneTeam program facilitators. So, that now it's on the website and that other schools across the country could find a OneTeam program facilitator, hopefully close to them. They could come to their athletic department and facilitate this kind of entry level to our educational program on how to make your athletic department more inclusive for LGBTQ students.

Although three participants suggested Division III embraces inclusivity, one coach noted how there was still a lack of representation of Black women in Division III. According to Vanessa, the lack of Black LGBTQIA+ and/or Black women coaches may make some Black coaches feel unwelcomed and unable to be advocates at Division III institutions. Thus, Vanessa suggested the lack of representation of Black LGBTQIA and/or Black women coaches might be a barrier to coach advocacy for others not included in the study. Nevertheless, the lack of representation motivated Vanessa to accept a job offer at a Division III institution because she felt as if there was more advocacy work needed there. She said:

> So, this institution promised that they would allow me to still be able to do [diversity, equity, and inclusion work], and it was a PWI [predominantly White institution], which if you do the research, a lot of Division III are PWIs. Their minority-serving institutions, but no one on the board is minority. See administration. There's no minority. The senior leadership team is White males mostly…So, therefore, it bothers me, and that's why I stay Division III to address

> the issue…I'm not going to be one of those people who get caught up in the division. I want to get caught up in the work that I'm actually doing and our lives that I'm impacting, and so that was most important for me.

Conference Activities.

Another theme mentioned by three coaches that facilitated advocacy was conference activities. According to these coaches, conferences, which consist of fewer institutions than the NCAA, played a significant role in influencing their coach advocacy. Laila, for example, recalled how the conference she is in had a voter registration drive for athletes and coaches. She said, "the [conference] energized programs to vote. Nobody tried to influence which way you voted. Just go vote. Be engaged in the political process." Rose explained when conferences organize initiatives, like athletic directors and institutions at the organizational level, they let coaches know advocacy is acceptable and important. Conference initiatives also raise awareness about social issues and encourage coaches to commit to social justice. Rose, when describing the conference's Council for Racial Justice, said:

> The goal on it is to identify resources and strategies designed to assist with ongoing education and professional development related to diversity, equity, [and] inclusion. Identify resources and strategies designed to provide ongoing support and arrange various social, emotional, and mental [health resources] to underrepresented minority athletes. Support ongoing athletic programs that already exist on our campuses. We identify opportunities and strategies for the [the conference]…I love that this Council exist because now you have other

coaches that are again thinking twice…and now, all of a sudden, the Council helps give that extra push to say, "yes," and then identify strategies for both the athletic department and the conference office to support student-athlete education engagement leading up to the 2020 general election. So, raising awareness, deepening commitments, improving education, providing support, like those things that people say a lot but don't necessarily do, that's what this Council is all about.

Societal Level

Four themes emerged from the data in relation to facilitators and barriers at the societal level contributing to coach advocacy. Themes included ones organizing around power dynamics, Black Lives Matters events, elections and policy changes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 12 shows the number of participants and references associated with each of these themes. More details related to each theme are described next.

Table 12: Facilitators and Barriers of Coach Advocacy at the Societal Level

Theme	**Number of Participants**	**Number of References**
Power Dynamics	16	53
Awareness of Intersectionality	8	13
Racial Power Dynamics	8	16
Religious Power Dynamics	4	7
LGBTQIA+ Power Dynamics	3	5
Gender Power Dynamics	2	2
General Power Dynamics	5	10
Black Lives Matter Events	12	24

Continued

Table 12 continued

Elections and Policy Changes	11	20
Polarization of Political System	5	8
Supreme Court Decisions	4	4
Contentious Elections	3	4
Policy is Powerful	3	4
COVID-19 Pandemic	5	14

Power Dynamics.

All 16 participants discussed how the presence and awareness of power dynamics in society, which largely related to systemic oppression, affected their engagement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Several subthemes emerged, including awareness of intersectionality, racial power dynamics, LGBTQIA+ power dynamics, religious power dynamics, gender power dynamics, and general power dynamics.

Eight coaches mentioned racial power dynamics. They said white supremacy, silence, and ignorance were factors that sometimes make advocacy challenging, but simultaneously make advocacy necessary. Laila explained the awareness of racial power dynamics is needed to help White people understand why they should invest in racial justice. However, White policymakers have historically prevented White people from learning history. She said:

> Your history books talk about it a little bit, but it doesn't really delve into the impact that slavery had on African Americans regarding our generational wealth, regarding how politics basically has really determined and really subjugated the lives of Black people, and they don't talk about how Hitler used the model from slavery to go through Europe, so it's like there's so much that has been missed.

> There's so much that has been sort of hidden from the White population. Black people always have known where we are, but I think it's all contrived. It's all very intentional in order to be able to maintain power, politically and financially and economically.

Indeed, Heather noted the ignorance of many White athletes offered an opportunity to engage in advocacy but also prevented her from advancing her advocacy as fast as she would have preferred. She said:

> Some White athletes will not speak up as much or not engage as much in the conversation because they weren't comfortable with it or felt like they didn't know enough. I think that was always a barrier of like, "well, am I going to say the wrong thing? I will say the wrong thing. I had the best intentions, but I don't want to cause any trouble." So, we had to work through some of those.

Laila summed this up when she said, "some guys at an entry level of conversation." Everett extended upon the idea that White people do not know enough about White supremacy when he said, "first, say, 'I don't know something.' That's hard for people to do…They never start with the concept that I might be wrong." That is, some people do not have an adequate understanding of racial dynamics—and many people think they do—preventing the conversation about racial justice from advancing as quickly as the conversation should be.

Moreover, eight participants described how awareness of intersectionality, biases, and privilege was an important factor influencing coach advocacy. Oliver, for example, shared his thoughts on intersectionality:

> I think the important thing that you always realize when you are part of a minority group is that you can't really ever talk about social justice or inequalities in one aspect without really talking about it in every aspect, and I think one of the important things not only the specific addressing Black Lives Matters and the racial injustice, but it really started to be important for us to talk about even within every racial minority group there's also an LGBT minority group within that. The LGBT identity isn't separate from racial identity. it isn't separate from religious identity or cultural identity.

Laila then shared her thoughts on biases and privilege:

> Let's be mindful of the fact that some people are more privileged than other people and it's not from an economical standpoint. When White people walk out the door, their lives are not in danger as much as a Person of Color. When a heterosexual person walks out the door, their lives are not as in danger as is a member of the LGBT community, so the more we can discuss these differences, then the better.

Another subtheme that emerged for four participants was religious power dynamics. Vanessa, for example, highlighted how Christianity is evolving, facilitating her engagement in advocacy. She noted:

> Even the Christian faith is changing, is progressing. The facts are getting there. More people are not knowing these things, and so the church is having to adjust and having to change, and people are starting to feel more welcome in their own skin and they're starting to find more places within religion to be themselves.

Importantly, though, as Sofia, Rose, and Everett suggested, Christianity maintains a large amount of power throughout the world and is sometimes used to justify negative attitudes and behaviors toward others.

An understanding of the power dynamics between non-LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+ communities also was important for three participants. Vanessa, for instance, acknowledged nearly 50% of transgender individuals attempt suicide at some point during their lives. She said, "that is alarming to me as a therapist for number one, and number two as a coach." Nora also recognized the difficulties associated with coming out for cisgender men and transgender athletes and coaches. She said:

> It's really difficult, especially for male athletes to come out as gay or a male coach to come out as gay. It's incredibly challenging for trans athletes to be who they are. There are rules across the country that maybe don't allow certain trans athletes to participate, so we just do a lot of like outreach advocacy.

Recognizing the disparities between non-LGBTQIA+ and LGBTQIA+ athletes and coaches facilitated advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights among these three participants.

Awareness of gender discrimination was another subtheme that facilitated advocacy for two participants. Darius, for instance, recalled when his daughter experienced gender discrimination in the workforce. He said this awareness made him more interested in engaging in advocacy. He said:

> I have a daughter. I think the most interesting thing for me—and she was probably in her early 30s when she was working for a Swiss-based consulting company and to say, "Daddy, I thought it was hard being Black in corporate

America but it's way harder being a woman," and I think that that was the point where I realized that the gender issue is even more pronounced in certain circles.

Black Lives Matter Events.

Twelve participants indicated major events/protests facilitated their engagement in advocacy. No subthemes emerged as all twelve participants discussed Black Lives Matters protests. For example, these 12 coaches indicated protests resulting from the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery made them more aware of racial injustice. Subsequently, the murders and protests made the coaches, especially the White coaches in the present study, realize the need for advocacy for racial justice. Caleb talked about the impacts of the murders, protests, and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. He said:

> I think that a lot of it has re-revealed the realities of our world to such a level of me recognizing I needed to do more, and I hope other people as well. And so, like if I go back to 2016 and sort of you know, the election of Donald Trump and I feel like him kind of making it more okay to sort of show who you are in our world, which on one level like that's a good thing, like to see where we really are at and, on another level, it's like, oh my gosh, we're really not as moved, as evolved, as I was hoping, and I think People of Color—specifically Black, Indigenous, and People of Color—would probably be like, "yeah, White dude. This is where we're at."

These twelve participants mentioned coverage of the murders and protests sparked conversations and increased awareness of and interest in learning more about systemic racism and privilege among others. Laila explained:

> During the George Floyd protests…a lot of our White student-athletes did not know that these kind of injustices existed. I think that it was illuminating for them to know that, "there are some people on my team who are subjected to abuse that I didn't even know existed," and so I think that gave us an option—a chance—to explore why. Let's look at prejudice. Let's look at White privilege. Let's look at some of the things that they didn't learn in school.

Laila later added, "it wasn't until George Floyd died everybody started taking a knee. When [Colin Kaepernick] was trying to express a need for reform, but people weren't ready for it, so I think timing is important."

Elections and Policy Changes.

Elections and policy changes was another societal level theme that emerged from the data. Eleven participants discussed elections and policy changes, and four subthemes emerged, including the polarization of political systems, Supreme Court decisions, contentious elections, and the power of policies.

Five participants said the polarization of the political system in the U.S. served as a barrier to coach advocacy. Participants suggested politics in the U.S. are polarized, pinning people against each other. Relatedly, three participants identified the two-party system in the U.S. to be a major barrier to engaging in advocacy. The two-party system, they argued, makes politics become more about power and less about the people. Oliver

stated:

> The majority of the country doesn't fully align with the two power struggles. They align somewhere in the middle, and yet you don't legislate and talk about in the middle. We talk about the extremes and that's probably the greatest barrier to change is that we are bipolar. Two extremes versus multipolar.

Supreme Court decisions was another subtheme mentioned by four participants. That is, Supreme Court decisions created policy changes that sometimes facilitated and other times made advocacy more challenging. More specifically, the Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage resulted in supporters and opponents advocating for opposing viewpoints. Oliver, for instance, shared:

> Gay marriage's now legalized. Therefore, everyone of the country is going to believe it's appropriate. Well, no, that doesn't change people's belief. It just changes out the government right is regulating it, and so I think that they work hand-in-hand and they amplify each other, but at the same time, oftentimes policy change can be an impetus for greater backlash as well. So, when policy or legislative change happens, you have usually a group that's pro and that's against. Both of those groups feel more engaged and empowered.

Contentious elections was a subtheme mentioned by three participants. More specifically, the election of and campaigns for Donald Trump as President made many coaches angry. Three coaches interviewed reported they were worried about the direction the country was taking, motivating them to get more involved in advocacy. Indeed, these three coaches recognized violent offenses and other forms of discrimination increased

during Trump's term in office. When discussing the impact of the former president, Darius said, "the amount of just vile and negative rhetoric that has now become acceptable in main course dialogue—these are the kinds of things that I find most troubling and most dangerous."

The power of policy was another subtheme mentioned by three participants. According to these three participants, some policies threaten to make advocacy more needed, but also make advocacy more challenging. Heather, for example, said, "the whole issue around critical race theory right now I think puts people on edge about whether or not we can teach about any form of discrimination." Put differently, some states are introducing bills that, if passed, would make teaching about discrimination and disparities illegal. Yet, raising awareness of discrimination and disparities is a crucial aspect of advocacy. Although Heather recognized this as a barrier, Oliver explained how poor policy or lack of inclusive policies facilitated advocacy. He said:

> Stonewall came about, not because there was policy change, but it was a fight back against a resistance to the policy that was accepted. And this group over here didn't have some policy support or legislative support. They were actually fighting against the inequalities. That is important to understand, too, so that sometimes policy that is in the negative or lack of policy or lack of legislation can be just as much of a motivator for your group that's being held back for not being supported or not being included, right? That group maybe gets more amplified when legislation isn't supported, so it's an interesting dynamic.

COVID-19 Pandemic.

The data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, but after the lockdown phase that caused college sports to abruptly end. As such, five participants described the impacts of COVID-19 on the advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. On one end, coaches reported how the pandemic made advocacy more challenging as some people had unequal access to the appropriate technology to have virtual conversations. For two coaches, however, the pandemic altered the focus of their institutions, making them less attentive to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. That is, some institutions, like Nathan's, prioritized addressing COVID-19 and ignored other social issues. Nathan said, "I didn't feel a sense [of leadership]…I don't think anybody was really—I think the attention of the college at that time was the quarantine." On the other hand, for some participants, the pandemic made virtual meetings more commonplace. The transition to virtual meetings, according to some participants, made meetings easier to schedule and made conversations feel safer. Nathan suggested, "it may have been a blessing… [The athletes] felt more comfortable behind their camera to say some stuff that they wouldn't have said if we were sitting in the same room at that time." In other words, COVID-19 caused some institutions to suppress conversations of social justice, yet also allowed teams to have conversations in safe spaces. Thus, COVID-19 served as both a facilitator and barrier to coach advocacy.

Summary of Facilitators and Barriers to Coach Advocacy

Participants from the present study identified several facilitators and barriers of college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Interestingly, an

awareness of power dynamics was the only theme that every participant mentioned. Meanwhile, the most discussed themes (i.e., themes with the greatest number of references) included institutional characteristics and actions, the goal to create a supportive team culture, and sense of responsibility. Other prominent themes that emerged from the data include self-awareness of one's own identities, confidence/competence, relationships, exposure to diversity, access to advocacy-related resources, and major events/protests.

Interestingly, many factors influencing college coach advocacy were both facilitators and barriers. That is, some participants identified a given factor as a facilitator while others identified the same factor as a barrier. In some instances, the same participant(s) recognized a given factor as both a facilitator and barrier. For instance, some participants described feeling confident and competent in their abilities to engage in advocacy whereas other coaches lacked confidence, sometimes preventing them from engaging in advocacy. As another example, power dynamics such as racial discrimination created problems, but simultaneously made advocacy more necessary. Figure 3, which is set up like Figure 2, represents the results of facilitators and barriers throughout the ecological system. These findings are further discussed in Chapter 5.

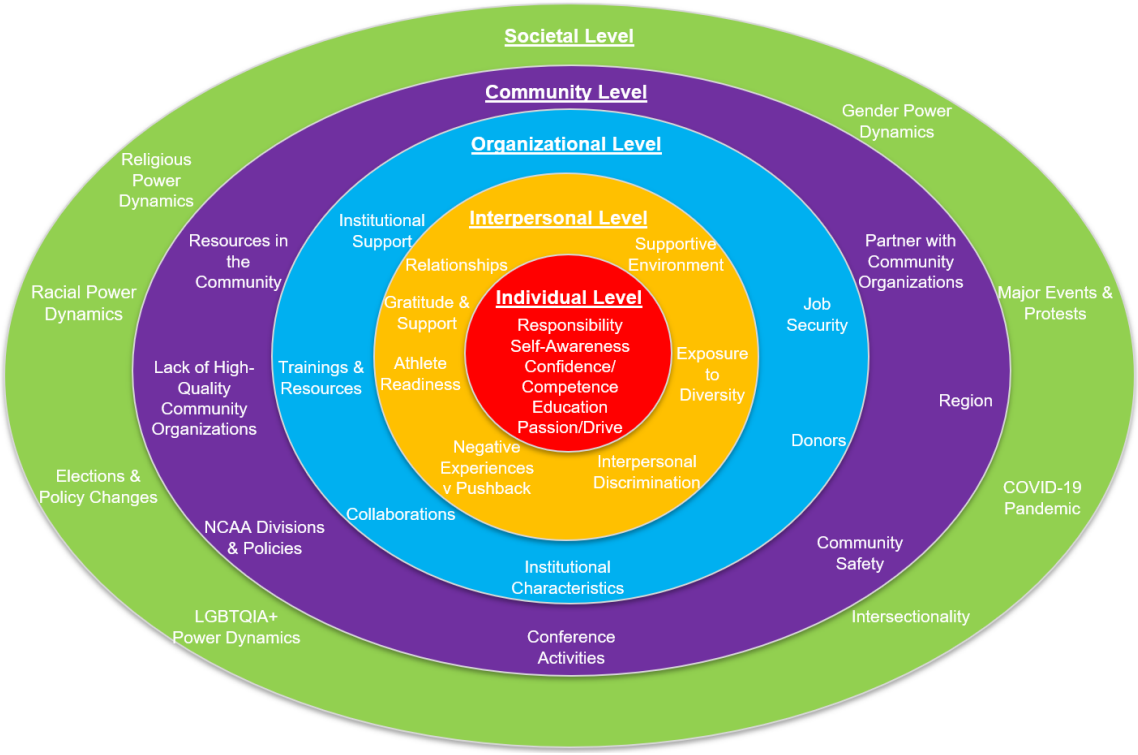

Figure 3: Facilitators & Barriers of Coach Advocacy in the Ecological System

Chapter 5. Discussion

As various governments and organizations put forth discriminatory policies and as individuals and groups continue to hold prejudices, there are increasing needs for social work research to examine how different spaces and roles can be used as platforms and agents to inspire social change. Previous sport social workers, for example, surveyed 175 college athletes and found college coach advocacy for sexual assault prevention boosts knowledge of and engagement in sexual assault prevention among college athletes (Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). However, despite the potential to advance sport social work and social justice, few studies to date have examined coach advocacy. Even less explore college coach advocacy. To address these gaps, the present study highlights our understanding of how college coaches engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. Findings also shed light on the various systems-level factors that facilitate and/or prevent their engagement in advocacy. Findings from the present study have implications for sport stakeholders such as college coaches, sport social workers, other sport leaders and administrators, and prospective athletes, at each level of the ecological system.

Experiences of College Coach Advocates

Findings from the present study show how college coaches experienced advocacy at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal levels.

Participants mostly shared experiences at the interpersonal level with their teams, but also discussed advocacy experiences at the other levels of the ecological system.

Individual Level

One unique finding relates to the positive impact advocacy had on the study participants. These college coaches had mostly positive experiences related to their advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Participants in this study reported feeling more authentic. The college coaches in this study also reported having a greater peace of mind, purpose, agency, humility, confidence, and hope because of their advocacy involvement. Additionally, these college coaches also felt as if they were making more of a difference due to their advocacy efforts. The finding that college coaches may benefit from engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice aligns with prior research. For instance, Fingerhut and Hardy (2020) concluded racial justice advocacy boosts well-being among White members of racial justice advocacy organizations.

Apart from positive individual impacts, participants also reported other kinds of advocacy experiences at the individual level. More specifically, participants described how they role modeled appropriate behavior, increased visibility for LGBTQIA+ people by being themselves, wore equality-themed clothing, and engaged in reflections. These findings corroborate those from Kluch (2020) regarding college athletes who argued that proudly being oneself and embracing visibility were forms of athlete advocacy. Thus, both college coaches and athletes may choose to engage in advocacy at the individual level by being themselves, wearing advocacy-themed clothing (e.g., Nike's "Be True"

line), and engaging in self-reflection and learning. In turn, these activities contribute to more positive experiences overall in relation to the participants' sense of self.

Interpersonal Level

Participants in the present study reported on multiple ways in which they are engaged in advocacy experiences at the interpersonal level. In fact, these types of advocacy experiences were mentioned more often than those in any other systems level. Perhaps these participants were most confident in their skills or had greater opportunities to engage in advocacy in the interpersonal level. There also is a possibility that college coaches in the present study received more supports and facilitators as well as less barriers at the interpersonal level than any other level of the ecological system. As explored later in this chapter, participants reported more types of facilitators within the interpersonal level than in any other level, as well. For instance, 15 coaches reported wanting to create a supportive team culture and 14 reported relationships with and among athletes as key facilitators of engagement in advocacy. Given they reported more facilitators at the interpersonal level than other level, participants may have experienced more facilitators that increased their motivation to engage in advocacy at this level as compared to other levels.

Another primary way participants in the present study engaged in advocacy at the interpersonal level was through conversations with their athletes focused on increasing awareness of social injustices. This finding is supported by previous research demonstrating how high school coaches use their platforms to host conversations with their athletes about sexual violence and bystander intervention (Jaime et al., 2015;

Kroshus et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2013; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Steinfeldt et al. (2011) also found college coaches can hold conversations to challenge gender norms. In addition, Kroshus et al. (2018) found consistent norms around sexual violence was a form of advocacy. Others also showed coaches have important roles in upholding policies related to alcohol use and misuse (Chow et al., 2019). This does seem to be the case for the college coaches in this study. When describing their advocacy, they reported how they established team norms and rules. More specifically, some coaches had their teams set and agree upon common expectations for all staff and players. In some cases, coaches explicitly named these agreements calls to action. Among other expectations in these cases, staff and players agreed to respect differences and speak up whenever they hear or see an injustice, even if others on the team were not present. Therefore, establishing team norms may be a way college coaches can engage in and encourage advocacy.

In addition, participants described engaging in advocacy by providing athletes with opportunities to engage in advocacy. Some coaches, for example, established team committees, such as one focused on diversity, equity, and social justice. The establishment of these team committees then provided athletes with opportunities to lead team advocacy efforts together with their coaches. Coaches in this study mentioned their athletes used these opportunities to lead efforts around Pride Night Black History Month celebrations. Certainly, team committees in college sports often organized by college coaches and administrators seemed to set the stage for advocacy-related interactions for these college coaches.

Another way many college coaches in this study engaged in advocacy involved organizing and hosting Pride Games. A Pride Game is a regularly scheduled competition (e.g., soccer game) used as an opportunity to celebrate LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport. Recently, scholars have critiqued the impacts and designs of Pride Games (Denison & Toole, 2020; Storr et al., 2022). Nevertheless, findings indicate that organizing a Pride Game was one way college coaches in this study advocated for LGBTQIA+ rights. Indeed, organizing a Pride Game was one way these college coaches created more inclusive spaces for LGBTQIA+ athletes. Other college coaches may consider organizing Pride Games to celebrate LGBTQIA+ athletes or other types of events to celebrate the inclusion and accomplishments of BIPOC athletes.

A surprising finding in the present study related to recruiting. This is the first study, to the author's knowledge, documenting how college coaches have leveraged recruiting as a tool to engage in advocacy. College coaches in the present study used recruiting as an opportunity to provide more opportunities for athletes from diverse backgrounds and to include athletes who value social justice. Although this finding was surprising, recruiting is a primary responsibility of college coaches (Holmes, 2011; Judge et al., 2018; Tsitsos & Nixon, 2012). There are several possible reasons for college coaches using this existing responsibility as a form of advocacy. For instance, some coaches argued recruiting athletes with social justice values helped them foster a supportive team culture. Specifically, one facilitator of coach advocacy in the present study related to the goal of creating supportive team cultures. Participants might have thought that adding players who embrace diversity and social justice may make creating a

supportive team culture easier. In addition, one coach acknowledged she would have an easier time coaching these athletes as they were more like her. Perhaps other coaches similarly thought they would have an easier time coaching athletes who value diversity and social justice compared to athletes who do not value diversity and social justice. Further, coaches may have expected athletes who embrace diversity and social justice are more capable of helping them win than athletes who do not embrace diversity and social justice. Indeed, one coach mentioned a concern that a lack of advocacy would result in problems off the field—which may include problems such as racism and homophobia—affecting athlete performance on the field. Perhaps these coaches believe recruiting athletes with diversity and social justice values will contribute to better team cohesion. By boosting team cohesion, these coaches may expect to have a team with less conflict, improved teamwork, and more success. Another interesting finding was that many participants similarly believed advocacy boosted the performance of their athletes. So, these coaches may have believed athletes who embrace values related to diversity and social justice may have greater potential for successful athletic careers than athletes who do not embrace these values. Thus, college coaches may leverage this responsibility as an opportunity to participate in advocacy.

Also, these participants described benefits they experienced at the interpersonal level because of their advocacy. Many college coaches described how their relationships with their athletes and other loved ones grew stronger as they felt more comfortable with each other. This may not be surprising as prior research, including one case study of a college coach, showed college coaches prioritize player development and relationships

with players (Harvey et al., 2018; Krueger, 2019). That is, advocacy may be one way college coaches prioritize player development and relationships with players, allowing them to strengthen their bonds with their athletes. In turn, these bonds contribute to better advocacy experiences.

Together, there are several ways college coaches may engage in advocacy at the interpersonal level. Many of these opportunities for advocacy involve leveraging their existing responsibilities as advocacy tools. Indeed, college coaches may collaborate with their athletes to discuss social injustice and justice, plan events around their competitions, and recruit high school athletes who will continue to contribute to the team's commitment to create change.

Organizational Level

At the organizational level, findings here demonstrate how college coaches have several opportunities to promote LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. One of the most common ways these coaches advocated at the organizational level was through informing departmental policies. Enforcing team policies have previously been recognized as important responsibilities among college coaches (Chow et al., 2019; Kroshus et al., 2018). Findings from the present study extend upon this, suggesting college coaches also may use their platforms to advocate for revised policies at the organizational level. That is, college coaches can inform policies not just within their teams, but within their athletic departments. They especially advocated for reform by joining committees. Perhaps, joining committees gave them opportunities to inform policy decisions in specific areas. Some participants described informing athletic department policies by organizing

fundraisers and reviewing merchandisers. Organizing fundraisers, for instance, may have been opportunities for participants to contribute to the growth of resources for athletes from diverse backgrounds. Meanwhile, reviewing merchandisers allowed coaches the chance to ensure the athletic department was supportive of minority-owned and social justice-oriented businesses. Participants also discussed the importance of creating a policy to mandate the playing of the Black national anthem before home competitions. Playing the Black national anthem may be one way to showcase acknowledgement of and appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity. Put differently, advocating for the Black national anthem to be played during competitions may help develop a more inclusive and safer team environment for BIPOC athletes.

College coaches in this study also advocated for their athletic departments to adopt policies to make recruiting more inclusive. This included reformatting recruiting intake forms and creating and funding BIPOC student organizations. Indeed, the goal of inclusive intake forms was to make prospective athletes and their families feel more accepted. One of the goals of creating and funding BIPOC student organizations was to offer BIPOC prospective athletes with insight into the experiences of current BIPOC college athletes at the institution. By taking these steps, some of the coaches in this study hoped to recruit more diverse athletes, which then would help foster a supportive team culture and boost the team's athletic performance.

Moreover, participants explained how they participated in advocacy at the organizational level by connecting athletes with other campus resources. Connecting LGBTQIA+ athletes with LGBTQIA+ resources, according to the coaches, allowed some

athletes to feel safer and more included. For these college coaches, connecting athletes with appropriate resources also helped them to educate athletes about important issues. These findings are supported by other research. For instance, Tredinnick and McMahon (2021) previously found college coaches can become advocates for sexual violence prevention by connecting athletes with campus resources to increase athletes' knowledge regarding such resources and sexual violence. Therefore, college coaches may be able to foster more inclusive and safer environments by connecting athletes with appropriate resources across campus.

College coaches in the present study engaged in advocacy at the organizational level mostly by informing policy decisions within the athletics department. Other college coaches may consider joining committees to give them more opportunities to be involved in formulating policies. Regardless of committee engagement, college coaches may consider fundraising for local non-profit organizations, reviewing merchandisers the department relies upon, and playing the Black national anthem. College coaches also can become more aware of campus resources so they can connect their athletes with appropriate supports.

Community Level

Findings from this study also shed light on ways in which college coaches advocate at the community level. Coaches in this study mostly partnered with existing organizations. Others, though, created their own organizations to address social needs and social injustices. Tredinnick and McMahon (2021) previously found knowledge of campus resources on sexual violence increases knowledge of sexual violence prevention

among college athletes. No research to-date, though, has explored how college coaches partner with or create community-based organizations as a form of advocacy. Yet, several organizations such as Athletes for Hope, Athlete Ally, and RISE, among others, offer resources for coaches to be engaged in racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights. As such, the present study was the first, to the author's knowledge, to offer insights on how college coaches engage in advocacy through existing and new organizations. Participants described partnering with and creating organizations to create resources for other coaches and institutions and to increase access to their sport among marginalized communities. As discussed later in this chapter, community organizations may have provided coaches in this study with the skills and tools needed to confidently engage in advocacy. For example, perhaps community organizations can help college coaches learn advocacy strategies. Community organizations also may connect college coaches with knowledge to increase their competence related to social issues. Also, community organizations may increase college coaches' exposure to experienced advocates who can help guide and support them through advocacy.

In addition, some coaches described their advocacy with the NCAA and their conferences. This is the first study to show college coaches engage in advocacy by joining NCAA and conference committees or petitioning these groups. Like with other community partners and within athletic departments, coaches served on committees in the NCAA and in their conferences to create trainings to teach other coaches how to work with LGBTQIA+ athletes. Some also joined conference initiatives to brainstorm future paths the conference should take to support racial justice. Perhaps coaches in this study

felt safe to engage in advocacy when their conference and the NCAA created opportunities for them to join committees. Indeed, some facilitators of coach advocacy related to providing trainings, resources, support, and other opportunities for coaches. In fact, one facilitator at the organizational level related to athletic directors inviting coaches to participate on committees. There is a possibility coaches interpreted the creation of these committees and invitations to join them as expressions of support for advocacy. These actions also may have encouraged participants to accept responsibility to engage in advocacy. Other college coaches may consider accepting responsibilities within the NCAA and their conference to influence social change for racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights.

Societal Level

Participants at the societal level mostly discussed using social media to engage in advocacy. Some early research has examined how fans interact with athletes who engage in advocacy—or talk about these athletes—via social media (Frederick et al., 2017; Litchfield et al., 2018). However, no studies, to the author's knowledge, have explored how college coaches use social media to engage in advocacy. Findings from the present study, though, show posting and connecting with others (and resources) on social media can be used as a form of advocacy. More specifically, participants shared resources and opinions about racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights to raise awareness about social issues and future possible directions to their followers and friends on social media. However, some participants did not like social media and chose not to use the platform to engage in advocacy. Perhaps, familiarity with social media encouraged coaches in the study to

advocate on these platforms. Indeed, an important facilitator of advocacy at the individual level related to confidence and competence with advocacy skills. Therefore, confidence and competence with social media skills, along with advocacy skills, may be important for promoting advocacy at the society level.

Moreover, few participants added how they engaged in more conventional forms of advocacy through voting and involvement with presidential campaigns. Although conventional, this is the first study, to the author's knowledge, to show some college coaches engage in advocacy through involvement in politics. Perhaps, the polarization of the political system in the U.S. discouraged other coaches in the study from engaging in more conventional forms of advocacy. Specifically, participants expressed frustration with the two-party system and other aspects of U.S. politics. Due to this barrier, coaches in the study may have found advocacy at other levels more impactful, and thus, more worth their time. Given confidence and competence were important facilitators of advocacy, coaches in the study also may not have been as knowledgeable about how to engage in conventional forms of advocacy. In addition, there also is a possibility the coaches in the study did not feel they had the support of their superiors to engage in advocacy at the societal level. Indeed, none of the facilitators and barriers at the societal level related to perceived support from others. Rather, the facilitators and barriers at the societal level related to cultural power dynamics, Black Lives Matter events, politics, and COVID-19. However, many facilitators and barriers at other levels, especially at the interpersonal and organizational levels, related to support or lack thereof from superiors

and loved ones. Thus, college coaches may need more support to engage in conventional forms of advocacy at the societal level.

Summary of Experiences of College Coach Advocates

Findings from the present study suggest college coaches engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice in various ways. Many participants, for example, partnered with or created new community organizations to address social injustices. Many coaches also hosted conversations, especially with their athletes and staff, to raise awareness for social injustices. Several others also raised awareness for social injustices by creating and sharing posts and resources on social media. Participants also described joining committees in the athletic department, conference, and NCAA to inform policy decisions. Combined, these findings reveal college coaches can engage in advocacy at each level of the ecological system.

Facilitators and Barriers of College Coach Advocacy

Findings also revealed several facilitators and barriers that impact coach advocacy at different levels of the ecological system. As mentioned in Chapter 3, many of the factors mentioned by the participants served as both facilitators and barriers. Other facilitators had barriers that were closely related to them. Thus, facilitators and barriers were discussed together rather than separately. Findings are summarized here.

Individual Level

One unique finding in the present study relates to the power coaches possess, critical self-reflection, and awareness of oneself. That is, participants recognized being a college coach gave them greater privilege and power, which they reported provided them

a platform so others were more likely to listen to them and follow along with their actions. Indeed, college coaches may be strong policy champions, important figures who can use their platforms to inspire change (Cullerton et al., 2018; Mundy, 2013). Participants felt a sense of responsibility to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice due to their influencer role. This finding corroborates previous claims where scholars argued coaches are in powerful roles to influence the lives of others (Hardman et al., 2010; Tredinnick & McMahon, 2021). Indeed, these participants even recognized they hold influential positions in society and talked about how they used their power to make a difference for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities.

Additionally, participants in this study leveraged their confidence and passion to then engage in advocacy. Perhaps college coaches not only need to be more aware of social issues, but also need improved confidence and greater self-awareness of their influence to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. This relates to previous research on high school coach advocacy for sexual violence. Specifically, Lyndon and colleagues (2011) determined high school coaches and administrators lacked the necessary competence to prevent sexual violence perpetration among athletes. As other scholars have insisted the messenger (e.g., coach) may be more influential than the message when advocating for social justice (e.g., Mundy, 2013), future researchers should explore ways to increase confidence, competence, and perceived influence related to advocacy among college coaches.

Interpersonal Level

Several facilitators and barriers to coach advocacy emerged in the interpersonal level of the ecological system. For example, college coaches in the present study considered advocacy a form of support. The goal to create a supportive culture facilitated advocacy, leading coaches to hold conversations, organize events (e.g., Pride Games), and urge the passage of certain policies (e.g., playing the Black national anthem before home competitions) related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice with their teams. Interestingly, findings suggest college coaches believe these actions can boost athletic performance as supportive cultures may offer pathways for athletes to feel safe to participate as their authentic selves. The finding that advocacy may be connected to athletic performance relates to previous scholars who insisted embracing diversity and inclusion benefits organizational (Cunningham, 2011b, 2015) and team performance (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004) and creates more opportunities for engagement and advancement among marginalized individuals (Badgett, 2020; Badgett et al., 2019). As such, advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice may be a way for college coaches to embrace diversity and inclusion and to improve their team's performance.

The possible relationship between advocacy and performance also relates to one prior narrative by Prewitt-White (2019). The author shared how racism, not a lack of confidence, decreased motivation among athletes. Thus, Prewitt-White (2019) concluded workshops on confidence and self-talk were not appropriate. Instead, the author reported a need to address racism to make sport safer for BIPOC athletes. Relatedly, Munson and Ensign (2021) reported a lack of clear support for transgender issues makes transgender

athletes feel less safe to seek help for their injuries. As such, by advocating to minimize and even eliminate racism and other sources of discrimination, college coaches may then be able to strengthen performance skills (e.g., confidence, self-talk) and foster help-seeking behavior. That is, lessons on performance skills may not be as effective as intended while racism and other sources of discrimination exist. Therefore, college coaches may need to advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice to eliminate systemic barriers so they can then focus on specific performance skills such as confidence building and positive self-talk.

Although the present study does not provide evidence for a connection between advocacy and performance, the findings do show some college coaches who engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice do believe a connection exists. In fact, two participants acknowledged there is no empirical evidence for the connection but maintained the belief that advocacy can benefit performance. Indeed, as participants theorized, advocacy may create an environment where athletes and staff feel safer and protected, boosting their commitment, effort, and well-being. According to the participants, these benefits include a decreased risk of suicide as athletes feel more secure. This is particularly important as LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals are at greater risk of suicide and other mental health problems (e.g., Cooper et al., 2017; Johns et al., 2019; Rao et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2009; Symons et al., 2017; Utsey et al., 2008; Willoughby et al., 2010). Furthermore, this suggests advocacy may be one way college coaches can address mental health problems among college athletes.

The present study also highlighted the influence of relationships. For example, exposure to and relationships with people from diverse backgrounds based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, occupation, and class, among others, facilitated coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice by increasing participants' awareness of privilege and marginalization and increasing their interest in creating safer environments for those individuals they know who experience oppression. Strong connections with athletes then inspired coaches to become more engaged in advocacy to create a better and more inclusive world for them. Prior research has similarly argued relationships with BIPOC individuals facilitate advocacy. For example, Tropp and Uluğ (2019) and Uluğ and Tropp (2021) found positive relationships with BIPOC individuals as well as awareness of racial injustice and privilege facilitate racial justice advocacy. So, positive relationships with BIPOC individuals and a heightened awareness of racial injustice and privilege may be needed to facilitate racial justice advocacy among college coaches.

Findings also suggest relationships with family can be facilitators or barriers to coach advocacy. College coaches were motivated to engage in advocacy to create a better world for their children. Other coaches described being motivated by their parents and significant others who also were engaged or who encouraged engagement. Meanwhile, conservative family members who lacked exposure to diversity and did not travel much outside their hometown acted as barriers to coach advocacy. Growing up with conservative family members and not traveling throughout one's childhood delayed some participants from gaining exposure to diverse thoughts and people. In turn, this delayed

some coaches from engaging in advocacy earlier on in their careers. Relatedly, some participants feared making athletes uncomfortable, and possibly disrupting team dynamics, by forcing them to engage in conversations. Other coaches held voluntary conversations to avoid making anyone uncomfortable while others attempted uniting their team by hosting conversations about expectations and needs for all members of the team to feel safe and thrive. For the participants in this study, knowing that one has support from their family and athletes, encouraged them to engage in advocacy.

In addition, clear support and gratitude from others allowed college coaches to realize their advocacy was influential, encouraging them to maintain engagement in advocacy. This aligns with prior research with athletes which has shown confirmation from others boosts self-efficacy, self-worth, and value (Cranmer & Brann, 2015). In fact, researchers have even noted social support from coaches facilitates engagement in advocacy among Black college athletes (Fuller & Agyemang, 2018). Others similarly found connections between social support and racial justice efforts (Fingerhut & Hardy, 2020). The present study expanded upon this, suggesting social support for college coaches similarly facilitates advocacy. Thus, college coaches may need to find sources of social support within their existing network to help them become more engaged in advocacy.

Furthermore, some participants also had negative experiences with advocacy, potentially acting as a barrier to future advocacy. A plethora of studies also have examined pushback athletes experience after engaging in advocacy (e.g., Cunningham & Regan, 2012; Litchfield et al., 2018). The present study expands upon these findings by

showing some college coaches also have negative experiences after engaging in advocacy. Importantly, though, BIPOC women in the study reported experiencing more pushback than others, who reported minimal or no negative consequences from engaging in advocacy. This is not surprising as BIPOC women, such as Serena Williams, tend to be viewed with less respect and tend to receive harsher and more derogatory criticisms (Litchfield et al., 2018). Thus, supports are needed to ensure all college coaches, especially those who identify as BIPOC women, can engage in advocacy and simultaneously maintain their well-being and success. Without these supports, college coaches may struggle to manage the harassment from fans, which may cause additional negative consequences related to the effects of distress.

Most of the facilitators and barriers at the interpersonal level centered around their athletes and other relationships. Indeed, the goal to create a supportive culture for their athletes was a major facilitator of coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Coaches' relationships with athletes, family members (e.g., parents, children, significant others), and other advocates, as well as social support and gratitude from others, largely influenced their engagement in advocacy. Although coaches reported different sources of support and some reported no instances of pushback, others, especially the BIPOC women in the study, did report various negative experiences with their advocacy. Ideally, support from others, including support at the organizational level, would negate any effects of the negative experiences associated with advocacy.

Organizational Level

Like at the interpersonal level, facilitators and barriers at the organizational level largely centered around support, suggesting support at multiple levels of ecological system may be a critical facilitator of college coach advocacy. At the organizational level, though, facilitators and barriers related to the actions of and experiences within the athletics department and within an institution of higher education. For example, findings suggest athletic departments can convey support to college coaches and facilitate their advocacy by expressing verbal support for advocacy work and by offering trainings and resources related to LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, and inclusivity. A willingness to collaborate with others to implement trainings and to help with department policies also showed coaches the department was serious about their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, facilitating coach advocacy. Athletic departments also were able to show their commitments to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice, and thereby facilitate advocacy, by including questions related to social justice in interviews and performance reviews. Including such questions showed prospective and current coaches the department was interested in and supportive of advocacy. These actions align with the purpose of higher education institutions. According to prior scholars, institutions of higher education should be providing support for faculty and staff engaging in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Indeed, scholars have insisted higher education institutions have a responsibility to address social injustice and promote social justice (Astin, 1985; Lagemann & Lewis, 2012; McCarthur, 2011).

However, not all participants reported receiving institutional support, resources, and collaborations. Rather, many participants reported the lack of institutional support, resources, and collaborations as barriers to coach advocacy. In other words, not providing clear support, offering training opportunities and resources, collaborating with others outside the department, and/or changing department policies (e.g., asking about commitment to diversity and social justice in an interview) may prevent some college coaches from engaging in advocacy. Indeed, the lack of organizational supports left coaches unsure if advocacy was acceptable and left coaches somewhat unprepared in how to effectively engage in advocacy and build inclusive environments. There is a need for athletic department administrators to collaborate with others throughout the institution and the community to design and offer resources and trainings for college coaches related to working with LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC athletes. There also is a need for athletic department administrators to explicitly state their support for social justice causes and for them to oppose social injustices. If athletic department administrators offer trainings, provide resources, and express clear support for LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, and other social issues, college coaches may be more likely to engage in advocacy to address these and other areas.

Moreover, some participants in the present study identified job security and donors as factors impacting coach advocacy. That is, having job security and support from donors facilitated coach advocacy whereas a lack of job security and support from donors were barriers to coach advocacy. Interestingly, one participant felt a sense of job security because they earned a graduate degree, meaning they would be able to find a job

in a different field if they ever lose their job because of their advocacy efforts. Prior research on athletes has similarly shown fear of losing one's job, playing time, and prestige are barriers to engaging in advocacy (e.g., Cunningham & Regan, 2012; Frederick et al., 2017). Thus, the findings extend previous results from athletes to college coaches, demonstrating how job security facilitates likeliness of advocacy behaviors.

Importantly, though, these findings need to be contextualized within institutions of higher education. Although participants did not discuss certain characteristics as facilitators or barriers related to institutions of higher education, there is a possibility that working at a college or university facilitated engagement in advocacy behaviors. More specifically, institutions of higher education often have missions and values related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice (Astin, 1985; Lagemann & Lewis, 2012; McCarthur, 2011). Many colleges and universities, for instance, have created offices related to Title IX; compliance; diversity, equity, and inclusion; support for LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and faculty; and support for BIPOC students, staff, and faculty (Kwak et al., 2019). As such, college coaches, compared to high school coaches and others employed outside institutions of higher education, may have additional supports to increase awareness of social justice issues and strengthen skills related to advocacy for social change.

Therefore, institutions and athletic departments have various opportunities to facilitate college coach advocacy. Athletic directors, for example, can express explicit support for advocacy and can offer trainings and resources for coaches. When doing so, athletic directors can collaborate with others outside the department to ensure the

trainings and resources are being designed and delivered by experts. They also can ensure coaches of their job security and can connect coaches with donors who value social justice advocacy.

Community Level

Institutions also are situated within larger communities and athletic departments are situated within conferences and other large governing bodies (e.g., NCAA) which make up the community level. In the community level, factors related to the area in which the institution is located, as well as the institution's conference affiliation and NCAA, can impact coach advocacy. For example, findings suggest urban and liberal environments, compared to rural and conservative environments, facilitate coach advocacy. Perhaps, living in more urban and liberal areas exposed coaches to greater diversity. Indeed, positive relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds has been connected to greater levels of racial justice advocacy (Tropp & Uluğ, 2021). Therefore, living in urban areas may have allowed some participants to have more opportunities for positive relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Thus, college coaches may need to intentionally develop relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds to become more engaged in advocacy.

The safety of the neighborhoods in these areas also influenced coach advocacy. This extends upon previous research which has examined threats to playing time and public image among athletes (Cunningham & Regan, 2012; Frederick et al., 2017). Findings from the present study suggest community safety facilitates coach advocacy whereas threats to physical safety in the community was a barrier to coach advocacy.

Nevertheless, the threat or fear of physical violence also was simultaneously a facilitator for some coaches who were motivated to decrease hate and violence. Indeed, while perceived physical safety might make some coaches more willing to engage in advocacy, a lack of perceived safety also may inspire them to create changes to make the environment safer.

The existence of community organizations related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice also facilitated advocacy among the coaches in this study. Findings suggest the existence of community organizations provided coaches with resources and training opportunities to learn more about social issues and become stronger advocates. As with the idea of interconnectivity between levels in the ecological system (see Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the existence of community organizations may be able to strengthen factors that facilitate coach advocacy at other levels (e.g., confidence, competence, self-awareness, relationships with other advocates, exposure to diversity). However, not all organizations are effective. Findings also suggest community organizations with poor structure and operations act as barriers to coach advocacy. More specifically, the existence of organizations alone is not enough to facilitate advocacy. Instead, these organizations must include high-quality and culturally competent staff and resources. Thus, community-based organizations need to recruit high-quality and culturally competent staff and then connect with college coaches. Strengthening connections between high-quality and culturally competent community organizations with college coaches may increase advocacy among college coaches.

In addition, findings suggest conferences and the NCAA impacted coaches' involvement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Conferences, for example, can create committees on racial justice or organize a voter registration drive to inspire coaches to be more engaged in racial justice advocacy. Similarly, NCAA Division III offers trainings and hosts awards for LGBTQIA+ inclusivity and empowerment. Perhaps, initiating action relates to social support, which has been connected to greater engagement in advocacy (Fingerhut & Hardy, 2020). That is, initiating action may show coaches they will receive support if they engage in advocacy. Initiating action also may alter community norms around advocacy. Indeed, changing norms is a fundamental component of changing desired behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, advocacy-related actions by conferences and the NCAA may influence the norms of college sport and, in turn, encourage advocacy among college coaches.

Societal Level

There also were several facilitators and barriers of coach advocacy at the societal level, the outermost layer of the ecological system. These included an awareness of power dynamics, major protests, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, an awareness of power dynamics was the only facilitator of coach advocacy mentioned by every participant. Findings suggest an understanding of cultural dynamics related to the oppression of BIPOC individuals, LGBTQIA+ people, women, and other minorities, as well as an understanding of the impacts of intersectionality, encouraged participants to engage in advocacy. Indeed, participants explained knowledge of issues affecting certain groups of people motivated them to engage in advocacy to address these issues. This

corroborates prior research which has found high school coaches and administrators and youth cricket coaches in India lack awareness of gender issues, which posed as barriers to coach advocacy regarding sexual violence (Lyndon et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2015). Interestingly, though, the present study suggests the awareness of these issues facilitates advocacy, but the existence of these issues creates barriers for college coaches. For example, participants said the incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate, teaching of American history relates to white supremacy. This can lead to a lack of awareness about the treatment of BIPOC communities throughout American history and a lack of awareness about the long-term effects of such treatment. Without an awareness of these complex social issues, college coaches may be less likely to engage in advocacy.

Findings also demonstrated how current events sparked awareness of social issues, which led to greater involvement in advocacy. Awareness of major events, including the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, as well as problematic rhetoric encouraged by former President Donald Trump, made college coaches more aware of the pervasiveness of social problems affecting BIPOC communities and LGBTQIA+ individuals. This is unsurprising as recent scholarship has shown exposure to racism increases awareness of racial injustice and privilege, which then facilitates racial justice advocacy (Uluğ & Tropp, 2021). Thus, the rise of social protests and discussions about injustices made the participants more aware of the existence and intensity of social injustice, facilitating their engagement in advocacy.

Although the rise in protests and social commentary increased awareness of social injustice and facilitated advocacy among the participants, some aspects of American

policy were barriers to participants. Specifically, participants reported American politics are polarized, creating contention and preventing discussions between those with opposing views. This made advocacy more challenging for the participants. There is a need for college coaches to develop skills related to navigating this polarization, so this barrier does not stop them from engaging in advocacy. Indeed, this polarization may make advocacy more needed to help increase awareness of and respect for diversity and social justice among others.

Finally, the present study builds upon the growing body of literature related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Domínguez et al., 2020). The authors argued COVID-19 was a facilitator for advocacy as the pandemic helped bring awareness to social injustices tied to health equity. Although findings from the present study agree that COVID-19 was a facilitator of advocacy, findings also suggest COVID-19 was a barrier of college coach advocacy. The pandemic forced people to move many conversations to virtual settings. According to some participants, some individuals may have been more comfortable having conversations about social issues online rather than in-person. However, not everyone had equal access to technology. In addition, some institutions focused on addressing the pandemic, leading them to ignore major social movements such as Black Lives Matter protests.

Together, the many different facilitators at the societal level promoted greater engagement in advocacy mostly by increasing awareness of social injustices. That is, an awareness of power dynamics, major protests, American policy, and COVID-19 each influenced participants' awareness of social injustice and engagement in advocacy.

Summary of Facilitators and Barriers of College Coach Advocacy

Several facilitators and barriers related to college coach advocacy were identified in the present study. At the individual level, factors such as a sense of responsibility, self-awareness, and confidence/competence influenced coach advocacy. Factors at the interpersonal level then included the goal to create a supportive team culture, relationships, and exposure to diversity, among others. At the organizational level, facilitators and barriers related to institutional characteristics and actions, job security, and donor support. Community partnerships and certain regional characteristics (e.g., politics, safety) were important factors at the community level. Interestingly, the only facilitator mentioned by every participant, an awareness of power dynamics, was in the societal level. Other facilitators and barriers at the societal level related to major protests, American politics, and COVID-19.

Implications for the Ecological Systems Theory

Findings need to be understood through a framework of the ecological systems theory. An important aspect of the ecological systems theory is that each of the levels are interconnected (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the individual level has a bidirectional relationship with the societal level as the individual college coach influences society and as societal norms, values, and events impact the college coach. Therefore, the facilitators and barriers the participants in this study identified likely impact all their advocacy experiences, regardless of system level. Indeed, heightened levels of confidence and competence in advocacy-related skills likely increased the frequency of advocacy behaviors at all system levels and not just the individual level. Similarly, as one

participant stated, having a higher education degree, a facilitator at the individual level, increased their perceived job security, a facilitator of advocacy at the organizational level. In addition, being on a committee at the organizational level exposed participants to other coaches and sport leaders engaged in advocacy, expanding their social support network. Black Lives Matter events at the societal level also increased awareness and knowledge of social injustice, leading some participants to engage in self-reflection of their own identities and biases, impacting them at the individual level.

Moreover, some facilitators and barriers mentioned by the college coaches in this study are important to highlight as critical to influencing advocacy engagement. For instance, developing a sense of responsibility at the individual level is needed to engage in advocacy at other levels. Without a sense of responsibility, college coaches may not perceive advocacy as important to their roles. In addition, awareness was an important factor at the individual and societal level. Increasing self-awareness of one's identities and knowledge of societal power dynamics was necessary for college coaches in this study to then become aware of privilege and marginalization of different groups of people. This aligns with prior research that has demonstrated awareness of racial injustice and privilege as important facilitators of racial justice advocacy (Tropp & Uluğ, 2019; Uluğ & Tropp, 2021).

Another critical facilitator of college coach advocacy highlighted by these findings relates to support. Participants in this study explained support at the interpersonal and organizational levels was encouraging. They received support at the interpersonal level from athletes, family, and experienced advocates. At the

organizational level, these college coaches received support from their superiors and athletes. Other scholars have previously demonstrated support as important for advocacy among Black college athletes (Fuller & Agyemang, 2018) and White advocates for racial justice (Fingerhut & Hardy, 2020). Findings suggest support from others at different levels of the ecological system is important to facilitate advocacy among some college coaches.

Relatedly, another key facilitator of advocacy at different levels of the ecological system was relationships with others. Indeed, relationships with athletes, family, experienced advocates, individuals with diverse identities, and community partners facilitated advocacy among the participants in this study. Tropp and Uluğ (2019) and Uluğ and Tropp (2021) similarly demonstrated that positive relationships with BIPOC individuals helped some White people become more aware of and angry about racism. In the present study, strong relationships with others connected these participants to more sources of support and exposed these college coaches to the social injustices others experience, which in turn, may have increased their awareness of social injustice. Thus, building positive relationships with others throughout the ecological system is important to facilitate advocacy.

Interestingly, the barriers reported by the college coaches in this study were similar to the facilitators. For instance, relationships with community partners facilitated advocacy whereas a lack of relationships with community partners made advocacy more difficult. In addition, other prominent barriers were also facilitators of advocacy. For example, awareness of social injustice facilitated advocacy, yet the existence of social

injustice made advocacy more challenging. Indeed, interpersonal and institutional social injustice created barriers making advocacy more challenging to navigate. Nevertheless, the existence of social injustice also made advocacy more needed. That is, participants did not want the existence of social injustice to stop them from engaging in advocacy. Therefore, having barriers to advocacy, in turn, facilitated advocacy by making social change more necessary.

Furthermore, an important recognition is that no two participants described the exact same facilitators and barriers of college coach advocacy. Although there were similarities between their stories, their uniqueness suggests there is not one set of factors that cause or prevent college coach advocacy. Instead, there are many combinations of factors impacting college coach advocacy in different ways. Thus, many steps—not just one—are recommended to encourage college coaches to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. For instance, college coaches may need a sense of responsibility, an awareness of social injustice, a large support network, and positive relationships with athletes, family, other advocates, and community partners to facilitate engagement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Limitations

The present study is not without limitations. For example, the present study was qualitative, cross-sectional, and exploratory, and thus, does not offer conclusions related to causality. The qualitative nature of the study also limits the generalizability of the findings. Other college coaches may have different experiences compared to those sampled in this study. In addition, the present study focused specifically on LGBTQIA+

rights and racial justice. College coaches may report different experiences, facilitators, and barriers related to advocacy for other social issues. Also, college coach advocacy was investigated through the perspective of ecological systems theory. Using this theory limited the ability to identify a linear series of steps to facilitate advocacy. Data collection and analysis, though, could have been guided by other theories such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to identify possible linear paths, if any exist.

Another limitation relates to the sampling design, which only resulted in 16 college coaches identified through popular press, expert consultations, and snowballing. The present study is limited by focusing the recruitment only on college coaches with known advocacy experiences. Other college coaches also may be engaged in advocacy and may report different experiences, facilitators, and barriers. Although a strength of the study related to the rich descriptions offered by these participants, the sampling design prevents findings from being generalizable to all college coaches. Relatedly, there was a lack of representation of college coaches in this study identifying as transgender or gender non-conforming and a lack of representation of those who practice Islam and several other religions. There also was a lack of representation of college coaches in NCAA Division II and other competition levels outside the NCAA. This was, in part, due to the low response rate from possible participants. Indeed, many college coaches were invited but did not respond to the email invitation to participate in the study. Thus, the present study is limited because the others who did not respond may have reported different experiences, facilitators, and barriers of advocacy. Also, eligibility criteria included being a college coach during the 2021-2022 school year. However, former

college coaches who recently left the profession within the last few years, as well as those outside college settings, may have unique experiences and may have left coaching due to barriers related to advocacy. There is a possibility that including these experiences would change the results of the study. Thus, this study is limited because former college coaches and coaches in other settings may have different experiences, facilitators, and barriers related to advocacy.

Moreover, the interviews occurred over a year after the height of the Black Lives Matter protests and the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Findings may have differed if data were collected during the peak of these historical events. For example, there is a possibility that college coaches may have been more engaged in advocacy during the peak of these historical events compared to at the time of the interviews. There also may have been more facilitators and/or barriers to advocacy during these times. Finally, only one researcher coded the data. Although several strategies were utilized to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data (e.g., expert feedback, member checking), additional strategies, such as including multiple coders, can strengthen the trustworthiness of the data even more. In addition, the one researcher who coded the data has values related to social justice and identifies as a White cisgender gay man. These identities carry biases that may have impacted the interpretations of these data.

Directions for Future Research

There are several areas of future research in need of exploration. This study only looked specifically at advocacy experiences, facilitators, and barriers related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Future research should examine how college

coaches engage in other forms of advocacy not included in this study. Other areas of advocacy include, but are not limited to, disability rights, immigration, and women's rights. Future scholarship also should examine why college coaches reported greater instances of advocacy at the interpersonal level compared to other levels of the ecological system. Such research, for example, might further explore college coaches' reasons for engaging in interpersonal-level advocacy but not societal-level advocacy. This type of study can be used to develop a stronger understanding on how to increase college coaches' engagement in advocacy at other levels.

There also is a need for future scholarship on coach advocacy to utilize various methodologies. The present study adopted a qualitative, cross-sectional, and exploratory design. There is a need for future research to expand upon this study with other rigorous research designs to help delineate causal pathways of coach advocacy. For instance, future researchers should consider pairing interviews with life mapping exercises and should consider examining causal pathways through surveys. Future researchers also should utilize mixed methods designs when appropriate. Future researchers also should analyze the experiences of college coach advocates with different theoretical frameworks other than the ecological system theory. For example, using the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) may help researchers identify other facilitators and barriers of coach advocacy that were not uncovered in the present study.

In addition, future research should include the experiences of those not represented in the present study. This includes, but is not limited to, the experiences of transgender and gender nonbinary college coaches as well as those who practice Islam

and other religions not included in the present study. This also includes coaches in NCAA Division II, coaches in leagues other than the NCAA (e.g., National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), former college coaches, and coaches of other age (e.g., high school, middle school) and competition levels (e.g., professional, semi-professional). As BIPOC women in the present study reported experiencing pushback at greater levels compared to all other participants, there also is a need to explore their experiences as advocates in greater detail.

Moreover, given that a unique and unexpected finding related to the use of recruiting as a form of advocacy, more research should explore how college coaches recruit prospective athletes, especially those with social justice values. For example, scholars may conduct semi-structured interviews with college coaches about their recruiting practices or may conduct ethnographies by immersing themselves, as researchers, into athletic departments with college coaches. Other methods may include surveying a large sample of college coaches. Future research also should explore prospective and current college athlete's attitudes toward coach engagement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. For instance, researchers might conduct semi-structured interviews with prospective and current college athletes. Future researchers also may survey prospective and current college athletes about their attitudes toward college coach advocacy. Another interesting finding related to participants believing advocacy improves the performance and well-being of their athletes. Thus, future research needs to examine the relationship between college coach advocacy and athlete

performance and well-being. To do so, researchers should conduct longitudinal studies that examine coach advocacy and athlete performance and well-being.

Future research also should examine best practices for Pride Games. Findings highlighted Pride Games as a form of advocacy among some college coaches. However, some scholars have begun criticizing the structure and effectiveness of Pride Games (Denison & Toole, 2020; Storr et al., 2022). Thus, more research is needed to develop an understanding of how Pride Games can be effective forms of advocacy among college coaches. Such research may involve interviewing and/or surveying athletes and other Pride Game attendees before and after the event.

Similarly, findings demonstrated partnerships with community organizations as important for advocacy, yet little research has examined these partnerships. More research, therefore, is needed to examine best practices for college coaches when partnering with or creating organizations in the community. This research may involve focus groups with community organizations and college coaches to learn more about their experiences collaborating with each other. Research exploring community partnerships may also utilize ethnographic methods to develop a detailed understanding of how these partnerships function.

More research also is needed on the role of college athletic departments, conferences, the NCAA, and other community partners. Indeed, findings suggest each of these have capabilities to facilitate college coach advocacy. Therefore, future research should examine if increases in supports—such as offering explicit support, trainings, and opportunities for advocacy engagement—increase college coach advocacy as suggested

by the participants in this study. Relatedly, a final important area of future research involves designing interventions and policies to increase college coach advocacy. An intervention may involve providing clear support, mentoring, professional development training, and other resources and opportunities.

Implications for Future Practice

Despite the limitations in the present study, findings still have implications for future practice. Specifically, a stronger understanding of the experiences of college coaches in advocacy for racial justice and LGBTQIA+ rights, as well as the facilitators and barriers influencing such advocacy, lends implications for college coaches, sport administrators, and sport social workers.

College coaches, for instance, can leverage these findings to learn how to engage in advocacy. The experiences the participants shared in the present study can serve as examples for other college coaches. That is, other college coaches considering engaging in advocacy or searching for ways to enhance their advocacy might consider using the same strategies as the coaches in this study. Indeed, other college coaches might consider using recruiting as an opportunity to engage in advocacy. Others might consider contacting their athletic director or conference commissioner for opportunities to join a committee on LGBTQIA+ rights or racial justice. Coaches also may consider leading conversations with the teams.

Also, coaches can use the information in the study to help them identify possible facilitators and barriers related to advocacy. Other college coaches can use these facilitators to establish support networks and to learn more about advocacy. For example,

other college coaches might consider contacting community organizations familiar with LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice to help them become more equipped to engage in advocacy. They also may use the findings from the study to help them prepare for possible barriers they may experience. Knowing some coaches experience pushback and criticism from community members may help other college coaches brainstorm strategies to respond to and cope with such pushback and criticism in advance.

There also are implications for sport administrators and other sport stakeholders, athletic departments, and institutions. More specifically, these actors play an important role in influencing advocacy among college coaches. In the present study, athletic departments facilitated advocacy for some participants when they provided clear support for advocacy and when they initiated actions (e.g., forming a committee, offering training, changing policies). Therefore, sport administrators within athletic departments are encouraged to express their clear support for advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice, ensuring coaches of their job security. They also should provide coaches with opportunities to refine their skills and knowledge through trainings and resources. Training opportunities and resources can strengthen both knowledge of social injustices and skills related to advocacy. Increasing knowledge about social injustices among coaches can at least ensure college coaches do not worsen social injustices and disparities even if they do not choose to engage in advocacy. Sport administrators also should consider asking coaches about their commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice during job interviews and performance reviews to show coaches they care about and even encourage social justice initiatives. Sport administrators and institutions

also should implement other policies to indicate a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. For instance, one policy might be to play the Black national anthem before all home competitions. Another policy could be to organize one or more committees based on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. There also is a need for athletic departments and institutions to collaborate with others across the institution and community to offer professional development trainings and resources related to LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Indeed, institutions include academic experts in various disciplines with unique specializations. Therefore, sport administrators in athletic departments should consider collaborating with faculty with expertise in LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, advocacy, and other related topic areas to design and implement trainings and resources for college coaches.

Further, sport administrators should be knowledgeable of the inequitable experiences of BIPOC women in advocacy. Indeed, findings show BIPOC women had more negative experiences than others in this study. Thus, sport administrators can help BIPOC women prepare for possible experiences related to advocacy. Sport administrators also should create additional supports and resources for BIPOC women, as they may be more likely than others to experience pushback for their advocacy-related actions. The additional supports and resources might help BIPOC women avoid burnout and exhaustion and maintain their well-being despite the criticism from community members.

Sport social workers are another group of individuals who can use these findings. Specifically, sport social workers in college settings can use this information to learn how to offer the best and most needed supports for college coaches. For example, sport social

workers in college settings can advocate for policy reform and further action alongside coaches to amplify their messages. Sport social workers also can connect coaches with resources and trainings offered inside and outside the department to help coaches strengthen their knowledge and skills related to advocacy. They may even consider leading these trainings for coaches.

Sport social workers who do not work in college settings also can use these findings to aide in their future practice. Sport social workers in the community may partner with organizations such as Athletes for Hope and Athlete Ally, among others. Collaborating with these organizations may increase their human capital and allow the organizations to offer more services to college coaches and others in sport who may wish to engage in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice.

Conclusions

The present study aimed to examine the experiences of college coach advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice and to explore the facilitators and barriers influencing such advocacy. Findings suggested college coaches can engage in advocacy in various ways at each level of the ecological system. For instance, participants described being role models and embracing their visibility at the individual level. At the interpersonal level, coaches established team norms around social justice actions and recruited social justice-oriented athletes. In the organizational level, they joined committees and advocated for equitable policies such as the playing of the Black national anthem. They also partnered with organizations at the community level to create more

resources and training opportunities for other coaches. Then, at the societal level, they broadcasted their opinions and actions related to social justice on social media.

Findings also highlighted facilitators and barriers impacting engagement in advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Facilitators and barriers at the individual level included a sense of responsibility, confidence, competence, and self-awareness. At the interpersonal level, factors included the goal of creating a supportive environment and relationships with and support from athletes, family, and other advocates. Meanwhile, the organizational level consisted of factors related to institutional engagement in and support of advocacy. The community level included facilitators and barriers such as the existence of high-quality community organizations and community safety. Finally, the societal level included facilitators and barriers related to power dynamics, major protests, and COVID-19.

An understanding of these experiences, facilitators, and barriers can be used to help other college coaches become more influential agents of change and inform colleges and universities and their athletic departments about how to support coaches in their advocacy efforts. Other college coaches might use these data to become advocates within themselves, their relationships with others, their institution, their community, and society.

Furthermore, findings highlight the roles of college coaches as advocates for LGBTQIA+ rights and racial justice. Indeed, findings demonstrate how college coaches can serve in leadership roles on these important social issues and can make a difference for broader social change.

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Appendix A. Email Recruitment Script

Subject Line: Invitation for Coach Advocacy Interview Study

Hello,

I hope you are doing well! You have proved to be a strong advocate for your work in racial justice and/or LGBTQ+ rights. If supporting these causes is important to you, we would love to interview you about your experiences as an advocate!
My name is Travis Scheadler and I am a PhD student in Social Work at The Ohio State University. I am working with Drs. Dawn Anderson-Butcher and Samantha Bates. Our research team is studying how college coaches use their platforms for social change related to racial justice and LGBTQ+ rights and believe you may be interested in sharing your thoughts and experiences. **We are asking for you to participate in an interview that will take approximately 60 minutes.** To participate in the study, or to ask any questions or voice your concerns, please respond to this email or contact Travis Scheadler at scheadler.2@osu.edu. If you are interested, please let me know some times you are available and we can schedule an interview together! Please let me know whether or not you are interested in participating in this study.

Best,

Travis Scheadler, MS

Appendix B. Social Media Recruitment Posts

Facebook

Are you involved in advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights or racial justice? Are you a college coach? We want to learn from you! My name is Travis Scheadler and I am a MSW and PhD student in Social Work at The Ohio State University. I am working with Drs. Dawn Anderson-Butcher and Samantha Bates to study how coaches use their platforms for social change. The purpose of the study is to explore the role of college coaches in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and racial justice. Specifically, we want to interview college coaches who have engaged in advocacy for these issues within the last five years. If you or anyone you know might be interested in participating in an interview with me, please message me or email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu.

Hi! My research team at The Ohio State University is studying college coach advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights and racial justice. Are you a college coach who has engaged in this work? If so, we would love to talk with you! If you are interested in being interviewed about your experiences in advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights and/or racial justice as a college coach, please message or email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu.

Twitter

Are you a college coach who does LGBTQ+ advocacy or know someone who does? Our research team wants to interview you or the person you know! Email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu. Please RT this to help this important research!

Are you a college coach who does racial justice advocacy or know someone who does? Our research team wants to interview you or the person you know! Email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu. Please RT this to help this important research!

Are you a college coach who does racial justice or LGBTQ+ advocacy or know someone who does? Our research team wants to interview you or the person you know! Email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu. Please RT this to help this important research!

Attention college coaches who engage in LGBTQ+ or racial justice advocacy! We want to interview you! Email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu if you are interested or have any questions.

College coaches who advocate for LGBTQ+ rights or racial justice: email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu for an opportunity to be interviewed!

College coach advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights and racial justice is important. RT if you agree and email me at Scheadler.2@osu.edu if you are a college coach and are interested in being interviewed for our study!

Appendix C. Verbal Consent Script

"Hello, my name is [*Name*]. I am a researcher at The Ohio State University in the College of Social Work. Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview today focused on college coaches who have advocated for LGBTQIA+ rights and/or racial justice. Today, I am going to ask you a few questions about your experiences with advocacy.

The information you share with me will be utilized to inform research on college coach advocacy, which may help us develop an understanding of how to encourage advocacy among other college coaches. This interview will take approximately one hour. There is a small risk of a breach of confidentiality because others may repeat what they hear, but all efforts will be made to keep your responses confidential. On our end, our team will not use your name but rather we will summarize your responses. Your responses and information may be used or shared with other researchers without your additional informed consent.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can, of course, decline to answer any questions as well as to stop participating at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There is no incentive tied to your participation.

If you have any additional questions concerning this research or your participation in it, please feel free to contact me, my supervisor, or our university research office at any time. Here is my contact information:

(The respondent will be given information such as name, institutional affiliation, and contact information of the interviewer.)

I would also like to ask your permission to make a tape recording of our discussion so that I can have an accurate record of the information that you provide to me. Our research team will keep the transcripts confidential and securely in our possession.

With that being said, do you have any questions about this research? Do you agree to participate and to allow me to record this interview?

If so, let's begin….

Appendix D. Demographics Questionnaire

1. How old are you in years?
2. What is your employment status?
    a. Full-Time College Coach
    b. Part-Time College Coach
    c. Other
3. If your coaching position is part-time, what, if any, other jobs do you have? [write in]
4. Please select your current role.
    a. Head Coach
    b. Assistant Coach
    c. Other (please specify)
5. Please select which sport(s) you currently coach or have previously coached at the collegiate level.
    a. Basketball
    b. Baseball
    c. Beach Volleyball
    d. Bowling
    e. Fencing
    f. Field Hockey
    g. Football
    h. Golf
    i. Gymnastics
    j. Ice Hockey
    k. Lacrosse
    l. Rifle
    m. Rowing
    n. Skiing
    o. Soccer
    p. Softball
    q. Swimming & Diving
    r. Track & Field/Cross Country
    s. Volleyball
    t. Water Polo
    u. Wrestling
    v. Other
6. Please select the gender of athletes you have coached at the collegiate level.
    a. Men
    b. Women

    c. Other
7. Which level do you or have you coached at?
    a. NCAA Division I
    b. NCAA Division II
    c. NCAA Division III
    d. Other
8. How many years have you coached at the collegiate level?
9. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
    a. Some High School
    b. High School
    c. Some College
    d. Associate degree
    e. Bachelor's Degree
    f. Some Graduate School
    g. Master's Degree
    h. Ph.D. or other Doctoral Program
    i. Trade School
    j. Prefer not to say
10. What is your current coaching salary?
    a. Below $4,999
    b. $5,000-$9,999
    c. $10,000-$19,999
    d. $20,000-$29,999
    e. $30,000-$39,999
    f. $40,000-$49,999
    g. $50,000-$59,999
    h. $60,000-$69,999
    i. $70,000-$79,999
    j. $80,000-$89,999
    k. $90,000-$99,999
    l. $100,000 or higher
    m. Do Not Know
    n. Prefer not to respond
11. What is your race/ethnicity? (please check all that apply)
    a. African American/Black
    b. Asian/Asian American
    c. Latin*/Hispanic American
    d. White/Caucasian/European American
    e. Other (please specify)
    f. Prefer not to respond
12. What is your gender identity?
    a. Woman
    b. Man
    c. Non-binary (e.g., genderfluid, genderqueer)

    d. Agender
    e. Queer
    f. Do Not Know
    g. Another gender identity not listed (please specify)
    h. Prefer not to respond
13. "Transgender" describes people whose gender identity or expression is different, at least part of the time, from the sex assigned to them at birth. Do you consider yourself to be transgender?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Do Not Know
    d. Prefer not to respond
14. What is your sexual orientation?
    a. Heterosexual or Straight
    b. Gay or Lesbian
    c. Bisexual
    d. Pansexual
    e. Asexual
    f. Queer
    g. Unsure
    h. Other (please specify)
    i. Prefer not to respond
15. What is your religious affiliation? [write in]

Appendix E. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. To get us started, share with me a little about how your coaching journey began and how it led you to where you are now.
2. You were identified as someone who has engaged in advocacy in the past. Tell me about your experiences engaging in advocacy.
    a. How, if at all, have you been involved with issues or topics related to racial justice?
    b. How, if at all, have you been involved with issues or topics related to LGBTQIA+ rights?
3. What, if any, factors facilitate, or increase, your engagement in advocacy?
    a. How, if at all, has your personal identity, beliefs, values, past experiences, or skills facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?
    b. How, if at all, have relationships with others such as with athletes, friends, or families facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?
    c. How, if at all, have organizational factors in the athletics department or university facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?
    d. How, if at all, have community factors such as with community organizations or larger groups facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?
    e. How, if at all, have social or political factors facilitated, or increased, your engagement in advocacy?
        i. We also have seen many social movements expand and have seen many athletes, coaches, and other sport leaders participate in these social movements. In what ways, if any, have these movements impacted you as a coach? Which ones impacted you the most and why?
        ii. How have these movements impacted your experience as a coach? How have these movements impacted your advocacy?
4. What, if any, barriers made it difficult to engage in advocacy?
    a. How, if at all, has your personal identity, beliefs, values, past experiences, or skills made it more difficult to engage in advocacy?
    b. How, if at all, have relationships with others such as with athletes, friends, or families made it more difficult to engage in advocacy?
    c. How, if at all, have organizational factors in the athletics department or university made it more difficult to engage in advocacy?
    d. How, if at all, have community factors such as with community organizations or larger groups made it more difficult to engage in advocacy?

    e. How, if at all, have social or political factors made it more difficult to engage in advocacy?
5. What motivated you to use your platform as a college coach to engage in advocacy for racial justice? LGBTQIA+ rights?
6. What, if any, benefits did you experience after engaging in advocacy?
7. What, if any, pushback, did you face after engaging in advocacy?
    a. What motivated you to advocate despite this pushback?
    b. Would you do it again? Why or why not?
    c. What would you do differently?
8. What, if anything, do you think college coaches need from their athletic departments to engage in advocacy?
    a. What do you need from athletes? Peers? Family? Fans? Administrators? Compliance office? The university? The community? Society?
9. What else would you like me to know that we have not yet covered?
10. Before we go, we would like you to complete a short online demographic survey so we can remember some information about you. This will not ask for your name but will help us describe you and other participants when sharing our findings. Can you complete this for us, please?