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The Behaviors of NCAA Sport Captains: A Qualitative Study

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THE BEHAVIORS OF NCAA SPORT CAPTAINS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Masters Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Program in Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science

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by

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance at Ithaca College has been approved.

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a widely researched topic within the business, industrial, and academic communities. In fact, leadership is one of the most extensively studied topics in organizational and industrial psychology (Chelladurai, 1984). However, there have been limited studies assessing sport leadership. Much of the existing research on leadership in sport has examined how different coaching styles affect athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Specifically, there is a dearth of research investigating the behaviors among NCAA sport captains. The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of NCAA captains' behaviors. This study assessed the behaviors of leaders participating in individual sports (i.e., track and field, wrestling, and swimming) and team sports. Specifically, this study was designed to explore how and why NCAA sport captains exhibit their respective leader behaviors. Participants included six (N=6) male NCAA team captains from Division I and III sport programs. Three (n=3) individual sport captains and three (n=3) team sport captains were interviewed. Each athlete was interviewed individually during the Fall 2008 semester. An in-depth, semi-structured interview was used for data collection. The captains' descriptions of their experiences and behaviors were analyzed according to adapted methods outlined by Shelley (1998). The results indicate that NCAA sport captains develop relationships with teammates, develop relationships with coaches, have numerous responsibilities, provide leadership, keep their team focused, and remember to have fun. Results add to the existing literature on sport leadership and should benefit athletes, coaches, and sport psychology consultants by providing a greater understanding of leadership across NCAA sport populations.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family:

My father, Randy, for teaching me that passion and a great work ethic are the keys to success. Thank you for never refusing to throw batting practice, for being the best dad a boy could have, and for providing the blueprint to being a great father, better husband, and even better human being.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the most extensively studied topics in organizational and industrial psychology (Chelladurai, 1984). Leadership has been defined as the "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2001, p. 3). However, there is a dearth of research on leadership in the athletic realm. This is interesting because like businesses and industries, athletics provide a natural setting for organizational research (Ball, 1975).

Outstanding leadership is common among successful athletic teams (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Whether stemming from a manager, coach, or team member, effective leadership is believed necessary for a group of people to perform at their best (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). However, much of the existing research on leadership in sports has examined how different coaching styles affect athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Early studies have focused on the personality traits of coaches in an attempt to determine personality characteristics that were consistent among successful coaches (Ogilvie & Tutko, 1966; Schultz, 1966). Authors have also attempted to identify specific behaviors that lead to effective coaching (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977).

Athletes have referred to leadership as a fundamental element of achievement (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998; Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987). Coaches have also identified great leadership as one of the most important aspects of successful teams (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Todd & Kent, 2004; Yukelson, 1997). Yet, there have been inconsistencies in the study of sport leadership (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978).

While researchers have investigated the behaviors of successful coaches, little has been done to identify and examine the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. This is surprising considering the importance of athlete-leadership.

One study investigating athletes' leadership has led to the development of the *leader-member exchange theory* (Graen & Cashman, 1975). This theory approaches leadership from the role-theory perspective which proposes that captains live up to their role as leaders and act accordingly while the rest of the team plays the role of followers. Although role-theory outlines and begins to explain the leader-member interaction, more is needed in the study of leadership behaviors of NCAA sport captains.

An additional area of study related to leadership in sport has included an investigation of how the structure of sports can develop leaders. Grusky (1963) and Leonard, Ostrosky, and Huchendorf (1990) examined the role of formal structure in developing athlete leadership. Formal structure of leadership development is defined by three interdependent dimensions: spatial location, nature of the task, and frequency of the interaction (Grusky, 1963). Spatial location refers to an athlete's location on the playing field in relation to his or her teammates. The nature of a task refers to the processes involved in completing the task. Frequency of interaction refers to how often an athlete communicates with his or her teammates during practice or competition.

Authors have suggested that positions which are spatially central and require constant communication with teammates often produce more effective team leaders than peripheral positions (Grusky, 1963; Leonard, Ostrosky, & Huchendorf, 1990). As a result, athletes occupying positions such as quarterback in football, catcher in baseball, and point guard in basketball will develop into leaders more often than those playing

other positions. While this perspective provides valuable insight, it does not take into account a player's behaviors when evaluating his or her leader effectiveness. Together, these two components could further explain the development of sport leaders.

Despite some similarities, not all sports are structured the same. Sports are comprised of both individual and team sports. Individual sports (e.g., wrestling, swimming, and track and field) refer to sports where athletes compete independently of teammates during competition. Team sports (e.g., basketball, soccer, and lacrosse) refer to sports in which athletes must interact with their teammates to be successful. Unfortunately, previous research has failed to consider sport-type when evaluating specific sport leadership.

Given that leadership has been extensively studied in a business context, moderately studied in an athletic context, and minimally studied from the captain's perspective, it was the aim of this author to research and better understand the behaviors of NCAA sport captains.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. Specifically, an attempt was made to identify and examine the behaviors exhibited by NCAA sport captains. Leadership behaviors specific to NCAA sport captains were identified.

Problem Statement

Little is known about the specific behaviors of NCAA sport captains. This study has attempted to fill the research void in this area. Specifically, this study aimed to qualitatively examine the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. In addition, much of the

research on sport leadership has been dominated by traditional quantitative methodologies. However, as research expands, more researchers are increasing their use of qualitative methodologies (Cote, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1995; Locke, 1989; Sage, 1989; Shelley, 1998). This is an increasing trend in the field of sport psychology as researchers aim to grasp a more descriptive understanding of the cognitive and emotional processes linked with athletic performance (Brustad, 1993; Cote, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Jackson, 1992).

Significance of the Study

Research on motivation, competitiveness, and psychological skills has uncovered significant differences between individual and team sport athletes (Kamal, Alharoun, Metuzals, & Parsons, 1985; Mahoney, Gabriel, & Perkins, 1987; Zheng, 2003). Additional research has examined the traits and behaviors of successful leaders, (Hemphill & Coon, 1957; Ogilvie & Tutko, 1966; Schultz, 1966; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977) and the impact of one's position in sport as it relates to leadership (Grusky, 1963; Leonard et al., 1990). However, as stated, little research has directly examined the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. Moreover, there is a lack of research investigating the leadership behaviors of NCAA sport captains. Therefore, this study was designed to allow student-athletes an opportunity to express and describe, in detail, their thoughts on being a team leader. Gaining a greater understanding of leader and captain behaviors could lead to a better understanding of leadership within sport, as well as better ways for NCAA sport captains to positively influence their teammates.

Research Questions

This study was designed to investigate the following questions:

1. What are the behaviors of NCAA sport captains?
2. What are the responsibilities of NCAA sport captains?

Scope of the Study

The subjects for this study included six (N=6) NCAA Division I and III sport captains from both individual and team sports. A qualitative, semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant in order to determine the behaviors of each captain.

Definitions

The following definitions will be employed in this study:

Captain: An individual occupying a formal or informal leadership role within a team who influences team members to achieve a common goal. Captains are identified by their team as a role model for success, and serve both task and social functions (Carron, Hausenblas, & Eys, 2005; Kogler-Hill, 2001).

Individual Sport: Sport in which the athlete is required to perform independently of teammates during competition. In other words, only the actions of the athlete affect the outcome of competition (Mahoney, Gabriel, & Perkins, 1987).

Leadership: "The behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups toward set goals" (Barrow, 1977).

Qualitative Data: Data including direct quotations that capture people's perspectives and experiences. The data is a result of detailed descriptions based on in-depth questioning (Patton, 1990).

Qualitative Inquiry: Qualitative inquiry aims to gather data through inductive analysis resulting in a full description of people's perspectives and experiences (Patton, 1990).

Team Cohesion: The degree to which members are attracted to their team and desire to remain part of it (Michalisin, Karau, & Tangpong, 2003).

Team Sport: Sport in which athletes are dependent on teammates during competition (Mahoney, Gabriel, & Perkins, 1987).

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions apply to this study:

1. The captains interviewed were able to accurately and successfully articulate their leadership experiences and behaviors.
2. The leaders identified in this study accurately reflect "captains" for both NCAA individual and team sports.

Delimitations

1. The study only included male captains of NCAA Division I and III Central New York athletic teams.

Limitations

1. The results of this study may not be generalized to all NCAA captains.
2. The results of this study may not be generalized to competition levels other than NCAA Division I and III.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous research has highlighted the importance of sport leadership (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). However, despite these sentiments, Riemer and Chelladurai (1995) noted that research identifying leadership in sport is sparse and inadequate. The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. This chapter includes a review of leadership styles, leadership theories, the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS), research on coaches as leaders, research on athletes as leaders, and a summary of the literature examining leadership in sports.

Leadership Styles

Research on leadership styles in sport has varied greatly in an attempt to understand the effects of sport leadership on athletic performance. There are generally between three and six leadership coaching styles found in the literature, however the most commonly discussed styles of leadership are authoritarian, democratic, "laissez-faire", business-like, and servant-leader (Chelladurai, 1984; Ditchfield & Bahr, 1994; Hendry, 1974; Legget, 1983, Nakamura, 1996; Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008; Straub, 1990, Swartz, 1973; Tutko & Richards, 1971). There is no one leader style that completely describes all leaders. The people involved, timing, nature of the task, and circumstances are all variables influencing the appropriate style of leadership for any given situation. Leaders often incorporate a number of traits from one style in conjunction with characteristics from another style. The following is an overview of the most prevalent leadership styles found in the literature.

Authoritarian

Authoritarian leaders are extremely confident, hard-driven, and energetic. They rarely doubt their decisions, project that they have all the answers, and demand certain responses from their people. They believe that a strong disciplinary style will guide their teams to clearly stated team goals. These leaders are demanding, organized, well prepared, and rigid about their schedules. They generally do not have warm personalities, rarely listen to criticism, and do not generally strive to build relationships with their followers (Hendry, 1973; Nakamura, 1996).

This leadership style often produces a highly disciplined and well-organized team. Authoritarian leaders often instill passion and aggressiveness in their teams and emphasize the physical punishment of an opponent. Authoritarian-led teams tend to stay positive as long as they are winning (Chelladurai, 1984; Hendry, 1973, Nakamura, 1996).

Authoritarian-led teams can also experience dissention when the level of success declines. Such teams have a tendency to blame one another following failure. These teams have a relatively high turnover rate because many athletes do not enjoy playing in an atmosphere filled with fear and punishment. The enforcement of punitive measures by authoritarian leaders sometimes alienates players from their teammates, causing a strong dislike for authority (Ditchfield & Bahr, 1994; Hendry, 1973; Nakamura, 1996).

Democratic

Democratic leaders are somewhat authoritarian in nature but generally maintain their democratic make-up. They allow group members to have a voice regarding team decisions, as most team issues are solved based on a majority vote. These leaders only use discipline when it is genuinely warranted by the situation. They maintain structured

schedules and create a relaxed, positive environment. Democratic leaders continually seek input from team members regarding issues such as rule setting, team personnel, and training programs. Democratic-led teams work as a unit and most rules are a matter of team decisions. As a result, the discussed information becomes the foundation for the leader's final decisions (Legget, 1983; Nakamura, 1996; Swartz, 1973).

Democratic-led teams often have a high motivation to succeed that directly stems from the team's involvement in the decisions that determine the team climate. The leader is often liked by his or her followers. This style generally produces team cohesion, athletes performing better than expected, and a relaxed environment (Ditchfield & Bahr, 1994; Straub, 1990; Swartz, 1973).

A possible disadvantage to the democratic leadership style is the amount of time it might take to come to a team decision. A conversation in which everyone has a chance to speak can be time consuming. Additionally, followers are sometimes dissatisfied and feel a lack of guidance from the leader as he or she may find it difficult to make decisions on his or her own (Legget, 1983; Straub, 1990).

Laissez-Faire

The "Laissez-Faire" style of leadership is, in many ways, the polar opposite of authoritarian leadership. These leaders are relaxed, relatively unstructured, and do no stick to a strict schedule. They leave most decisions in the hands of the team. "Laissez-Faire" leaders often seem disinterested, indifferent, and unconcerned with their followers. They act according to their mood and generally produce a relaxed atmosphere (i.e., without structure), which often promotes a positive attitude toward work, as the followers are free from stress. As a result, players often retain instruction longer than they would in

an atmosphere of increased authority. "Laissez-Faire" leaders generally believe that intrinsic motivation increases performance.

However, a disadvantage of this leadership style quickly becomes clear if the team does not perform up to expectations. Because pressure during practice likely pales in comparison to the pressure of competition, the team may not be prepared to effectively handle the stressors of a game. Consequently, athletes are prone to blame the leader when failure occurs. They may interpret the leader's style as inadequate and uncaring because of their distant and detached way of leading. Discouraged athletes often interpret this leadership style to a lack of commitment on the leader's part (Legget, 1974; Nakamura, 1996; Straub, 1990).

Business-Like

The business-like leadership style is different from the three previous styles in terms of technique and information gathering. Business-like leaders emphasize the need to focus on the rational and logical aspects of the task rather than the emotional. They are accustomed to acquiring a wide variety of coaching information. These leaders are intellectual, practical, and provide their teams with many tactical advantages. They leave nothing to chance and attempt to discover new technological advances to give their team a competitive edge. They are constantly evaluating their team's performance and looking for any way to improve on a tactical weakness. These leaders have business-like relationships with their players, and an athlete's personality has little to do with his or her place on the team.

One disadvantage with this coaching style is that players may lose their sense of independence and identity as a result of the science-like atmosphere this leader often

creates. A person with different opinions and beliefs than the leader can easily be ostracized by the team and the leader. In a highly competitive atmosphere, some athletes are easily motivated, and with such a business-like approach, performance may decrease (Ditchfield & Bahr, 1994; Tutko & Richards, 1971).

Servant-Leader

The elements of the servant-leader model of leadership include trust, inclusion, humility, and service. A leader who employs this type of leadership style places other people's needs, aspirations, and interests above their own. The servant leader's primary motive, paradoxically, is to serve first, as opposed to lead (Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008). The previous leadership styles place the leader at the top of the pyramid and assume that any subordinates follow their instructions. In a servant-leader environment, subordinates are given clear roles, and the job of the leader is to serve or help the subordinate execute their roles. In turn, subordinates are responsible for executing their roles successfully and will be held accountable if they do not complete given tasks. Ostensibly, the result is often a work environment where genuine relationships are developed and maintained, everyone is valued, standards are upheld, and productivity is enhanced (Greenleaf, 1977). In a forthcoming study, college athletes who perceived their coach to be a servant leader also displayed higher intrinsic motivation, were more "mentally tough," and were more satisfied with their sport experience than athletes who were coached by non-servant leaders (Hammermeister, Burton, Pickering, Chase, Westre, & Baldwin, In Press).

Leadership Theories

Although a minimal number of studies evaluating athlete leadership have been published, several leadership theories have been developed (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978; Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1967; Gibb, 1969; House & Dessler, 1974). These theories apply to business, academia, management, and sport. Many of these theories are based on studies that demonstrate leadership as a function of both the situation and the individual. This relationship between a leader and the situation is referred to as the *interactionist approach* (Gibb, 1969). The *interactionist approach* posits that the effectiveness of one's leadership is dependent upon the relationship with his or her followers and the situation. This approach is further explained by models such as the *contingency theory* (Fiedler, 1967), the *path-goal theory* (Evans, 1970; House, 1971; House & Dessler, 1974), and the *multidimensional theory* (Chelladurai, 1980; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

The *contingency theory* states that leader effectiveness is a combination of the leader's style of interacting (personal dimension) and situational behaviors (Fiedler, 1967). Task and inter-personal orientation represents the leader's interaction style while leader-member relations, the task structure, and leader power contribute to situational behaviors (Chelladurai, 1984). In other words, the effectiveness of a leader is a byproduct of the leader's relationship (i.e., personal dimension) with his or her followers coupled with the actual task (i.e., situational favorableness). According to this theory, leadership style is a stable personality characteristic (Fiedler, 1967). As such, leadership can only be improved in two ways: Either a new leader must be found whose style is more compatible with the situation, or the situation must be changed to fit with the leader's overall personality (Fiedler, 1967). Based on this theory, a leader is most

effective when the situation is favorable and compatible with the leader's personality (Fiedler, 1967). With regards to athletics, one might assume that teams should more closely examine the characteristics of potential leaders before appointing them team captains.

The *path-goal theory* (House, 1971; House & Dessler, 1974) focuses on the wants and needs of group members. Based on this theory, a leader should only provide coaching, guidance, and social support if they are lacking in the environment. Thus, member functioning and satisfaction are a result of the congruence between the leader's actual behavior and the members' preference for those behaviors.

As an extension of the *path-goal theory*, the *adaptive-reactive theory* proposed by Osborne and Hunt (1975) indicates that leader behavior consists of the leader's adaptations to the conditions of the organizational system and his or her reactions to the wants and desires of subordinates. This theory also states that subordinates will generally respond to the reactive behaviors of the leader. In other words, this theory posits that leader behavior is a combination of the requirements of the organization (i.e., the leader's adaptations) and the leader's responses to the needs, desires, and pressures of the subordinates (i.e., the leader's reaction to his or her followers) (Chelladurai, 1984).

Additionally, the *theory of leadership role differentiation* suggests that leaders tend to specialize in either instrumental (i.e., concerned with achieving the task goals of the group) or expressive leadership roles (i.e., involved with the internal social integration of group members), but generally cannot be leaders in both domains (Rees, 1982). Instrumental roles include helping complete the task or providing instruction,

whereas expressive roles include helping maintain group solidarity and team cohesion (Rees, 1982).

In a study examining the *role differentiation theory*, Rees and Segal (1984) assessed two functions (i.e., task and social functions) of athlete leaders on two collegiate football teams. They found that all of the task leaders were starters, while the social leaders were divided evenly among starters and non-starters. Additionally, they found that task leaders were spread out amongst sophomores, juniors, and seniors, while social leaders were mostly seniors (Rees & Segal, 1984). However, on individual sport teams, athletes are not often identified as starters or non-starters. In many cases, each athlete has the opportunity to compete as often as any other athlete. As a result, the distinction between starter and non-starter could indicate that individual and team sport captains view their roles differently.

These situation-specific theories were originally applied outside of sport. Therefore, to better understand sport leadership, Chelladurai (1978, 1984,1993) developed the *multidimensional model of sport leadership* (MML). This model combines the *path-goal* and *adaptive-reactive* theories in order to provide a better framework for the study of leadership in athletics. The MML assesses the effectiveness of leadership in sport by measuring athlete satisfaction (i.e., of leadership behaviors) and athlete performance (Chelladurai, 1980).

The MML is a linear model comprised of antecedents, leader behaviors, and consequences (Chelladurai, 1980). Antecedents are factors which influence leader behavior and can be classified as situational (e.g., team goals, game situations, leader characteristics, or team member characteristics). These variables are believed to have an

effect on three states of leader behaviors: *preferred*, *required*, and *actual* (Chelladurai, 1980).

Preferred leader behavior refers to behavior which is desired by the followers (Chelladurai, 1978). For instance, some athletes might prefer that their coach give them a day off before a big competition. *Required* leader behavior refers to behaviors which are mandated by the situation (Chelladurai, 1978). For example, a coach is required to appoint five players to start on the court during a basketball game. Finally, *actual* behavior refers to the behavior exhibited by the leader in any given situation (Chelladurai, 1980).

According to the MML, member and situational characteristics have an effect on both required and preferred leader behaviors, whereas leader characteristics and required and preferred behaviors will influence the leader's actual behavior (Chelladurai, 1978). Additionally performance outcome and member satisfaction are positively related to the level of congruence among the three aspects of leader behavior. Therefore, the degree to which a leader's actual behavior resembles the required and preferred behavior will determine the follower's overall performance and satisfaction.

In order to test the hypothesized relationships in the MML, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). This scale measures five dimensions of leader behavior: *training and instruction*, *democratic behavior*, *autocratic behavior*, *social support*, and *positive feedback*. The LSS can be administered in a perceived version, in which athletes describe the behaviors of their leader, a preferred version, in which athletes describe the types of leadership behaviors they desire, or self-perceived version, in which the leader describes his own behavior (Chelladurai & Saleh,

1980). Initially, the LSS was intended to measure coaches' leadership abilities, but it has now been modified to measure the leadership behaviors of team captains as well (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998).

Leadership Scale for Sports

In general, the MML predicts that congruence among *required*, *actual*, and *preferred* leader behaviors promotes better athlete performance and satisfaction (Chelladurai, 1978). Congruency among a leader's style and subordinate's expectations can yield positive results, and likewise, when the two are not congruent, performance can be negatively affected.

According to Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) the LSS measures five dimensions (i.e., factors) of leadership behavior. The dimensions are described and interpreted below:

Factor 1— Training and Instruction: This factor includes 13 items and reflects the function of a leader required to improve the performance level of his or her athletes. The leader instructs his or her followers to help them reach their athletic potential and instills the correct tactics and techniques to reach that potential.

Factor 2— Democratic Behavior: This factor includes 9 items and reflects the extent to which a leader incorporates the voice of the team when making decisions. These decisions may range from group goals to how the goals may be achieved.

Factor 3— Autocratic Behavior: This factor includes 5 items and reflects the extent to which a leader keeps apart from his or her athletes and emphasizes his or her authority in the coach-athlete relationship.

Factor 4— Social Support: This factor includes 8 items and reflects the extent to which the leader is involved in satisfying the interpersonal needs of his or her athletes. The athlete's behavior may directly satisfy such needs or the leader may create an environment where team members mutually satisfy each other's needs. Social support is provided independently of athletic performance.

Factor 5— Positive Feedback: This factor includes 5 items and reflects the extent to which a leader compliments and expresses appreciation to his or her athletes for their performances and contributions.

(Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980)

In summary, the LSS consists of one direct task factor (*training and instruction*), two decision-style factors (*democratic and autocratic behavior*), and two motivational factors (*social support and positive feedback*).

Coaches as Leaders

Several researchers have used the LSS to identify leadership styles and behaviors most effective in athletic contexts (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998; Schliesman, 1987; Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997). Much of the existing research using the LSS has attempted to identify the characteristics of successful coaches. Chelladurai and Riemer (1998) used the LSS to examine the influence of coaching variables such as gender, personality, age, sport experience, athlete maturity, culture, organizational goals, and nature of a task in relation to athlete's preferred and perceived coaching behaviors, team performance, and athlete satisfaction. Results indicated athletes were most satisfied with coaches who emphasized the skills and techniques needed to perform well. Athletes

also believed their performance was heightened by coaches who rewarded good performances and provided positive feedback (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998).

In a study using three different forms of the LSS, the leadership preferences and perceptions of 216 male collegiate athletes in track, basketball, and wrestling were investigated (Chelladurai, 1984). Chelladurai (1984) found that team members were less satisfied when their coach demonstrated training and instruction behaviors that were considered inadequate. Similarly, Schliesman (1987) found that the more athletes' perceptions exceeded their stated preferences in training and instruction, positive feedback, and social support, the more satisfied they were with their coaches' behaviors in those areas. These findings imply that leadership behaviors directly affect team performance depending on the subordinates' preferences and perceptions of their leaders' behaviors. However, these studies fail to identify athletes as leaders, instead focusing on coach behaviors.

Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, and Bostro (1997) examined the relationship between leadership behaviors and group cohesion in team sports. Baseball and softball players were assessed in relationship to predictions based on the MML. The athletes completed the perceived and preferred version of the LSS while their coaches completed the self-perceived version in order to compare how accurate athletes interpreted leadership behaviors with coaches intentions. Results indicated team cohesion was most strongly related to the athlete perceived LSS version in comparison to the self-described coach version (Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997). These findings emphasize the importance of athlete perceived leader behaviors.

Rieke, Hammermeister, and Chase (2008) recently examined the coaching effect of a servant-leadership style. Close to 200 high school summer camp basketball athletes from 20 teams in the Northwest United States were given the *Revised Servant Leadership Profile for Sports* (RSLP-S), which consists of a perceived leader coaching profile segment and preferred leader behavior profile. The results suggested that servant-leader coaches produce athletes who are more intrinsically motivated than their non-servant leader peers. Also, servant-led athletes were more task-oriented, more satisfied, more mentally tough, and performed better than athletes in a non-servant environment.

Similarly, Black and Weiss (1992) assessed the relationship between perceived coaching behaviors, perceptions of ability, and motivation in competitive age-group swimmers. Their results revealed that coaches who were identified as engaging in more frequent bouts of encouragement and who provided constructive feedback during negative performances (i.e., important components of trust and inclusion), were associated with swimmers who believed they were successful and competent, preferred challenging tasks, demonstrated greater effort, and genuinely enjoyed their sport experience.

In a study looking at the impact of coaching techniques on team cohesion in a small group sport setting, Turman (2003) aimed to identify the leadership techniques and behaviors that motivate athletes, and determine the impact these various strategies have on team cohesion. The results indicated that subordinates were de-motivated when their coaches embarrassed, ridiculed, or promoted inequity among their players. Findings also identified that players got motivated when their coaches bragged about other teammates, gave motivational speeches, talked about the quality of an opponent, provided athlete

directed techniques, and kept the atmosphere fun with activities that involved sarcasm and teasing (Turman, 2003).

The connection between coaching (using various leadership styles during interaction with a team) and cohesion has been described by various researchers (Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Carron, 1983). Both elements are central to group development, and a way for coaches to exhibit leadership strategies that can impact the way groups perform. Because team success is viewed as one of the primary goals of athletic competition, researchers believe that there is a strong relationship between cohesion and performance (Turman, 2003).

One of the ways coaches develop team cohesion is by developing genuine relationships with their players. Subordinates that know a leader cares about them as a person are more inclined to listen to, trust, and work hard for their leader. Martens and Peterson (1971) conducted one of the first studies to examine the relationship between cohesion and team performance. They surveyed 1,200 university male athletes participating in intramural league play and found that highly cohesive teams were more successful than teams with low levels of cohesion. A meta-analysis by Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawly (1993) suggested that 83 percent of the studies completed on this topic have resulted in a positive relationship between cohesion and performance. Most have concluded that athletes on successful teams perceive their team to be more cohesive, while athletes on unsuccessful teams perceive their team to be less cohesive. Success tends to equate to increased group morale and strong interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates.

Athletes as Leaders

Although identifying successful coaches' characteristics is necessary to better understand leadership in sport, recent empirical research has shown the importance of athlete leadership as well (Glenn, Horn, Campbell, & Burton, 2003; Loughead & Hardy, 2005). Loughead and Hardy (2005) found that team leaders exhibited social support, positive feedback, and democratic decision-making leadership behaviors to a greater degree than coaches. A study correlating peer leadership in soccer teams completed by Glenn and Horn (1993) resulted in the development of the Sport Leadership Behavior Inventory. This inventory outlines the following 11 descriptors of a peer leader: *determined, positive, motivated, consistent, organized, responsible, skilled, confident, honest, leader,* and *respected.* In addition, Glenn, Horn, Campbell, and Burton (2003) found style of athlete leadership to be related to trait anxiety and the team climate (i.e., mastery and performance oriented) among elite athlete female adolescent soccer players.

Given of the importance of athlete leadership, it is necessary to understand the difference between the various types of athlete leaders. When an athlete is identified as a leader by his or her team, their role can be characterized as formal or informal (Loughead & Hardy, 2005). A formal leader (i.e., captain) is generally appointed by the coach or voted into that position by the team. However, this selection process does not guarantee the leadership provided will be effective or fill specific team needs. In comparison, Mabry and Barnes (1980) identified an informal leader as someone who emerges from the interactions taking place within the group. Informal leaders are not appointed by coaches or teammates. They emerge or grow into their role as the season progresses.

The formal athlete leader, or team captain, assumes considerable responsibilities within the team structure compared to fellow teammates (Lee, Coburn, & Partridge, 1983). Although there is a lack of research pertaining to team captains, there is some evidence emphasizing their importance. Mosher (1979) indicated that team captains have three main responsibilities: (a) to act as a liaison between the coaching staff and the players, (b) to act as a leader during all team activities, and (c) to represent the team at receptions, meetings, and press conferences. Additionally, Mosher (1979) listed the following as tasks that team captains are responsible for: ensure constant communication between coaches and players, establish regular team meetings, lead by example, arrive early for practice, work hard during practice, lead warm-up sessions, encourage teammates, and help younger players.

Although the behaviors of coaches are instrumental in the satisfaction and performance of teams, several researchers (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Kozub & Pease, 2001; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Rees & Segal, 1984) have proposed athletes to be an additional and important source of leadership within teams. Researchers have also dedicated time to explaining the roles of athlete leaders (Loughead et al., 2006). Findings indicate that athlete leaders are generally more involved in task-related functions (e.g., member psycho-social needs) and external-related functions (e.g., representing the group at meetings and media gatherings) than non-leader athletes (Loughead et al., 2006).

One of the first studies to examine peer leadership in sport was done by Tropp and Landers (1979). These authors assessed collegiate female field hockey players to determine the relationship among field position, frequency of ball contact, and teammates' perceptions of leadership ability. Results indicated that peer leaders were

associated with teammates' ratings of interpersonal attraction and number of years on varsity. It was also important for team leaders to possess expressive qualities and behaviors.

One theoretically grounded study on peer leadership in sport was Rees's (1983) research on adult male basketball teams. His study was based on Bales and Slater's (1955) model of task/socioemotional specialists, which suggests that a leader is required either to be involved with the task-related goals of a group or to be concerned with the interpersonal relationships of its members. Results of the study indicated that individuals with the highest leadership ratings scored high in both instrumental (task) and expressive (socioemotional) behaviors, leading Rees to suggest that leadership role integration might be more common; Leaders may be both task-oriented and concerned with their teammates well-being.

As stated above, athlete-leaders are more involved in task-related functions than non-leader athletes. This gives the team captains more responsibilities than the other athletes on the team. Task-related behaviors enhance team climate, norms, and functioning, which are related to the *training and instruction* dimension of the LSS (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006). Specifically, this dimension focuses on teaching skills, techniques, and tactics, and a way for team captains to lead by example. However, team captains are also involved in structuring and coordinating team activities.

It is assumed that team captains do not want to be identified as coaches by their teammates, but rather as peers. To maintain a friendship or to be accepted by peers necessitates a degree of social competence (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998). Social competence refers to the attributes or skills used when interacting with others that ensure

all parties involved feel they have benefited from the interaction and are left with a positive feeling. Children and adolescents with quality friendships develop the opportunity to experience cognitive, emotional, and social growth because they engage in greater closeness, loyalty, and equality of interactions with their peers (Moran & Weiss, 2006).

Research on friendship, peer acceptance, and peer leadership in sport suggests there may be a number of similar skills or behaviors that are necessary for successful teammate relationships. For instance, Weiss, Smith, and Theeboom (1996) examined several aspects of friendship in adolescent athletics and found recurring dimensions of friendship. The greatest emphasis was on intimacy and attractive personal qualities. These dimensions are comparable to the socioemotional leadership behaviors that have emerged in other studies (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Rees, 1983).

In a qualitative study interviewing six university male hockey team captains, Dupuis, Bloom, and Loughead (2006) found that while each had his own personality, several common personality traits emerged: being effective communicators, remaining positive, controlling emotions, and remaining respectful to teammates and coaches. These traits are representative of the *leader characteristics* dimension of the MML. According to Chelladurai's (1993) MML, a leader's personal characteristics act as an antecedent that influences actual leader behavior. According to the MML, if the leader's preferred, required, and actual behaviors are congruent, leadership will be effective.

Although effective peer leadership is a relatively unexplored topic, it is an important dimension of peer relationships (Weiss & Stuntz, 2004). Effective team leaders have been defined as "...individuals who are primarily responsible for defining

team goals and for developing and structuring the team to accomplish these missions" (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001, pp. 452). Because peer influence increases significantly throughout adolescence and into young adulthood, it is likely that a peer leader plays an important role in the lives of others. Additionally, research shows the potential influence an effective leader (i.e., coach, team captain) may have on the success of the team (Horn, 2002). Thus, for college athletes, a peer demonstrating strong leadership qualities and a willingness to form relationships with his or her teammates could play an important role in the success of the team.

Shields and Gardner (1997) examined athlete-leader roles in baseball and softball using the *influential leadership theory* which places athlete behaviors within two broad categories: *consideration* and *initiating structure*. Consideration behaviors refer to those fostering friendship, mutual trust, and heightened respect between the leader and his or her subordinates (e.g., asking about a teammate's family). Behaviors initiating structure refer to those which establish rules and regulations, procedural methods, and well-defined patterns of organization (e.g., punishing a teammate for breaking team rules). The authors found, in general, team cohesion to be strongly related to the perceived LSS version and the perceptual discrepancy scores. In short, this indicates that athlete perceived behaviors play a vital role in team cohesion.

Kozub and Pease (2001) examined how the coach-captain relationship might affect an athlete's ability to provide adequate leadership. Results showed a positive relationship between athletes strong in task (i.e., pertaining to the nature of the job) and social (i.e., relations with followers) leadership behaviors and the coaching behaviors of social support, training and instruction, democratic behavior, and positive feedback. In

other words, satisfaction of athletes demonstrating task and social leadership was highly correlated with the aforementioned factors on the LSS. It must be noted, however, that operationalizing athlete leadership into only task and social dimensions may limit the recognition of specific leader behaviors compared to the five dimensions on the LSS.

In an attempt to further the research on coach-athlete leadership, Loughead and Hardy (2005) measured coaches' behaviors using a modified version of the LSS. They found that coaches were perceived by their athletes to exhibit higher levels of training, instruction, and autocratic behaviors than athlete leaders. Conversely, athlete leaders were viewed as displaying greater social support, positive feedback, and democratic behaviors. According to this study, coach and athlete leaders exhibited different types of leadership behaviors, suggesting the importance of studying athlete and coach leader behaviors separately.

Several researchers have noted the presence of team leaders as a crucial component to the effective functioning of teams, since leaders likely influence variables such as cohesion, structure, and team motivation (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Todd & Kent, 2004; Yukelson, 1997). However, to date, research examining athlete leadership has mostly been descriptive in nature. Yukelson, Weinberg, Richardson, and Jackson (1983) examined the characteristics of collegiate athletes who were identified as effective leaders. Results found athletes scoring high in leadership status, as rated by their peers, tended to be better performers, had more seniority on the team, and had a greater internal locus of control than teammates who were rated low in leadership status. Still, little is known about team captains as leaders.

Summary

Most approaches to identifying leadership styles have investigated specific personality and character traits of leaders. Initially, theories on leadership originated from research in business and management. However, with the development of the MML (Chelladurai, 1978), researchers began to investigate leadership in the athletic realm. A congruence between the required, actual, and preferred behaviors of a leader likely leads to greater follower satisfaction (Chelladurai, 1980). In order to quantitatively measure leadership in sports, the LSS (Chelladurai, 1980) was developed to measure five dimensions of leadership. While most of the studies using the LSS have focused on coaches, and how athletes' preferences for and perceptions of coach behaviors can influence team performance, the impact of team captains' behaviors on team performances has yet to be determined. In sum, the behaviors and influences of NCAA sport captains has yet to be studied.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. For this study, only returning captains were chosen for interviews. Returning captains were defined as having been on the team roster and a captain within one year prior to the onset of the study. A qualitative research design implementing a semi-structured interview format was utilized to assess the athletes' thoughts about leadership. This chapter includes information on the identification and description of the participants, data collection, measurement techniques, and data analysis.

Identification and Description of Participants

The participants in this study included Men's Division I and III NCAA sport captains. Men's athletic coaches at Division I and III universities in Central New York were contacted and asked to recommend returning captains to be interviewed. Recommended athletes were then contacted and informed of the nature and purpose of the study, the format of the interview process (Appendix A), and asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix B).

Participants included six (N=6) male NCAA sport captains from Division I and III institutions. Three (n=3) individual sport captains and three (n=3) team sport captains were interviewed. Each athlete must have fulfilled the following criteria in order to participate.

1) Each athlete must have competed as a member of an NCAA Division I or III men's sports team within the last year.

2) Each athlete must have served as a captain on his team.
3) Each athlete must have served as a captain on a varsity level team.

Data Collection

Each athlete was interviewed individually during the Fall 2008 semester. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. All subjects were provided the opportunity to withdraw at any time or refused to answer any interview questions without penalty. The total participation time for each subject was approximately 2 hours: 1 hour for his initial interview and 1 additional hour (optional) to review the transcribed interview (30 min) and to later review the final data interpretation and results (30 min).

Participants were given the opportunity to select a venue for their interviews. However, a seminar room at one of the universities was reserved in case the participants wanted their interviews to take place on a college campus. Prior to each interview, the participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix B). The informed consent form described the study in detail and allowed the athletes a final opportunity to continue or discontinue their participation. Prior to signing the informed consent form, issues of confidentiality, anonymity, and potential risks and benefits were discussed with each participant.

The tapes and transcripts from all interviews were stored in a locked cabinet in the primary investigator's house to maintain confidentiality. The tapes were destroyed after they were transcribed. The researcher, Dr. Greg Shelley, and Dr. Noah Gentner were the only people to view the transcribed data. Pseudonyms were used to ensure subjects' anonymity while maintaining confidentiality. Subjects were given the right to choose a

pseudonym for their interviews. If they did not choose a pseudonym on their own, the researcher provided one for them. The pseudonyms were used throughout the study and will be used in all subsequent publications and presentations. There were no potential risks to the participants. The results of this study, however, could help to identify the most frequent behaviors of NCAA sport captains. Athletes, coaches, and sport psychology consultants would likely benefit from such results.

Measurement Techniques

An in-depth, semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) was used for data collection. During each interview, the researcher took notes and each interview was tape recorded. While the semi-structured interview process is gaining acceptance in the field of sport psychology, including the study of flow states (Jackson, 1992) and injury (Shelley, 1998), it has not yet been employed in the study of leadership behaviors among NCAA sport captains.

Data Analysis

The captains' descriptions of their behaviors were analyzed according to adapted methods outlined by Shelley (1998). To facilitate the analysis of data, information collected from the interviews was coded which allowed for the organization of the data before the processing of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to coding as "unitizing", as it is the process in which raw data are combined into units. The units can be represented by abbreviations, numbers, or symbols. After coding, the researcher categorized significant statements, formulated meanings, and eventually clustered lower and higher-order themes. Following the transcription of each interview, data were analyzed according the following eight procedural steps (Shelley, 1998):

1) Each athlete's oral descriptions of his experiences as a captain was read in order to better understand the information. The researcher attempted to get a general sense for what had been discussed.
2) From each transcript, significant statements and phrases that directly pertained to being a team captain were extracted.
3) Meanings were then formulated from these significant statements and phrases as they related to the "captain experience". Significant statements and phrases were categorized into meaning units.
4) The formulated meanings were then synthesized into clusters of lower-ordered themes. These lower-ordered themes provided the basis for the final analytical steps.
5) The clustered, lower-ordered themes were then integrated into higher-ordered themes by which the captain experience for each athlete was described.
6) The higher-ordered themes were then reviewed and synthesized. These exhaustive higher-ordered themes comprised the final description of the captain experience for each athlete.
7) To achieve final validation, the researcher asked each athlete to review the captain description.

8) Finally, the exhaustive, higher-ordered themes from each athlete were compared across subjects (i.e., athletes) in order to examine the *common* themes that NCAA sport captains use to describe their behaviors.
9) These common themes provided the answer to the research questions.

Following each interview and prior to all data analyses, the interviewer attempted to identify and remove any biases regarding the phenomena under investigation – in an attempt to depict the empirical reality of the information collected (Patton, 1990). This is called bracketing and is used to portray the experiences described by the participants as accurately as possible. To successfully bracket the information, the researcher adhered to the following four steps (Patton, 1990) and:

1. Located key phrases or statements that spoke directly to the phenomena in question.
2. Interpreted the meaning of these phrases as an informed reader.
3. Obtained the subject's interpretations of these phrases.
4. Inspected the meanings for what they revealed about the essential and recurring features of the phenomena.

Objectivity ultimately determines the success of a qualitative study. Because qualitative investigation contains the analysis of words rather than numerical data, all information must be properly managed, well organized, and interpreted. The actual words from the athletes interviewed were used as much as possible when coding themes and synthesizing the data.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study was designed to examine the following primary research question: What are the behaviors and responsibilities of NCAA sport captains? This chapter presents the common themes identified from across subject comparisons from each of the participants' higher-order themes. Data from six semi-structured interviews with NCAA individual and team sport captains were analyzed. The separate higher-order themes for each of the six athletes are presented in Appendices D, E, F, G, H, and I, respectively. The following sections include a discussion of the common themes identified from the analyses.

Common Themes

After analyzing the collective higher-order themes, five common themes emerged across the participants. These five common themes (Appendix K) answer the original research question: What are the behaviors of NCAA sport captains?

Common Themes

Captains:

1. Develop relationships with teammates
2. Develop relationships with coaches
3. Have numerous responsibilities
4. Provide leadership
5. Keep their team focused and remember to have fun

Each of the aforementioned common themes is presented and discussed below.

COMMON THEME #1: Develop Relationships with Teammates

Each athlete emphasized the importance of developing genuine relationships with his teammates. The captains believed that mutual respect between a captain and his team was very important. They behaved in a way that showed they genuinely cared about their teammates' well-being and were never rude when speaking about a team issue. In discussing the mutual respect between a captain and teammate, Athlete 1 made the following statement:

> I mean, I like everybody on the team and I have great friendships with all of them. Just because you're the captain doesn't mean that should be diminished in any way. I mean, if they respect you enough to vote you captain, they are going to respect you enough to listen to you when you have something to say to them at practice.

Even in an individual sport like track and field, where a captain and teammate might race against one another, a genuine relationship was still apparent. For example, Athlete 1, a former Division I track and field captain, had this to say about how he did not allow competing against a teammate to get in the way of being a good leader:

> I mean, there are different heats, if you're in the same heat or in different heats, you walk up to give them a high five before the race, good luck, good race, and then at the end of it, you get back together and say nice job, or tough luck. But it's always respectful; it's always friendly, never hostile.

In a similar fashion, Athlete 2 emphasized the importance of the captain-teammate relationship, and added that relationships with his teammates were fostered through good communication and quality time spent together. Athlete 2, a Division III basketball player, had this to say about what he did to develop relationships with his teammates:

> We want everyone to be there, whether it's running, lifting, or whatever. Even on the weekends, we hang out together. We come in and do workouts together whether it's swimming or we just want to be together. You build [relationships] off the court. Together, you just know each other so much better off the court and then it just goes right on to the court.

This quote also shows how positive teammate relationships can contribute to team success.

When asked about his relationship with his teammates, Athlete 3, a Division I All-American Lacrosse player suggested that knowing his teammates on a personal level allowed him to be a better captain:

> I think knowing personalities within the group helps me as a leader know when I need to pull someone aside and say something or say it when nobody is around, or say it in front of everyone and get them going.

Athlete 3 later echoed Athlete 2's sentiment by emphasizing the importance of getting to know his players away from the field, and how good relationships might contribute to team success.

> The cohesiveness off the field is definitely a huge part of it and I think our team in particular, with the size, with how much we're with each other off the field, on the field, how much we communicate through when we're away, on breaks we get email chains going, phone chains going. We always try to stay in touch with each other and it really builds the cohesiveness we need to be good.

Athlete 4, a Division I NCAA National Champion wrestler, also talked about the importance of developing quality relationships with his teammates. He had the following to say:

> The nice thing about college sports is that you not only compete together and you train together, but you live together. It's my family when we're here, so I do all I can do to get along.

Athlete 4 also stated that the relationships he had with his teammates were not influenced by the fact that he was the team captain.

> "[I have] the same relationship that everybody else has with their teammates. There is no pedestal. I don't think I need to go out and demand any respect that isn't there."

> "I try to make no difference evident on my end of the relationship, and because again, I value the relationship between a teammate."

Athlete 5, a Division I soccer player, believed that a captain should be comfortable enough with a teammate to speak with him about any issue. He had this to say regarding his belief in the importance of maintaining a genuine relationship with each teammate:

> Like what I was saying before with the captain being able to bridge out into all the different networks on the team. Any good captain can go up to anybody on the team and talk to him about anything. You act as kind of a filter, not between coach and team, but now between different people on the team. You know, I think that any good captain can go up to anybody on the team and talk to him about anything.

When asked about how the captain-teammate relationship would impact racing a teammate, Athlete 6, a Division III swimmer and diver said the following:

> It's almost an unwritten thing that no matter who you swim against, you are going to try and beat them regardless of them being a teammate or not. The only difference I feel is as a captain, you go over to provide encouragement before the race. I do not believe being a captain gets in the way of being a teammate.

Much like Athlete 1, Athlete 6 believed that while it is imperative that captains race against their teammates as if they were any other opponent, their relationship does not disappear when they arrive at the starting block.

COMMON THEME #2: Develop Relationships with Coaches

The participants in this study also agreed that captains should develop good relationships with their coaches. At times, this means being the intermediary between the coach and their teammates, which requires an honest, open, and trusting relationship with their coaches. Consequently, ineffective communication between a captain and his coaches can negatively affect the captain's leadership ability.

In the following statement, Athlete 1 expressed why he believed it was important to have a good relationship and good communication with his coach:

> I think [coach is] a great guy, as a captain, it's very important that you're in communication with him. Let him know things are going wrong or going well. Make sure that you know his plan, what he has in store for the team so you can help facilitate that.

Later, he discussed the importance of being able to communicate with the coach about a variety of issues:

> Once a week, we'd talk to him after practice tell him how things are going, what we're thinking, what he's thinking, what we've been seeing, and if we have any questions, we make sure we ask him if he does. It's a great relationship [I] have with him. It's friendly, it's great. You have to have open communication. Suppose you don't know what he's thinking, you can't communicate that back to the team. So you need to be able to talk to him.

Athlete 2 also described the importance of good communication and the necessity of a good captain-coach relationship:

> Yeah, [the coaches] and I have a great relationship. They come to me with whatever they have a problem with and I go to the players. Me and the other captain are the first people they come to with any news and it's nice to know before anyone else.

Later in the interview, Athlete 2 suggested that the trust between a coach and his captain can have a positive impact on athletic achievement.

> Yeah, [trust] is the biggest thing with them. That gives me so much more confidence. They give me the green light to call all the plays on the court and the fact that they have all that trust in me gives me that much more confidence [on the court].

Athlete 3 believed that his consistent effort to become a better player contributed to the relationship he had with his coach.

> I think since day one, since I've been here, I've tried to do the best I can at bettering myself on and off the field and I think they recognize that. With that, we have a great relationship.

He also expressed that the captain-coach relationship had evolved to where he used his coaches as a model for effective leadership:

> I think our coaching staff is some of the greatest leaders I've ever been around and they really have their belief and stand by it. My head coach is unbelievable as a person and as a leader, as a mentor. I've really gotten to see how he, as a leader, operates. He is one of the coolest guys to hang out with. Off the field, you can talk to him about anything and he'll do anything for you, if it's the right thing.

Athlete 5 also believed that the captain had to have a good relationship with his coach and at times, act as the middle-man between the coach and the team.

> To continue being a good captain...it's also being a bridge between your team and the coach. Kind of like an intermediary. You know, there's stuff being said in the locker room that doesn't need to be heard by coach, and you're kind of like the filter in between the two sides.

Later in the interview, Athlete 5 remarked about why open communication was vital between him and his coach:

> I think our coaches are great in the sense that they will listen to us if we have suggestions about, you know, where people should be playing. They'll definitely listen...which is always good because it makes you feel like what you have to say matters. And also, I guess, obviously captains and coaches don't agree on everything, but you know, coach is good at explaining his rationale, so even if you disagree with him, you can at least understand why he's making the decision the way it is and hopefully, like I said before, relate that information to everyone who respects you on the team.

Although Athlete 6 had a slightly negative experience with his coach, he further emphasized the importance of having a positive captain-coach relationship. He described it as follows:

> With the coach here, I feel like it's pulling teeth when I try talking to him. I don't know if it's just a personality difference, but every time I try talking to him, unless it's just a very in-depth conversation, it's just one word, short answers. But with other people, and with this year's current captains, he'll be laughing and joking. So I'm like, well, I guess I can walk away now.

He also believed that the poor relationship with his coach negatively impacted his athletic and leadership ability.

> I am personally not satisfied with how I've been coached in college. I guess that has regressed me because I was an All-American in high school, and once I got to college, I have regressed significantly. And I guess lacking that relationship with my coach, I'm not saying this is more hypocritical, even though I tried to form that relationship; he never really gave me anything back. I kind of feel my lack of relationship with my coach has affected how my leadership is because the other guys on the team might view my lack of relationship with my coach as something wrong.

COMMON THEME #3: Have Numerous Responsibilities

Team captains are faced with many responsibilities and jobs both in and out of sport. Whether they are delegated by the coach, other players, or themselves, captains are asked to be in charge of a number of tasks. The captains in this study understood that increased responsibility comes with the job and they genuinely embraced the added workload.

Athlete 1 talked about the breadth of responsibilities he believed accompanied the role of captain. In addition to competing for his team on the track, he felt obligated to fulfill several other duties as well:

> And then also, for team emails and setting up group meetings. I'd bring it to the captains that we should have a team meeting and I would do the email. Or if we had orders for like bags or conference t-shirts. I would do the emails, get the names, and get the money collected. Things like that.
>
> But I mean, I always try to get people to do things together. Uh, I think that helps facilitate better chemistry, better bonding. Like, uh, we have a team cheer we do, before the big meets and we make sure we get everybody in there. We get everybody involved to feel like we're actually a team unit. Yeah, that's definitely part of my role, to facilitate that and get people to think about that.
>
> I mean some of them, if they want to come up to me, I'll be more than happy to talk to them about [individual goals] and tell them my experiences and what I think they should do. But that's, most of the time they would go to the coach with that. But I'll help them with whatever I can.

Athlete 2, a two-time Division III conference Player of the Year, summed up how he approached the increased responsibility that came with being a captain:

> Yeah, I love it. I love having that responsibility because I can handle it. I like being out there on the court and have other people looking up to me. Especially when it ends up working out good and we end up playing well. And I like being the captain. I like people coming to me and whatnot and to show people what to do, how to do it, and how to become a better player.

Athlete 2 also talked about how he believed that part of a captain's responsibility was to motivate and prepare his team for every opponent. He provided the following anecdote in response to a question about the responsibility he had to motivate his teammates:

> Um, one time, let's see, a kid last year, a freshman, it was before a big game, I remember, and he hadn't been playing for a while. He was a good player, you know. At the beginning of the year he was getting in five or ten minutes a game, and it was before a big game. He hadn't gotten in the past few games and he was just down, you could tell. During practice, you could just tell. I remember during practice, I took him aside and told him that when I was a freshman there were times when I didn't think that I was going to play and I ended up playing a lot of minutes, so you just always have to be ready. And you could just see, he started practicing harder and you could just tell in his head he thought he was going to play.
>
> I make sure everyone has their game plan, scouting reports, and they know them. I like to quiz people a lot and make sure they've read it and know what's going on, especially since we get quizzed on it from the coaches. So I like to make sure people are prepared for the game and think about the game.

Athlete 3, a three-time All-American, believed that captains have to accept all of the responsibilities that come with the job. He was also comfortable with taking the blame if something went awry.

> I'm excited to be in that position and handle that position. That is a big responsibility and on top of class, school, and lacrosse, you have 47 guys to look out for. I think that it is a huge responsibility, it's an exciting responsibility. It comes with a lot of help from everyone. But in the end, if something goes wrong, it's on my shoulders, and I'm fine with that.

Later in the interview, Athlete 3 described how his responsibilities included motivating his team, fulfilling off-field responsibilities, and giving his teammates advice. The following quotes support this:

> I think my role as a leader, as a captain, is the same. To keep people motivated, to keep people fired up.
>
> The parents of the freshman are coming in and they're leaving their kids to coach, but the coach isn't there at all times so it's kind of like you're a big brother. You're kind of getting that lead role in protecting them or showing them the way, giving them advice, and you have to build that relationship where they know they can come to you if they need anything or they have any questions.

Athlete 4 remarked about how his responsibilities ranged from making sure his team was training hard, to organizing social mixers, and putting together community service events:

> So [being a captain] does come with a handful of responsibilities as far as how you are going to, just wrestling oriented, how you are going to train, how you are going to compete, what your attitude is, and I think that's the most important part about being a captain and the part I take most seriously.
>
> What's really nice are things that have developed over time, tradition-type things that just kind of like fall in suit and I don't have to do a lot of thinking on my own. Like, we have a fall mixer with the Women's Lacrosse team every year. It's something that a captain way back decided on, and I have the responsibility to call the lacrosse girls and get it all organized.
>
> An example is there is a lady who works in the lunchroom that has cancer, and is having a hard time paying the bills and needs to paint her house. The lunch lady came over and asked me if I could get a contingent of our guys together and go paint for her on Saturday. Sure, so today at practice, that's kind of my responsibility. So, and, so I just said, Saturday, after practice, we're going over to this ladies house and we're going to paint for a few hours. If you have something conflicting, fine, it's short notice, but we have a good group of guys, so it's not like pulling teeth. We'll have a few cars go up there and help her out.

COMMON THEME #4: Provide Leadership

The fourth common theme that emerged from the interviews was that captains must provide leadership. Leadership was expressed in a variety of ways including vocal leadership and being a positive role model for teammates. Captains also led by example through their work ethic, on-field performance, intensity, and by always striving for success. As such, they consciously monitored their behaviors and believed they should set a good example for their teammates.

Athlete 1 believed that a captain should be a positive role model and someone his teammates can emulate. He used previous captains as a model for his behavior and wanted his teammates to do the same. He was a vocal leader but also led through his work ethic and intensity.

> But then, yeah, once I became a captain, I tried my best to emulate what I'd seen before [in previous successful captains]. Work ethic, intensity, I yell a lot, I make jokes with people, but it's all, you try to keep it in a real joking manner, but I try not to be hostile towards anybody.

Later in the interview, Athlete 1 talked about the importance of leading and motivating his teammates through his behavior and performance:

> Well, a lot of it is motivation. That's, uh, I think that's probably the main aspect both in what you say and also how you perform. It's definitely important for one of the captains to be, I think, one of the better athletes on the team. If not, one of the best. And it really motivates your teammates when someone else does well. In definitely track and field because when you're not doing your events, you want the other people to compete. And when you see someone do really well, you want to do well too and perform at your best.

Athlete 1 then discussed his vocal leadership style and talked about holding people accountable for their actions. For him, part of being a captain was being comfortable with holding teammates responsible and letting people know when their behavior got out of line:

> I mean I think you need to be out in front leading exercises, um, if you notice someone doing something wrong, show them what they're doing wrong.
>
> And if people are, you know, joking around too much in the middle of drills or something like that then you need to just tell them, look, just, when you're done with the drills, while you're doing it, you need to focus on what you are doing.

Athlete 2 also spoke about leading by example on and off the court:

> My biggest thing with being a captain and a leader is, more than vocal, just setting the example through action. Out on the floor, leading your team, even if something is going wrong you can't show it. Especially for me, being the point guard, if I make a great pass to someone and they drop the ball, they slip and it goes out of bounds, I'll tell them it was my fault, bad pass. I'll take the responsibility for a lot of the bad things that happen. You have to kind of keep a steady head on your shoulders. You can't go with the emotions of the game, you know, when a lot of things are going bad. That's what I focus on most is just the action part.

Athlete 2 also believed that captains provide leadership through exuding confidence, maintaining their emotions and having a great work ethic. The following statements support this:

> Yeah, I think that's the biggest thing, how you carry yourself out there. You can't show any weakness, I think. A lot of times the biggest thing for me is when we're playing bad or the other team is beating up on us pretty good, you got to not show that you're frustrated or anything. Just so the other people see that, especially the younger guys, and it doesn't affect them either.
>
> [I'm a good captain because] I've always worked harder than everyone in the off season. That was always my biggest thing. I'd always get in the gym and shoot more, do more ball handling drills, and I just got that from my dad. Even when I was like 5 years old I was inside doing drills, shooting drill. I feel like even since I was that age, every summer I would just work harder than everyone and still, it was just all built up until now.

Athlete 5 believed that captains are leaders on and off the field. Captains can lead vocally or through action, but the best captains lead by focusing on their strengths.

> So for me, it's pretty much just leading by example in everything off the field. Never being late, having the right attitude at all times, always being positive. I think to become a captain, you need to be one, proven that you are a leader on the field, that's very important, and [two] that you're a leader off the field.

> Like I said, before, there are many different ways. I don't think there is a mold for a captain out there. It can be anything. It can be a guy who is very quiet who goes about his business that teammates look up to and follow and say, 'This guy is working hard, so I will too.' Or it can be a guy who will get on people, yell at people. So, you have captains who push, who pull, you know. There are a whole bunch of different ways to go about it.

Athlete 6 also spoke about the importance of captains leading by example. He believed that since they represent the team, they need to behave accordingly. The following statements support this idea:

> You're seen by your teammates as one of the faces of the team. But in regards to changing what I do, you make sure that you watch yourself a little bit more, but it doesn't change how I personally prepare. What I'm doing this year is no different than what I did last year. I still try to lead by example; I still try to be the first one in, last one out kind of deal. I try to do all of the dry land, or in the case of last year when I was injured, I was making sure that everyone saw I was doing my rehab.

> Again, I feel like leading by example is one of the biggest things that a captain can do. Yeah, you can sit around and rest during meets and stuff, but when it comes to events, you want to be up, you want to be cheering, you want to be at the side, you want to be at the blocks, giving encouragement, giving feedback, and helping everyone out.

Athlete 6 also spoke about his belief that captains should have some personal characteristics that guide their behavior.

> And also have an open mind, you know, just being tolerant to the different people that come on to the team because there are going to be people that rub you the wrong way. I'm guilty of feeling that way but the captain has to have that tolerance, and everyone is everyone, you can't control what people say or do, and you just have to go about your business and do the best you can.

> [The captain] has to give a little bit more and sacrifice a little bit more of his time and his energy for the team, making sure that everything is the way it should be, making sure that things are open, things are out there so people are informed, they don't get irritated about not being involved, making sure that everyone has an equal role on the team.

COMMON THEME #5: Keep Their Team Focused and Remember to Have Fun

The final common theme that emerged from the interviews was that captains need to keep their team focused and remember to have fun. As seriously as they take their responsibilities, captains made it a point to state that sports should be fun and that they behave accordingly. However, captains also realized the importance of keeping their teammates focused on the tasks necessary to reach their goals. Athlete 1 talked about the importance of staying focused when competing, no matter what the situation:

> Well it's important in track, at least in a lot of our meets, that if you get a lot of points ahead, obviously its okay to feel like you guys are doing well, but not to rest on your laurels. Anything can happen in a race. People can get hurt, people can fall down in races, I mean that's happened to me. I mean, it's kind of like, if they're ahead by like, let's say 30 points after the first day, then like, alright, it's not fun to have to play catch up. But we come in the next day...It's important that night when we're down to make sure everyone's not down about it. Tomorrow is when we're going to shine and we need to make sure that everyone is ready to go. And you know, when you get the ball rolling, some guys do really well, and it really motivates people to do well.

When discussing the importance of having fun on the track, Athlete 1 said the following:

> You know, um, it's important to have a good time too. It's really tough to spend a lot of time doing hard workouts if you're not having fun at it. So it's important to keep spirits up. Outside of practice and competition it's good too, to set a good example. It's not a problem to go out and have a good time, but don't do stupid things that people might want to try and emulate.

Athlete 2 also remarked about how playing sports should be fun. He stated the following:

> It's okay to have fun. You don't have to be serious all the time as a captain. Everyone likes to see you having fun and that lets them know that they can have fun. I think you just need to act like you care just as much, if not more, than anyone that they've seen play.

He also provided the following example in regard to how he made sure his teammates were having a good time:

> But let's say someone makes a great play, an And-1 or something, I like to go over there and give them a chest bump or a slap on the back or whatever. I like to

> show that you're having fun out there and show a lot of excitement. And, after a game, I think it's good to celebrate, definitely. I mean, you don't play that many games in a season compared to the NBA or even Division I, so I think it's good to enjoy it.

Athlete 3 remarked throughout the interview about the importance of having fun but also keeping people focused. The following are two comments supporting his views:

> So, on the field, I think you have to be on all the time, I think you have to lead by example, get guys excited to be there, and try to have fun with it. It is a sport, we all play because we love it and we have to keep it fun and constantly remind them to go out, play the game, and have fun.

> If we crush a team and we play unbelievable, but we're going to go back to film and no matter what there's going to be something that we can improve on. And usually you want to let people, it is a game we play to have fun, and let people enjoy it as much as it is, also, you want to win, but to do that, if we win, get that message across. Usually after a win, have fun, enjoy this, but tomorrow it ends. And then you have the next task ahead.

Finally, Athlete 6 continually stated how important it was for his team to have fun while competing, but also to stay focused. He also remarked how this idea guided his behavior as a captain.

> You know, one example is going into the last event of states my sophomore year, there was a DJ who plays songs and we can dedicate songs. You know, people will dedicate Metallica, do all this intense stuff, and then we go up and dedicate a song to all of the rest of the teams at states and it was The Beatles "All You Need is Love". And like, all of the other people are looking at us thinking, what are they doing, this isn't motivation. But that's just how we are, still having fun, still having a good time, but we already know that we've put in the work.

> As a captain I feel like you have to remind the guys what we've gone through to get to that point, all the work and all the fun. Like I said before, however, I try to keep the guys focused while still letting my personality run wild. Well, I think it is important just to remember that our team dynamic is having fun, working hard, and doing our thing. And, just as a captain, again, refocusing them, when you get in that circle and you look into the eyes of the guys around you, they are looking at you, to focus them on the task at hand.

Summary

This chapter presented common themes that emerged from interviews with NCAA Division I and III individual and team sport captains, with various quotes supporting each theme. These themes provide an answer to the following research questions: What are the behaviors and responsibilities of NCAA sport captains? The common themes include: (1) develop relationships with teammates, (2) develop relationships with coaches, (3) have numerous responsibilities, (4) provide leadership, and (5) keep their team focused and remember to have fun. These themes not only indicate what these captains believe are the components of effective leadership, but also how beliefs influence their behaviors and leadership styles. These themes will be further discussed in the next chapter and compared and contrasted with the existing athlete-leadership literature.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. A qualitative analysis of interviews with six team captains (N=6) revealed five common themes: (1) develop relationships with teammates, (2) develop relationships with coaches, (3) have numerous responsibilities, (4) provide leadership, (5) keep their team focused and remember to have fun. Each of these themes is discussed below as it relates to the existing literature on sport leadership.

Common Theme #1: Develop Relationships with Teammates

In the current study, each captain stressed the importance of developing genuine relationships with his teammates. Congruent with several theories, the relationship between a leader and subordinate is one of the most crucial factors of effective leadership (Fiedler, 1967; Gibb, 1969). For instance, the *interactionist approach* posits that the effectiveness of one's leadership is dependent upon the relationship with his or her followers and the situation (Gibb, 1969). Similarly, in the *contingency theory* (Fiedler, 1967), a leader's effectiveness is a result of the leader's style of interacting with others, paired with the task at hand.

In contrast, the *path-goal theory* (Evans, 1970) emphasizes social support only on the occasion that subordinates prefer to develop interpersonal relationships with their leader. In the current study, it is probable that teammates prefer to develop quality relationships with their captains. Five of the team captains interviewed indicated that their teammates were somewhat responsible for their appointment as captain, either by a

team vote or by providing input to the coaching staff. Assuming athletes recognize that captains have an increased role on the team, and thus interact with teammates more frequently, it might be assumed that teammates would vote for a teammate with whom they wanted a strong relationship.

In the *theory of leadership role differentiation*, Rees (1982) proposed that leaders specialize in tasks that are concerned with either achieving on-field goals or those involved with integrating group members (i.e., developing relationships). Rees and Segal (1984) found that task-leaders vary across ability level, but social leaders are typically seniors. Much like a previous study of two college football teams (Rees & Segal, 1984), the participants in the current study expressed the importance of being social leaders, and all were seniors.

Athletes in this study believed that there should be a shared appreciation and mutual respect between teammates and captains. Each athlete interviewed was identified as a formal leader according to the definition provided by Loughead and Hardy (2005). However, the athletes stressed the importance of being seen as "equal" to the rest of their teammates. When talking about wanting to be looked at as "just one of the guys," Athlete 4 stated, "[I] should have the same relationship that everybody else has with their teammates. There is no pedestal...and I don't think I need to go out and demand any respect that isn't there. I try to make no difference evident on my end of the relationship, because again, I value the relationship between a teammate." This quote emphasizes how strongly this athlete appreciated the relationships he had with his teammates. Developing genuine relationships with their teammates was part of what made college athletics such an incredible experience for these captains.

The captains in this study displayed behaviors that were representative of the fact that they sincerely cared about their teammates' well-being. This is important because according to the *contingency theory* (Fiedler, 1967), leader effectiveness is a combination of the leader's style of interaction and situational behaviors. If team captains can behave in a way that fosters the relationship between teammates, they may have the ability to become more successful leaders. For example, Athlete 6 talked about how it was important for him to vocally support his teammates during a race: "Yeah, you can sit around and rest during meets and stuff, but when it comes to events, you want to be up, you want to be cheering, you want to be at the side, you want to be at the blocks giving encouragement, giving feedback, helping everyone out." This type of behavior appears to promote a positive relationship between teammates.

Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) also recognized the importance of the leader-follower relationship. One of the dimensions of the LSS that contributes to a positive leader-follower relationship is *social support* (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Accordingly, *social support* refers to behaviors that satisfy teammate's needs and are provided independently of athletic performance. For example, Athlete 3 spoke about how he attempted to get to know his players well enough away from an athletic setting so that he could talk with them about any issue and give advice when necessary. When talking about his belief in the importance of a strong leader-follower relationship, he said, "You're kind of getting that lead role in protecting them or showing them the way, giving them advice, and you have to build that relationship where they know they can come to you if they need anything or they have any question."

According to the *influential leadership theory* (Shields et al., 1997), team captains' roles are placed into two broad categories: *consideration* and *initiating structure*. Consideration refers to behaviors that foster friendship, mutual trust, and a heightened respect between the team captain and his teammates. When teammates feel that they can openly voice their concerns, opinions, or questions to team captains, they are likely showing a significant amount of trust and respect in their captains. Generally, people are only comfortable opening up to others in a leadership position when they truly trust them. Because team captains in this study engaged in *consideration* behaviors, their teammates were more likely to be open and honest with them, in turn, increasing their leadership effectiveness.

Relationships between teammates are often developed away from the field of play and are reinforced in an athletic context. Team chemistry is often strongly related to team success. Loughead et al., (2006) found that athlete leaders are generally more involved in the psycho-social needs of team members than non-leaders. This is important because it emphasizes the fact that team captains need to be able to develop quality relationships with their teammates. When teammates have a genuine relationship with one another, they are able to trust each other, have confidence in one another's ability, and have more fun while competing; all of which can lead to enhanced performances.

For example, Athlete 2 emphasized the necessity of the captain-teammate relationship, and talked about how his relationships were fostered through open communication and by spending quality time together away from the court. He said the following: "Even on the weekends, we hang out together. We come in and do workouts together whether it's swimming or we just want to be together. You build [relationships]

off the court. Together, you just know each other so much better off the court and then it just goes right onto the court."

The captains in this study also expressed that developing a personal relationship with their teammates would help them lead more effectively. When asked about his teammates and becoming a better leader, Athlete 6 stated: "For motivation, it depends on the people I'm going to motivate. I don't try to motivate people the same way because everyone responds differently." Additionally, Athlete 3 said that he "thinks knowing personalities within the group helps [him] be a better leader, know when [he] needs to pull someone aside and say something or say it when nobody is around, or say it in front of everyone and get them going."

When a captain uses the relationship he has developed with a teammate in order to be a more effective leader, it is congruent with the *multidimensional model of sport leadership* developed by Chelladurai (1993). The MML uses preferred, required, and actual behavior as a means to assess leader effectiveness. By knowing teammates on a personal level, captains better understand what behavior their teammates prefer. By knowing their sport, captains know what behavior the situation requires. When captains know what behaviors their teammates prefer and combine it with behaviors required by a certain situation, they can act accordingly increase their leadership effectiveness.

Common Theme #2: Develop Relationships with Coaches

It is commonplace for college athletes to develop quality relationships with their coaches. Chelladurai and Carron (1983), and Schliesman (1987) found that NCAA coaches attempt to generate relationships with their athletes, are concerned with their

welfare, and have their best interests at heart. Most collegiate athletes are spending an extended amount of time away from their homes for the first time in their lives. They may also be used to relying on support from an adult figure or loved one during difficult experiences. As a result, they may look to their coach as an alternative source of support.

Findings from the current study indicate that NCAA captains cultivate genuine relationships with their coaches. The athletes reported that their coaches were concerned about their well being and that they had positive interpersonal relationships with them. For example, when asked about how important the coach-captain relationship is, Athlete 1 had the following to say: "I think it's very important. I think he's a great guy. I mean, as a captain, it's very important that you're in communication with him...it's a great relationship [I] have with him. It's friendly, it's great." When discussing the captain-coach relationship, Athlete 5 focused on how a good relationship lends itself to open communication, which is beneficial for the team: "I think our coaches are great in the sense that they will listen to us if we have suggestions about...where people should be playing. They'll definitely listen...which is always good because it makes you feel like what you have to say matters. So it's a very good relationship in terms of that." This theme is also similar to Carron and Chelladurai's (1983) finding that NCAA coaches aim to develop relationships with their athletes by listening to their concerns through open communication.

According to the participants in this study, it is vital for captains to have a good relationship with their coaches because they often act as an intermediary between their coach and teammates. Additionally, they suggested that captains need to know the goals that the coach has for the team and lead accordingly. Without developing rapport and

trust with their coaches, it would be hard for captains to carry out their coach's instructions. For example, when asked about the communication between a coach and captain, Athlete 1 said, "I think it's very important [I'm] in communication with him. Let him know if things are going wrong or going well. Make sure that [I] know his plan, what he has in store for the team so [I] can help facilitate that. So we'd have little captains' and coaches' meetings every once in a while, like once a week, [I'd] talk to him after practice, tell him how things are going..."

Similarly, Athlete 2 stated the following when asked about his coach-captain relationship: "Me and the other captain are the first people [the coaches] come to with any news, and it's nice to know before everyone else. Especially when things are going wrong in practice or whatever, they'll come up to us and let us know what needs to work. The good thing about the coaches here is that they listen to us and whatever we have to say. They like feedback from us too."

The coach for Athlete 2 encouraged him verbally as well. When his coaching staff wanted to implement a new offense, they went to him to see if he had any opinions or concerns: "I remember last year when they were thinking about a new offense and everything...they wanted to know from us what people thought about certain offenses that we put it, which is nice...that's the biggest thing with them. That gives me so much more confidence. They give me the green light to call all the plays on the court and the fact that they have all that trust in me just gives me that much more confidence" (Athlete 2). Again, without a good relationship and open communication, it would be difficult for captains to implement the coach's ideas into their leadership behaviors.

Athlete 5 echoed this sentiment when he said, "captains and coaches don't agree on everything, [but] coach is good at explaining his rationale, so even if I disagree with him, I can at least understand why he's making the decision and...relate that information to everyone on the team." Since he has a positive coach-captain relationship, Athlete 5 can be a better leader for his team, thus making his team more effective.

According to Martens and Peterson (1971), one of the ways that coaches develop team cohesion is by developing genuine relationships with the players on their teams, including team captains. Athletes will be more inclined to trust, listen to, and work hard for a leader who cares about them as a person first and player second. Similarly, Black and Weiss (1992) found that coaches who engaged in frequent supportive behaviors and provided constructive feedback during negative performances were associated with swimmers who believed they were capable, skilled, demonstrated excellent effort, and enjoyed their coach experience. In the current study, it was found that captains experienced confidence and sport enjoyment when their coaches showed them support through positive communication and behavior. As previous quotes from the current study exemplify, a harmonious relationship between the coach and his captain yielded satisfied captains, open communication, and better team cohesion. In support of this finding, Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawly (1993) indicated that strong interpersonal relationships between a leader and subordinates allowed group morale and team cohesion to develop amongst teammates. Overall, it appears that being a successful captain includes developing a positive relationship with the coaches.

Common Theme #3: Have Numerous Responsibilities

In the current study, it was determined that NCAA captains had several responsibilities. This theme mirrors Lee, Coburn, and Partridge's (1983) finding that the formal athlete leader, or team captain, assumes a considerable number of responsibilities within the team structure compared to fellow teammates on association soccer teams. In an earlier study, Mosher (1979) established that team captains have three main responsibilities: (a) to act as a liaison between the players and coaches, (b) to act as a leader during all team activities, and (c) to represent the team at receptions, press conferences, and meetings. Based on the themes presented, this study yielded comparable results.

For instance, Athlete 5 mentioned that being a team captain involved "being a bridge between [the] team and the coach. Kind of like an intermediary. There's stuff being said in the locker room that doesn't need to be heard by the coach and [I'm] kind of like the filter between the two sides." For many captains, this is a welcome opportunity; however, Athlete 4 made it a point to speak about how he did not want the added responsibility of being an intermediary between the coach and team. He said the following: "What I don't like, I hope it doesn't fall into the definition of a captain, is someone who is the in-between coach and wrestler. That's the part that gives me a headache and I try to stay out of it."

Similar to what Lee, Coburn, and Partridge (1983) found, Athlete 3 spoke about how the team captain is responsible for speaking at the annual team banquet: "[Being named team captain] is definitely a great responsibility, a great honor, and it's portrayed that way. Every year it's announced at our alumni weekend in front of hundreds of

alumni...the captain then usually gets up and says a couple of words...but it's a big responsibility."

Athlete 4 talked about some of the responsibilities he had on match day: "When it comes up to match time, you know, I go and call the flip in the center of the mat. And if we win, we present first, or we choose when we're going to present." While calling a coin flip might seem mundane in some people's eyes, in this case it is one of the added responsibilities of the captain. This athlete also spoke about the job of keeping long-standing team traditions: "We have a fall mixer with the Women's Lacrosse team every year. It's something that a captain way back decided on. And I have the responsibility to contact the lacrosse girls and get it all organized."

Similar to the current study, Mosher (1979) identified that team captains are responsible for ensuring constant communication between the coaching staff and players, establishing regular team meetings, encouraging teammates, and helping younger players. For example, Athlete 1 talked about some of the duties he was in charge of away from the track: "I'd bring it to the [other] captains that we should have a team meeting and I would do the email. Or if we had orders for like bags or conference t-shirts, I would do the emails, get the names, and get the money collected."

Even though the team captains in this study did not want to be looked at as different from the other athletes on their teams, it is evident that they assumed more responsibilities than their teammates. Responsibilities included coordinating team activities, representing the team during games and team functions, and taking the blame when the team underperformed. Captains embraced the obligations and duties they had

away from practices and competitions. They understand that it came with the title of "NCAA Team Captain" and welcomed the added responsibilities.

Common Theme #4: Provide Leadership

Results from the current study indicate that NCAA captains, in fact, provide leadership for their teammates. Previous research has confirmed the importance of sport leadership (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). According to Chelladurai and Saleh (1980), effective leadership is necessary for athletic teams to perform at their best. Athletes have also reported that they achieve more when led by a fellow teammate (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998; Gould et al., 1987). Additional research has also shown the positive influence that effective leadership has on the success of athletic teams (Horn, 2002).

The team captains interviewed suggested that they provided their teammates with various types of leadership. One factor of effective leadership, from Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) LSS, was *training and instruction.* This factor reflects how a leader is required to improve the performance level of his followers through teaching them the tactics, techniques, and skills needed for them to reach their athletic potential. In other words, captains are required to lead vocally by teaching their teammates the right techniques and telling them the right things to do in athletic situations, as well as lead by example through the right actions and behaviors. In order to effectively lead, captains must consider the teammates involved, type of situation, and stage of competition. Current findings support this factor.

When talking about the right method for effective leadership, Athlete 5 spoke about how there was no "correct" way to lead and how each captain should provide

leadership based on their personal strengths: "I've seen a bunch of captains on this team and everyone has been good in their own way, all very, very different. I don't think there is a mold for a captain out there; there are a whole bunch of different ways to go about it." Additionally, Athlete 3 talked about how he believed that part of his role as a captain was to provide different types of leadership to every teammate: "If you don't like the way things are going, step in, say something and lead by example, but also lead vocally." This finding is similar to what Gold et al. (1987) uncovered when examining athlete-leadership; athletes achieve more when a fellow teammate has the initiative to take a leadership role in a given situation.

One way for captains to provide leadership is through verbal interaction. Captains often feel as though part of their job involves speaking to a teammate about various issues. Vocal leadership could include telling teammates the proper techniques and skills for athletic success, supporting teammates during competition, instructing teammates when coaches are busy working with other players, or describing proper on and off-field behaviors. For example, Athlete 3 spoke about how he enjoyed leading vocally at the beginning of every practice: "And from a vocal aspect, for me, at the beginning of every practice I try to get everyone going, huddle up everyone, get everyone on the same page, and then I let people play, and if something goes wrong or if someone makes a mistake, I'll pull them aside and try to explain to them what's gone wrong."

In some instances, captains provided vocal leadership when they felt like their teammates were demonstrating inadequate behavior. For example, Athlete 2 discussed an incident when he provided vocal leadership to an underclassman who was depressed over his limited playing time: "He hadn't gotten in the past few games and he was down,

during practice, you could tell. I remember during practice, I took him aside and told him that when I was a freshman, there were times when I didn't think that I was going to play and I ended up playing a lot of minutes, so you just always have to be ready. And you could just see, he started practicing harder and you could just tell in his head he thought he was going to play." Similar to Chelladurai and Riemer (1998), the current study found that some players bettered their performances when leaders provided them with some form of positive feedback. In the previous example, the captain endeared himself to his teammate by relating a similar experience that he had as a freshman. Knowing that the successful captain was once in his shoes, the freshman relaxed, started to compete harder, and realized it was just a matter of time before he was going to get his opportunity to play. Without the vocal leadership of his captain, he might not have made the necessary adjustments to become a better player.

Captains also provided their teammates with effective leadership by leading by example. Every athlete interviewed believed that leading by example was one of the primary roles of a captain. While it is important for captains to talk the talk, it is more important for them to walk the walk. Team captains provided a model of behavior for their teammates to emulate. The coaches put their faith and trust in the captains and expected them to behave appropriately. In most instances, if a captain misbehaved, he felt it would give his teammates the excuse to do the same.

Mosher (1979) discovered that team captains are responsible for completing several tasks, including leading by example. He found that team captains generally arrive early for practice, work hard during practice, and lead warm-up sessions. The current study revealed that the captains led by example in many of the same ways. Athlete 1

stated, "You need to lead by example...In practices you're always out in front. Always out leading the warm-ups and doing the drills first. And then when we split off into our individual groups [I'm] leading runs." It seems as though Athlete 1 understood, accepted, and relished the fact that part of his role as an NCAA team captain was to lead his team by example.

Athlete 6 explained that, "... leading by example is one of the biggest things that a captain can do." Athlete 3 said that he "can't demand something from [his teammates] if [he's] not living it." For him to ask a teammate to give his best, he needs to give 100% every day and give his absolute best. He continued to say that his "leadership role on and off the field comes with [being captain]. The way I lead by example is a huge part about [my] leadership."

Athlete 5 felt equally strong about the importance of leading by example. He explained that a captain can be "a guy who is very quiet, who goes about his business, one that teammates look up to and follow and say, 'this guy is working hard, so I will too'". It seems important for captains to remember that they are a model of proper behavior for their teammates. Captain behavior is especially important during times when the team is not performing well. Athlete 5 described the importance of proper behavior during a loss: "If we're down two goals, [guys] will just put their heads down and kind of turn off. But I think what our captains, on our team right now, do very well is even if we're losing, they'll still be on guys, they'll still be the ones working hard trying to set an example and yelling at guys trying to get them to work harder." Mirroring Mosher's (1979) findings on athlete leadership, the team captains interviewed in the current study believed it was part of their role to lead by example.

Common Theme #5: Keep Their Team Focused and Remember to Have Fun

Results from this study indicate that NCAA captains need to make sure their teammates remain focused while maintaining a fun atmosphere. Staying focused included maintaining a positive attitude, keeping things in perspective, reminding teammates to remain "even keeled" during the highs and lows of a season, and reinforcing team goals. Part of having fun is being able to enjoy the captain experience and reminding teammates that their sport is "just a game" (and should be treated accordingly).

NCAA captains keep their teammates focused in a variety of ways. Comparable to previous studies (Ditchfield & Bahr, 1994; Tutko & Richards, 1971), this study found that leaders acquired a wide variety of information on potential opponents that could provide their teams with tactical advantages. In turn, it was part of the captain's responsibilities to keep his teammates focused on the opponent's tendencies and statistical trends. For example, Athlete 2 remarked about one of his roles: "I make sure everyone has their game plan, scouting reports, and they know them. I like to quiz people a lot and make sure they've read it and know what's going on, especially since we get quizzed on it from the coaches. So I like to make sure people are prepared for the game and think about the game." It is clear from this quote how Athlete 2 kept his team focused on the upcoming opponent and got his teammates ready for each game.

In order for captains to help their teammates focus, they may need to individually focus themselves. When Yukelson, Weinberg, Richardson, and Jackson (1983) examined the characteristics of collegiate athletes who were identified as effective leaders, they found that leaders have a greater locus of internal control than their teammates. Being in control includes the ability to focus on what is necessary to complete a given task. This

could indicate that captains attempt to convey this characteristic to their teammates. Consistent with their focus in leading by example, the captains in the current study attempted to remain focused as a way to help their teammates focus.

It is also up to a captain to keep his team focused regardless of score or position in a game or match. Teams can lose focus during competition when the game gets "out of hand." Captains often take it upon themselves to keep their teammates focused. Athlete 6 stated the following when talking about an instance when it looked like his team was easily going to win a meet: "When it gets to that point, I try to make sure they are still focused. It's like, hey, we're still in a meet...We have to make sure we recognize we still have a job to do. We're not out of the woods yet. We're not going home yet, so let's just keep doing what we're doing."

Keeping teammates focused is an important factor for consistent athletic performances. When teams lose sight of their short-term and long-term goals, contentment and satisfaction can set in, resulting in a lackadaisical attitude and halfhearted effort. Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks (2001) said that team leaders should define team goals, in addition to developing the process for teams to accomplish them. One way for captains to do this is to keep their teams properly focused on the goals they have set. Athlete 3 talked about the importance of keeping his teammates focused on the team goals: "You know, obviously we have our long-term goals that we put down...but you don't want to strive too far without building the blocks in between. So we usually go step by step, especially within the season, focusing on the next workout, then the next game. That's more important, it keeps people focused."

While it is part of the captain's role to keep his team focused, it also seems important to keep things fun. Turman (2003) found that teams were more cohesive and players more motivated when leaders kept the atmosphere fun with activities that involved sarcasm and teasing. Results from this study indicate the same. For example, Athlete 1 talked about how he teased and made fun of his coach to get a laugh out of his teammates: "I would joke around, or the coach would be giving a speech and I'd make a funny comment about it and people would laugh. It's really important to have a good time...It's really tough to spend a lot of time doing hard workouts if you're not having fun at it." As such, one could argue that keeping the atmosphere fun is an important part of overall team success.

Athlete 6 also emphasized the importance of keeping things light and having fun. He stressed that swimming was not a job, and while his team attempted to win every meet, they were not swimming in the Olympics. He believed that all of the hard work his teammates put in during practice should result in enjoyment during meets. For instance, he once dedicated The Beatles song, "All You Need is Love" to his teammates. Although other teams questioned why he chose a song not known for motivating athletes, his teammates got a kick out of it. As he explained, "All of the other people are looking at us thinking, what are they doing, this isn't motivation. But that's just how we are, still having fun, still having a good time, but we already know that we've put in the work. As a captain, I feel like you have to remind the guys what we've gone through to get to that point, all the work, and all the fun." Still, he also emphasized the importance of keeping his team focused when he quickly remarked that he "tries to keep guys focused while still letting [his] personality run wild."

Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the common themes that emerged from the interviews with NCAA Division I and III individual and team sport captains. These themes begin to provide an answer to the following research questions: What are the behaviors and responsibilities of NCAA sport captains? The common themes include: (1) develop relationships with teammates, (2) develop relationships with coaches, (3) have numerous responsibilities, (4) provide leadership, and (5) keep their team focused and remember to have fun. All themes were discussed in relation to the current literature on sport and athlete leadership. Findings support previous research, as well and provide additional insight to the behaviors of NCAA individual and team sport captains.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide a qualitative assessment of the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. A semi-structured interview allowed the athletes to describe in detail any thoughts, beliefs, or feelings they had regarding their experiences as NCAA team captains. Specifically, an attempt was made to assess the behaviors of NCAA sport captains.

Summary

Each captain (N=6) was interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. The unique behaviors of three individual (n=3) and three team sport (n=3) NCAA captains were assessed. Although each captain had his own unique experiences, similar behaviors of NCAA captains emerged. Captains attempted to develop relationships with their teammates and coaches, had a variety of responsibilities, provided peer-leadership, kept their teams focused, and remembered to have fun.

Conclusions

A thorough analysis of the data revealed five common themes. Results indicate that NCAA captains (1) develop relationships with teammates, (2) develop relationships with coaches, (3) have numerous responsibilities, (4) provide leadership, and (5) keep their team focused and remember to have fun.

These themes begin to provide insight into the behaviors that shape the leadership characteristics of NCAA sport captains. Considering that leadership has a significant impact on athletic teams and that athlete-leadership has not been examined extensively,

(Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998), it might be beneficial to study each of these themes separately.

For example, captains in the current study indicated that they strive to develop relationships with their coaches. Captains also maintained that part of their role is to provide leadership to their teammates. Previous research has shown genuine relationships among teammates to improve team cohesion, which is a strong contributor to team success (Widmeyer, Carron, & Brawly, 1993). Considering that athletes realize their coaches are there to provide leadership as well, how do NCAA team captains know what type of leadership to provide? Are they cognizant of when they "cross the line" by leading too much? Do they speak to their coaches about how much and what type of leadership they should provide their teammates? By independently investigating each theme, more information is likely to emerge to enhance and further substantiate each theme.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are suggested when further investigating the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. First, it is logical to recommend a replication of the current study. A replication can be used to help expand and understand the aforementioned results. Knowing the behaviors of NCAA sport captains and understanding why leaders exhibit such beliefs and qualities is useful information for college athletes, coaches, and team captains. A replication of the current investigation would be useful in furthering the knowledge about NCAA sport captains.

Second, it would be beneficial to increase the scope of the study to include female captains, Division II captains, and captains from other sports. Exercising a more assorted

population would also allow researchers to further explain the behaviors of NCAA sport captains. With more subjects, it would be possible to more fully examine the applicability and generalizability of the common themes. As stated previously, results cannot be generalized outside of the captains interviewed. Captains should also be interviewed at different points in their season (i.e., off-season, pre-season, post-season) to assess possible behavioral changes. With additional interviews throughout the season, a more detailed and complete account of the athlete's behaviors could be documented.

It might also be valuable to qualitatively interview the coaches and teammates of each NCAA captain in order to understand how their behaviors are perceived by those they are in charge of leading. Research has shown that when an athlete's preferences for a leadership style are in harmony with the actual leadership style, a degree of subordinate approval and performance efficacy emerges (Chelladurai, 1978; Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978; Schliesman, 1987). Therefore, future investigators might want to administer the perceived version of the LSS (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) to the captain's teammates and coaches, as well as the self-perceived version to each captain.

Such methodologies might help to uncover whether NCAA team captains are actually exhibiting the behaviors they believe they are. This study did not evaluate how teammates view their NCAA captain's behaviors. However, it would be interesting to investigate the facet of teammate satisfaction in relation to the incongruity between perception and preference. Comparing the perceived versions of the athletes, coaches, and teammates may provide captains with the opportunity to assess if their leadership beliefs and methods are being interpreted as desired.

Future studies of NCAA team captain's behaviors might include examining the personal and sport history of each team captain. Weiss, Smith, and Theeboom (1996) have shown that there are several interesting aspects of friendship in adolescent athletics. Important areas of emphasis have included intimacy and attractive personal qualities. These dimensions are comparable to the socioemotional leadership behaviors that have emerged in other studies (Glenn & Horn, 1993; Rees, 1983). An athlete's ability to exhibit intimacy and/or attractive personal qualities might be impacted by their immediate or past relationships with parents, teachers, coaches, and teammates. Therefore, knowing how a leader's personal and sport history has molded his or her philosophy on effective leadership, and in turn affected his behaviors, might be a good way to further examine athlete-leadership.

The concept of the interpersonal coach-captain relationship also needs further investigation. While the present study showed that athletes preferred having a genuine relationship with their coaches, it did not address or provide the differences in the various coach-athlete relationships. While it appears that captains are treated by their coaches with respect and genuine care, it is impossible for each coach to act the same with all athletes. A descriptive understanding of the actual relationship between a captain and coach seems to be an important factor in determining the quality of relationship between the two. Since a positive relationship between a leader and follower impacts leader-effectiveness, the quality of the coach-captain relationship must also impact the quality of the captain-teammate relationship. With that stated, the relationship between coaches, captains, and teammates deserves further investigation.

Finally, there should be further research to examine the differences in the behaviors of individual and team sport captains (i.e., sport subtype). In other words, future research should look at what separates individual from team sport captains in terms of their behaviors. Prior research has shown that individual and team sport athletes significantly differ on motivation, competitiveness, and psychological traits (Kamal, Alharoun, Metuzals, & Parsons, 1985; Mahoney, Gabriel, & Perkins, 1987; Zheng, 2003). The findings from the current study slightly mirror previous research. For example, two of the three individual sport captains implied that they did not want to be the intermediary between their coach and teammates. However, all team sport captains identified that role as one of their more important responsibilities. Additionally, future research should compare the behaviors of NCAA team captains across sport divisions. For example, this study showed that Division I sport captains believed that their Division I teammates should be self-motivated. Conversely, Division III athletes indicated that motivating their teammates was part of their responsibility as a captain. Future research should explore these variations in NCAA captain's behaviors.

Although much more research is needed to increase the practical application of the present findings, these results begin to provide insight into the behaviors of NCAA Division I and III individual and team sport captains. NCAA captains, coaches, and sport psychology professionals might continually benefit from this ongoing line of research. A number of recommendations have been made in the hope of adding to this important line of research and to the findings and conclusions presented.

APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT STATEMENT

Hi, my name is Jesse Michel. I am a graduate student in the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. I am investigating the behaviors of NCAA team sport captains in Division I and III athletics. This is part of my Master's Thesis project. I would like to invite you to be one of the subjects in my study. You must be 18 years or older in order to participate in the study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview consisting of questions regarding your experiences as an NCAA captain and about your leadership behaviors. The interview will consist of open-ended questions and will take between 50-60 minutes to complete. The interview will be tape recorded. After you complete the interview, I will transcribe it and allow you to review the transcription to check for accuracy. The only people to have access to the tapes and transcribed interviews will be myself, and my thesis advisors, Dr. Greg A. Shelley and Dr. Noah Gentner. All tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet and the tapes will be destroyed after they are transcribed. Your participation will be kept confidential and your name will not be used at any time during the study. You will be given the opportunity to select a pseudonym which will be used in the study and any subsequent work citing the study results. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me using the information provided below. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I greatly appreciate your help with this project and look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jesse Michel
(818) 632-4017
jmichel1@ithaca.edu

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. Purpose of Study – The purpose of this study is to investigate the behaviors of NCAA sport captains.
2. Benefits of Study – This investigation should enable NCAA sport captains to gain greater knowledge about those factors that influence their leadership behaviors. Information will be collected about athlete's thoughts on leadership and what it means to be a leader on their respective teams. Athletes, coaches, and sport psychology consultants will also likely benefit from the results of this study.
3. What You Will be Asked to Do – You will be asked to participate in an interview asking about your experiences as an NCAA captain, your leadership behaviors, and general thoughts about leadership. In addition, you will be asked about your specific experiences as a leader on your team. The total participation time will be approximately two hours. One hour for the interview and an optional additional hour to view the transcribed interview (30 minutes) and to later review the final data interpretation and results (30 minutes). The interview will be audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Following the transcription, you will have an opportunity to review the written transcription for accuracy and make any changes you deem necessary.
4. Risks – There are no potential risks involved with your participation. You may have some apprehension when answering the interview questions. You may refuse to complete the interview or skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.
5. If You Would Like More Information About the Study – Please feel free to contact the primary investigator, Jesse Michel, at (818) 632-4017.
6. Withdrawal From the Study – You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may omit answers to questions you feel uncomfortable answering.
7. How the Data Will be Maintained in Confidence – Pseudonyms will be used to ensure your anonymity, while maintaining confidentiality. All audiotapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet. All information received (audiotapes and transcripts) will be read only by the researcher and his thesis advisors. After the tapes are transcribed they will be destroyed.

I have read the above and I understand its contents. I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

_____
Print or Type Name

_____ _____
Signature Date

I give my permission to be audiotaped.

_____ _____
Signature Date

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

Demographic Questions

Gender _____ DOB _____ Ethnicity _____

Sport _____ Position _____ Team or Individual Sport _____

Years playing sport _____ Years on current team _____

Years as captain _____

Process appointed captain _____

Captains on your team _____

Interview Statement: I will now be asking you specific questions about being a captain.

Leadership Questions

1. What does it mean to be a captain?
2. What do you think being a captain entails?
3. Please describe a captain to me.
4. What type of relationships do you think a captain has with his teammates?
5. How should a captain behave? (Explain w/ specific examples)
6. I'm going to list a few topics. Please tell me how each relates to your role as a captain:
    - Motivation
    - Team chemistry
    - Team goals
    - Leadership

Team Specific Questions

1. Please tell me what it's like to be a captain on your team.
2. Please describe yourself as a captain
3. I'm going to list a few circumstances. Please tell me about your role as a captain during each of these situations:
    - Day of competition
    - Winning during competition and after a win
    - Losing during competition and after a loss
    - During an important competition
    - After an important competition
4. Please tell me about your relationship with your teammates.
5. Please tell me about your relationship with your coach(es).
6. How would you describe the cohesiveness of your team?
7. What role do you play in your team's cohesion?

Please share anything else about being a captain (i.e., attitudes, behaviors, leadership styles) that you would like to share but have not yet discussed to this point.

APPENDIX D
ATHLETE 1: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.1.1 – captains are positive role model and lead by example

L.1.3 – Captains are positive role models and should be someone teammates can emulate. They motivate teammates through words and actions, and lead by example.

L.1.4 – Captains are consistent performers, take responsibility, have great work ethic and intensity, and are not afraid to speak their mind regarding team issues,

H.1.2 – captains develop mutual respect and genuine friendship with teammates

L.1.2 – Captain perceives his teammates think he is a good leader, motivated, cares about the team, and is a hard worker. Also, has earned the team's respect and the team trusts him.

L.1.6 – Captains have informal, friendly relationships with teammates and genuinely care about their well-being. When speaking with a teammate about an issue, they are never rude

L.1.7- In order to be effective, a captain has to have a mutual respect with his teammates and treat them accordingly when discussing team issues.

H.1.3 – captains have a good relationship with their coach and are the intermediary between the coach and team

L.1.5 – Captains need to have open communication and a good working relationship with their coach. They are the intermediary between the coach and the team and keep the coach informed about team issues.

H.1.4 – has a positive attitude, has fun, and enjoys the captain experience

L.1.8 – Captains need to have a positive outlook regardless of if his team is ahead or behind in a meet or has just won or lost a competition.

L.1.9 – College athletics is a huge commitment and the captain has to keep the atmosphere light and make sure everyone is having fun.

L.1.10 – A captain needs to be dedicated to his sport and his team, embrace the responsibility of the job, and enjoy the experience.

H.1.5 – has a lot of off-field responsibilities

L.1.11- Captains have off-field roles including facilitating team chemistry, organizing team functions, and being a counselor or advisor to teammates who seek out help for non-sport related issues.

APPENDIX E
ATHLETE 2: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.2.1 – captains develop relationships with teammates and have fun while playing

L.2.8 – Team chemistry is developed off the field through good communication and spending quality time together. Close relationships and team chemistry results in team success.

L.2.9 – Team goals are essential for success and voted upon by the whole team.

L.2.3 – Captains have informal friendly relationships with their teammates. They encourage them when necessary and always put their teammates ahead of themselves.

L.2.6 – It is important for captains to remember that the team should enjoy playing and have fun on the court.

H.2.2 – captains lead by example

L.2.1 – Captains should lead by example through words and actions on and off the court.

L.2.4 – Captains should protrude confidence and maintain their emotions. They have great work ethic, stay positive, and love to win.

H.2.3 – captains embrace off-court responsibilities

L.2.5 – Captains embrace the responsibilities that come with the position and are willing to take the blame if their team underperforms.

L.2.7 – Captains responsibilities include motivating their teammates, ensuring they are prepared for each opponent, emphasizing hard work, and keeping teammates calm under pressure.

H.2.4 – are able to effectively communicate with the coaching staff

L.2.2 – Close relationships and open communication with the coaching staff results in increased confidence and team performance.

APPENDIX F
ATHLETE 3: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.3.1 – captains believe being elected team captain is an honor

L.3.1 – Every player on the team understands that being voted team captain is a tremendous honor and the position is treated as such.

H.3.2 – have many off-field responsibilities, must delegate responsibility when necessary, and lead by example

L.3.2 – Captains responsibilities include motivating their team, providing leadership, giving advice and representing their team at all times.

L3.8 – With one captain on a large team, it is essential to delegate responsibility amongst the upperclassmen.

L.3.4 – Captains lead vocally and by example.

H.3.3 – develops good relationships with teammates which can result in on-field success

L.3.5 – Great relationships, communication, and trust are essential components of successful teams.

L.3.6 – Teams should be close-knit, look out for one another, and develop relationships off the field.

H.3.4 – keeps things in perspective and makes sure team is having fun

L.3.7 – Captains need to remember that playing sports should be fun.

L.3.9 – Captains need to keep things in perspective and remember that small goals lead to accomplishing the ultimate team goal.

H.3.5 – uses coaching staff as a role model for effective leadership

L.3.3 – Captains use their coaches as a role model for leadership behavior and through effective communication are intermediaries between the coach and team.

APPENDIX G
ATHLETE 4: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.4.1 – Since wrestling is primarily an individual sport, there are times when a captain has to focus on himself before the team.

L.4.1 – Wrestling is primarily an individual sport but individual performances contribute to team success.

H.4.2 – captains believe being selected captain is an honor

L.4.2 – Being selected captain is an honor and indicates your teammates respect and trust you to do things the right way.

H.4.3 – captains should practice what they preach and balance all aspects of their lives

L.4.3 – Captains should use the laissez-faire leadership style, be someone their teammates can look up to and lead by example.

L.4.4 – Captains should be responsible, practice what they preach, and keep a positive attitude.

L.4.7 – In order for captains to be effective, they should maintain a balance between their sport and the rest of their lives.

L.4.8 – Captains are hard-workers who love to compete.

H.4.4 – establishes equal relationships with each teammate

L.4.5 – Captains are no more important that the rest of their team and should not get special treatment from teammates.

L.4.11 – Coaches have mutual respect and expectations for their captains.

L.4.12 – Captains should know their teammates on a personal level and keep teammates informed.

H.4.5 – has several off-mat responsibilities

L.4.6 – Captains have numerous sport-unrelated responsibilities.

L.4.9 – Team unity develops naturally.

L.4.10 – Captains reinforce team goals and keep things in perspective.

APPENDIX H
ATHLETE 5: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.5.1 – captains lead by example and are role models for teammates

L.5.3 – Captains are leaders on and off the field.

L.5.5 – Captains can lead vocally or through action but always lead according to their strengths.

H.5.2 – effectively communicate with coaches and teammates

L.5.6 – Captains are able to speak effectively with everyone on the team because they have earned their teammates respect.

L.5.7- Captains are friends with their teammates and provide advice when needed.

H.5.3 – Injuries negatively affect a captain's credibility

L.5.2 – Injuries can affect a player's credibility and impact as a captain.

H.5.4 – Off-field team activities facilitate cohesion which can lead to on-field success

L.5.10 – Off-field activities can bring a team together and the resulting team cohesion translates to on-field success.

H.5.5 – develops good relationship with coaches and is an intermediary between the staff and team

L.5.4 – Captains have good rapport with the coaches and act like a bridge between the staff and team.

APPENDIX I
ATHLETE 6: HIGHER-ORDER THEMES

H.6.1 – Swimming is an individual sport, but a captain cares about the team's results

L.6.1 – Swimming is an individual and team sport.

L.6.8 – Racing a teammate is just like racing any other opponent.

H.6.2 – captains are positive role models and lead by example

L.6.3 – Captains should lead by example.

L.6.4 – Captains have many positive qualities and characteristics.

H.6.3 – does not lead with authoritarian style

L.6.5 – Captains aren't disciplinarians.

H.6.4 – captains know their teammates well enough to speak with them about any issue

L.6.6 – Captains use their experience to provide teammates with support.

L.6.7 – Captains should know their teammates on personal level and maintain open communication throughout their tenure.

H.6.5 – keep team focused on overall goals and having fun

L.6.9 – Every team has a different dynamic that makes them successful. Team chemistry does not have an effect on team success level.

L.6.10 – It's important to trust the hard work that goes in to each competition and remember to have fun.

L.6.11 – Teams should have attainable goals and captains keep teams focused on their goals.

H.6.6 – captains believe being captain is an honor

L.6.2 – Being the captain of the swimming and diving team is a great honor.

H.6.7 – Ineffective communication between a captain and coach negatively affects the captain's leadership ability

L.6.12 – Captains cannot do their jobs effectively if they do not get along with the coaching staff.

APPENDIX J
OVERALL COMMON THEMES

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEAMMATES

H.1.2 – captains develop mutual respect and genuine friendship with teammates
H.2.1 – captains develop relationships with teammates and have fun while playing
H.3.3 – develops good relationships with his teammates which can result in on-field success
H.4.4 – establishes equal relationships with each teammate
H.5.2 – effectively communicate with coaches and teammates
H.5.4 – Off-field team activities facilitate cohesion which can lead to on-field success
H.6.4 – captains know their teammates well enough to speak with them about any issue

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH COACHES

H.1.3 – captains have a good relationship with their coach and are the intermediary between the coach and team
H.2.4 – are able to effectively communicate with the coaching staff
H.3.5 – uses coaching staff as a role model for effective leadership
H.5.2 – effectively communicate with coaches and teammates
H.5.5 – develops good relationship with coaches and is an intermediary between the staff and team
H.6.7 – Ineffective communication between a captain and coach negatively affects the captain's leadership ability

HAVE NUMEROUS RESPONSIBILITIES

H.1.5 – has a lot of off-field responsibilities
H.2.3 – captains embrace off-court responsibilities
H.3.2 – have many off-field responsibilities, must delegate responsibility when necessary, and leads by example
H.4.5 – has several off-mat responsibilities

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP

H.1.1 – captains are positive role model and lead by example
H.2.2 – captains lead by example
H.5.1 – captains lead by example and are role models for teammates
H.6.2 – captains are positive role models and lead by example

KEEP THEIR TEAM FOCUSED AND REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN

H.1.4 – has a positive attitude, has fun, and enjoys the captain experience
H.2.1 – captains develop relationships with teammates and have fun while playing
H.3.4 – keeps things in perspective and makes sure team is having fun
H.6.5 – keep the team focused on overall goals and having fun

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