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Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

FALL 2011

www.tuckercenter.org

Join us on
November 2
for the Girls &
Women in Sport
and Physical
Activity 2011
Conference:
Creating Change

Register now!

Tucker Center to Host Conference on Girls & Women in Sport

In the nearly 40 years since Title IX was made law, significant changes and positive outcomes for girls and women in physical activity contexts are clearly evident, yet disparities and inequalities still exist in many key areas. On the eve of the 40th anniversary of Title IX and to capitalize on the North American Society of Sport Sociology's (NASSS) annual meeting November 3-6 in Minneapolis, the Tucker Center is hosting a pre-conference focused solely on girls and women in sport. **The Girls & Women in Sport and Physical Activity 2011 Conference: Creating Change** will be held Wednesday, November 2 on the University of Minnesota campus in the TCF Bank Stadium.

This fast-paced, accessible, community-building, collaborative event will bring scholars, practitioners, advocates, and leaders of women's sport from across disciplines together for one day to discuss a variety of issues around inequality, including the lack of power; inclusion/exclusion; health disparities; and media portrayals of female athletes. Some features of the conference include interactive "ChimeIn" participant response technology, invited keynote scholars, a Creating Change photo booth, poster sessions, three accepted paper sessions with expert respondents, and a lunch session panel of leaders in women's sport [see tuckercenter.org/conference for more detail]. The interactive poster session featuring over 40 research and programmatic projects

from around the globe will launch the conference and provide an opportunity for participants to meet colleagues and engage in discussing the latest discoveries and ideas throughout the conference and beyond.



Don Sabo

Opening Keynote. Don Sabo, Professor of Health Policy & Health Education at D'Youville College in Buffalo, NY, will give the opening keynote, "**From Exclusion to Leadership: What History and Research Tell Us About Women's Continuing Achievements in Sports.**" Professor Sabo is considered one of the most important empirical researchers in the United States on girls and women in sport, especially as related to youth sports, gendered participation opportunities, and family and health correlates. Professor Sabo is author or editor of eight books, numerous peer-reviewed articles, and several ground-breaking research reports including: *The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women's Leadership* (2009); *Go Out and Play: Youth Sports in America* (2008); and *Physical Activity and Sport in the Lives of Girls* (1997). In addition to his scholarship, he founded and directs the Center "**Conference**" continued on page 2

Letter from the Director



Nicole M. LaVoi

Fall greetings to everyone from the Tucker Center! As the Associate Director of the TC, I have the honor of writing the Director's Letter this fall, as TC Director **Mary Jo Kane** is on sabbatical for the 2011-12 academic year. Her sabbatical follows six years of service as the Director of the School of Kinesiology. This summer Kane was invited to write a column on female athlete portrayals in sport media for *The Nation's* special sports issue. Read about her column in **Research Updates** on page 2. You'll also want to read about our numerous scholarly activities in the Kudos & Announcements section on page 3.

In the coming months, we are proud to host many exciting events related to girls and women in sport. In October, "**Concussions and Female Athletes,**" a ground-breaking documentary on the untold story of the impact of concussion on female athletes produced by Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) Minnesota Channel will premiere (see page 3). On November 2, in lieu of our Fall Distinguished Lecture, we are hosting the **2011 Girls & Women in Sport and Physical Activity: Creating Change Conference** at the TCF Bank Stadium DQ Room. Our feature story beginning on this page outlines all the details of the conference, from the opening keynote by influential women's sport scholar **Don Sabo** to the closing keynote panel by a trio of internationally recognized sport media scholars: **Margaret Carlisle Duncan, Mary Jo Kane, and Michael Messner.** You won't want to miss this exciting conference! In addition, mark your calendars now—in February 2012 we are hosting the second annual **Tucker Center Film Festival.** Details and film submission information are on page 3.

In addition to planning and delivering groundbreaking events, we are continually asked to share our opinions and expertise, to take part in national conversations, and to lead educational workshops on cutting-edge issues related to maintaining and advancing the involvement of girls and women in sport and physical activity. To keep up to date on all the work we do at the Tucker Center and for more information about our events and how to keep connected with us via social media, see page 2 and visit our Web page at www.tuckercenter.org.

—Nicole M. LaVoi, Ph.D. (Twitter: @DrSportPsych)



Research Update: TC Director Kane's sport media research featured in *The Nation*

In July, *The Nation* magazine devoted a special issue—"Views from Left Field"—to the role and impact of sports in U.S. culture. In the wake of Title IX a significant part of that sport culture now includes females. To illuminate an important issue pertaining to female athletes, TC Director and Professor Mary Jo Kane was invited by editors at *The Nation* to address how and why sportswomen are covered in mainstream sport media. A central focus of Kane's article was whether a "sex sells" strategy is the most effective way to increase interest in and respect for today's female athletes.

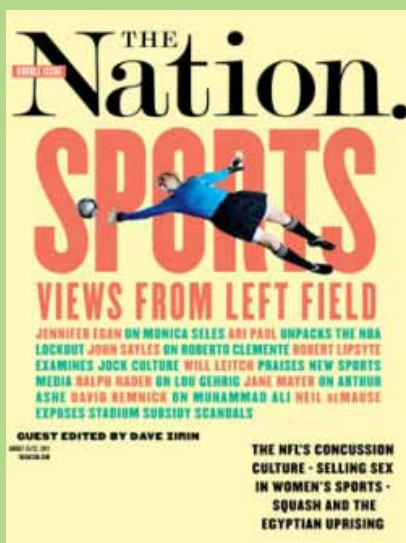
This question is better answered within a broader context of what sport media scholarship has revealed. Over the past four decades, scholars have examined media coverage of women's sports and discovered two patterns of representation. First, female athletes, compared to their male counterparts, are significantly underrepresented in terms of amount of coverage, where they receive only 2-4% of all sports reporting. This lack of media attention ignores the reality of women's overall level of involvement: They represent 40 percent of all sport participants nationwide and approximately half of all those involved in intercollegiate athletics. The second pattern is that athletic females are routinely presented in ways that emphasize their femininity and heterosexuality versus their athletic competence and grace-under-pressure performance.

Trends related to amount and type of coverage have been remarkably resilient and universal. They can be found in print and broadcast journalism, at different levels of athletic involvement (Olympic, college, and professional sports), and regardless of time period with respect to Title IX. In sum, sport media routinely highlight the athletic exploits of males as opposed to the physical—and sexualized—appearance of females.

A major consequence of such media coverage is to maintain women's status as second-class citizens in one of the most powerful social, political, and economic institutions on this planet. One premise of sport media scholarship is that media play a significant role in relegating sportswomen to the sidelines because they systematically underreport and trivialize women's athletic achievements. Scholars have investigated why these particular patterns of representation dominate media coverage—not to mention marketing techniques—surrounding women's sports. A commonly held belief among those who cover and promote women's sports is that the most effective way to generate fan interest is to present sportswomen in ways that reaffirm conventional notions of femininity and heterosexuality. This taken-for-granted assumption explains the desire to portray sportswomen as traditionally feminine rather than as physically powerful. It also explains why, when athletic females appear in ads as product endorsers, they often do so in sexually provocative poses.

In spite of such deep-seated beliefs and practices, there is virtually no research to support the effectiveness of such a "sex sells" approach to the coverage and promotion of women's sports. To fill this void, Kane and colleague Dr. Heather Maxwell conducted a ground-breaking study in which they examined the widely held notion that "sex sells" women's sports. Key findings from this study, Kane's broader critique of how (and why) sportswomen are represented in both image and narrative form, and evidence for what does sell women's sport, can be found in *The Nation's* special issue [www.thenation.com/article/162390/sex-sells-sex-not-womens-sports]. Additionally, a slide show of exemplar images of the six categories of how female athletes are portrayed in sport media—from athletic competence to soft porn—can be viewed on our Web site.

The key takeaway from Kane's research and her primary argument?—*Sex sells sex, not women's sports.*



... "Conference" cont'd from page 1

for Research on Physical Activity, Sport & Health and is currently a Senior Health Policy Advisor of the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) where he also served as Research Director. In 2009 Sabo was bestowed the



American Association of Physical Education, Health, Recreation and Dance (AAPEHRD) Scholar of the Year Award, and in 2010 the WSF honored him with the Darlene Kluka Women's Sports and Physical Activity Research Award.

Sabo's keynote will assert that women's interest and participation in sport are undergoing a major transformation in western societies. Gender and sex segregation no longer exclude women from sport, and the traditional equation, "sport = masculinity," is losing its cultural primacy. He will argue that not only is sport changing girls and women, but girls and women



are also transforming sport. In this wider context, Professor Sabo will discuss an array of evidence-based research that documents the links between athletic participation and the physical and emotional health of girls and women. He will suggest that aspects of the fitness revolution, women's athletic achievements, and the erosion of traditional gender beliefs are giving rise to a new policy vision for sport as a public health asset rather than a social hierarchy that promotes winning at all costs and male dominance. Professor Sabo will also point to women's sports advocates, researchers from a wide array of disciplines, and women athletes who are playing key leadership roles in helping to create change.

Alliance of Women Coaches

Lunch Session Keynote Panel: Many groups and individuals are doing exceptional work to create change for girls and women in sport. We have invited

a remarkable group of leaders in women's sport to discuss key initiatives of their respective groups or research centers. The panelists for the "Groups Creating Change for Girls & Women in Sport" include Karin Lofstrom, Executive Director of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS); Kathy Babiak, Director of the newly developed joint venture of the University of Michigan and the Women's Sports Foundation; the Sports, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center for Women and Girls



(SHARP); Lynda Ransdell, President of the National Association of Girls & Women in Sport (NAGWS); Nicole M. LaVoi, Associate Director of the University of Minnesota's Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport; Chris Shelton, representing the International Working Group for Women in Sport (IWG) and Women Sport International (WSI); and Celia Slater and Judy Sweet, Co-Directors of the Alliance of Women Coaches. The most current and cutting-edge information about women's sport and social change will be discussed in this information-packed session!

The conference also will include three research presentation sessions by scholars from around the world. Themes of the sessions include: females



in positions of power; inclusion/exclusion; and sport media. Not the typical conference presentation format, these sessions will be short, concise, and focused on creating lively discussion. An expert respondent will draw out key take-away messages and the audience will have the ability to "chime in" via real-time, audience response technology or to participate in the Q&A that will conclude each session.

"Conference" cont'd on back page

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE TUCKER CENTER!

There are several ways you can keep up to date with the most recent events and news from the Tucker Center. For starters, the Tucker Center's Web site is our online hub. Everything from current research to staff contacts can be found at:

www.tuckercenter.org

The Tucker Center also maintains a presence on Wordpress, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and via RSS:

- **Wordpress Blog:** tuckercenter.wordpress.org
- **Facebook:** z.umn.edu/tcfacebook
- **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/tuckercenter
- **YouTube:** www.youtube.com/tuckercenter
- **RSS Feed:** z.umn.edu/TCRSS

We hope you'll take advantage of all the ways we are sharing information!



Tucker Center collaborates with TPT to produce ground-breaking documentary “Concussions and Female Athletes”

The topic of our 2011 spring Distinguished Lecture concentrated on the impact of concussions on female athletes. We recognized that in spite of considerable scholarly inquiry, media coverage, and public debate, female athletes were largely missing from discussion. In tackling this topic, we wanted to expand dialogue, increase awareness, promote prevention, and ensure that future concussion research included female athletes.

As a direct result of our lecture, Twin Cities Public Television Minnesota Channel (TPT), in partnership with the Tucker Center, has produced a one-hour ground-breaking documentary. “Concussions and Female Athletes” is the untold story of the impact of concussion on female athletes. The premiere will be **aired Sunday, October 16, 2011 at 8:00 p.m.** and includes interviews with athletes and their parents, referees, coaches,



scholars, and policy makers. In particular we want to acknowledge the support we received from President Emeritus Robert H. Bruininks, who was instrumental in making this partnership with TPT a reality. A “second premiere” on the tptLIFE channel will air Sunday, October 23 at noon. The documentary will also run on The Big Ten Network and be available to view for free on our Web site.

Recently, numerous other positive awareness and prevention outcomes have occurred as a result of ongoing concussion dialogue. For example, this summer Minnesota joined 20 other states that have passed concussion legislation to protect youth athletes, and Dick’s Sporting Goods has created Protecting Athletes through Concussion Education (PACE). The PACE initiative is available free of charge to schools and assists in determining if an athlete is ready to return to play after suffering a concussion.

We hope concussion initiatives and our documentary help ensure that all youth athletes have a safe sport experience, thereby having the opportunity to accrue the many positive developmental benefits sports participation can provide.

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honors & Awards

- **Ayanna Franklin**, a sport & exercise psychology doctoral student, was awarded the Dorothy McNeill Tucker Fellowship for 2011-12. In her research, Franklin examines the psychological responses of athletes to sport injury, and her doctoral dissertation will examine the role of personality in athletes’ sport injury responses and rehabilitation adherence. She is advised by Professor **Diane Wiese-Bjornstal**, TC Affiliated Scholar.
- In June, **Lindsay Kipp**, a sport & exercise psychology doctoral student, was awarded a competitive research grant from the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA). The grant will help support her research titled, “Social Influences and Psychological and Physical Well-Being of Female Adolescents.” She is advised by Professor **Maureen Weiss**.
- In September, **Alyssa Norris**, former sport & exercise psychology M.A. student, was presented the prestigious Student Diversity Award from the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) at the annual meeting in Honolulu, HI. Norris, advised by TC Associate Director **Nicole M. LaVoi**, graduated this past spring and has started a doctoral program in clinical psychology at Washington State University.
- **Emily Houghton**, sport sociology doctoral student, was awarded a fellowship for 2011-12 from the Edith Mueller Endowed Fund for Graduate Education in the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. She will use the award to support her collaborative research project, “(In)visible Pioneers: Exploring the Experiences of African American Female Athletes During the Civil Rights Era.” Houghton is advised by Professor **Mary Jo Kane**, TC Director.

Scholarly Activities

- TC Affiliated Scholar **Kent Kaiser**, Northwestern College, published in the September issue of *International Journal of Sport Communication*. His article is titled, “Gender Dynamics in Producing News on Equality in Sports: A Dual Longitudinal Study of Title IX Reporting by Journalist Gender.”
- TC Affiliated Scholars **Daheia Barr-Anderson** and **Maria J. Camacho-Miñano**, and **LaVoi**, published a paper in the June issue of *Health Education Research* titled, “Interventions to Promote Physical Activity Among Young and Adolescent Girls: A Systematic Review.”

Presentations

- TC Research Assistants **Julia Dutove** and **Maya Hamilton** gave a keynote, “Females in Positions of Power in Sport,” at the annual U of M Women’s Physical Education Alumnae Association breakfast in September.
- **LaVoi** will give two invited keynote presentations this fall. October 20-22 she will share “Evidenced Based Practices of Developing Physically Active Girls” with participants at the First National Conference on Girls and Women in Sport and Physical Activity held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In November, she will give a keynote, “Sexy Babes, Silence & Social Media: Female Athletes and Sport Media Research,” to the Western Society for Physical Education of College Women in Cambria, CA.
- **Kaiser** presented a paper, “Conflict Frames, Media Bias, and Power Distribution: Title IX as a Longitudinal Social-Movement Case,” in August at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention, St. Louis, MO.

2012 TUCKER CENTER FILM FESTIVAL



Back by popular demand! Mark your calendars for the second annual **Tucker Center Film Festival (TCFF)** to be held the first week of February, 2012. The TCFF was created to honor and increase the visibility of female athletes, and runs in conjunction with the annual celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Film submission is open until November 1, 2011. For more information or to submit your film for consideration, contact Austin Stair Calhoun (stair@umn.edu).

FALL 2011 CONFERENCE

THE GIRLS & WOMEN IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 2011 CONFERENCE: CREATING CHANGE

Wednesday, November 2, 2011 • 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

TCF Bank Stadium, DQ Room

University of Minnesota, East Bank Campus



Margaret Carlisle Duncan



Mary Jo Kane



Michael A. Messner



Cheryl Cooky

... "Conference" cont'd from page 2

Closing Keynote Panel

"A Great Conversation with Sport Media Scholars" will feature three seminal scholars who have shaped the landscape of sport media scholarly inquiry. Panelists will discuss a number of current issues, including insights into the persistent patterns of underrepresentation of female athletes in sport media in terms of amount of coverage and continued emphasis of femininity and heterosexuality over athletic competence. This accessible conversation will be a unique opportunity to hear first-hand how seasoned researchers conceptualize decades of research, discuss personal and professional experiences, reflect on outcomes and impact of their research, reveal future directions, and illuminate remaining gaps in sport media research. Moderated by a rising star in sport media research, this distinctive conversation promises to be captivating!

About the Panelists

Margaret Carlisle Duncan is Professor Emeritus of the Department of Human Movement Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Professor Duncan has examined portrayals of female athletes and women's sports in the media, as well as media depictions of women's bodies and body practices. She has co-authored four sport media studies commissioned by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles (now called LA84). She is a former president of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), and is a Fellow of the National Academy of

Kinesiology—the highest academic honor in her field.

Mary Jo Kane is a Professor and Director of the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota. Professor Kane is an internationally recognized scholar who has published extensively on media representations of athletic females and is also considered one of the nation's leading experts on the social and political implications of Title IX. She is a Fellow in the National Academy of Kinesiology, and in 2004 received the Scholar of the Year Award from the Women's Sports Foundation. This award is given to individuals who make significant research contributions in the areas of women's sports and physical activity. In 2007, she was named one of the 100 Most Influential Sports Educators by the Institute for International Sport.

Michael A. Messner is a Professor of Sociology & Gender Studies at the University of Southern California. Professor Messner examines the social construction of gender in sport and has published several studies on gender and televised sports. He is author or editor of 11 books, and two-time winner of the NASSS book award for *Taking the Field: Women, Men and Sports* (2002) and *It's All for the Kids: Gender, Families and Youth Sports* (2009). He is a past President of NASSS and has served as a consultant to the California Women's Law Center relative to his work on Title IX. In 2007, he was named one of the 100 Most Influential Sports Educators by the Institute for International Sport.

About the Moderator

Cheryl Cooky is an Assistant Professor with a joint appointment in Health & Kinesiology and Women's Studies at Purdue University. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Gender Studies from the University of Southern California. Her research focuses on gender and sport participation and gender in sports media coverage. She has published in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *Sociological Perspectives*, and the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, as well as in several edited books and anthologies. Cooky is the co-author (along with Michael Messner) of the report, *Gender in Televised Sport: News and Highlight Shows: 1989-2009*, which has been downloaded over 3500 times in 48 states and 68 different countries. A rising star in sport sociology, in 2008 she was awarded the Dorothy Harris Women's Sports Foundation Dissertation Scholarship.

For the full conference program, list of accepted papers and posters, registration, hotel and travel, detailed schedule, and additional information about the conference, visit our Web site at www.tuckercenter.org. This event will not be streamed live on the Web. To keep apprised, follow the Twitter hashtag #GWSC2011! and @TuckerCenter tweets during the conference. We have many registration options to make it easy for you to join and be part of creating change for girls and women in sport. See you in November!



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