



Coaching Youth Soccer as a Token Female

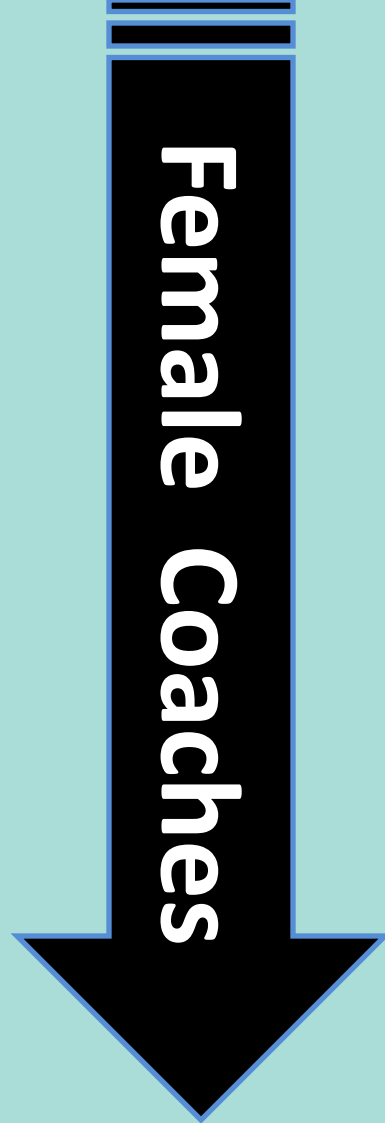
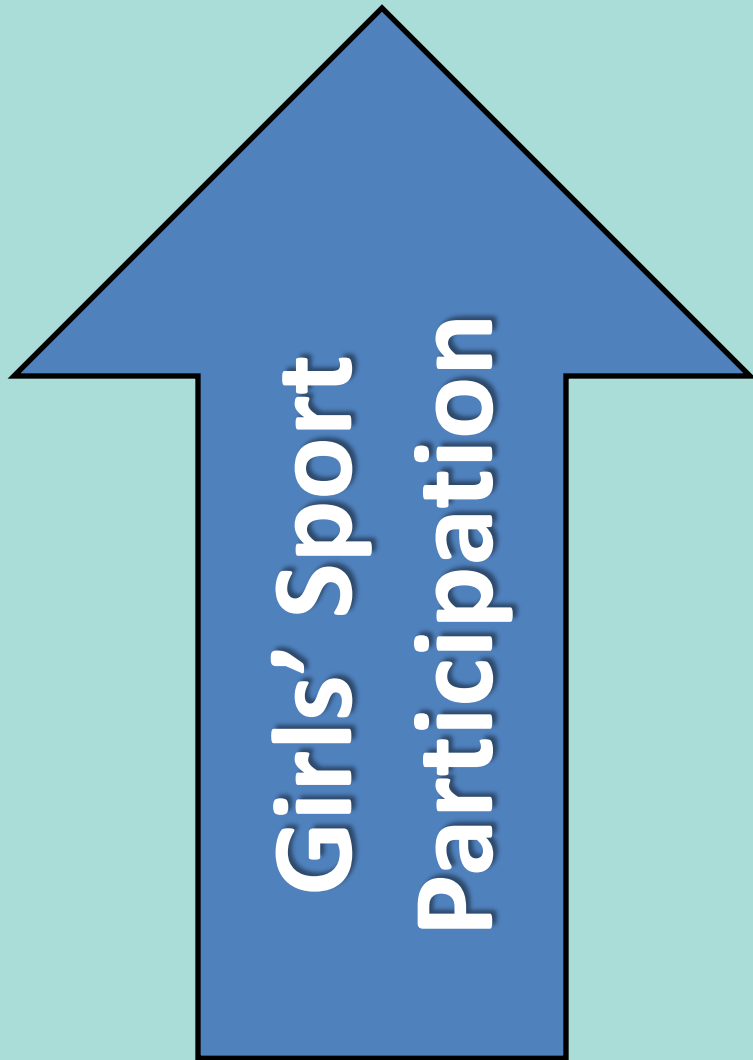
Nicole M. LaVoi, Ph.D.

Erin Becker, M.A.



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

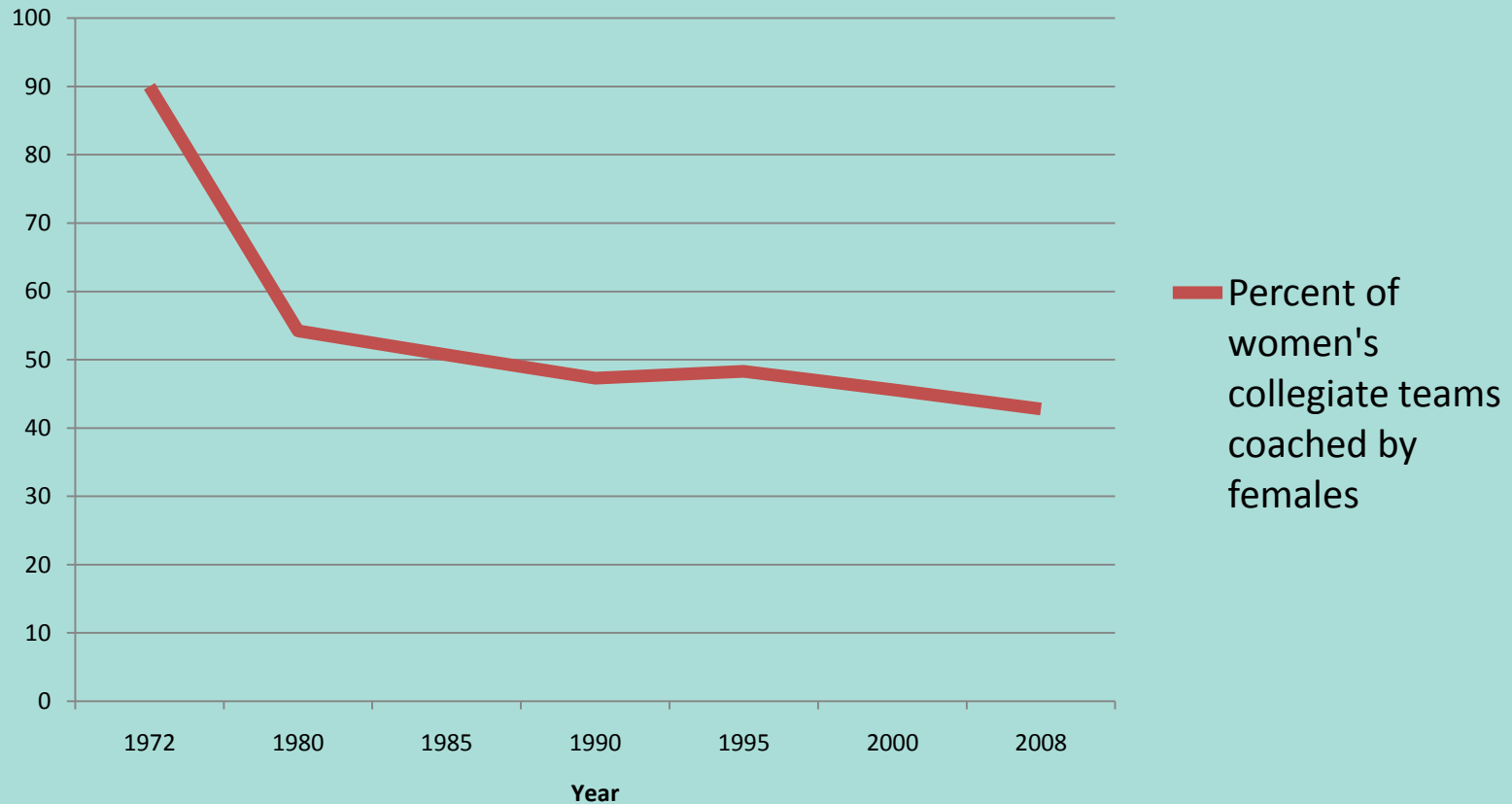
ALL-TIME HIGH



ALL-TIME LOW



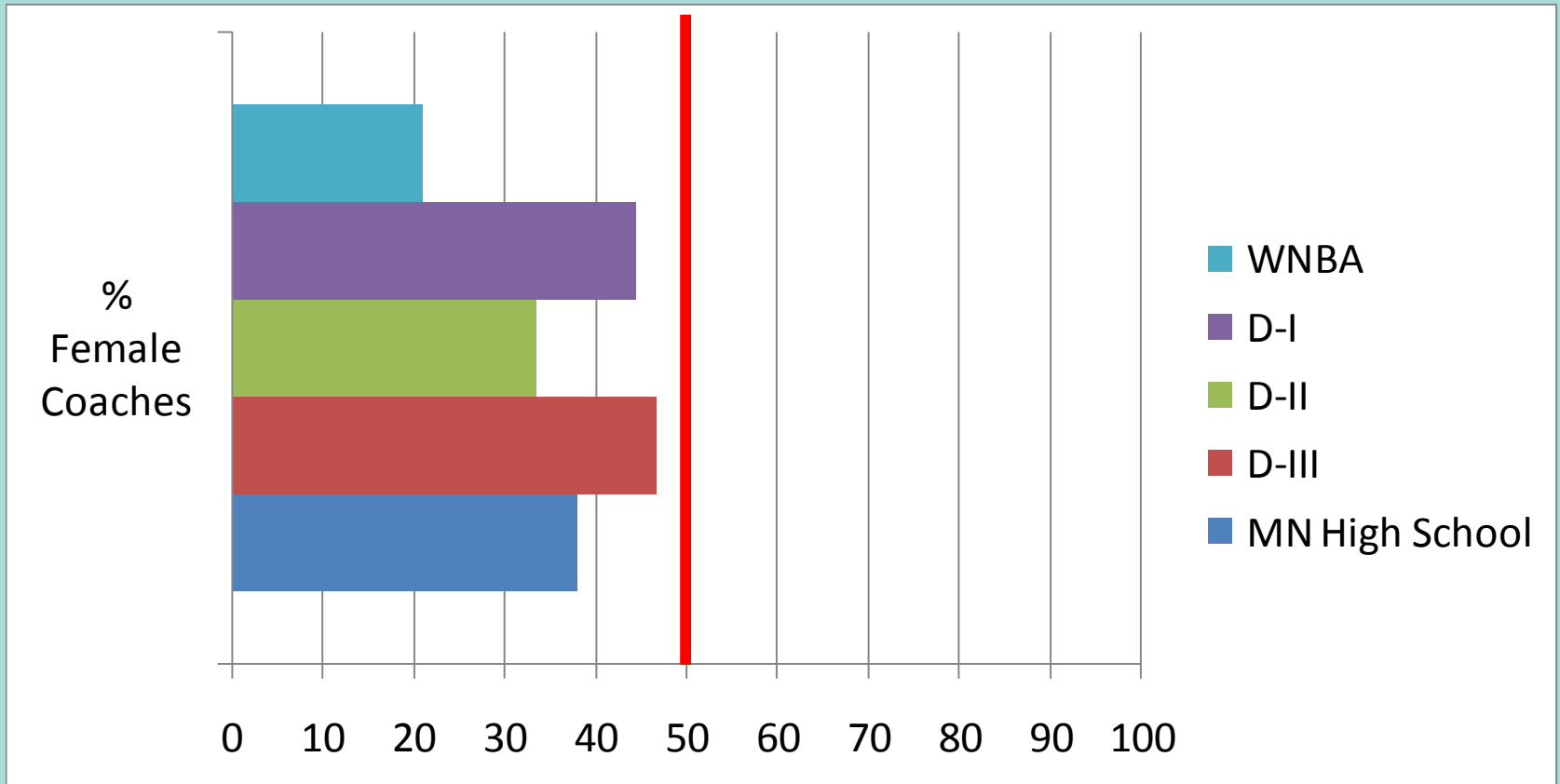
Percent of women's collegiate teams coached by females



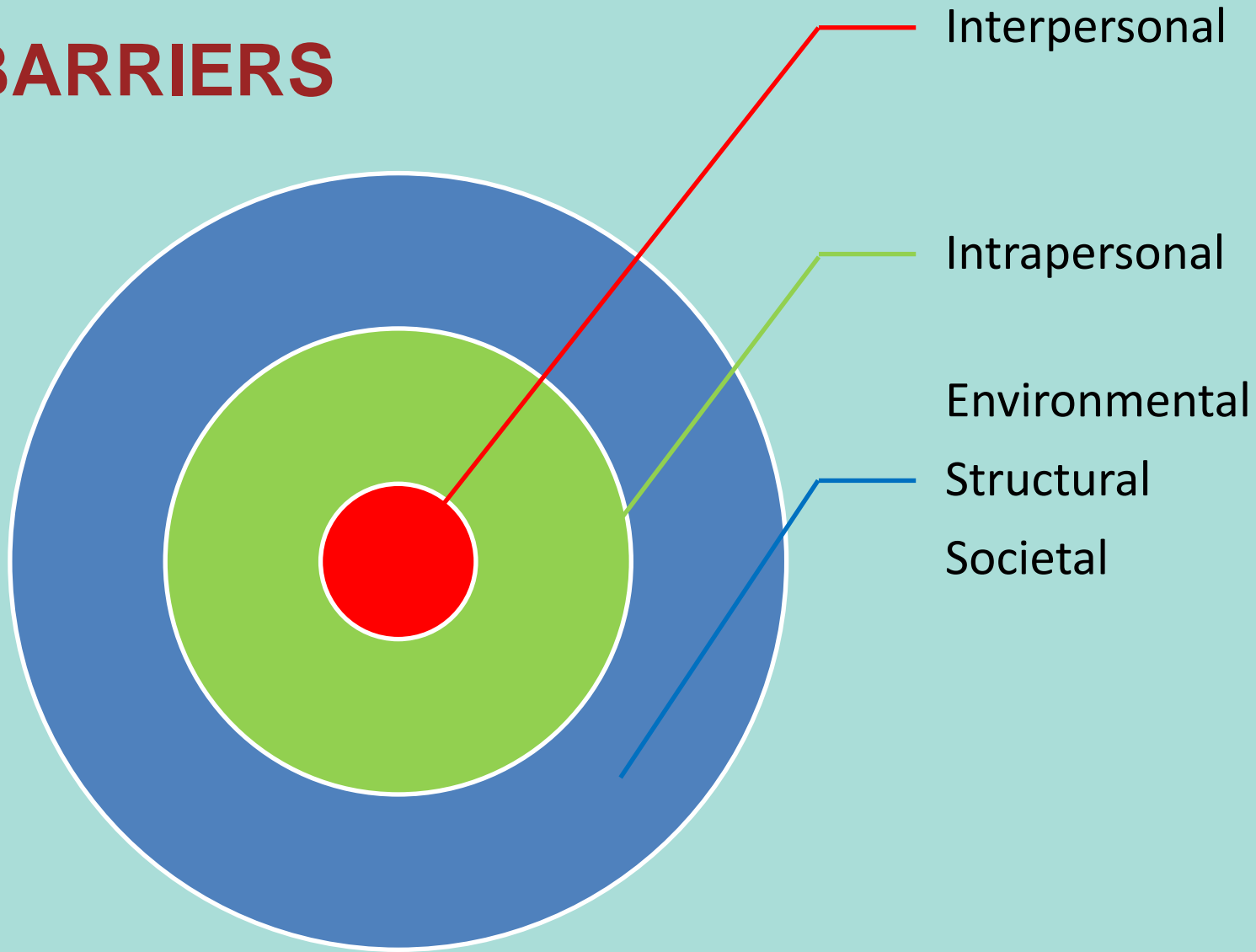
(Acosta & Carpenter, 2008)



% of Female Head Coaches of Female Athletes by Level of Competition (2008)



BARRIERS



Why Does it Matter?

- **Girls need female role models**
- **Challenge (and change) gender stereotypes**
- **Female coaches experience discrimination and sexism**

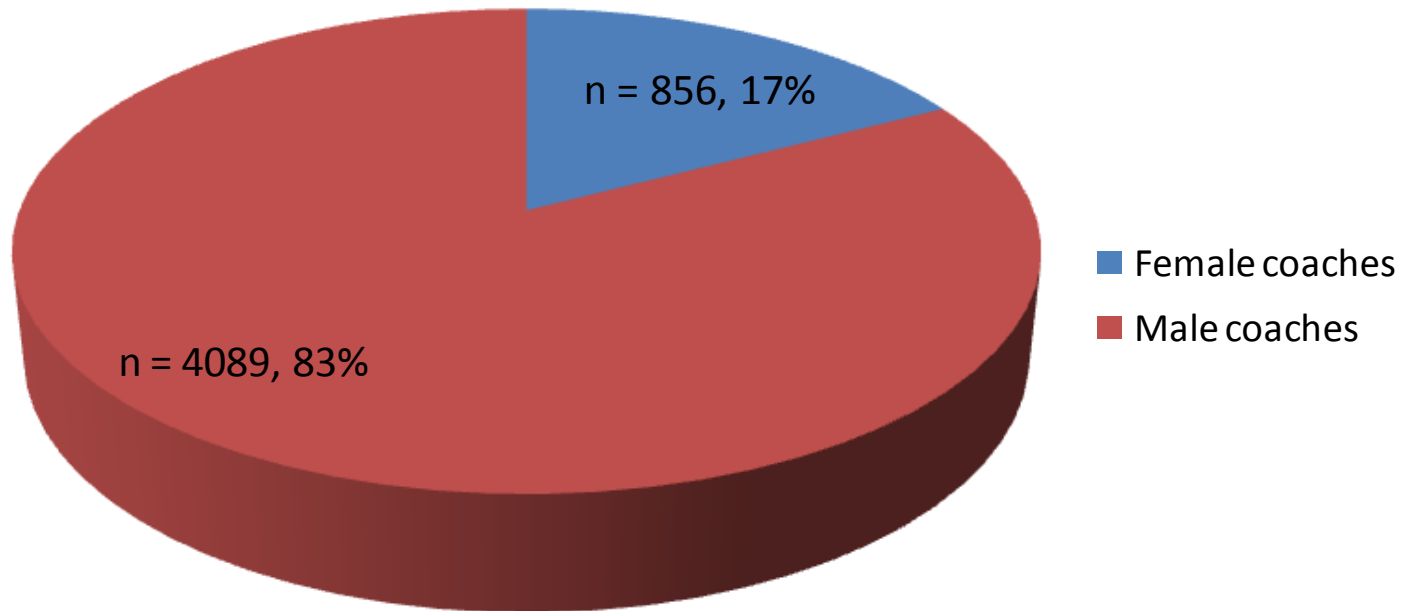


Tucker Center Research on Female Soccer Coaches



2007-08 MSHSCA head coaches by sex (n = 4945)

Number and % of high school head coaches by sex



Highest and lowest % of female head coaches for girls' teams in MSHSL sports

Top three sports with the highest % of female head coaches

Synchronized Swimming:

100% (n =17/17)

Girls' Track:

60% (n =36/60)

Girls' Cross Country:

51.1% (n= 23/45)

Bottom three sports with the lowest % of female head coaches

Girls' Basketball:

13.7% (n=90/656)

Girls' Softball:

20.9% (n =90/430)

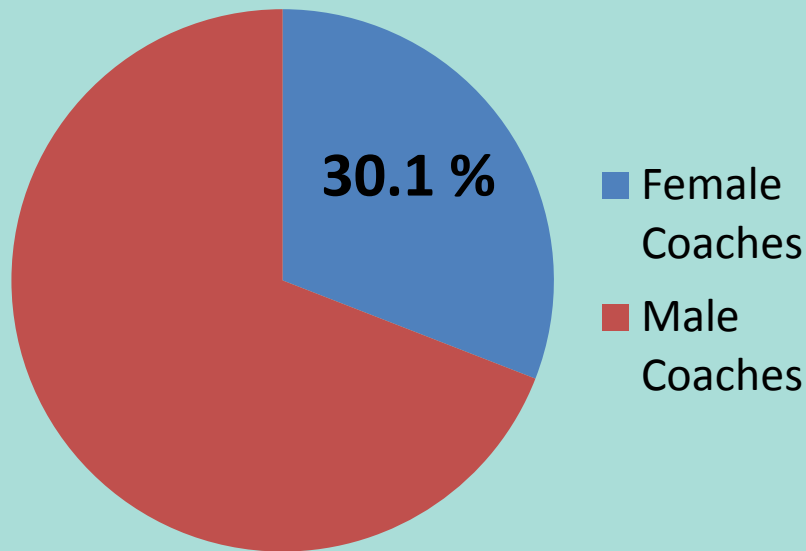
Girls' Soccer:

30.1% (n = 60/194)

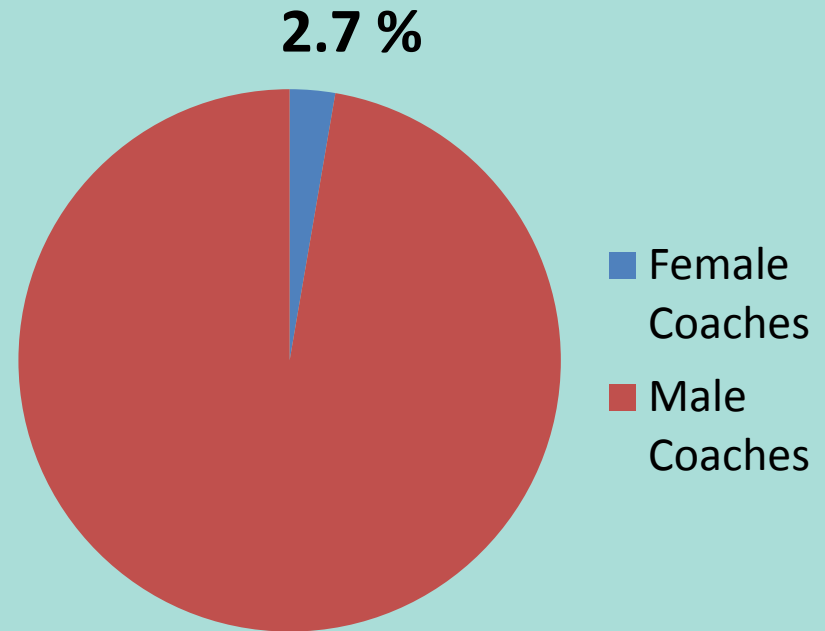


% Female High School Soccer Coaches in Minnesota (2007-08)

Girls' Teams



Boys' Teams

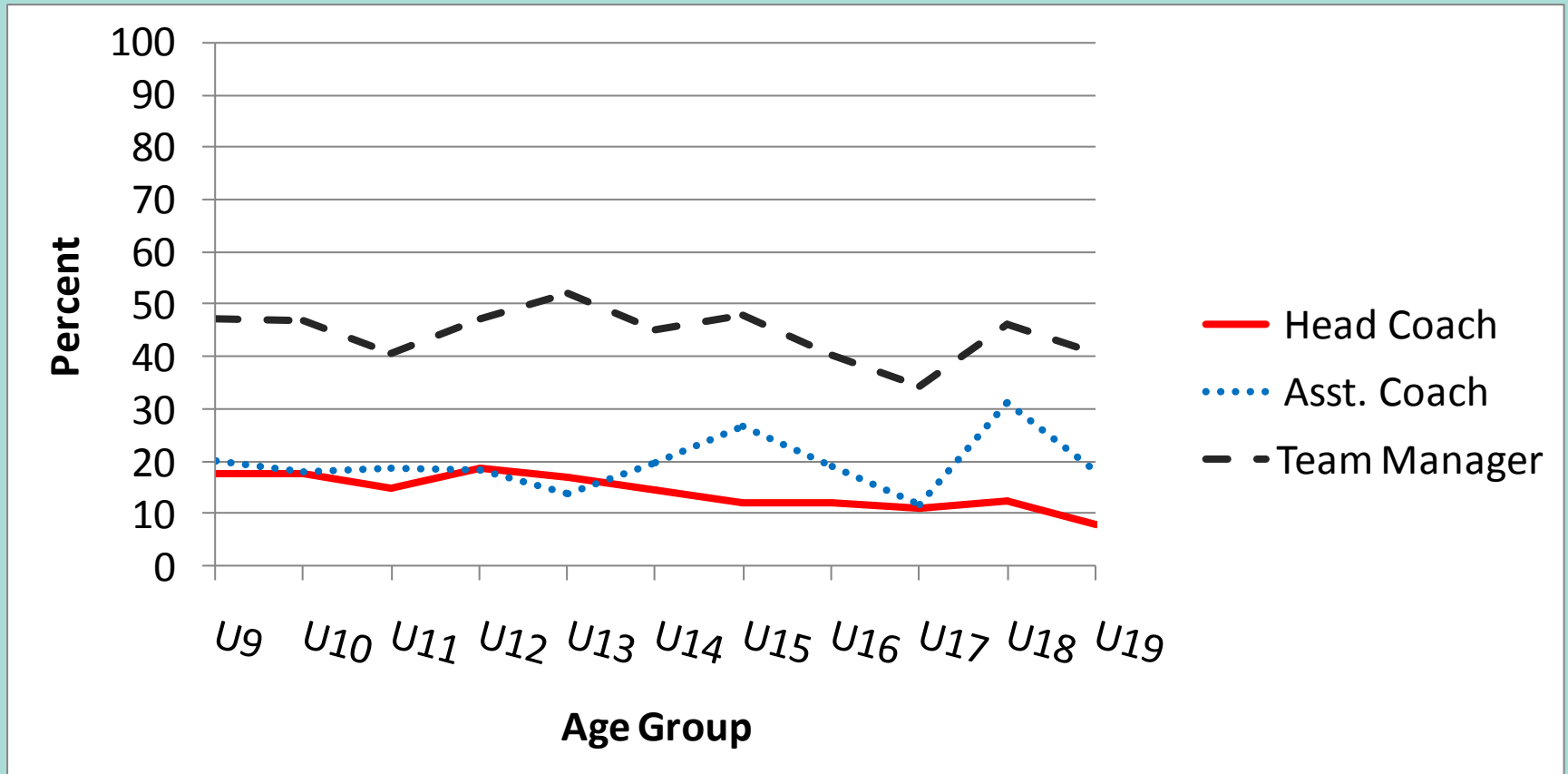


LaVoi (2009). Occupational Sex Segregation in a Youth Soccer Organization: Females in Positions of Power

- Kanter (1977)
 - Tokenism & Marginalization
- $N = 5683$
 - Head Coaches ($N=2048$)
 - Assistant Coaches ($N=1499$)
 - Team Managers ($N=2136$)
- Sex of Coach, Sex of Athlete, Age Group, Competitive Level



Figure 1. Percentage of females in positions of power in organized youth soccer by age level for boys' and girls' teams combined.

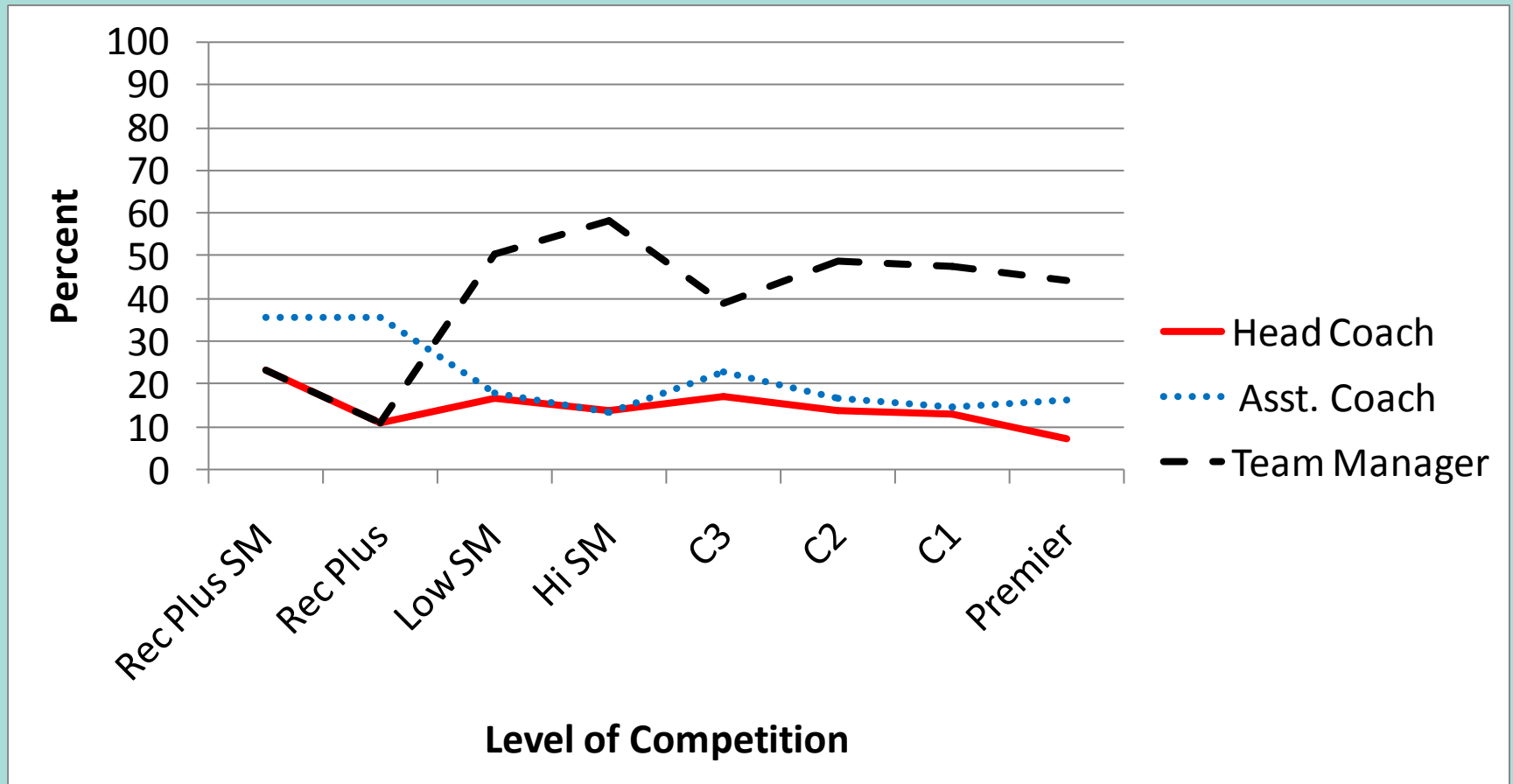


LaVoi (2009)



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Figure 2. Percentage of females in positions of power in organized youth soccer by competitive level for boys' and girls' teams combined.

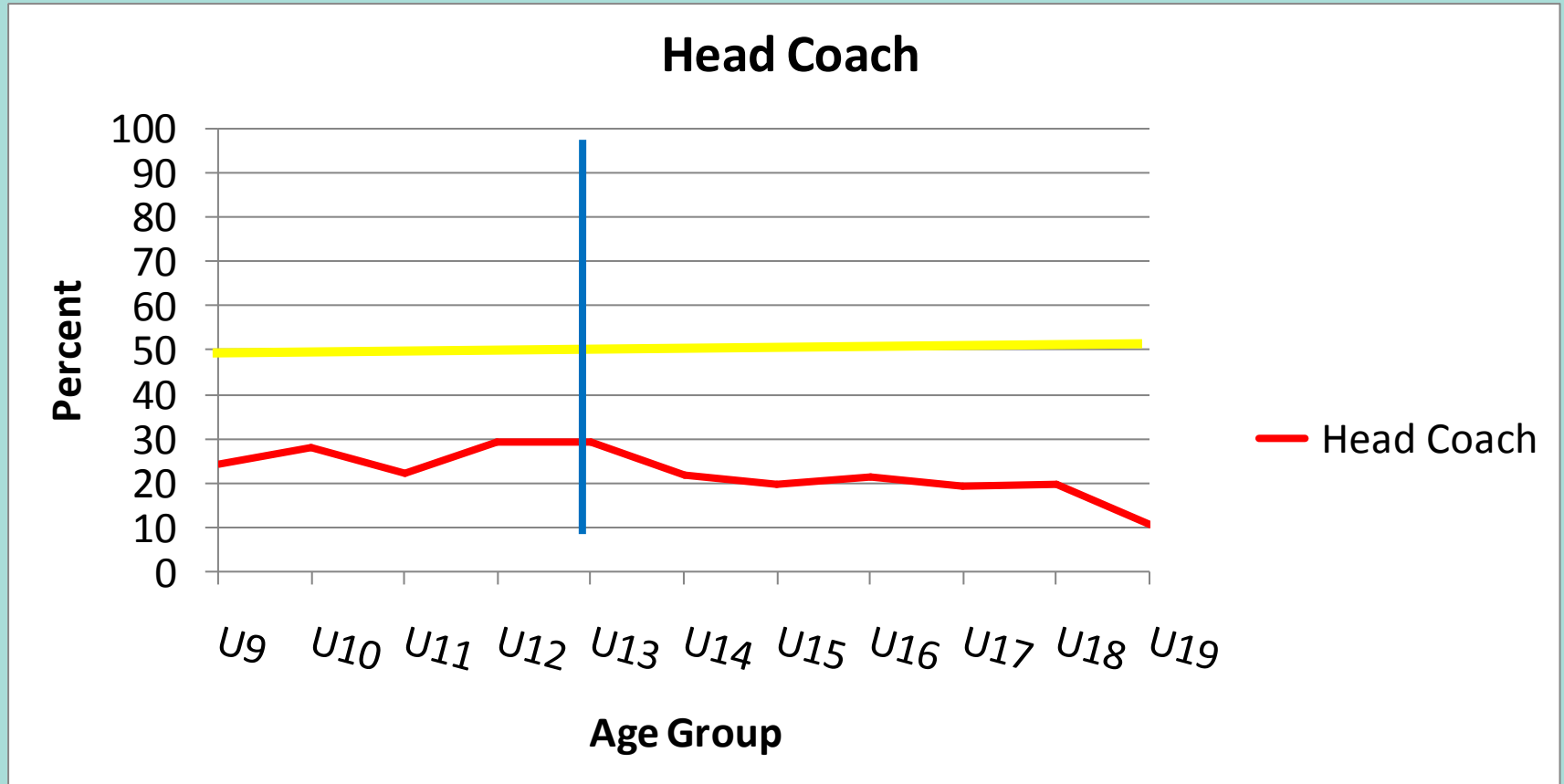


LaVoi (2009)



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Percentage of female Head Coaches for girls' youth soccer teams by age group



LaVoi (2009)



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Key Points: Study #1

- Females are under-represented
- Female coaches are “tokens”
- Females are marginalized
- Clear gendered division of labor



The Glass Ceiling

(Messner, 2009)

- Overt sexism
- Men's domination of playing spaces with body and voice
- Surveillance & challenges to authority of female coaches
- Internalized beliefs about appropriate level



...this is why I'm not going to be coaching my older one competitively anymore. He's now 13 and we're at a point that two things, he is at a point where, like I mentioned the coaches have been the one who were the most educated, experience coaching wise...he needs a far higher level of coaching than what I can provide. That's one reason, the second reason is we're at the age level for him, that in order to sustain a good child-parent relationship I need to back away from being a coach of him as well.



The Glass Ceiling

(Messner, 2009)

- Overt sexism
- Men's domination of playing spaces with body and voice
- Surveillance & challenges to authority of female coaches
- Internalized beliefs about appropriate level
- **Existence of old boys' networks**



What is the impact of the sex of decision makers on the prevalence of female youth sport coaches?



Becker & LaVoi (in progress)

- Homologous Reproduction
- Online Survey
- N = 34 decision-makers
 - $n = 28$ male, $n = 6$ female
 - 741 Head Coaches,
 - 18% ($n = 133$) female
- 100% White



Results: Study 2

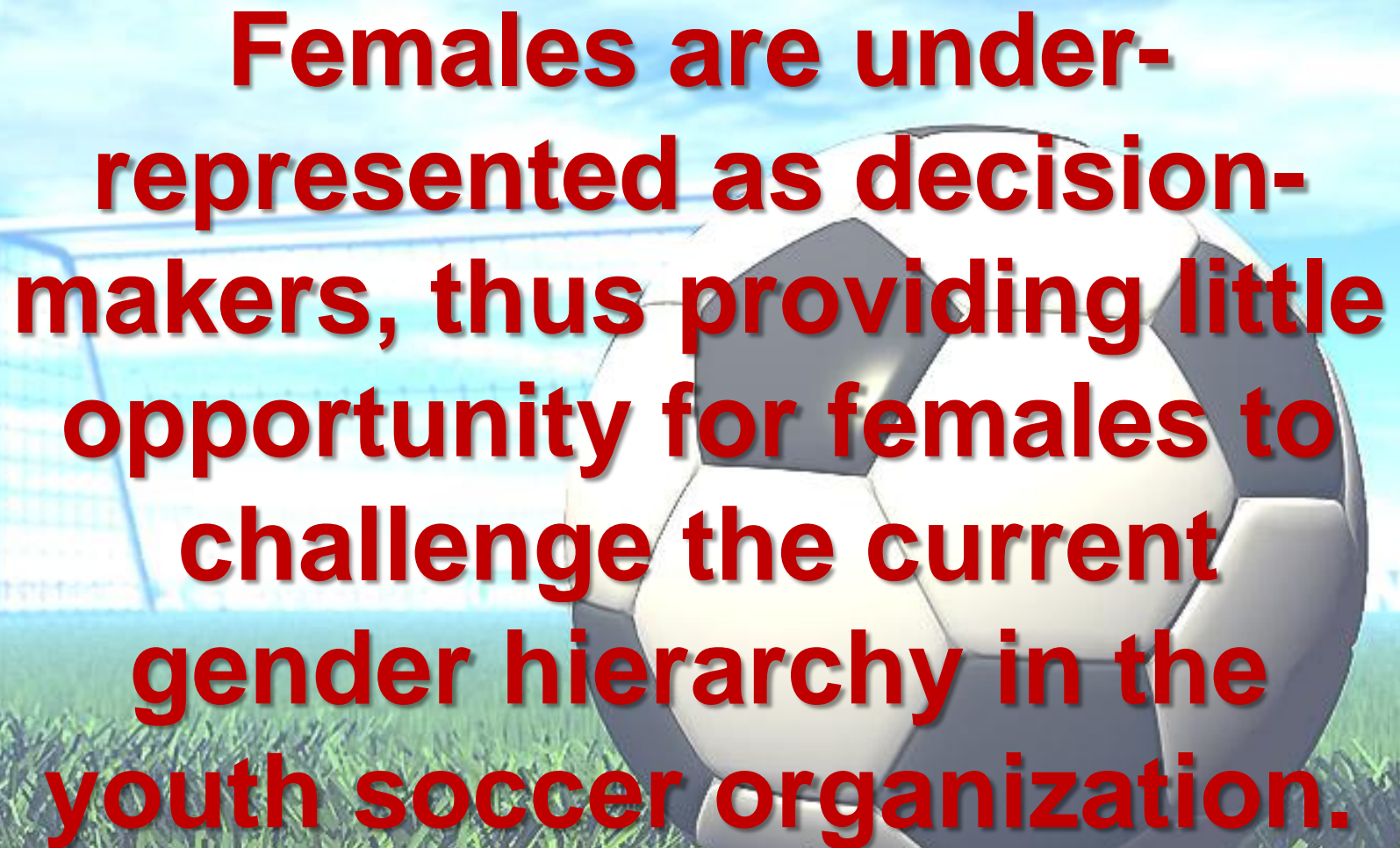
- Homologous Reproduction did **not** occur
 - $\chi^2 (1, N = 740) = 0.47, p > .492$
- Female decision-makers are tokens (17%)
- Female decision makers are marginalized
 - # coaches appointed
 - FemDM ($M = 15.2$)
 - MaleDM ($M = 23.2$)



Explaining Lack of Homologous Reproduction

- Conformity
 - Adopt dominant decision making patterns
- Exceptional skill & ability



A soccer ball is positioned in the center of a green grass field. In the background, a soccer goal is visible under a blue sky with light clouds. The text is overlaid on this scene.

Females are under-represented as decision-makers, thus providing little opportunity for females to challenge the current gender hierarchy in the youth soccer organization.



LaVoi & Leberman (in progress)



- $N = 24$ youth soccer mothers
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews
- Motivations, perceived barriers, challenges, experiences, & beliefs about coaching, roles negotiation



Leberman & LaVoi (in press).



Juggling Balls and Roles, Working Mother-Coaches in Youth Sport.

- Role conflict v. role enhancement
- Negotiation: Triad of roles
- Transference of skills





Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport



Strategies Handout

Mother-Coach Generated Strategies for Increasing Female Coaches in Youth Sport



Future Directions

- Ambivalent Sexism
- Qualitative investigation of gendered decision making processes
- National Longitudinal Survey
- Education & Empowerment

we
coach
educating & empowering through sport





Coaching Youth Soccer as a Token Female

Nicole M. LaVoi, Ph.D.

Erin Becker, M.A.



Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport