

FEMALES COACHING GIRLS' CLUB SOCCER IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Abstract
of
FEMALES COACHING GIRLS' CLUB SOCCER IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
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by
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Since the passage of Title IX, there has been a rise in female involvement in athletics, which has led to an increase in the number of female coaches; however, the number of male to female coaches continues to be imbalanced. The purpose of this thesis is to determine the percentage of females coaching girls' club soccer in Northern California. It will also explore the number of female directors of coaching and how that number influences the percentage of female coaches within each soccer club. Data was collected from 1,154 girls' teams and results show that twenty-one percent of girls' teams were coached by females and seventy-nine percent were coached by males. Seven out of 175 clubs had a female director of coaching which did not have an impact on the percentage of female coaches within those soccer clubs. Further research is needed to prove a trend in the data.

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Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

American society is becoming more and more driven by sports. Every day there is a game on television or at the local park or stadium that draws athletes and spectators to join in on the excitement. Girls and boys alike are becoming more involved in sports each year. Messner (2009) points out four possible social trends that led to the increase of organized sports in the United States. First are a combination of John F. Kennedy's worries that American children were too "soft" and more recently, the fear of an obesity epidemic. The government, schools, and community organizations are advertising the benefits and making physical activity more of a priority. The second factor leading to an increase in organized sport is the "culture of fear," (as cited in Glassner, 1999) that children are no longer safe playing in public without constant supervision. Children are encouraged to engage in organized play through sports programs as a method to keep them safe. The third factor mentioned by Messner, is the change in family structure to two working parents has increased the need for parents to provide enriching experiences, tutors, lessons, and activities that will expectantly benefit their children's future. Fourth, and mentioned repeatedly in the rise in women's sports specifically, is the passing of Title IX (Messner, 2009). Since the passage of Title IX, an amendment that requires gender equity for boys and girls in educational programs including sports, there has been a rise in female involvement in athletics. The spike in female participation in sports has led to an increase in the number of female coaches; however, the number of male to female coaches continues to be imbalanced.

The most popular sports, baseball, soccer, basketball, and football, have historically been dominated by males. Female sports are less frequently in the spotlight and tend to be less popular among most crowds. The male dominance goes beyond athletes and spectators and continues to be a trend with coaches. With an increase of female athletes, more teams are formed which leads to a need for more coaches. Men are coaching girl's and women's teams from the youth levels up to college and professional levels, while it is rare to see a female coaching boy's or men's teams especially at the college or professional level. In 2014, Acosta and Carpenter found that 43 out of 100 women's collegiate teams are coached by a female and 98 out of 100 men's collegiate teams are coached by a male.

The lack of female mentors and role models is one of the leading causes for girls to drop out of sports and for athletes to not move on to coaching after their playing careers. Today's girls need encouragement from strong and confident female athletic role models to participate in sports and live a healthy lifestyle more than ever due to society's influence on the importance of external beauty. (Staurowsky, 2012). Young female athletes without an opportunity to be coached by a female before the end of their playing career could become a part of the cycle of players and potential coaches who drop out or change careers due to the lack of a female role model. Although this is not the main topic of research, it is important to note that girls can easily identify with a same sex role model who might have faced the same or similar barriers that the athletes could face in their future.

Youth sports coaches are often initiating and building the foundation for young athletes to grow into successful athletes. Although the players must show dedication and put forth the effort to achieve their dreams, the coaches' efforts and drive to encourage the athlete demonstrations similar importance. This research will not focus on whether male or female coaches are better at coaching boys or girls, or why it is important for girls to be coached by a female and boys to be coaches by a male. The data collected will create a starting point for further research on girls' youth club soccer coaches.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the percentage of females coaching girls' club soccer in Northern California, U9 to U18 teams. It will also explore the number of female directors of coaching and how that number influences the percentage of female coaches within each club.

Significance of the Study

Acosta and Carpenter (2014) have been collecting data on female coaches at the college level for over 35 years. Less data is available for high school coaches and even less data is available at the club level. This study will provide a baseline of data for future studies to determine if the downward trend of female coaches at higher levels is also occurring in club soccer. This information could provide insight to club sports directors and more opportunities for female coaches within club sports.

Hypotheses

1. Female head coaches will account for less than 20% of head coaches of girls' soccer teams in Northern California.
2. In Northern California club soccer, there will be a greater percentage of women coaching at the younger age groups (Under 9-Under 11).
3. Soccer clubs in Northern California with a female director of coaching will have a higher percentage of females coaching girls' teams than clubs with a male director of coaching.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The critical mass of sport participants and coaches are found at the youth and interscholastic levels, yet the vast majority of research on female coaches is at the high level, elite, or intercollegiate levels (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). Since the passing of Title IX in 1972 and its compliance date in 1978, the opportunities for female coaches have increased due to an increase in participants at all levels. Previous research, or lack thereof, can help identify if coaching gender trends exist at the youth, high school, and collegiate level of competition.

Female mentors facilitate networking and provide guidance to coaches and athletes (Kilty, 2006). Previous studies on girls' interest in coaching have proved the argument that girls have more interest in coaching if they've had a female coach. Seventy-two percent of the subjects in the study were coached by a female which strengthens the argument that female coaches are needed to be positive female role models for young female athletes (Everhart & Chelladurai, 1998). Women are often subordinated and restricted to lower level, and lower paying coaching positions with minimal exposure to role models or opportunities to advance. (Reade, Rodgers & Norman, 2009). According to Acosta and Carpenter, females have fewer role models in the decision and leadership positions than do males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

Taylor Imeson's research on whether the gender of the coach could influence the athletes drive to pursue a coaching career did not parallel the results of the research stated above, however, the results did suggest that educating coaches on how to guide females

into a coaching career was an equally important end result (Imeson, 2017). Support and resources for current coaches is important to educate and guide the future coaches.

Youth Sports

United States Youth Soccer was founded in 1974 with 100,000 players registered from ages five to nineteen. In 2016, there were over 3 million players registered. (What is US Soccer, 2012). Of the 3 million players, 85% are under 14 years old (Roby & Snow, 2013). Roby and Snow explain how parents are choosing club sports for their child to prevent a sedentary lifestyle due to less time allotted for P.E. and recess at school. The increase of participants in youth sports can also be attributed to exposure to sports on television, more commercials and programs such as Play 60, a health and wellness program for kids that is highly endorsed by the National Football League, and an increase in exposure to data on childhood obesity (Fuel Up to Play 60, 2017). Parents are looking for an outlet to encourage physical activity and have turned to extracurricular activities such as club sports. In 2005, 54% of kids ages six to seventeen were participating in at least one organized team sport. In just five years, the percentage of kids participating in organized team sport increased to 59% in ages ten to seventeen (Woods, 2011). The number of youth sport participants is going in the right direction, but the minimal research and data on coaches for youth sports teams is leaving a gap in the resources for female coaches at the youth levels.

Looking specifically at youth soccer, Messner has provided the data in Table 1 on youth soccer coaches for six regions in Southern California for the 2006 and 2007

seasons. One region has 19% of girls' teams with women head coaches and the other regions are even lower. Through reflection on interviews and observations, Messner identified the career path of female coaches into three categories. The “stoppers” are women who coached one or two years then quit. The “cyclers” coached younger teams for a few years then cycled back to the younger teams to avoid the older and more competitive age groups. The “gamers” were the female coaches who continued to coach the teams throughout the older age groups. Messner’s findings concluded that coaching older teams was more intimidating and that women prefer coaching youth teams using kids-knowledge verses sports-knowledge which is why a higher percentage of women are coaching in the younger age groups. (Messner, 2009)

Table 1

Proportion of AYSO Women Head Coaches in Communities Surrounding South Pasadena 2006 & 2007

<u>Region</u>	<u>Teams with Women Head Coaches</u>	<u>U10 & Under Teams with Women Head Coaches</u>	<u>U11 & Older Teams with Women Head Coaches</u>	<u>Girls' Teams with Women Head Coaches</u>	<u>Boys' Teams with Women Head Coaches*</u>
AYSO Region 2	11	8	3	9 (11.7%)	2
AYSO Region 13	21	18	3	15 (13.8%)	6
AYSO Region 40	5	4	1	3**	2
AYSO Region 60	11	9	2	6 (15%)	5
AYSO Region 88	28	19	8	19**	8
AYSO Region 214	41	34	7	19 (19%)	22

* 43/45 coached U10 or younger teams

** Total number of girls' teams not available to calculate percentage

(Messner, 2009)

LaVoi (2009) reported from one Midwestern state that only 17.3% females occupied the head coach position for interscholastic sports. 15.1% of private youth soccer club teams were head coached by females and were more frequently coaching less competitive, less visible teams, and very seldom coached boys' teams. Most sports participants and coaches are found at the youth and interscholastic levels yet researchers have mostly studied elite or intercollegiate female coaches. (LaVoi, 2009)

The job description for a Director of Coaching for youth soccer clubs is comparable to that of an Athletic Director, without being associated with a school. Athletic Directors shape the athletic programs by providing leadership and using their experience and perspective on equity to make hiring decisions and program goals (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Although there is minimal to no data on the gender of youth soccer Directors of coaching, Acosta and Carpenter have data showing that in 2014, 22.3% of intercollegiate athletics directors were female and 77.7% were male and that schools with a female athletic director have a higher percentage of female coaches within the program.

High School Sports

According to high school participation statistics, before Title IX in 1971, there were over 3.5 million boys and less than 300,000 girls participating in high school sports. By 2000, those numbers had increased to 3.9 million boys and 2.7 million girls participating in high school sports. The 2016-2017 Athletics Participation Survey Total conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations show 4.5

million boys and 3.4 million girls participating in high school sports (Participation Statistics, 2017).

From 1985-1990, the number of female high school coaches in California increased from 2,000 to 2,321, however, the percentage of females coaching girls' teams decreased from 36.4% to 33.4%. Within the five years, there were 1,451 additional positions available to coach. (Muth, 1990). This increase in female teams is significant; however with more men than women stepping in to coach, the percentage decrease in female coaches displays how male coaches have become dominant in sports. Although more coaching jobs were available to females, the percentage of female head coaches in California high school varsity programs decreased from 68% in 1977 to 32% in 2004. (Shrock, 2005)

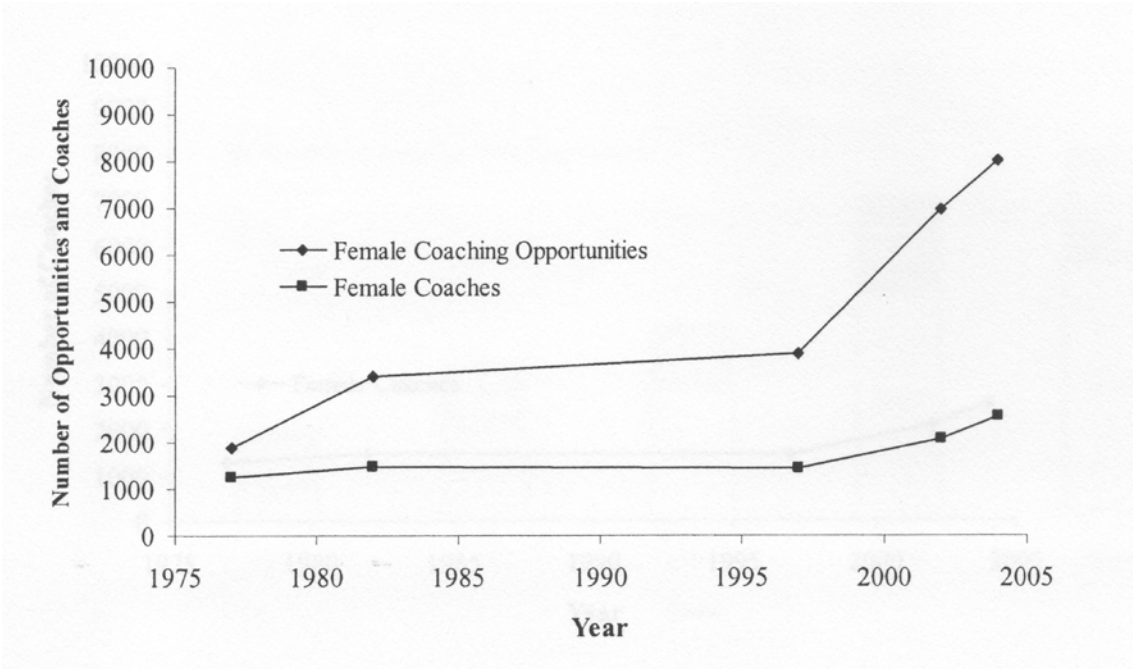


Figure 1: Female varsity head coaches in California 1977-2004. (Shrock, 2005)

Two Year Colleges

At the two-year colleges from 1985-1990, the percentage of women's teams coached by females dropped from 40.5% to 37.4% while the percentage of males coaching women's teams increased from 49.1% to 56.8%. (Muth, 1990)

Four Year Colleges

In 1990 it was reported that four-year colleges increased the overall number of women's teams and stayed relatively the same in percentage from 41.6% to an even 41%. (Muth, 1990) In 2014, it was found that forty-three out of 100 women's teams are coached by a female, with 4,154 females coaching college sports which was an all-time high in 2014. (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014) The number of female coaches in four-year collegiate programs is increasing and there are more teams added each year. History has shown a decrease in the percentage of female versus male coaches due to the increasing number of teams which has created more coaching opportunities. In collegiate athletics, there has been a push for female involvement in coaching within the past ten years. From 2012 to 2014, 307 new women's teams were added to four-year colleges nationwide. Of the 307 new teams, females occupy 180 positions and males hold the remaining 127 of the increase. (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014) Acosta and Carpenter present the data in the chart below to show the trend of the percentage of female coaches throughout the years was decreasing, although the percentage of female coaches has increased by .5% in from 2012-2014.

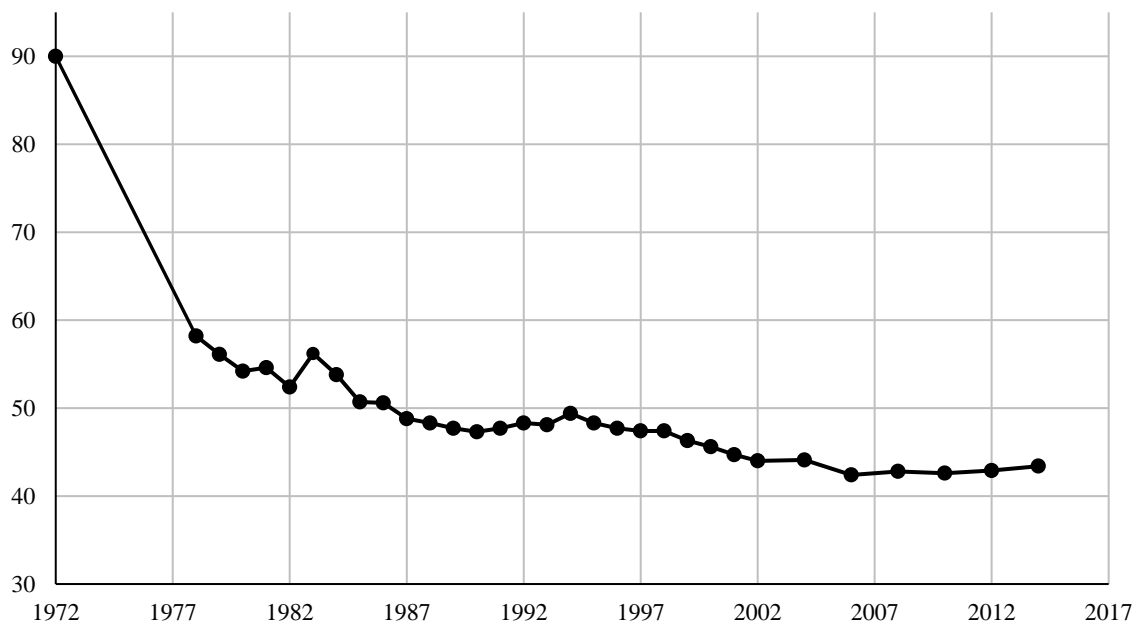


Figure 2. Percentage of female head coaches for collegiate women's teams. (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014)

Soccer Across the Board

From 1985-1990, females coaching high school girls' soccer dropped from 27.1% to 24.8%. Two-year collegiate programs dropped just over ten percent from 54.5% to 44.4%. Four-year collegiate programs increased from 10.5% to 25% (Muth, 1990).

The percentage of females coaching soccer at four-year universities in 1978 was 29.4% and 31.8% in 2014 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). In 1977 only 2.8% of colleges had a women's soccer team. In 2014, 93.3% of colleges had a women's soccer team making it tied with cross country for the third most popular collegiate women's sport, behind basketball and volleyball. The 2.4% increase in female coaches from 1978 to 2014 is marginal when compared to the number of schools that added soccer to their sports program.

Current Programs Addressing Coaching Gender Gap

Sporting governments worldwide are addressing the imbalance in coaches by creating programs to support more female coaches with educational resources, career development, and networking opportunities. Champion Women is targeting equality, accountability and transparency throughout sport and culture (Hogshead-Makar, 2014). The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sports (CAAWS) has a Women and Leadership Program and resources for females to train and improve their coaching abilities and gain rewarding experience. Canada also has a Women in Coaching program that is aimed to increase the number of coaching opportunities for women at all levels of sport (Women in Coaching, 2012). In the United States, the Alliance of Women Coaches (AWC) was founded in 2011, and is dedicated to leading the field of women coaches, at all levels, by providing support, resources, and events and programs which address the needs and interests of its members (Walker, 2016). Reach in the UK is another example of an organization with its full interests to support women in coaching (McIlroy, 2017). The Women in Sports Foundation was created in 1974 by Billie Jean King and is committed to creating leaders by ensuring girls access to sports (Staurowsky, 2016). With support and resources, we should see an increase in the number of educated and experienced female coaches. Understanding and addressing the barriers for female coaches will improve the success of organizations on producing more female coaches.

Chapter 3

METHODS

NorCal Premier Soccer League is a soccer program that organizes leagues and tournaments throughout Northern California for teams seeking a competitive soccer experience. There are 200+ clubs involved with NorCal Premier Soccer League. NorCal organizes playdates, Youth Premier Leagues, Regional Leagues, National Premier Leagues, and State Cup.

Data will be collected on club soccer coaches of over 1500 teams within the under 9 to under 18 age groups in Northern California that participated in NorCal Premier Soccer League during the 2016-2017 season. The season for U9-U11 is from March 2016 to December 2016. The season for U12-U14 is from March 2016 to February 2017. The season for U15-U18 is from June 2016-April 2017. The starting and ending dates differ slightly from club to club based on their participation and results in the final tournaments.

Procedures

Data will be collected by contacting each NorCal Premier Soccer League club, through the NorCal website, club website, by email, or by phone. The gender of each coach will be recorded by team age group. The director of coaching's gender will also be recorded for each club from the club website. If the gender of the coach or director is unclear, the club will be contacted by email or phone and asked for clarification. One head coach will be counted for each team. If coaches coach more than one team, they will

be counted for each team they coach. Data will be organized into team age group, club, and younger age group (U9-U11).

Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used in analyzing the data. Percentages will show results for comparison between male and female coaches, percentage of male and female by age group, the percentage coaching the younger age groups, and the percentage of female coaches in a club with a female director of coaching.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine the percentage of girls' club soccer teams coached by females in Northern California, for U9 to U18. It will also explore the number of female directors of coaching and how that number influences the percentage of teams coached by females within each club.

There were 1514 girl's teams participating in the NorCal Premier Soccer League in the 2016-2017 season. There are 323 teams coached by a female and 1191 teams coached by a male. Overall, the percentage of teams with female coaches is 21% and the percentage of teams with male coaches is 79%. This is higher than the stated hypothesis; therefore, hypothesis one, which stated that there will be less than 20% of girls' soccer teams with female head coaches in Northern California, is rejected.

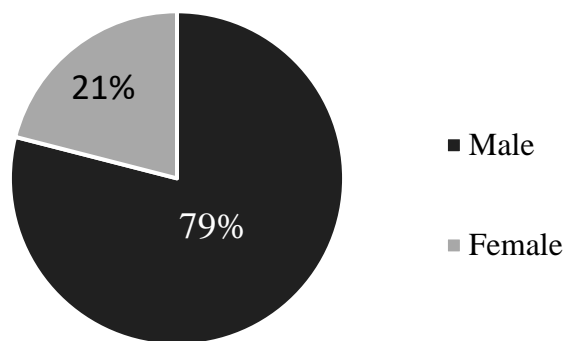


Figure 3. Percentage of teams coached by male and female coaches.

The breakdown of the coach’s gender by age group can be seen in Table 2 and Figure 3.

Table 2

Coach’s Gender by Age Group

<u>Age group</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
9	72%	28%
10	68%	32%
11	75%	25%
12	77%	23%
13	79%	21%
14	81%	19%
15	86%	14%
16	84%	16%
17	84%	16%
18	87%	13%

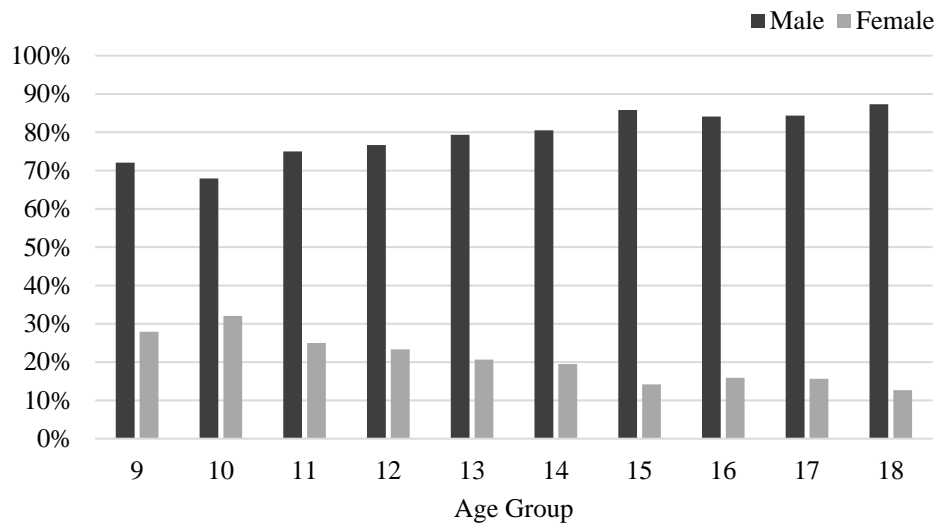


Figure 4. Percentage of coach’s gender by age group.

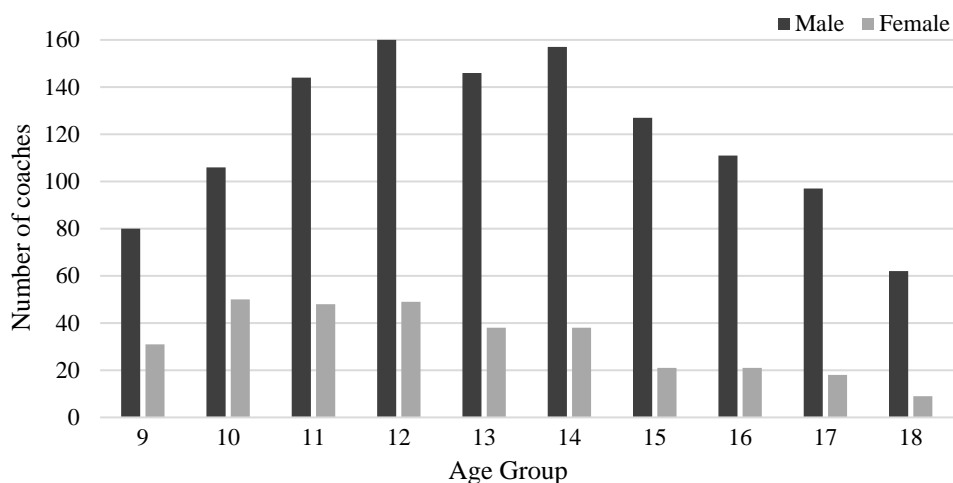


Figure 5. U9-U18 gender of coach.

There are 459 girls' teams in the U9-U11 age groups. There are 330 teams with male coaches (72%) and 129 teams with female coaches (28%). The 129 teams coached by females in the three younger age groups makes up 40% of the 323 total teams coaches by females in all ten age groups. U9-U11 showed 25-32% of teams coached by females, however less than 25% of the older age groups are coached by females. More specifically, ages U14-U18 are below 20% coached by females. There were a greater percentage of teams coached by women at the younger age groups. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.

There are seven clubs with a female director of coaching out of 175 clubs. Of those seven clubs, only one club has a higher percentage of teams coached by female. There are two clubs that do not have a female coach for any of their girls' teams. The hypothesis stating that soccer clubs in Northern California with a female director of

coaching will have a higher percentage of females coaching girls' teams than clubs with a male director of coaching is rejected. The data and percentages for the seven clubs can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 6.

Table 3

Clubs with Female Director of Coaching

<u>Club</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male %</u>	<u>Female %</u>
Butte United SC	5	4	56%	44%
Granite Bay FC	15	4	79%	21%
IR Academy	9	0	100%	0%
Loomis YSC	5	3	63%	38%
Manteca FC	1	2	33%	67%
Merced United FC	5	0	100%	0%
Mustang SC	27	12	69%	31%

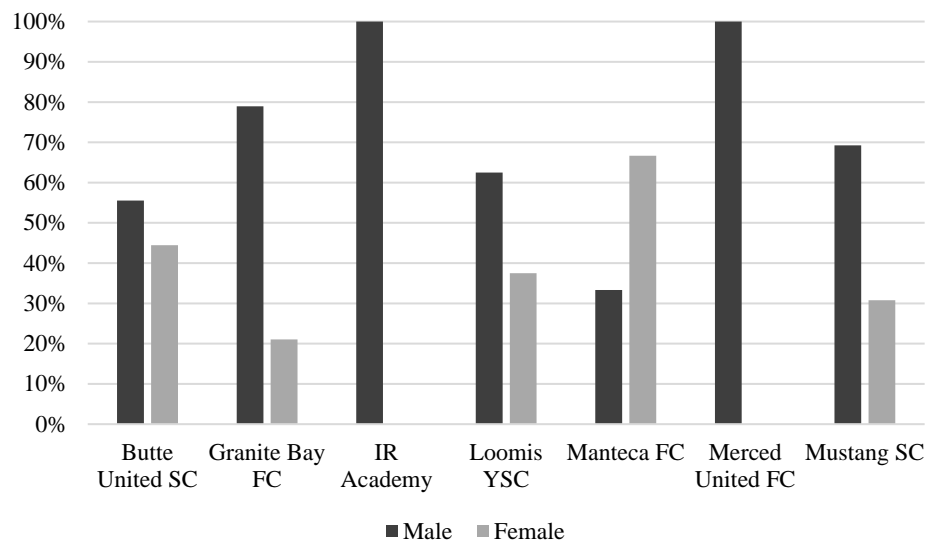


Figure 6. Coaches' gender from clubs with a female director of coaching.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Although the first hypothesis was rejected, the result that only 21% of girl's teams are coached by females demonstrates a continued need to increase the number of females coaching soccer. The number of opportunities for female coaches are at an all-time high. There are 1,514 competitive girls' soccer teams participating in NorCal Premier Soccer League for the 2016-2017 season. Of the 175 clubs with girls' teams participating in the NorCal Premier Soccer League, only 8% (14) of those clubs have more girls' teams coached by females than males. Also of note, are the 39% (69) of clubs that have no females coaching the girls' teams.

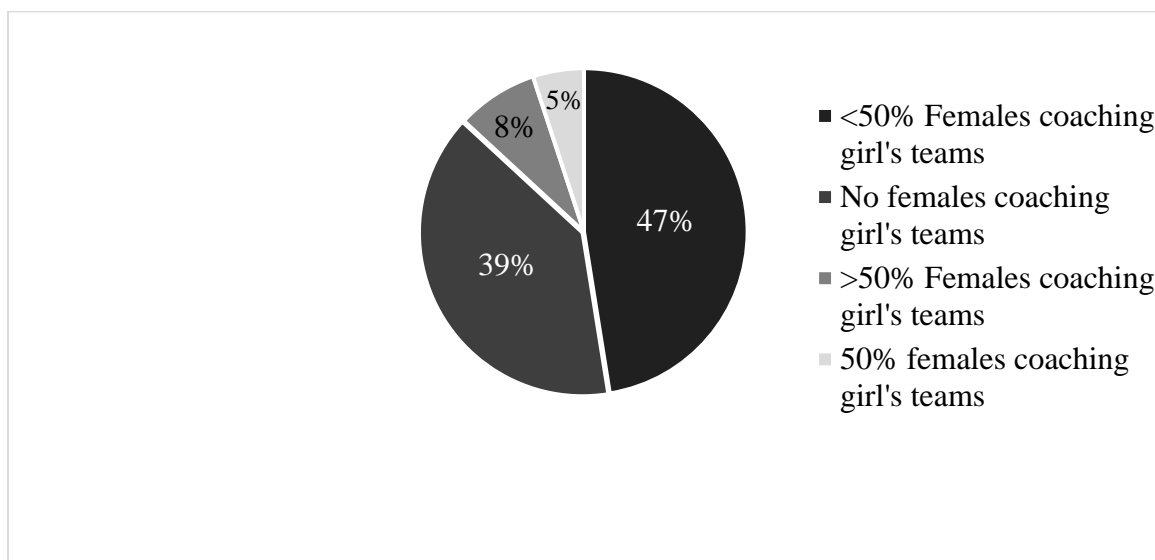


Figure 7. Clubs with female coaches coaching girls' teams.

Considering Acosta and Carpenters (2014) data on Administrators, specifically Athletics Directors, into consideration, if we increased the number of female Directors of Coaching then perhaps the number of females coaching girls' teams would increase. Although there are only seven female directors out of 175 clubs, the male Directors of Coaching should still be committed to gender equity within the soccer club.

The forty percent of total teams coached by females were in the younger age groups. This data parallels Messner's conclusions regarding female coaches fitting into three categories, stoppers, cyclers, and gamers. Without having data on how long each coach has coached or whether they have cycled back to younger age groups, it is impossible to assume that all the females coaching in the younger age groups are cyclers. However, a duplicate study every year could help prove that female coaches are, in fact, coaching more of the younger and less competitive girls' teams. If interviews were conducted with the female coaches that are coaching in the younger age groups, it could confirm Messner's theory that women are coaching in the younger age groups because they can coach kids-knowledge instead of more sports-knowledge in the older and more competitive age groups. This could be a contributing factor to the higher percentages of coaches coaching girls youth soccer.

Using the FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup as benchmarks for the history of international soccer competition, the first men's, 1930, and the first Women's, 1991, World Cups have a sixty-year gap. The United States Women's National Soccer team was established in 1985, whereas the United States Men's National Soccer team dates back 100 years prior, to the first international appearance in 1885. The

gap in the history of women's soccer has a huge effect on the number of females with experience playing soccer, which, in turn, might explain the low number of experienced females looking to coach. Because of this discrepancy between men and women coaching, more studies need to address the issue of gender concordance in coaching from all levels.

To further the research and prove a trend in the data or an improvement in female club soccer coaches, this study would need to be repeated and reviewed annually. Future studies will determine whether the number of female coaches in club soccer are rising, or falling. This information can help answer the questions and help balance the gender gap in coaching.

There are thousands of teams across the country and world that are participating in elite leagues that are developing young athletes. We do not yet know whether the low percentage of youth soccer girls' teams being coached by women will become a trend, like at the other levels, nor do we know the repercussions, although in 2014, Acosta and Carpenter's *Women in Intercollegiate Sport* is finding a downward trend for female coaches at the collegiate level. While this study does not answer the question about ongoing trends in youth soccer, the biggest question is why is there a gender gap among coaches? Why are there so few females coaching girls' competitive youth soccer? Where are all the female coaches? What are the barriers to coaching for females? With the number of girls participating in sports still on the rise, will we see a higher percentage of females coaching the next generation of young athletes?

Instead of dwelling on the questions we can't answer, we can instead look for possible solutions and identify strategies to increase the number of females coaching. Organizations like Champion Women and Alliance of Women Coaches are advocating for females of all ages, whether they are athletes or coaches. Support and resources are available through these organizations and many others for current female coaches to share, educate, and encourage their athletes to pursue a career in coaching. To prevent the cycle of player drop outs and career changes, female athletes, coaches, and administrators need to take on leadership roles and mentor positions for young athletes to emulate.

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