9D Sarah Stokowski, University of Arkansas & Megan Turk, University of Arkansas
“Orthodox Gender Ideology and Lesbian Athletes”

Orthodox gender ideology has greatly manipulated sport participation, motivation, ideas, and overall beliefs (Coakley, 2015). Coakley (2015) believes orthodox gender ideology (or the traditional way of thinking about gender) influences the following: identity, relationships, expectations, and rewards. Traditional gender ideology consists of ideas and/or beliefs used to define masculinity and femininity (Coakley, 2015). Ultimately, such ideologies determine the expectations of what is male and female; defining what is considered masculine/feminine. Orthodox gender ideology distributes the thought that women who participate in sport are invaders (Coakley, 2015). Furthermore, dominant gender ideology revolves around the belief that homosexual feelings are deviant and dissipated. Thus, if female athletes are portrayed as invaders and homosexuality is immoral, what impact does sport have on lesbian athletes? Informed by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979), the purpose of this study is to explore how lesbian student-athletes (i.e. invaders) navigate their social world in the collegiate athletic setting. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, this study can assist in demonstrating that sport greatly assists in development of gender ideologies; however, sport can also assist in re-configuring traditional social norms to promote tolerance and understanding. Exploring the experiences of lesbian student-athletes may shed additional light on struggles faced within the athletic department.

9D Kristine Newhall, Bridgewater State University
“My Authentic Self: Coming-out Narratives of Coaches and Athletes”

Though homophobia and homonegativity in the American sports landscape are pervasive, the last decade has seen more athletes and coaches coming out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer. Media coverage always accompanies these coming out moments which have generally been framed positively. I argue that the positive framing is due, in part, to the authentic self narrative that the majority of athletes feel and employ as part of their coming out stories. This narrative positions coming out as individual choice and in so doing de-emphasizes institutional discrimination, and positions the individual as previously broken and immoral before being healed and made whole by coming out. In this presentation I problematize the authentic self discourse by positioning it in relation to the gay pride/gay shame dynamic, discussing its origins in the psychological literature, and offering Foucault’s technologies of self as an alternate way of positioning and understanding out athletes and coaches.

9D Dillon Landi, The University of Auckland & Richard Pringle, The University of Auckland
“Neoliberalization of Queer Sporting Bodies: A Deleuzean Analysis”

Sport has long been labelled a bastion of exclusion for particular bodies, specifically women (e.g. Cahn, 1994), non-white (e.g. Hawkins, 2010), and those with disabilities (e.g. Nixon II, 2000). In addition, and the focus of this paper, queer (or non-heterosexual) bodies have also been historically been marginalised in sport (e.g. Griffin, 1998; Pronger, 1990). Recent research has illustrated that there has been a cultural shift toward the softening of fear toward non-heterosexual sexualities (McCormack, 2012), which has also influenced the culture of sport (Anderson, 2009). Conflicting evidence, however, has illustrated that homophobia and competition are still linchpins of sport culture (Denison & Kitchen, 2015). Using a Deleuzean (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1992) framework, the authors analyse the ‘neoliberalization’ (Peck & Tickell, 2002) of queer bodies in sport. By examining ‘coming out stories’ of queer athletes from Outsports.com, the authors develop an argument linked to neoliberalism and Deleuzean theory that queer bodies may be inadvertently reinforcing the hegemonic structures they were once (or continually are) oppressed by in sport.
When it was first developed as a medical category, transsexuality demanded that people first be visible as transsexual, then undergo transition, and finally become invisible as their “new” sex/gender. However, as LGBT movements evolved and “coming out” came to be a major political tool, trans narratives changed. Coming out, “becoming one’s true self,” and claiming a distinctly trans identity became hallmarks of the dominant trans narrative alongside feeling trapped in the wrong body, cross-gendered behavior, and a deep-seated sense of being the opposite sex. Therefore, being visible as trans became a possibility. But, visibility is a fraught concept ruled by the politics of recognition. Notions of trans embodiment have been imagined through a white racial frame, and the stakes for being visibly trans are much higher for people of color. Sport offers a unique space in which to examine these issues as the binary logics of gender structure access to competition and limit articulations of trans-ness. And yet, many recent trans athletes are also people of color. In this paper, I examine mediated narratives around trans athletes’ participation in order to ask how coming out works to produce dominant narratives and delineate who counts as a trans athlete.