Pedro Noguera explains that “the trouble with Black boys” is that their failure is accepted by society, they’re rendered a lost cause - not worthy of a national call to action or considered symptomatic of a failure of our public education system, and they’re not empowered to see, understand, and develop their own personal responsibility and solutions. As a society, we’ve given up on them and they, in turn, have given up on themselves. Through sports participation, Black boys are granted a glimpse of possibility, achievement and promise. Still, sports participation, even as it is mythologized as a pro-social institution is wrought with inequity. Coaches, particularly in school settings, often carry ideological frames and use pedagogical practices that intentionally and unintentionally stratify, alienate, and label the most marginalized. I have conducted an ethnography for ten-plus years in a Philadelphia summer basketball league, co-coaching with Chuck, a long-time coach and legendary player. Chuck is clear in his praise and speaks about his preferences: nice, suburban boys “can’t play a lick,” while boys from poor, inner-city Philadelphia have attitudes, but play hard, and are fearless. Chuck also describes his preferred player as players with “fight” and players who “ain’t finished playing until it’s over.” Chuck prefers players who need him: they’re coachable, they’re hungry for attention and approval and recognition. And he also likes the emotional work that goes along with our South Philly kids. Chuck’s perspective derives from seeing the cultural assets of poor, inner-city kids who are often labelled “bad boys,” deviant and troublemakers in school and elsewhere. In this way, and others, Chuck represents critical race coaching.

Women coach approximately 2.5% of men’s athletic teams at the collegiate level. Conversely, men have found ample space in coaching women’s athletic teams. Currently 40% of women’s teams are coached by women in the National Collegiate Athletic Association, a sharp decrease from the early 1970s when more than 90% of women’s teams were coached by women. Female coaches have been unsuccessful in making inroads into coaching men’s athletic teams at the collegiate level. This research examined the experiences of male collegiate student-athletes who do have a female head coach. Three themes emerged from the interviews: 1) Give her a chance, 2) A coach is a coach, and 3) Gendering of the female coach. Based on these findings, the researchers recommend female coaches intentionally pursue coaching positions of male teams, recruit male athletes who have previous experiences with female coaches, and understand the gendered perception their male athletes have of female coaches. Female coaches may be better prepared to coach men through an understanding of the experiences of their male athletes. Women may also be more open to the proposition of coaching men by gaining a better idea of their perception by the athletes.

The conference theme of “publicly engaged sociology of sport” is a perfect fit for analysis of one of the largest public figures in modern sports in general and women’s sports in particular, the late Coach Pat Summitt. Summitt is considered an icon, a legend, and a change agent far beyond her sport or even her country, in addition to being a championship coach. The purpose of this paper is to present a qualitative content analysis of local and national media coverage of Summitt’s hiring in 1974, first NCAA championship in 1987, announcement that she had early-onset dementia, Alzheimer’s type in 2011, and death in 2016. The evolving manner in which traditional print, and later online media, covered her coaching and life milestones reflects larger societal changes that she helped usher along. The findings
will be placed in the sociocultural context of the parallel increase in opportunities for women to participate in college athletics and their rising, even if still imbalanced, media coverage. In addition, the reactions contained in the media coverage of Summitt’s career will locate her life as a springboard for both increased celebration of women’s athletics and also continued scrutiny of their coverage in the media.

4H Lars Dzikus, University of Tennessee & Alicia Johnson, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
“Being a Minority: Gendered Experiences of Female High-School Head Coaches”

The purpose of the current study is to explore experiences of female high school head coaches. LaVo and Dutove (2012) examined three decades of research on female coaches and created an ecological model of barriers and support for female coaches. Their work also revealed some glaring gaps in the literature to date. These include a lack of research on female coaching experiences at the interscholastic level, a lack of understanding how female coaches are supported, and little consideration of intersecting social identities. The current project seeks to address these gaps in the literature based on an exploratory case study framework and semi-structured interviews with female high school head coaches from one school district in East Tennessee. Of the 182 varsity head coaches in this district, only 23% were women. Preliminary results suggest that participants describe their experiences as a constant struggle to find a place to fit in. Among the participants’ recommendations for other women considering coaching are (a) preparing for inequality, (b) sticking to your beliefs, and (c) networking. The authors propose to bring the study’s findings back to practitioners in the form of workshops for coaches and administrators.

4H Zachary Taber, University of Denver; David Goffman, University of Denver & Brian Gearly, University of Denver
“A Trioeethnography of Existential-PostStructural Sport Psychology and Sport Coaching Praxis”

Brian, Zach, and David know each other from their experiences in a graduate level research methods course in sport psychology. Brian was the professor, Zach and David students. After the course was over, we stayed in touch and eventually Zach and David approached Brian to do an independent study on spirituality and religiosity in sport. This project turned into an exploration into existentialism in sport, and then Brian’s understanding of poststructuralism kept creeping into our conversations. We’ve come to share a certain disdain for much sport psychology/athletic performance scholarship and practice, and the purpose of this trioeethnography is to come to understand this disdain and to offer a new theoretical approach through the use of existential-poststructural sport psychology and sport coaching praxis.