PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE ATHLETES:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGES IN ESPN’S RISE MAGAZINE

A Thesis in
Media Studies
by
Laura M. Cunningham

Copyright 2011 Laura M. Cunningham

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

December 2011
The thesis of Laura M. Cunningham was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Marie Hardin
Professor and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research
Thesis Adviser

Jeanne Lynn Hall
Associate Professor of Communications

Colleen Connolly-Ahern
Associate Professor of Communications

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School
Abstract

A number of different publishers have made attempts to create a magazine for the female athlete (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, 2005). With little success in the past, ESPN is stepping up to the plate with Rise magazine. The girl version of Rise magazine is geared towards the high school female athlete. I engaged in a textual analysis of selected editorial and advertisement images throughout Fall 2009, Fall 2010 and Winter 2010 issues of the girl version of Rise as well as the December 2009 and October 2010 issues of the guy issues of Rise magazine. I examined how female athletes were represented in relationships to sport and male athletes as well as how female athletes were represented in advertisements. I coded each image for body position, sport type, facial expression, movement, context, captions and surrounding text. Results show that ESPN has created something that showcases the female athlete in a way that does have some differences from past stereotypical representations of the female athlete. However, concern about the magazine is the powerful advertisements that starkly contrast with the happy-go-lucky appearance of the editorial images. Thus, I am concerned about the impact that the messages, what it means to be an athlete, may have on the young female readers.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................ iv

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 1

Literature Review......................................................................................................... 5

Methodology.................................................................................................................. 19

Findings......................................................................................................................... 28

Discussion...................................................................................................................... 48

Conclusion..................................................................................................................... 56

Works Cited................................................................................................................... 62

Appendix A: Hallie Kuhlman......................................................................................... 69

Appendix B: Girl football player.................................................................................... 70-71

Appendix C: Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, Jordan Adams and Alexyz Vaioletama........ 72

Appendix D: Hallie Wilson and Kylee Lahners............................................................. 73

Appendix E: Shawn Johnson......................................................................................... 74

Appendix F: Lydia Carra............................................................................................. 75

Appendix G: Sloan Stephens......................................................................................... 76

Appendix H: ESPN Rise Games.................................................................................. 77

Appendix I: Katie Hoff and swimmers......................................................................... 78

Appendix J: Calvinisha Conerly and Teaianna Jones.................................................. 79

Appendix K: Elizabeth Burchenal................................................................................. 80

Appendix L: Eleanor Fulton, Kristen Kientz and McLane Ritzel................................. 81

Appendix M: Dwight Howard and Gatorade.............................................................. 82

Appendix N: Serena Williams and Gatorade, Be Strong............................................. 83
Appendix O: Serena Williams and Gatorade..................................................84
Appendix P: Nike weights...........................................................................85
Appendix Q: Monica Hargrove and Under Armour.................................86
Appendix R: Nike.......................................................................................87-88
Appendix S: Adidas Pulse fragrances.......................................................89
Appendix T: Chris Johnson and Powerade................................................90
Acknowledgments

It is with great pleasure that I am able to thank the many people who made this thesis possible.

Dr. Marie Hardin, it is hard for me to truly tell you how much I have appreciated your encouragement, guidance and constant support throughout this process. I know that without your help none of this would have been possible.

Dr. Jeanne Hall and Dr. Colleen Connolly-Ahern, I want to thank you both for being a part of my thesis committee. Each of you provided me with insight into your areas of expertise and for that I am grateful.

I would like to thank my husband, Cory Cunningham. His words of encouragement and support over the years have helped more than he will ever know.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Fred and Debbie Caldwell. Their support and patience over the years helped me to get to where I am today.
**Introduction**

I have played softball from the time I was ten years old until I graduated college. After finishing my collegiate softball career, I was fortunate enough to continue my passion for softball by coaching a college team and giving pitching lessons. As a pitching coach I spent a lot of time one-on-one with my players and get to hear about what they are reading and watching in their everyday lives. Most of what my girls, my athletes, were reading was gossip magazines. My high school aged athletes did not have a magazine geared towards athletics that was age-appropriate for them. Their parents began approaching me for reading suggestions for their daughters and I was struggling to come up with an answer. When I first saw *ESPN Rise*, I was excited and wanted to see what this magazine had to offer for my athletes. I wanted pay attention to the kinds of representations of female athletes that were being portrayed within the magazine. I knew that if I was going to recommend this to my athletes that it had to be something that I believed in.

**Background**

Through the years a number of different magazines have been published with intentions of catering to the female athlete. Each of these magazines promised to provide something different and new. The magazines claimed that they would portray the female athlete in a new way, specifically by showcasing her athleticism. Despite valiant attempts, the majority of these magazines was short-lived and had little success (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, 2005). The reasons for failing differ, but a common theme remained: the bulk of them fell into the pitfalls of presenting the female athlete in stereotypical terms that showcased her femininity first and her athleticism second. ESPN is making
its move as they try to enter the high school female market by developing what once was *SchoolSports Magazine* into the girl version of *Rise* magazine. In order to gauge if *Rise* will have a future, it is important to take a look at why other sports magazines geared for youth have not had great success in the youth female market. In order to succeed, it is imperative that *Rise* accomplishes their goals that they set forth: to create something that is both new for the female athlete and has longevity.

In 1989, *Sports Illustrated for Kids* was created with a goal of presenting sports the way children, tweens, and young teens want to read about them (*SI* media kit, 2011). To accomplish this goal, *Sports Illustrated* incorporated “great action photos, easy-to-read stories about star athletes, helpful instructional tips from the pros, and humor, comics, and activities” into its magazine (*SI* media kit, 2011). Since its creation, *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, has claimed to be the “authority on kids and sports” (*SI* media kit, 2011). Of the 8.1 million in readership, 3.5 million were kids under the age of 12 (*SI* media kit, 2011). While it is clear *Sports Illustrated for Kids* reached a youth audience, most (69%) of the readers were male (*SI* media kit, 2011).

Television will become incorporated with ESPN Rise through SportsCenter.

SportsCenter will highlight one high school player of the week on Fridays and Saturdays for 32 weeks between August 16-March 23 of 2011-2012 (Pardon the interrogation, 2011).

Two additional spin-off magazines of ESPN Rise are Gridiron and Hardwood. Gridiron “tackles the issues important to football athletes across the nation” (Editorial overview, 2010) by featuring regional previews, national features, and more (Gridiron overview, 2011). Hardwood looks at high school basketball athletes and “identifies with the determination and competitiveness of basketball athletes by focusing on the issues that matter most” (ESPN Rise Magazine Group, 2011).

ESPN also launched Girl magazine in 2009. The name of the actual magazine has changed since the initial issue from Girl to Rise. This was not a merger with the guy version of Rise, but simply a name change that kept the same female geared content. Thus, there are two magazines called Rise; one geared towards male athletes and one for female athletes. From this point on, the reference of Rise magazine will refer to the female issue unless otherwise noted. Rise magazine was said to be “the first magazine to focus exclusively on the influential teen girl athlete” (Girl, 2011). Rise’s mission states:

Every story inspires, motivates, educates, and/or celebrates teen girl athletes as we support their efforts to run faster, jump higher, compete stronger, and celebrate athletic achievement in their lives (Girl, 2011).

Rise magazine is published three times a year and is distributed directly to female high school coaches across the country (Girl, 2011). To date, the four issues of Rise magazine were released in Fall 2009, Winter 2010, Spring 2010, and Fall 2010. Covers
of *Rise* magazine have included high school athletes such as eight-time Kansas State track champion Hallie Kuhlman, Under Armour All-American softball players Hallie Wilson and Kylee Lahners, and Olympic gymnast Shawn Johnson (*Girl*, 2009; ESPN *Rise*, Winter 2010; ESPN *Rise*, Fall 2010).

It is my aim to look at how ESPN’s *Rise* magazine has represented the female athlete using visual communications as well as what kinds of advertising the magazine presents for its audience. I am interested in focusing on all of the images within the magazines, from advertisements to feature articles. I want to gain an understanding of what the magazine is representing as the “ideal” sporting female, as well as how the magazine portrayed sport and its role in the lives of young women. Analyzing images of athletic and non-athletic contexts from *Rise* magazine will help to attain each of these goals. Finally, it is my intention to identify potential implications these images may have on high school girls.

In order to best analyze the images and come to some conclusions about *Rise* magazine, I must first review some of the literature on the subject. I will concentrate on four primary areas to review: gender and sport, gender and power, feminist concern/theory, and sport magazines and gender. Within each of the primary areas, I will also explore a number of subcategories as well. It is my hope that by understanding the past literature, I can best identify if the images from *Rise* magazine fall in line with past representations of female athletes or if this magazine is really doing something new and revolutionary for the female sports world.
Literature Review

Gender and Sport

In order to understand where perceptions of gender and sport came from, we must look at where they began. As young children, boys and girls are exposed to “gender-typed” toys. Young boys are given toys that “encourage exploration, manipulation, invention, construction and provide feedback” (Miller, 1987, p. 474). Young girls, in contrast, are given toys that “afford practice in domestic activities (irons, stoves) or in mothering behaviors (dolls, stuffed animals)” (Miller, 1987, p. 474). As children get older, the gender segregation continues as they are introduced to the gender-specific sports each gender allowed to play.

Masculine sport involves contact, aggression, and the use of force (Koivula, 2001). Thus, sports such as football and baseball are for boys (Hardin & Greer, 2009, p. 210). “Feminine sports” allow for girls to showcase their beauty, and those engaged with such sports experience little or no gender conflict (Koivula, 2001, Royce; Gebelt, & Duff, 2003, p. 49). Examples of feminine sports include figure skating, gymnastics, and aerobics (Koivula, 2001; Hardin & Greer, 2009). These are all individual sports that do not involve heavy amounts of contact and allow for “segregation of the female athlete from teammates” and for “the confirmation of the participant’s “femininity” (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1999, p. 43).

As children get older and carry on with sports, the gender typing continues. “Sport has been found to reinforce a power differential based on gender that is not only favorable to males, but may also be constraining toward females” (Ross & Shinew, 2008, p. 41; Henderson et al., 1996). Sport has also been traditionally associated with
masculinity and is a site for male domination (Sever, 2005). Messner (1998) also believes that domination for men stems from sport being viewed as “natural” and participation being strongly encouraged (Messner, 1998). Women, on the other hand, are encouraged to stay on the sidelines and take on more domestic roles instead.

Some cultures go so far as to view women’s participation in sport as inappropriate (Sever, 2005). If a woman does choose to engage with competitive sport, she may be viewed as masculine or even as having inferior physical capabilities compared to a man based solely on her gender (Sever, 2005; Oglesby, 2008).

Conversely, men who choose not to participate in sport are looked down upon and viewed as “unmanly” (Sever, 2005). Society has positioned sport as something only men can succeed at because only they possess the qualities that sport requires: superiority, mental and physical toughness, competitiveness, initiative, strength, power, aggression, and confidence (Duncan, 2006).

There are, without question, some female athletes who are “skilled and forceful subjects, and who embody power,” and yet they are looked down upon simply because they are women (Ross & Shinew, 2008, p. 41; Whitson, 1994). Despite a significant increase in the number of opportunities for women since the enactment of Title IX, research shows that female athletes still fail to get the “stature, respect and approval that athletic participation brings to boys and men” (Royce, Gebelt, & Duff, 2003, p. 47).

Unlike the male athletes, female athletes are encouraged to only participate in non-contact and individual sports (Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005). Those women who choose to ignore the whispers, stares and labels to engage in contact or team sports face a number of additional challenges. Some of the barriers they face include a significant lack
of safe and appropriate sports facilities, a lack of women in decision-making positions to speak on their behalf, and lack of female role models (Sever, 2005). Women participating in sports have been subjected to physical and/or verbal sexual harassment (Sever, 2005). The negative representation of women in sport may further continue the cycle of how women in sport are looked at by influencing younger generations’ perceptions and attitudes towards women, sport, and gender equality (Oglesby, 2008).

**Gender and Power**

**Forefront.** Since the 1972 creation of Title IX, the number of girls participating in athletics jumped nearly ten times to the point where nearly half of all high school females are participating in athletics (Elliot, Goldberg & Kuehl, 2010). With the implementation of Title IX, girls and women became protected from exclusion on the basis of sex within any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Rhodes, 2004). Despite these, and many other, advancements for women in sports, Michael Sanserino (2010) asserts that fewer women fill roster spots than men and continue to earn less in athletic scholarship dollars than men (Sanserino, 2010). Fink (1998, p. 37) argues that the media are responsible for the perceptions of women in sport, saying, “the visibility of women is “all in the hands of the media.”

The media have the power and ability to impact large masses of people through means such as framing and agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is described as the “ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda” (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009, p. 1). Throughout history and on a constant basis we see the mass media “presenting objects and suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, and have feelings about” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 177).
Framing, “the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy,” is something that exists on a number of different levels (Nelson, Clawson, Oxley, 1997, p. 567). Media framing is essentially how the media decide to present an issue or event. Within each frame, the media give audience members a specific way to interpret a topic (Geer, 2004). While some scholars may argue that media framing is subconscious, others believe that what the media are doing in terms of framing is intentional (D’Angelo, 2002). Framing choices can be attributed in part to “social and professional routines of journalists” (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 23; Van Dijk, 1985), driven by ideology and prejudice (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Edelman, 1993), or shaped by an interaction of journalists’ norms and practices and of the influence of interest groups (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). As a result, audience members may come to believe that what the media are presenting to them is just the normal, accepted perception of the issue or event. As it relates to this specific study, framing has the ability to influence perceptions of images in two different ways. First, the content within the images could be framed to project the traditional and stereotypical representations of female athletes that have existed for a number of years. Or, the framing could show viewers information that showcases a different take on female athletes that they may not have thought of. Slothuus (2008) refers to the concept of a new consideration as a result of framing as the belief content. This new perspective could represent female athletes in a way that is different from past representations and showcases their true athletic ability. Thus, media producers retain a certain degree of power over the ways issues are perceived.
Another level of power that the media have is within visual messages. “The power of photographs to convey meaning is already significant, particularly in sports” (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, & Hardin, 2002, p. 344). Images are powerful – indeed, often more so – than the words that surround them in a magazine or other popular text. Duncan pinpointed this issue: “Photographs do not simply create images of women or girls, men or boys; they construct differences between females and males and address viewers as though the differences are natural and real” (Duncan, 1990, p. 24-25). A photograph not only freezes a moment in time, but freezes a point-of-view in time as well.

Mary Jo Kane (1989) argued that there is a need to evaluate the images of female athletes because of the images’ powerful ability to influence attitudes and beliefs (Kane, 1989). In essence, female athletes are photographed as if to say, “We’re winners, but we’ll still look pretty for you. We’re not threatening. We’re strong but feminine. We’re not ugly, not bad marriage material” (Bishop, 2003, 186; Nelson, 1998, p. 146). It is as if the women need to justify their athleticism through their femininity. Being a competitive athlete is not enough; women must also be “kind, nurturing, accommodating, nonthreatening, placating, pretty, and small” (Bishop, 2003, p.186).

**Underrepresentation.** One of the primary issues that exist within the literature on the coverage of female athletes is the underrepresentation of female athletes (Kane, 1989). This issue is important because the underrepresentation may result in women in sport being viewed as unimportant compared with the “real” sports world of men. Women’s sports that “do receive coverage are safe, socially “acceptable” sports” (Kane, 1989, p. 60). Underrepresentation of female athletics in the media dates back more than three decades with Miller’s 1975 study of the *New York Post* and The *Los Angeles Times*. 
In her study, Miller found each newspaper’s sports section to contain a significantly lower percentage of photographs of women than in any other sections of the paper (Miller, 1975). Fast forward nearly 20 years later to Salwen and Wood’s (1994) study of cover photographs from *Sports Illustrated*, and not much had changed. Salwen and Wood found that 55 women were used on various covers of *Sports Illustrated* as compared to the 782 men (Salwen & Wood, 1994). More recently, St. James (2010) conducted a study noting that that *Sports Illustrated*, excluding the annual swimsuit issues only featured one female on its cover in 2008: Danica Patrick. *Sports Illustrated for Kids* is another magazine failing to represent the female athlete. Armentrout, Kamphoff, and Thomae’s 2010 study revealed the blatant underrepresentation of female athletes in the magazine. Through the analysis of *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, they exposed that females were only “represented 12% of the time and on the cover less than 1% of the time” (Armentrout, Kamphoff, and Thomae, 2010, p. 26).

**Ambivalence.** When a woman does break the mold and engage in, or even succeed in, sport she is often viewed in the media in ambivalent or derogatory terms that trivialize her achievements (Duncan, 2006; George, Hartley, & Pari, 2001). The coverage of women in sports can be equated to that of a visually appealing decoration (Redmond, Ridinger & Battenfield, 2009). Regardless of their age, women are most often referred to as “girls” (Oglesby, 2008). No matter what their skill levels are, women in sport are discussed in terms of their physical as well as emotional attributes and responses rather than their skill or athletic talent as compared to men (Oglesby, 2008). The emphasis on these female athletes is transferred from their athletic ability to their sexuality (Weaving, 2005). Media all too often portray female athletes as “sex symbols, as opposed to
“powerful, talented athletes” (Cunningham et al., 2004, p. 862; Fink & Kensicki, 2002, p. 331). This can be seen through the endless media coverage of female athletes being depicted as the “feminine athletic ideal, which consists of an attractive appearance, thin body, and sexual appeal” (Duke, 2010, p. viii).

Even when there is an increase in the coverage of female athletes, the “biased depictions of the female athlete may send a potent message” that does more harm than good (Fink, 1998, p. 38). It is at times very difficult to find women being photographed in a positive, athletic way. The term positive in this instance refers to photographing female athletes in a way that affirms their athleticism and showcases them as strong role models. In contrast, the term negative would signify that female athletes were photographed in ways that presented stereotypical depictions of female athletes; weak, highly sexual, passive, etc.

Women are accepted as athletes and covered by the media when they are depicting the traditional stereotypical roles as deemed by society (Greendorfer, 1990). Even when female athletes were covered in positive ways that stressed a “women’s strength, skill, or expertise [there were] with negative suggestions that trivialized the women’s efforts or implied that they were unsuited to sport” (Duncan & Hasbrook, 2002, p. 91). Through this type of ambivalence among the images, a “symbolic denial of power for women” is created. (Messner, Duncan & Jensen, 1993, p. 123).

Feminist Concerns/Theory

Feminist research on women’s sport first really took off in the 1980s (Markula 2005). With sport being a “site of production of the ideology of male superiority,” it becomes difficult for women to truly penetrate the sports world in a way that
acknowledges their gender and athletic ability in a positive light (Markula, 2005, p. 3). One of the biggest feminist concerns in regard to how women in sport are portrayed was that they are constantly being compared to the male athlete, and their differences have been emphasized in a way that positions women as inferior to men (Markula, 2005). A key danger of this is that the comparisons within the media can lead women to internalize the gender identities that society has created for them. Internalizing one’s gender identity means that, in this case, the female athlete becomes subject to media influence (Barker-Ruchti, Tinning, 2010).

Femininity exists as the map for how women should act and is “socially constructed, historically specific, and mediated by social class, race, ethnicity, and other social categories of inequality” (Scraton & Flintoff, 2002, p. 11). If this is true, then the marginalization of women in mediated sport is a reflection of their inferior position within culture. Some feminists (McDonagh & Pappano, 2008) believe that sport produces an emphasized femininity that “encompasses an idealized version of Western womanhood that posits the women be physically inferior to men, weak, docile, concerned with their appearance, and attentive to enhancing their heterosexual desirability” (Carlson, 2010, p. 429).

Society takes gender a step further in using it to influence which games or activities are defined as “real” sports (Creedon, 1997). One of the most popular and most watched sports in America, football, is a male dominated sport (Corso, 2011). The media hype surrounding football, the Super Bowl in particular, shows that men have a certain degree of privilege within our culture, a privilege that women are strictly denied because of their gender (Creedon, 1994).
Within the actual photographs of women in sport, one issue for feminists falls within the *power* that the images possess. When someone looks at a sports photograph, he or she might view it as a glimpse of the real world that “we have seen before and know to be true” (Zimmerman, Kauffmman, & Leifer, 1975). The potential issue of seeing these images is that those viewing them can perceive the photographs as reality, which can, in turn distort their perception of themselves and others (Stein, 2009). Viewing stereotypical photographs over and over again leads to a reinforcement of gendered relations that disadvantage the women in the photographs and make the photographs appear to be the norm. Thus, when looking at the repetition of these images, things such as body position of the woman and men become an important theme.

There are a number of cues that can be identified within images showing that the female athlete has been portrayed differently than the male athlete. Sexual difference, for example, has been defined as “culturally constructed differences between men and women framed as ‘natural’” (Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005, p. 106). Duncan and Hasbrook (2002) identify ambivalence as another cue, suggesting that the ambivalence of female athletes explains the “mixed or contradictory messages” that exist in media coverage. Essentially, ambivalence as it applies to female athletes is for the media to cover the female athlete, but in a way that may present her gender before her athletic ability.

This study will be approached from a liberal feminist approach. Hargreaves (1990) asserts that liberal feminism within the sports world is essentially working towards the elimination of any social impediments that could prevent women from having the opportunities to compete on equal terms with men. Liberal feminism does not
believe that there are any biological reasons why women do not have the ability to compete on the same playing field with men. Thus, women should be given equal access to the traditionally masculine sports.

**Sport Magazines and Gender**

Magazines have the ability to reinforce the gender-role attitudes and perceptions that society holds as the standard (MacKay & Covell, 1997). The “visual messages” (photographs) that exist within magazines have the ability to “reflect and shape—some would argue even create—attitudes and values about ourselves and others” (Kane, 1996, pg. 59). Thus, when someone is looking at magazine views the photographs, they see the images as real and truthful.

The two largest circulation sport magazines in existence today are *ESPN The Magazine* and *Sports Illustrated*. *Sports Illustrated* is “the most respected voice in sports journalism which reaches a weekly audience of nearly 21 million adults” (SI media kit, 2010). Not only does this magazine reach an adult audience, *Sports Illustrated* also has a predominantly male audience (Reichert, 1999). The other sport magazine, *ESPN The Magazine*, states that the magazine is “for young men who want to stay on top of athletes, teams, topics, and upcoming events in their own sports world” (ESPN the magazine, 2011).

The majority of women’s magazines, those with content geared toward a female audience, function within the limits that enable the “hereto-sexual” (Gauntlett, 2002). This ideal follows the notion that while women can be independent, they must also be attractive to men. Thus, these magazines would never encourage, or allow, women to move outside of the boundaries of the ‘sexy’, the ‘stylish’, and the ‘fashionable’
In his “gender advertisements” study, Erving Goffman (1979) discovered characteristics present within images of women that position them as subordinate or inferior to men. These images of women in magazines have a tendency to stem from the concept of the “male gaze” (Brandt & Carstens, 2005). Through the lens of the male gaze, images “portray what women should look like and what men should look for” (Krass, Blauwkamp & Wesselink, 2001, p. 753). More often than not, women are photographed on their backs, assuming an awkward stance, or with a “licensed withdrawal” (Shoop & Luther, 2009). Coined by Goffman, licensed withdrawal presents women in a passive, alienated way that distances themselves from the situation (Goffman, 1979).

In terms of women in sport magazines specifically, the “traditional women’s magazines, including those with an athletic veneer (such as Shape) have traditionally fallen short of providing empowering images of women” (Hardin, Lynn & Walsdorf, 2005, pg. 106). Two magazines that were created specifically for women and sport were Sports Illustrated for Women (SI Women) and Real Sports. SI Women was intended to cover “the sports that women play and what they want to follow, from basketball to tennis, soccer to football and features real athletes, tells their real stories, and gives the real scoop on women’s sports” (Rabb, 1999; Answers, 2011). Hardin, Lynn, and Walsdorf concluded through their 2005 study that SI Women had lost its “uniqueness” and was placed into the category of an aesthetic fitness magazine (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, 2005).

The other magazine created for women and sport, Real Sports, was first published in 1997 and is still being published today in the form of its Annual Most Important
Moments in Sports edition that is published once a year (Real Sports, 2011). The magazine also has a website that is being published today and serves primarily as an archive to past annual issues. According to the magazine’s website, Real Sports’ mission is to be the “Magazine of choice for fans and athletes involved in girl’s and women’s sports. Its purpose is to “entertain and inform so our readers can become involved with the drama of competition involving female sports” (Mission statement, 2004). While this magazine is said to be the “authority on women’s sports,” it does not appeal to the teen female athlete or sports enthusiast (Real Sports, 2011).

Advertisements within magazines offer another area of exploration. Goffman (1976) was one of the first to identify that advertising images express ideals of gender (Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998; Goffman, 1976). Helsop, Newman, and Gauthier (1989) assert that the ideals of gender reinforce, “stereotypes to convey messages quickly” (Cuneen, 1999, par. 3; Heslop, Newman & Gauthier, 1989). The dangers with stereotypical advertisements are that perceptions of “what is female” and “what is male” are then created and thus engrained in the consumer’s mind (Cuneen, 1999, par. 3).

Some major corporations, such as Nike and Reebok, have recognized that women control the vast majority of the sporting good and apparel market (Cuneen, 1999). In an attempt to reach this market, these companies have begun to create advertisements that move women from the domestic, dependent role into a stronger and more athletic role (Cuneen, 1999). Despite these attempts at advancement, Levin (1990) contests that with sport as a whole being largely a male-dominated area, it will only be a matter of time before the advertisements will revert back to the stereotypical depictions of females (Cuneen, 1999; Levin, 1990).
Several studies have been conducted looking at the advertisements within *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. Sulzby (1985), among numerous others, has argued that children identify with the meanings in pictures before they comprehend the textual meanings (Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998; Sulzby, 1985). Thus, it is important to take a look at what the images in a youth sporting magazine such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids* are portraying to young athletes. Cuneen and Sidwell (1998) concluded in their study that there existed very specific behaviors that were reserved for each gender and that these behaviors were depicted in the advertisements. It was also identified within the same study that “gender portrayals were used to frame “sexual difference” in the advertisements” (Lynn, Walsdorf, Hardin & Hardin, 2002, par. 11; Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998).

The sheer number of male models in advertisements outnumbered female models 6:1. Aside from the quantity of male models in advertisement, what Cuneen and Sidwell (1998) found in the context of the advertisements was interesting as well. The advertisements that depicted any sort of activity featured a male model. Males overwhelmingly were depicted in the prominent role within the advertisement whereas women were shown serving supporting roles. When women were shown in advertisements they were generally the advertising models or shown engaging in recreational activities such as jogging or rollerblading. These recreational activities often lacked a competitiveness involving women working towards their achieving some goal. Rather, the women were photographed in leisurely activities that were more about having fun. Women in the advertisements were more often than not strategically posed and even put into provocative positions (Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998).
Hardin et al. (2002) examined editorial photographs within *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. After breaking down the images within the magazine into genres of sport that included high risk, strength, aesthetic, and neutral, Hardin et al. (2002) found that overall, men were the main focus of editorial photographs 76.3% of the time (Perotti, 2009; Hardin et al., 2002). In line with past findings, Hardin et al. also identified that men were photographed more within a team context, as leaders, and in active poses when compared to the female athletes (Perotti, 2009; Hardin et al., 2002). Hardin et al. concludes in her 2002 study that up to the point of their study that *Sports Illustrated for Kids* “has done little to present gender-equal images to its readers” (Hardin et al., 2002, p. 355). *SIK* has essentially done little to photograph the female athlete as leaders, in active poses, in team contexts or as the main focus of an image.
Methodology

This study engaged in a qualitative method known as textual analysis. According to Macanamara textual analysis is an “unobtrusive and non-reactive tool used to measure communication messages” (Kian, 2005, p. 5). McKee discussed the ability of textual analysis to identify cultures and subcultures and how they fit into the world they lived in (McKee, 2003). In order to make these claims, educated assumptions must be made to interpret the content how we see it (McKee, 2003). The concept of interpretation was important in that it involved decoding meanings and understanding that the interpretations were subjective and more than one reading of the text was possible (Eskes, T., Duncan, M., & Miller, E., 1998). McKee elaborated on the idea of being interpretative saying, “…there is no such thing as a single, ‘correct’ interpretation of any text” (McKee, 2001, p. 140). Engaging with this method has allowed me to combine “evidence from [my] senses, and private experiences, to general and certain knowledge of what is really there” (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2004).

Sample

The sample utilized for this study was three issues of ESPN’s Rise girl magazines and two issues of the ESPN’s Rise guy magazines. My intentions were not to compare the two magazines to one another image-for-image, but rather to use the guy version of the magazine as a reference to how ESPN may have presented the female athlete differently or similarly in another version of the magazine.

ESPN’s Rise girl was targeted toward female athletes between the ages of 13-18 (Girl, 2011). The magazines had a circulation rate of 300,000 per issue and were distributed directly to high schools across the country (Girl Media Kit). ESPN’s Rise
magazine’s mission statement declared that “every story inspires, motivates, educates and/or celebrates teen girl athletes as we support their efforts to run faster, jump higher, compete stronger and celebrate athletic achievement in their lives” (Girl Media Kit). The three issues that were examined for this study were released in Fall 2009, Fall 2010, and Winter 2010. There was a fourth issue of Rise magazine published in the Spring of 2010. However, despite numerous attempts, I was unable to obtain a copy of this issue. Thus, the study proceeded with three of the four copies of ESPN Rise that have been published to date.

ESPN’s Rise guy magazine was broken up by state and then into month. The issues I examined were the Arizona December 2009 and Pennsylvania October 2010 issues. These issues were selected at random, as I simply purchased the first two issues I saw, and acted as another reference to better analyze the Rise magazines. I used these two issues as a comparative reference with the girl Rise magazines. My intention was to see if the representations of female athletes were different in the guy Rise as compared to the girl Rise. I used the same coding procedures for the images in guy Rise and girl Rise.

Procedures

From the three issues of girl Rise I conducted my analysis on the images within the magazines. My choice to analyze photographs only within the issues of ESPN Rise was based on my belief that images were powerful—indeed, often more so than the words that surround them in a magazine or popular text. It was possible to “treat the visual images as text because the visual often is just as loaded with ideology about health and beauty as written discourse and can be read as text” (Duncan, 1998, p323).
Duncan emphasized the importance of photographs, saying, “Photographs do not simply create images of women or girls, men or boys; they construct differences between females and males and address the viewers as though the differences are natural and real” (Duncan, 1990). The images of men and women created sexual differences that went beyond biological norms. The differences that photographs create between males and females will be referred to as “sexual differences.” One of my objectives was to examine if the culturally constructed differences that are often created between men and women extended to representations of high school aged girls. I wanted to see if at what point, if any, there was a so-called line drawn in the sand that would represent high school girls as girls and boys as boys without the use of sexual differences.

Women who want to express their sexuality on their own terms were often viewed as threatening to men. As a way to almost counter this threat, female athletes were presented in images as women first and athletes second. For example, when individual sportswomen appeared in the media they were often shown in non-athletic clothing, with jewelry and styled hairdos (Wenner, 1998). The sportsman on the other hand was nearly always shown in his uniform engaging with sport.

I also took into account the rationale behind both the editorial and advertising images. It was my belief that ESPN, in this specific instance, had an obligation to present female athletes in a certain way. ESPN made a claim early on that its intention with this magazine was to celebrate the female athlete (Girl, 2011). Thus, this magazine should be approached differently than the other beauty and gossip magazines that exist for high school females of this age. The images of the high school athletes should present the girls as athletes forefront in order to fulfill promises to readers. As for the advertising
images throughout the magazines, I understand that the advertisements were likely created for national campaigns and not solely for *Rise* magazine.

Goffman (1978), McArthur (1975), and Resko’s (1975) work on gender advertisements was utilized as a framework for examining images of females among the advertisements in *Rise* magazine. Goffman asserted that advertisements used stereotypical poses and body positioning to reinforce gender roles (Goffman, 1979). McArthur and Resko have examined the roles that men and women played in advertisements and determined that men were more often in an authoritative position and independent compared to the women that were dependent on the opposite sex (Paek, Nelson, & Vilela, 2011, p. 194). Goffman (1976) conducted studies looking at very specific body movements and found women to tilt their head lower to imply submission or appeasement towards men. He concluded that women tend not to face the camera directly and express displays of withdrawal by angling their eyes, head, and body away from the center of interest in the photograph (Ragan, 1982). In contrast, Goffman claimed that males within photographs were positioned in direct relation to the object of interest of the photograph or facing the camera head on (Ragan, 1982). The vast majority of past literature suggests that men in advertisements have been depicted as stronger, faster and more superior than women. With these images being replicated over and over again, the message becomes more natural and accepted that women are weaker, slower and less superior to men.

The first step I took in conducting my analysis was to combine past literature with my perspective and experiences to create a set of guiding questions that served as the standard for the analysis. In creating these questions I acknowledged and kept in mind
that sport was a hegemonic social institution that “…naturalizes men’s power and privilege over women” (Pedersen, 2002, p. 304). By creating a set of questions such as the ones below, this study has the ability to be applied to various other magazines. The questions included, but were not limited to the following:

1. How is the female athlete represented in relationship to sport in ESPN’s Girl Magazine?
2. How is she represented in relationship to boys and men in the magazine?
3. How are women and girls represented in advertisements and within non-athletic contexts in the magazine?

I analyzed both select editorial and advertisement images from each of the three magazines. As a means of checking my coding methods, I was able to consult with my advisor before, during and after my analysis of the photos to discuss my readings and alternative readings. The images I discussed within my findings are representative of both sides of the traditional and non-traditional depictions of female athletes. I selected images that were not outside the norm for images in the magazine. I did not intentionally select the ‘best’ or the ‘worst’ of the images, but rather selected images that represented the entire magazine as a whole. In order to fully discuss both the sets of images, I separated my findings to discuss the editorial and advertisement images as individual groups. I then addressed both sets of images as a whole.

My intentions were to showcase both sides of dominant issues that exist within images of female athletes. By dominant issues, I mean images that fell in line with past representations of female athletes and those images that presented a different take on the female athlete. Images that fell in line with past representations of female athletes presented the female athlete as small, weak, docile, inactive, sexual, etc. The images that presented a different take on the female athlete, and thus going against traditional sexual
differences, included things as photographing female athletes who participate in group sports, showcasing athletic abilities through movement, photographing from below as to make the athletes appear larger in stature, etc. In doing so, I used elements that were included in coding schemes from both Margaret Duncan’s 1990 study on sports photographs and sexual difference as well as Hardin, Lynn and Walsdorf’s 2005 study on images of women in sports magazines. By combining aspects from each study’s coding techniques I was best equipped to carry out both a unique and in-depth study.

Each of the images selected for analysis were subjected to a list of specific coding categories. In keeping with Duncan’s (1990) method of coding I broke my analysis up into content and context. Among the category of content included things such as physical appearance, pose/body position, facial expression, camera angle, motion and sport type. The context of the image included visual space surrounding the image, captions and any surrounding text.

Coding Categories

Physical Appearance. The first category of analysis was to look at the physical appearance of the person(s). The physical appearance identified what the person(s) were wearing in the image and whether the clothing was a definitive sport uniform. The pose/body position identified the physical position that person(s) was in. Duncan found that men were often photographed upright, in motion and showcasing their size whereas females were photographed as immobile, short and small in size (Duncan, 1990). The idea behind making men appear larger and women smaller was that size equates to power; the more size and height the more power. As a result of allowing women to be portrayed as vulnerable and smaller in size, the overall feeling of women in photographs
was submissiveness and weakness. In comparison, men were photographed as large in stature and in motion that often equated to an appearance of dominance that results from body position and poses alone. The pose and body position of female athletes was important, as Duncan (1990) notes, because a level of power was given to viewers as they were granted access to the female athlete’s body (Duncan, 1990). For example, women who faced the camera straight on tend to “offer a maximum display of whatever body part was at the moment being emphasized” (Duncan, 1990, p. 30). Through this positioning, women were presented as vulnerable by allowing specific, often sexualized, parts of her body to be on display. This invites the viewers in to objectify and sexualize the woman’s body.

**Facial Expression.** The category of facial expression has identified how the person(s) face looked in the photograph and what that expression may have been implying. Duncan (1990) found that women were often photographed with a “come on” expression on their face that implied sexual availability (Duncan, 1990). This particular look acknowledged the viewer by the model’s head tilt and direct eye contact with the camera (Duncan, 1990). Within this category of facial expression, I have also acknowledged the presence or absence of tears coming from the subjects in the photographs. Duncan (1990) noted that men have been rarely photographed as crying because tears were identified with weakness. Rather, if a man had shown emotion, it was more likely to have been expressed by their faces buried in their hands or in a towel (Duncan, 1990). “...tears, displayed in photographs and underscored in captions may be another external indicator or difference- women cry often, displaying their weakness for all to see; real men hardly ever cry, reaffirming their strength” (Duncan, 1990, p. 38).
**Camera Angle.** The camera angle used to photograph the person(s) within the image played an important role in the overall message of the image. When the camera was below the subject, as to shoot up at the subject, superiority was suggested. The subject was in a dominant, elevated position and in relation to the viewer was bigger (Duncan, 1990). Conversely, when the camera was shooting down on the subject, the person appeared to be smaller, in a subordinate position that suggested inferiority (Duncan, 1990). The perceived height of the subject played a role in how viewers saw them. Duncan (1990) found that men were frequently photographed to appear much larger than women. Furthermore, female athletes were “often photographed below eye level angles, suggesting smallness and inferiority” (Duncan, 1990, p. 38).

**Motion.** It was from Hardin, Lynn and Walsdorf’s 2005 study on images of women in selected sporting magazines that the analysis of ‘motion’ came from. Hardin et al. (2005) used the concept of motion to identify if the subject within the photograph was either active or passive. A passive subject within this specific study meant that the subject was without question in a stationary position. An active pose in contrast indicated a subject(s) that was engaging in movement of some type. This movement may be lifting weights, running, swinging a bat, etc.

**Sport Type.** I also identified the specific sport type within each image. Determination of the sport type came from the clothing, caption, equipment, and surrounding text. A distinction was first made if a sport type could be identified. If no sport type could be identified with certainty, the person(s) in that image were placed in an “unknown” category in regard to sport type. For those images where the sport could be identified, the sport type was then identified as either an individual or group sport.
Context. While analyzing the context of each image I took into consideration three things: visual space, captions and surrounding text. The visual space was identified as the background and context that the person(s) is in. Things such as whether or not the image was photographed on the field/court versus in a studio-type were examined. In the instance that a caption was present with the image it was my belief that it was put there for a specific reason. Thus, it must be relevant and taken into consideration. The surrounding text played a large role in shedding light on the story that the image was portraying. For example, an image of a young girl in a tennis outfit with a racquet in a rundown neighborhood would not make much sense unless it was understood within the context of the surrounding article.

As the researcher, I personally conducted the analysis on each of the five total magazines myself. This allowed for consistency and certainty that each of the magazines was coded the same and my results were fluid across the entire sample. As both a feminist scholar and athlete, I had to position my research in a way that acknowledged my personal experiences and yet did not become solely directed by them. I allowed my background as a former high school and college athlete and current college coach to influence my readings of the images. I understood that there may have been a number of different readings of the images.
Findings

Editorial Images

The editorial images maintained consistency across each of the three magazines in terms of the qualities in line with past representations of female athletes versus qualities that presented female athletes in non-traditional ways. All but one of the editorial images featured female athletes.

Physical Appearance. The appearance of the female athlete was important. What each female athlete wore often gave first insight into whether they were represented as athletes or high school girls. I examined whether the magazines portrayed the girls as ‘happy-go-lucky’ high school girls (slang terminology that I defined as appearing to be bubbly, joyous and carefree) versus intense, focused athletes. The majority of the editorial images used for analysis from these magazines all contained images of female athletes in athletic clothing, often in sport-specific clothing, who had their hair pulled back into a ponytail. However, there were a handful of images that did not follow this pattern. The cover of the Winter 2010 issue featured 8-time Kansas State Track Champion Hallie Kuhlman (Appendix A). In the image, the track star was shown wearing jeans and a blue Nike hooded sweatshirt. Kuhlman also had small studs in her pierced ears and painted her nails a silver color. Her hair, pulled back into long ponytail with sideswiped bangs across her forehead, could be interpreted by readers as a feminine marker. From her appearance, it was not evident she was an athlete.

This ponytail over-the-shoulder look was the predominant look for the girls who had their hair pulled back. This particular hairstyle may have suggested to readers the girls were athletes since they kept their hair out of their face, but placing their long hair
over their shoulder acted as a sign of femininity. While possible, it is often less common to see an image of a male athlete with his hair down. The presence of this feminine marker has become so regular it appeared to be the norm.

In the Fall 2010 issue one image featured two male football players holding hands with one female football player while walking out on the field (Appendix B). The photograph, taken from behind the athletes, showed all three of the football players in their full football uniforms with pads and helmets. The only distinguishing feminine marker from this image was the girl’s long hair showing out of the back of her helmet. Had her hair been short or tucked under the helmet, it would have been difficult to know the gender of the athlete.

There were cases in which the female athletes were presented as athletes, but with their hair down. In the Winter 2010 issue this was evident with three dominant female basketball players (Appendix C). Each of the three girls wore their basketball uniforms with matching shoes and socks while dribbling basketballs down a court. The athletes also all had their hair down in the images. The presentation of a basketball uniform with their hair down offered contrasting representations of these athletes. It showed they were athletes with the use of their uniforms, but also attractive and feminine as well by having their hair down and styled.

**Body Pose/Position.** In the category of body pose/position, the photographs I discussed contained both images that went against stereotypical norms and in correlation with them. There were images of female athletes in positions that rather than suggesting their athleticism, highlighted their sexuality and femininity. In each of the three covers (Appendix A, D & E) the body pose/positions were questionable. While two of the
covers presented images of female athletes wearing athletic clothing, the poses did not suggest athleticism.

On the Fall 2009 cover, gymnast Shawn Johnson stood with her arms on her hips. Additionally, her shoulders and hips were positioned partly away from camera while her head looked straight on. While this was an attractive image of her, the pose does not speak to her athleticism.

The Fall 2010 issue showcased two high school softball females. Each of the girls were standing, while one girl, Hallie Wilson, placed her hand on her hip and bent one leg. Lydia Carra’s photograph in the Fall 2010 issue demonstrated another example of a female athlete who fell into the typical feminine pose as she too stood with her hands on her hips (Appendix F). Carra’s weight was transferred to her left leg while she bent her right leg. The hand-on-hip look, rarely seen with images of male athletes, thus becomes equated as a sign of femininity. This body position was a common theme seen throughout the editorial images containing females across all of the magazines.

The other girl from the Fall 2010 issue, Kylee Lahners, was facing more towards the camera while looking at Wilson (Appendix B). This image of the two athletes showed them as high school girls standing around, having fun and likely strategically placed into these positions. Their athletic accomplishments or abilities were not apparent in the image.

The most suggestive cover image, which fell in line with past representations of female athletes came from the Winter 2010 cover (Appendix A). The female athlete, Hallie Kuhlman, was shown bending at the waist with her hands on a railing. Kuhlman was photographed from slightly below and it appeared as though she was leaning over the
railing, not showcasing anything athletic about this high school girl. Readers of the magazine could be encouraged to read this photograph as a typical high school girl in the stands cheering on athletes on the track or field.

Possibly the most sexualized image from these three issues came from the Fall 2010 image of tennis player Slone Stephens (Appendix G). In this image Stephens was photographed while leaning on her tennis racquet with a bend at her waist. Her feet were staggered so her left foot rested about a foot in front of her right foot. This created a slight separation between her legs that began at her knees. Stephen’s arms were completely straight and hands rested on the racquet as if she was almost pushing it into the ground. She was photographed from the profile angle, thus showcasing her body’s curves. The racquet used in the image was more of a prop since it was turned sideways, and may not be evident as a racquet if not accompanied by an article about tennis. The feeling readers may have gotten from this image was that Stephens was exhausted and was resting on the tennis racquet.

**Facial Expression.** The facial expressions the girls had within these magazines lacked in intensity and concentration. Instead, most of the photographs featured smiling female athletes, images that could be associated with any high school girl. While female athletes do not necessarily need to be tough and intense all of the time, there should exist some balance to convey that female athletes do have the ability to be powerful and strong too. Aside from the happy and at times over the top joyous faces, the magazines did not feature any explicit photographs that showcased Duncan’s (1990) “come on” look. Rather than showcasing this “come on” expression, when an image did feature a powerful facial expression, it was executed quite well. By this I mean the intensity and power
displayed in editorial photographs conveyed authenticity as opposed to coming off as staged or fake. Even with a photographer who has a plan behind each photograph, the image showcasing the engaged, active athlete head to toe was refreshing.

**Camera Angle.** In summary: The overall camera angles used for the editorial images across the board were inconsistent with past images of female athletes. In the past, the majority of images of female athletes were photographed from above, making them appear smaller and inferior (Duncan, 1990). The vast majority of the female athletes within the *Rise* magazines were photographed either straight on or even from below. The from-below angle gave strength to these young women and a sort of stature that in the past was primarily consistent with images of male athletes.

**Motion.** The motion, or lack thereof was consistent with past images of female athletes. These athletes, who engage in sport and thus motion, were photographed posing the majority of the time for the camera. Of the fifteen editorial images I chose to best represent the three magazines, eleven of them showcased female athletes in a passive motion. While it was expected each of the covers would have posed images, it was surprising just how many images within the magazines were of female athletes strategically placed into a pose. For example, the Winter 2010 issue featured a group of swimmers who had the opportunity to talk with Olympic swimmer Katie Hoff (Appendix I). Three of the girls sat alongside the swimming pool, around Hoff, while the other two girls were in the pool looking up at Hoff. The girls sitting on the edge of the pool had their legs in the pool. The first girl in the line sitting by the pool held her arms in her lap, while the second girl had her arms to her sides, Hoff had her arms in her lap and the last girl in line had her arms by her sides. Two of the girls sitting by the edge of the pool
were looking at Hoff while the other girl was looking at the two girls in the pool. Hoff was smiling and looking over the heads of the two girls in the pool. The two girls in the pool were smiling and looking up at Hoff. While this may be something that actually happens alongside the pool, the athletes appeared very posed and too in sync with one another.

In contrast, a handful of images throughout each magazine featured girls in positions that showcased their participation and engagement with sport. The Fall 2010 issue for example showcases softball players participating in the ESPN Rise Games\(^1\) (Appendix H). The image presented one girl with her back to viewers of the image while she caught a softball. Her arms were up in the air as the ball was moving into her glove. Her feet appeared as though they were in the process of coming down from jumping. The other girl was diving, head first, into the base. The girl diving had her arms stretched out towards the base and her body extended across the dirt. Readers did not see a clear visual of her face because the girl catching the ball blocked part of it. This photograph appeared real and authentic as this was likely taken during the softball game rather than being posed.

**Sport Type.** The type of sport female athletes are photographed in has been an ongoing issue. In the past, those female athletes photographed were the ones who took part in individual, competitive sports—any sport in which the athletes compete by themselves versus competing alongside a team. Individual and “gender appropriate” sports for women include gymnastics, swimming and figure skating. In contrast, history

---

\(^1\) ESPN RISE games at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. The ESPN RISE games features competitive youth divisions playing alongside elite high school competition (ESPN rise games, 2011)
has shown that those female athletes who participate in “gender-inappropriate” sports are far less likely to receive media coverage (Pirinen, 1999). Competitive sports are covered much more than lifestyle sports such as surfing or rollerblading. This is largely attributed to competitive sports being spectator sports that others engage in by observing.

Two out of the three cover images from Rise fell into the category of showcasing “gender appropriate” sports female athletes. Both track and gymnastics are considered to be “gender appropriate” because the athletes can engage in competition individually. However, the Fall 2010 cover did oppose the norm by featuring two members of a softball team (Appendix B). By going through the magazine and identifying each sport type photographed, I came to the conclusion that each of the magazines showcase a solid balance between images of females who participate in individual and group sports.

**Context.** Few images actually showed female athletes engaging in their sport. Even images of them within their sporting context were often after the event ended when they were celebrating a victory. One of the images that really did go against the norms of body pose/position was from the Fall 2010 issue featuring a softball player on the field making a play at a base while another player was sliding in (Appendix G). This was a rare glimpse into the athleticism of high school female athletes.

The overall context of the images tended to present the female athletes within an athletic environment. Thus, the basketball players are seen on basketball courts, softball players on a softball field and football players on a football field. Despite the majority of the images following in this pattern, some exceptions existed. On the cover of the Fall 2009 issue, gymnast Shawn Johnson was featured in front of a plain white background (Appendix E). Additionally, on the cover of the Winter 2010 issue, track champion
Hallie Kuhlman was shown behind the railing that separated the fans from the actual playing field (Appendix A). The visual space surrounding her image was interesting in that her position in relation to the sporting field presented her as a spectator rather than an athlete. The other images presenting the athletes in a non-athletic visual space often had an apparent reason for it. For example, in the Fall 2009 issue, teammates Valcinisha Conerly and Teaianna Jones were pictured on the stairs of what could have been either their school or a home (Appendix J). Their surroundings were grey and full of dead vines and it was evident they were at the scene of a disaster. While the visual space that Conerly and Jones were photographed in was not considered to be athletic, their surroundings correlated well with their story and thus made sense. These two athletes played basketball in New Orleans and lost everything from Hurricane Katrina. The story surrounding the image talked about how these girls returned to New Orleans, despite losing it all, and began to play basketball again and did not let their circumstances get them down.

Captions. The majority of the captions used in the magazines described some accomplishment or statistic that the athlete pictured had accomplished. The language used in the captions was unique and different than past captions accompanying images of this sort. In the Fall 2010 issue for example, soccer player Elizabeth Burchenal was featured in her soccer uniform holding a soccer ball in the palm of her hand (Appendix K). The caption beside her image read, “Can No. 33 Saint Ursula climb the rankings despite the graduation of powerhouse scorer Elizabeth Burchenal?” What made this caption unique was the use of the word ‘powerhouse.’ The term powerhouse was generally associated with power and dominance. By pairing the word with a female
athlete that power was then cast upon her as an athlete in a way that was not often done. This wording enabled this female athlete to be placed on the same playing field as a male athlete and narrowed the gap of sexual difference.

Almost every female referenced in the captions was identified by her first name only. Referencing someone by his or her first name has often been a sign of youth and signified a lower status. Thus the female athletes may not be taken as serious athletes by the use of their first name. The references to female athletes in *Rise*, the male version of the magazine, were very different. While it was interesting that *Rise* showcased female athletes in its magazine in the first place, what was even more interesting was that *Rise* identified the female athletes by their first and last name in each caption used (Rise, 2009). The captions for the male athletes also used the athlete’s first and last name. By doing this, *Rise* was allowing both male and female athletes the same amount of respect and authority.

**Text.** The last part of my analysis of the context of (editorial and advertising) images throughout the girl *Rise* magazines involved the surrounding text. It was important to note, as previously mentioned within the visual-space analysis, that the actual story and text that surrounds the image plays a large role in understanding the image itself. In the Fall 2009 issue three sisters were photographed while running on their cross-country course (Appendix L). Based on the image alone, the girls were presented as strong, athletic, female athletes. While there was no caption with the image, there was surrounding text. The primary text presented gave a brief example of a cheer the girls did before one of their meets. The cheer read:

The Senior goes: My name is ______, you know what I got?
Then everyone says: What do you got?
Senior: I got a team that’s hotter than hot!
Everyone: How hot is hot?
Senior: Sexy legs and a cute booty, too.
Everyone: Do do do do.
Senior: I love cross country, how ‘bout you?
Everyone: 1,2,3…FALCONS (ESPN Rise, 2009, p. 40).

The wording of this cheer was problematic for a number of reasons. First, the message that this cheer sent was that their cross-country team was focused on their physical appearance more than their athletic abilities. Not only does the cheer identify that the girls on the team were “hotter than hot,” but the cheer continued on to describe their physical attributes. The athletes referenced their sexy legs and cute booties as though they were better cross-country runners because of those attributes. I do not think that it was appropriate for high school aged girls to be placing so much emphasis on their bodies in a sexual way. The second issue was that their coach allowed these girls to do the cheer before each meet. I think that as a coach, and adult role model, he/she should be able to tell the athletes that their cheer was not appropriate and that it shifted the focus from the girls as athletes to physically appealing girls. A third issue with the text was that it spoke to the idea of sexual difference in that it was less likely for a male track team to be singing a cheer such as this. This suggests that cheers focusing on the body are reserved for female athletes. It was more common to hear cheers by male athletes centering on winning, power and domination.

The text beside the cheer read, “How hot is hot?” (ESPN Rise, 2009, p. 40). While this wording correlated with the cheer that the girls used before their track meets, it was an interesting move that ESPN would pull that specific line. This was intriguing because in modern-day culture, the word “hot” was often associated with sexuality and attractiveness. Of the four words pulled from the cheer that were deemed prominent or
important by ESPN, the word “hot” was used twice. Thus, the word usage was calling attention to the physical appearance of the athletes. Additionally, the text used in the line was a bolder black text that was also italicized. All of the words were lower case, cursive and italics. There were what appeared to be tiny ink smears or splatters around the letters that create the muddled look.

Another example of where the text takes away power from the athletic context of the image was within the Winter 2010 issue (Appendix I). In the image of high school female swimmers surrounding Olympic swimmer Katie Hoff, there was specific mention of who did Hoff’s hair and make-up. The actual size, placement and font used for this credit were the same as photographer, author and illustration credits. While this may be the result of a contractual agreement between the magazine, Hoff and the makeup artist, the placement and appearance of the credit made it appear to be important to the article and image. Based on the article and image, Hoff was supposed to be presented as someone who trained right beside the female athletes and took the time to connect with them at the pool. Hoff’s attire consisted of a swimming suit with a swimming cap and goggles on her head. Viewers cannot see any of her hair and the goggles covered a large portion of her forehead. From the image itself, her hair and makeup are not forefront or evident. However, with the obvious notation of who did Hoff’s hair and make up, I took a second look at her physical appearance while moving her athletic ability to the side for that moment. Additionally, there was not one other mention of a hair or make-up artist in such a direct a way as was associated with this image. The credit to the artist was located directly below the author and photographer. While the artist may very well be a talented
individual, the placement of this information leads viewers to believe that the make-up and hair were equally as important as the story and image itself.

**Overall.** In general, the feel of the images of female athletes were very happy-go-lucky. Nearly all of these female athletes were smiling and presented as being carefree high school girls. I admired that these images presented high school female athletes enjoying their sport. Based on the presentation of images, readers were invited to see and relate to their peers while they were having fun in the images related to sport.

It was evident that there was a great deal of sexual difference displayed throughout the images. I believe that it was ESPN’s responsibility to find a way to present the fun-loving side of female athletics in a way that did not expose sexual differences between the male and female athletes.

While ESPN claimed to be presenting a magazine that put the athlete forefront, it was never outlined what that female athlete would look like. The absence of intensity and presence of sexual difference in the editorial images meant that ESPN failed to meet its claims. This magazine did not present something entirely new for the high school female athlete. What it showed was that ESPN viewed the high school female athlete as one who enjoys participating in her sport and succeeds while still having fun. There was some advancement made in areas such as camera angles and facial expressions. However, the images taken as a whole failed to presented the female athlete on the same playing field as the male athlete.

**Advertising Images**

In conducting the analysis on the advertisements on the three issues of *ESPN Rise*, I used the same criteria and methods as previously used in analyzing the editorial images.
This consistency across all images allowed for a better overall understanding of the images as a whole within the magazine. With that said, it was also important to separate the editorial and advertisement images when examining them in order to recognize that the advertising images were likely created by advertisers for a number of different magazines as opposed to the editorial images that were created solely for these magazines. As Biswas and Olsen (1992) noted in their study, marketers tend to use uniform advertising campaigns to create one unified image for a brand (Biswas & Olsen, 1992). Thus, this one unified advertising campaign was created and then used in a number of different media outlets. Therefore it became essential to consider that the advertising images may not fit perfectly with the overall feel of Rise magazine, but rather with the advertising campaign created for the product/service.

Unlike the editorial images, the advertisements used within the magazines featured both men and women in the images. A total of fifteen advertising images were selected from the magazines. The advertisements were selected because I felt they were a fair balance of the advertising images as a whole throughout the three magazines. The selection of the advertising images contained a variety of products, celebrities, models and environments making the collection of advertisements a good representation of the advertising images as a whole.

Of the specific advertisements selected for analysis, women outnumbered the men. The advertisements selected were scattered throughout the magazines and represent the advertisements used as a whole. The primary products advertised in the images were athletic clothing brands and sports drinks, specifically Gatorade. Each of the advertisements were full-page advertisements and in color. Nearly all of the images in the
advertise
tments that were analyzed showcased athletes, both male and female, as tough, athletic competitors. This went against past representations of female athletes specifically in that nearly all of the women represented sport as forefront to some degree.

**Physical Appearance.** The physical appearance of the models/celebrities within the advertisements varied. The most noticeable pattern was that advertisements containing celebrities tended to, but not always, be presented more as athletes first and men/women second. The emphasis was not on their clothing, but their athletic abilities.

One consistency throughout each of the magazines was the very first advertisement in each issue. On the opening page of all three magazines were images of a female in a sports bra and athletic pants/shorts. The Winter 2010 (Appendix P) and the Fall 2010 (Appendix Q) issue made clear what product they were selling in their advertisement. While the products were different, the images were very similar. In the Winter 2010 issue, professional surfer Monyca Bryne-Wickey is pictured with her hair pulled back into a braid and was resting over her shoulder to show the length and color (blonde). Her wrists and fingers were decorated with jewelry, more feminine markers.

Very similar to the Bryne-Wickey advertisement was the Fall 2010 advertisement for Under Armour. In this advertisement, sprinter Monica Hargrove was shown in her sports bra and sports pants. Hargrove was showcased in four separate images within the single advertisement. The primary image featured her standing with her hands on her hips in the Under Armour bra. Beside the primary image were three smaller images. The top of the three images showed Hargrove in a bikini holding a volleyball. The most interesting part of the image was that her head was cut off. This moved the attention from Hargrove as an athlete to Hargrove as a sexually appealing woman showcasing her
bare stomach and chest. The next image showed the sprinter squatting on top of a workout ball. From about her nose up was cut out of this image. This moved the attention to her legs, making them the primary focus of the image. The overall feel of this advertisement could read as an athlete in athletic clothing that was very engaged in her workout.

The Fall 2009 (Appendix R) issue also featured an advertisement on the inside cover that showcased a female athlete in a sports bra. The image presented one female in eleven images, ranging in a variety of sizes, while she was working out. The only brand identifier was on one image that showed her feet around a piece of athletic equipment, as she was about to engage in some abdominal exercises. The female athlete’s shoe had the Nike “swoosh” that likely signified that this advertisement was for Nike. However, there was no supporting text or any other images with the Nike brand. The images overall invited readers to see this woman as strong, athletic and willing to put in the time and effort.

One of the few advertisements that featured a male subject was in the Winter 2010 issue (Appendix T). This advertisement showcased football payer Chris Johnson. Johnson was shown standing, wearing a tight fitting shirt and gripping a football with both hands in front of his body. Johnson was also wearing earrings and his hair was in shoulder-length dreadlocks that hung just below his shoulder. The hair over the shoulder look and jewelry were both traditional feminine markers.

**Facial Expression.** The facial expressions among the advertisements both fell in line with past representations of female athletes and also went against the norm.
There were three very different facial expressions depicted by celebrity female athletes. The Fall 2009 issue featured Williams amidst what appeared to be a moment of victory. She had her mouth open, screaming in triumph, and her fist was clenched, showing her success. This intense, in the moment facial expression greatly contrasted Bryne-Wickey’s facial expression in the Winter 2010 issue. Bryne-Wickey’s head was tilted slightly down as her eyes looked up towards the camera. Her mouth was slightly open and her overall expression was that of the “come on” look that Duncan referenced. A third expression was from the Fall 2010 issue and featured sprinter Monica Hargrove. Hargrove’s facial expression showcased a smile on her face that projected a warmth and sort of femininity.

While most of the advertisements featured women, there was a handful showcasing a male athlete. Chris Johnson, from the Winter 2010 issue, was shown with a serious facial expression that showcased his dominance and confidence.

**Text.** The text throughout the majority of the advertisements projected a sort of power and dominance. I would suggest that the reason for this is because most of the advertisements featured celebrities.

The Fall 2009 issue featured Serena Williams in a Gatorade advertisement. In this image the text across the image read “Be Strong.” The message that viewers may have read from this image was that Williams was showcasing her strength and intensity in the image and that she got there with the help of Gatorade. The Gatorade advertisements in general tended to send a positive message through text to its readers. The text from the Gatorade advertisements focused on the benefits that athletes can gain
from using their product. The emphasis was placed largely on staying hydrated during “the head of battle.”

Bryn-Wickey’s Winter 2010 advertisement featured text that spoke to the Nike brand. The use of the product would result, according to the text, in an “muscle-igniting, head-turning, unstoppable you.” While there was reference of strength and power, the head-turning you indicated that viewers would be more attractive if they used the Nike product. Thus, the text could be read as relating to the sexual appeal that could result from using the Nike product.

Hargrove’s Fall 2010 advertisement included text that spoke to the Under Armour brand. The text from this advertisement read, “Protect this house I will.” This was the slogan that Under Armour used to promote the brand. I applaud Under Armour for using the same slogan with both advertisements featuring men and women. The wording signified strength through protection. However, I felt as though the actual image from the Hargrove advertisement did not make sense with the wording and the two contrasted each other. It was possible that the advertisement could be read as something for everyone in that the images themselves are sexually appealing for men while empowering for women through the text.

Johnson’s Winter 2010 advertisement included text beside the football player’s head read “Can you hang with Chris?” This text may have been read as placing Johnson up on a high, almost unattainable, level that the average person could not reach. In a magazine that was aimed towards high school female aged individuals, this wording made not only Johnson, but male athletes in general appear to be higher up than female ones. There were not any other advertisements, in any of the three Rise magazines that
combined the dominance of the image with the power of the text in a way that the
Johnson advertisement did.

**Motion/Pose.** The Gatorade advertisements were unique in that they presented
the athlete, male or female, as an athlete forefront. The gender of the athlete became
secondary and this was largely attributed to the motion of the athletes in these
advertisements. In both the Fall 2010 and the Winter 2010 issues the Gatorade
advertisements are laid out the same way. Both advertisements featured four smaller
images of Williams and Dwight Howard (Appendix M) on the right side with one larger
image of each athlete holding a Gatorade bottle. The smaller images consisted of a
headshot during a game/match, an extreme action shot, an image of each athlete drinking
Gatorade and an action shot. Each of the images, for both athletes, showcased their
athletic abilities. Rather than focusing on her clothing or body, the images of Williams
really presented her on the same athletic level as Howard in his advertisement.

Bryne-Wickey’s advertisement in the Winter 2010 issue featured the surfer
“punching” with one weight while keeping the other weight close to her body. This pose
was likely attempting to showcase power, but the very lightweights combined with her
appearance (sports bra) and facial expression (“come on”) presented her in a different
light. Her athleticism was moved aside and overshadowed by her sexuality and
femininity.

Hargrove’s advertisement in the Fall 2010 issue showed the sprinter in a variety
of images. In one specific image within the advertisement was of Hargrove practicing
her footwork over small hurdles. This was the only image, out of the four from this
advertisement, which presented her as an athlete.
Male and Female Presence. As previously discussed, there were only a few advertisements that included men in this analysis. The lack of male advertisements in these magazines could be due to the fact that the intended audience for this magazine was all female. The images of female athletes may have appeared more relatable within this context. There was only one advertisement throughout all three magazines that included both a male and a female subject. In the Fall 2010 (Appendix S) issue Adidas had an advertisement for their Moves Pulse fragrances for him and her. The advertisement featured a man and woman high fiving as they were walking away from playing beach volleyball. Both the man and woman were in swimsuits. Behind these two high fiving was another woman who was down on one knee with her one arm supporting her in the sand. Beside her was a man a few feet away and looking over her. The two forefront subjects did not project any unnecessary sexuality or power dynamic. However, the two individuals in the background did project a sort of power dynamic. It was possible to read the man over looking down on the woman in the sand as if he was asserting his dominance over her.

Lack of Male Presence. The Fall 2009 issue was different from the other two in that it did not have any advertisements with any men in them. Each of the advertisements featured either objects or women. The next issue released, Fall 2009, contained the Adidas advertisement featuring men and women as well as the Dwight Howard advertisement. In the Fall 2010 issue, there were three separate advertisements that all featured solely men. I found the growing presence of men in the magazines noteworthy because as the men were added to the magazine, they were presented on the same athletic level as the women in advertisements. The addition of a male presence to the magazine
did not take away from the women in advertisements by making them appear less intense or more feminine. Instead, the intensity and toughness were expressed across both men and women while showcasing the athlete rather than the gender.
Discussion

Editorial Images

The fifteen editorial images analyzed for this study presented high school female athletes in a different light than did past studies such as Duncan’s 1990 work. The majority of the female athletes were presented in a youthful light, yet they were still showcased as athletes. The girls were photographed from camera angles that did not present them as small or inferior. Rather, the athletes were photographed from straight on or even below. By taking the photographs from below the girls were given a sense of power and dominance over the viewer that was rarely seen in past images of this sort.

The type of sport that the athletes participated in was also new. In the past, most female athletes presented in the media were those participating in individual sports. The overwhelming presence of photographs containing female athletes engaging in sports such as softball, basketball or even football was new. The acknowledgement that female athletes do play group sports and can excel in them was a new in viewing what was acceptable for female athletes in the eyes of the media.

With the wide range of sports that the athletes in the magazine were representing, high school girls may have been more open to the idea of trying a new sport based on how it was represented within the magazines. Football, for instance, has traditionally been a male-dominated sport. It was often rare to find a girl on the playing field alongside the guys. In one image within the magazines, a high school female football player was pictured in the middle of two male football players. The image was putting football on an attainable level while breaking the gender norm and showing female athletes that they have the ability to play the sport.
Another aspect of the editorial images that changed from Duncan’s (1990) study was the facial expressions. There were several images scattered throughout the three magazines that did contain tough, intense facial expressions. These images were most often seen in images that presented the female athletes engaging in their sport. Thus, the intense facial expression was most often associated with movement. Since the vast majority of the images throughout all three of the magazines contained images of passive athletes, their facial expressions lacked intensity. The athletes were all smiling and shown having fun in whatever they were doing. The downside with this was that while these girls may be shown as athletes, the emphasis was on the fact that they were in high school. The issue with this was that high school is associated with youth and youth was often related to terms such as carefree or in the moment. Thus, placing the emphasis on their age could invite readers to see these girls as engaging in something that they are just doing for now while they are young, but would likely not continue with as they got older. Additionally, some female high school athletes who took athletics seriously and wanted to see the intensity and power behind other high school athletes may have been disappointed in this magazine’s editorial images. Because of the relatable quality that these images have, the girls do not necessarily inspire readers. I think that it was reasonable to argue that people read magazines to see another lifestyle or to see someone they want to be like (Gray, Amos & Currie, 1997). If the readers of the magazine are already female high school athletes who enjoy playing their sport, what qualities do the images give readers aspirations towards?

The final pitfall of *Rise* was that it displayed a large amount of sexual difference throughout the editorial images. These female athletes were photographed with distinct
feminine markers that gave off the feeling of femininity from first glance. Their happy-go-lucky facial expressions would not likely be expressed by male athletes and thus become a thing that female athletes do. The text used in some of the photographs played into stereotypically female language that the male athletes would not likely engage in.

I believe that high school girls are accustomed to seeing sexual difference in the media as a natural and normal thing. As a liberal feminist, I believe that there are not any biological reasons why women do not have the ability to compete on the same playing field with men. Thus, female athletes should be represented within the media on the same level as male athletes and receive similar coverage.

**Advertising Images**

The fifteen advertising images that were analyzed from the three magazines were fairly consistent across all coding aspects. The general feel of the images was that of toughness and intensity. The majority of the images featured a celebrity often engaging in his/her sport. With each advertising image showcasing the intense side of sport, readers were invited to take away the notion that sport was a serious thing. This seriousness was something that was very different from the portrayal of athletes in the editorial photographs. While the presence of females in an athletic role was new in and of itself, the emergence of female athletes as fierce competitors in advertising images was another major difference from Duncan’s (1990) work. Athletes, when pictured in the past, were often photographed as objects of beauty and not as strong competitors. The celebrity athletes in the advertising photographs presented the female athlete in a new non-traditional light. The sexual differences that were once a main focus of images are
becoming less evident. The female celebrity athlete was no longer shunned away from being intense or competitive like the male athletes. It was becoming more acceptable, evident through the mere presence of the images, that female athletes can be viewed less in terms of their physical beauty and more in terms of their athletic accomplishments. This new light gives new hope to the future of females in sport.

Those celebrities in the advertising images often make their living off sport. Readers who were serious about sport could look to those celebrities as role models and something to aspire to be. Having a role model could encourage readers not only to work hard on the field, but also to use the same products the celebrity used or to do the same workout as the celebrity. In turn, the use of a celebrity could help the company of the advertisement. The majority of advertisements were not created solely for a single magazine. Thus, the advertising images used for Rise magazine were likely created for a national print campaign. There were two issues with celebrities within the advertising images. First, placing a celebrity in the image may have seemed as if what the celebrity was doing was unattainable. The celebrity status often seems off limits to the average person. Consequently, in interpreting the images as off limits, female high school may perceive the images as a status that they could never reach and give up trying. The second issue with celebrities in advertising images was that the advertisement itself may not fit well with the magazine and its contents. This was the case with Rise magazine and its advertising images.

As mentioned previously, the majority of the images showcased an intense and tough looking athlete. This was in contrast to the happy images that were presented as part of the editorial images.
Editorial and Advertising Images Examined Together

The thirty images examined as a whole showcased an accurate representation of the *Rise* magazines to date. Both sets of images presented images of female athletes that showed a great deal of difference in how female athletes are portrayed as compared to past studies such as Duncan’s (1990). However, the images looked at together send a contrasting message to readers and display a great deal of sexual difference that in the end may hinder the longevity of *Rise* magazine.

Despite the images being so contrasting within the magazines, I did not feel as though they were ambivalent. I believe that the images taken together portrayed the female athletes in a way that was reflective to both their age and athletic status.

While the images do frame female athletes in different ways than past representations, the images are so contrasting that they were sending two different messages to readers. The editorial images were saying that female athletes should be happy and always smiling. According to the images, they should be posed, lacking in any motion, and almost always had their hair placed over their shoulder. The advertising images, conversely, project that female athletes were a source of power and intensity. These images suggested that the toughness and dominance only existed with professional, adult athletes. Thus, the group of images taken as a whole is suggesting two very different things.

It was possible that the obvious contrast in images could be a problem for the magazine. Readers may become confused with the advertisements if they feel like they could not relate to the images. As a result, the athletes reading the magazines may not purchase the products that are being advertised. If the advertisements are not effective
within the magazine, it was possible that advertisers may need to either rework their advertisements or pull them from the magazine altogether.

Hardin, Lynn and Walsdorf (2005) assert several reasons why magazines in the “women’s sport niche” fail to survive. *Rise* magazine made claims early on its mission statement to be a magazine that celebrated the high school female athlete. The emphasis was placed on the athlete and presenting something new and different. Hardin, Lynn and Walsdorf suggested that some women’s sporting magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated for Women*, do not survive because they are lacking ”uniqueness.” In the instance of *Rise*, while the magazine does include images of high school female athletes, it presents them more often than not as high school girls first. This was evident through the athletes’ lack of motion, facial expressions, posing, physical appearance and more.

With sexual difference being so evident throughout the editorial images, female athletes could not be viewed on the same level as male athletes. Instead, the female athletes were viewed as girls that looked or acted a certain way and were also athletes. Through this presentation of images of high school female athletes, *Rise* magazine fell into the category of a magazine that was aimed towards all high school girls more than just high school female athletes.

**Ambivalence and Sexual Difference.** Overall, the images throughout *Rise* magazine both reinforced sexual difference and rejected ambivalence.

The images taken as a whole from girl versions of *Rise* were not ambivalent in my eyes. I felt as though the photographs did not project any sort of hesitation that would result in a contradictorily depiction of the female athletes. I believe this was partly because of how society views girls at this age. In the eyes of society, it was still
acceptable for girls in high school to enjoy sport. They were not being viewed as deviant for their interest or participation because they were still ‘girls.’ Had this magazine been composed of images of professional female athletes who were presented in the same way, I do believe ambivalence would have been an issue.

I felt as though sexual difference existed among the images throughout each of the three magazines. There were differences that appeared within the images of the female athletes that appeared to be natural and normal for all high school female athletes. Hardin, Lynn and Walsdorf (2005) noted that sexual differences displayed in photographs were culturally constructed to appear ‘natural.’ I felt that culture played a large role in how the females were depicted throughout the magazines. I believed that in American culture society viewed high school females, regardless if they were athletes or not, as happy-go-lucky, bubbly girls. High school girls are so used to seeing the sexual differences that they internalize them as gender norms that exist between every man and woman. If the advertisements presented tough or intense images of high school females, it would be in stark contrast to the image that culture had painted in our heads. The intense images would go against the gender norms that women should be docile and men should be aggressive. These sorts of images would help to eliminate sexual differences.

The areas within the images that displayed the most sexual differences were the body positions, motions, physical appearance and facial expressions. Nearly all of the athletes photographed throughout the three magazines were depicted as passive in motion. Duncan (1990) pointed out that “activity is associated with maleness, passivity with femaleness” (p. 34). Athletes were being shown in the magazines as stationary objects. Even though the magazine essentially was saying that it was okay for high
school female athletes to engage in sport, the lack of motion showed that they could only be displayed in certain ways. Thus, they were restricted in their representations as athletes. Since the majority of the images were lacking in motion, the body positions became a more prominent focus as they were likely posed or strategically placed. Duncan noted in her 1990 work that some body positions suggest masculinity while some suggest feminism. In the images from Rise magazine, the majority of the female athletes photographed were in what were considered to be very feminine poses. The girls often had their hand on one hip, one leg bent and transferred their weight to one hip. Conversely, in all of the images that did contain a male presence there were not any boys/men that displayed a pose even remotely similar. The majority of female athletes photographed in the magazines had distinct feminine markers. These markers, largely culturally defined, distinguished from the get-go that these athletes were female. The final area that showcased sexual difference was in the girls’ facial expressions. Nearly all of the images featured girls that were smiling and enjoying themselves. While this may be an accurate reflection of how high school female athletes act, the chances of seeing high school male athletes presented in this way was highly unlikely. Rather, it was more likely to see intense and focused facial expressions associated with male athletes.
**Conclusion**

This study should be understood within the context of its limitations. The primary limitation is the sample. Only three of the four girl versions of *Rise* are being examined. It was possible that if the fourth issue of the magazine is obtained that the results may be slightly different. The decision to select a handful of images from each magazine to analyze in-depth could be seen as a limitation. As explained within the methods section, this decision was made because I felt that the images chosen were a fair and accurate representation of the magazines. There were also limitations with using textual analysis as my method. By using this method, my analysis was directed by my interpretation of the images and could have appeared biased to some.

**Representation of Female Athletes in *Rise* Magazine**

The overall representation of female athletes in *Rise* magazine was not completely new and innovative compared to past representations of female athletes in magazines. ESPN showcased the age of the girls very prominently through things such as their body positions and facial expressions. This feeling of youth that transcended the majority of the images was important for a couple of reasons. I believed that ESPN spent a lot of time making sure that the high school athletes in the magazines looked their age. This was accomplished largely through distinct feminine markers. The issue then was that youth, and things associated with it such as body positions and facial expressions, at times came to the forefront over athleticism. Additionally, the idea of youth is viewed by society as a phase or moment in time (Halpern, 1994). As time passes, so does youth and a transition into adulthood emerges. If society equated sport with youth then sport will be
seen as a phase that too will be ‘outgrown’ and these high school female athletes will outgrow sport as they get older.

**Representation of Female Athletes in Relation to Boys/Men in Rise Magazine**

The representation of the female athlete in relation to the boys/men in the magazine was two-fold. In the only editorial image that contained a male high school athlete alongside a female one, both were placed on an equal playing field. The magazine did appear to be making strides in a new direction by depicting the female athlete to be on par with male athletes and on the same playing field. However, this was only a single occurrence that was not seen again in any of the other guy or girl versions of *Rise* magazine.

Nearly every advertisement featuring a male subject presented him with a sense of dominance and power. This type of presentation falls in line with past representations of the male athlete and sexual difference. There was a lack of a softer side to male athletes or a joy that was apparent within the advertising images of females. The majority of advertising images, featuring men or women, presented the athlete as tough and intense. Because of sexual difference, the men almost always took on the more aggressive role whereas the women were much more passive. These two roles were enhanced by means such as facial expression, pose and motion.

There was only one advertising image, the Adidas fragrance advertisement, which showcased athletes enjoying their sports similar to how the high school female athletes were portrayed in the editorial images. In this advertisement both the male and female athlete were on equal playing fields in terms of aggression and passivity.

**Representation of Girls/Women in Advertisements and Non-Athletic Contexts in Rise Magazine**
The overall representation of girls/women in advertisements contrasted dramatically with those in non-athletic contexts. The images of the female athlete in advertising contexts presented a tough adult celebrity who was successful in sport. She was often photographed engaging in her sport. The images of women in advertisements were on par with the advertisements featuring men. Both were often laid out the same and both featured an intensity that was not displayed in the editorial photographs.

The images that featured female athletes in non-athletic contexts most often were the editorial images. These images presented the girls out of their uniforms and generally standing around. Their overall demeanor showcased a happy high school girl. If viewers did not read the supporting text, they would not likely know these girls were star athletes.

The contrasting images suggest that when athletes are younger, it was socially acceptable to participate in sports because a lot of high school girls participate and find sports enjoyable. However, the advertising images feature older female athletes as more intense and focused--they are not depicted as enjoying their participation but instead as intensely competing. I believe that these sorts of images could hurt the desire of girls to participate in the long run.

**Implications on High School Female Athletes**

The presentation of how the female athlete was expected, by society, to act in high school versus as they got older could be a hindrance on this magazine. If high school female athletes feel that they can have fun with sports only when they are younger, they may not see the point in continuing to get better. They may instead feel as though they were never going to get to the professional level so they should just quit.
On the other hand, high school female athletes reading the magazine may be able to relate to the other images of the high school athletes and use the advertising images as something to aspire to be. By setting a goal for themselves, to be like the athletes in the advertisements, it could make them want to work harder and do better in their sport.

After conducting this analysis, I did not feel completely comfortable in recommending *Rise* magazine to the parents of my young pitchers. I felt that this magazine shows glimpses of advancement for female athletes that goes beyond typical teen magazines and presents female athletes in a positive light, yet there was still work to be done. I would not be at ease to suggest a magazine to very impressionable teenage girls that reinforced sexual difference and stereotypical gender norms.

**Future of *Rise***

There clearly exists tension between the editorial and advertising images throughout the magazines. While both sets of images are presenting female athletes, each magazine is presenting two very different images. On the one hand there were the high school female athletes who enjoy their sport, succeed at it and still have fun. The other side of the images presents the professional female athlete who was a fierce competitor and shows intensity while she competes. In order to create a magazine that sends one, cohesive and clear message there needs to be some sort of balance among the images.

To create one, fluid magazine I believe that both the advertising and editorial images need to change. The editorial images should feature more action photographs rather than primarily passive ones. I would like to see more shots taken during competition and fewer images of athletes standing around. By taking these images during play, things such as appearance, context and movement will change.
As for the advertisements, I understand that they are often created for national campaigns. I believe that it would benefit both Rise and advertisers to create advertisements featuring high school female athletes. In doing so, high school athletes would be able to identify better with each athlete throughout the magazine. Creating these types of advertisements would also be another way to create exposure for female high school athletes. With that said, I also believe that it is important to still have advertisements featuring professional athletes. However, I believe that these advertisements should be created for this magazine specifically. These types of advertisements would feature the professional athlete engaging with high school female athletes. This would show that the professional status is an elite category that not everyone can obtain; yet they are still athletes just like the ones in high school. I do think it is possible to also include advertisements of professional athletes engaging in their sport. With these types of advertisements, I think the key is placement. I would suggest placing the more ‘intense’ or ‘tough’ looking advertisements in close proximity to editorial images that are similar. Transitions will become extremely important and the magazine editors and advertisers need to work together to create images that flow from the ‘enjoyable’ side of sports to the ‘intense’ side.

I also question the longevity of Rise if it continues to have photographs of female athletes with distinct sexual differences in them. I think that by reinforcing these sexual differences ESPN created a magazine that will fall in line with past magazines geared towards high school girls.

**Future Research**
The next phase of research could concentrate on one of two things. First, high school female athletes could be questioned directly about the implication of the girl versions of *Rise* magazine. Their direct insight could help determine how exactly the images within the magazines are impacting high school female athletes. The second phase of future research could be to talk to the editors at ESPN. In questioning the editors I would want to know things such as their intentions behind specific images. By conducting these interviews I could get a better sense if my analysis of the magazines mirrored the intentions of ESPN.
References


*ESPN Rise*, Fall 2010.


*Girl*, Fall 2009.


Appendix A
Winter 2010 cover: Hallie Kuhlman
Appendix B
Fall 2010 pages 28-29: Girl football player
ONE OF THE BOYS...

STORY BY DIMITTY MCDOWELL

Being a girl on a guys' team can be exciting, intimidating, rewarding, challenging ... and absolutely worth it. Read on to find out how to get the most from the experience.
Appendix C

Winter 2010: Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, Jordan Adams and Alexyz Vaioletama

Pre-Season BASKETBALL RANKINGS

1. Mater Dei (SANTA ANA, CALIF.)
2. Brea Olinda (BREA, CALIF.)
4. Bolingbrook (BOLINGBROOK, IL)
5. Memphis Central (MEMPHIS, TENN.
6. Petey’s House Christian (JACKSONVILLE, FL)
7. Riverdale Baptist (UPPER MARLBORO, MD)
8. Neptune (NEPTUNE, NJ)
9. Whitney Young (CHICAGO, IL)
10. Buford (ATLANTA, GA)
11. St. Mary’s (PHOENIX, ARIZ.)
12. Long Beach Poly (LONG BEACH, CALIF.)
13. Ben Davis (INDIANAPOLIS, IN)
14. Monarch (LOVELAND, CO)
15. Christ the King (MIDDLETOWN, N.Y.)
16. Mt. Lebanon (PITTSBURGH, PA)
17. Lakeville North (LAKEVILLE, MN)
18. Start (STEVENS POINT, WIS.)
19. Goose Creek (GOOSE CREEK, S.C.)
20. Hoover (HOOVER, ALA.)
21. Lake Taylor (NORFOLK, VA)
22. Nazareth Regional (NORTH JERSEY, N.J.)
23. Regis Jesuit (AURORA, CO)
24. MacArthur (IRVING, TEXAS)
25. Lake Mary (LAKE MARY, FL)
26. Norcross (NORCROSS, GA)
27. Incarnate Word Academy (ST. LOUIS, MO)
28. Germantown Academy (WORTHINGTON, PA)
29. Fayette County (WAYETTEVILLE, AR)
30. Bishop O’Dowd (DEARBORN, CA)
31. Clarksville (CLARKSVILLE, TENN.)
32. Princess Anne (VALENCIA BEACH, VA)
33. Spring Valley (COLUMBIA, S.C.)
34. La Jolla Country Day (LA JOLLA, CALIF.)
35. Duncanville (DUNCANVILLE, TEXAS)
36. Jefferson (PORTLAND, ORE.)
37. Spartanburg (SPARTANBURG, S.C.)
38. North Little Rock (NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK.)
39. Butler (MATTHEWS, N.C.)
40. Renaissance (DEARBORN, MICH.)
41. St. John’s (WASHINGTON, D.C.)
42. Penn Charter (PHILADELPHIA, PA)
43. Marion County (LEBANON, KY)
44. St. Mary’s (ST. CROIX, CA)
45. St. Joseph’s Academy (ST. LOUIS, MO)
46. Oak Hill Academy (GRAND FORKS, LA)
47. Linn-Mar (MARION, IOWA)
48. Case (Cincinnati, OH)
49. St. John’s Academy (HIMPTON, N.J.)
50. Carondelet (CONCORD, CALIF.)
Appendix D
Fall 2010 cover: Hallie Wilson and Kylee Lahners
Appendix E
Fall 2009 cover: Shawn Johnson
After the loss of two parents in two years, no one would have blamed Sloane Stephens for quitting. Instead, she embraced tennis as an outlet for her grief, and found strength on the court.

"I felt like I was being punished for something I did."

Sloane Stephens thought she was the unluckiest person on the planet. The normally vivacious 16-year-old, a fourth seed in the girls' singles division, was in New York City last September preparing for the 2009 U.S. Open Juniors Championship. While waiting for her turn on the practice courts, Sloane received an unusual midday phone call from her older sister, Jonavetta.

"All of a sudden she started crying," Sloane recalls. "She’s like, ‘Dad was in a car accident. He died.’ I was like, ‘What? You’re kidding me.’ I felt like I was being punished for something I

One in nine Americans (11%) will lose a parent before age 20.

88% of Americans who lost a parent as a child said it was the hardest thing they’ve ever had to deal with.

Sloane Stephens, photographed near Wimbledon in June 2010.
The intensity and excitement of the softball game headlined the girls' side of the second annual ESPN Rise Games presented by Target (where Team Rally defeated Team Hype, 9-4, in a seven-inning game). But softball wasn't the only game in town. From July 14 to July 27, high school athletes from across the country also competed in elite and competitive track and field, lacrosse and field hockey. On the guys' side, football and basketball tournaments amped the energy level even higher. By the time the final game ended, nearly 14,000 athletes had experienced the thrill of competition, the pain of a tough loss and the adrenaline rush of victory. Here we offer a look onto the experiences of a few big winners from the Games. Go online to ESPNRise.COM to read all the recaps, see all the photos and watch all the videos from our exciting summer of sports. And see you in Orlando next year!
Pro Day comes to Fullerton, Calif.

Featuring the Fullerton Aquatics Swim Team (FAST) with guest trainer and Olympic swimming star Katie Hoff.

THE MEMBERS OF THE FULLERTON AQUATICS SWIM TEAM, or FAST, train a few lanes away from Olympian Katie Hoff, 21, at the Janet Evans Sports Complex in Fullerton, Calif. They see her during morning workouts, wave when they pass her in the locker room and follow her on Twitter (@khoff09). But talk to her? Get advice from her? Ask for her help on their flip turns? Like that would ever happen! It did at our Pro Day on Oct. 23. After an hour of dry-land training and coaching in the pool, Katie sat down with the girls—Patricia Tedjasukmana, 16, Natalie Matsuyama, 17, Kathleen Gore, 17, Isabella Kearns, 14, and Keara Chang, 16—for an open and honest Q&A session. We thought you’d like to listen in.
Four years ago, Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. But even as the city still struggles, one very determined girls’ basketball team is back stronger than ever.

Teaianna Jones knew it was time to leave New Orleans, so she grabbed a few clothes and her Xbox. Everything else she left behind. She left her sports trophies crowded on the windowsill and the school certificates hanging on the wall.

When she finally returned, a year and a half after Hurricane Katrina leveled her Lower 9th Ward neighborhood, nothing remained. Her home, gone. Her school, gone. Her neighborhood, gone. Everything she held dear was gone. She was hurt. She was devastated by the storm.

Losing her trophies especially hurt. She’d been so proud of those awards for softball and volleyball and track, and especially the one for best shooting guard in basketball.

But she started over. They all did.

The hurricane hit just before Teaianna’s freshman year. She’s a senior now, part of the first generation of New Orleans students to attend high school post-Katrina. She’s on the basketball team at Chavez High, the 9th Ward school wrecked by the storm. They still don’t have a school building; classes are taught in the hated white FEMA trailers. When her best friend, teammate and fellow senior Calvinisha
ELEANOR FULTON, KRISTEN KIENTZ & McLANE RITZEL
HIGHLANDS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL, LITTLETON, COLO.

Junior, Sophomore, Senior

Finished 1-2-3 in this year’s season-opening state-wide meet,
the Renaissance Run.

“We do this cheer before each meet. It’s kind of embarrassing, but it really
helps us get pumped up and ready.” —Kientz

A Senior goes: My name is ______ you know what I got?
Then everyone says: What do you got?
Senior: I got a team that’s hotter than hot!
Everyone: How hot is hot?
Senior: Sexy legs and a cute booty, too.
Everyone: Do do do do.
Senior: I love cross country, how bout you?
Then the team puts their hands in the middle and yells,
“1, 2, 3.... FALCONS!”
Appendix M
Winter 2010 page 5: Dwight Howard and Gatorade
Appendix N
Fall 2009 page 5: Serena Williams and Gatorade, Be Strong
GET FIT. NIKE FREE EXT.

START WITH YOUR FEET, AND GET FIT FROM THE GROUND UP. INSPRED BY NIKE FREE TECHNOLOGY, NIKE FREE EXT QUICK FIT FLEXES AND RESPONDS TO YOUR FOOT'S NATURAL MOTION AS YOU WORK OUT, FOR A MUSCLE-IGNITING, HEAD-TURNING, UNSTOPPABLE YOU.

NIKEWOMEN.COM
Appendix S
Fall 2010 page 5: Adidas Pulse fragrances