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Constructing privacy: the negotiation of disclosure management on a women's basketball team

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CONSTRUCTING PRIVACY: THE NEGOTIATION OF DISCLOSURE

MANAGEMENT ON A WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

by

Nicole R. Kotrba

<u>An Abstract</u>

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Health and Sport Studies
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2009

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Susan Birrell

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which theories and concepts of face-to-face interaction and disclosure management can be used to understand the construction of privacy on an intercollegiate sport team. The purpose of this research was to examine how team members talked to each other about themselves, and how they managed the personal information shared. Erving Goffman's model of social order and his concepts of "face" and "supportive work" frame the analyses of this study. Through semi-structured interviews and direct observations of the members of an NCAA Division III women's basketball team, I discovered the team's rules and the development of their communication norms, which were particularly prominent during two unanticipated team meetings I refer to as "The Commitment Meeting" and "The Re-Commitment Meeting." The players' commitment to be a close-knit group who got along well and supported each other became a central defining characteristic of this team. Team members negotiated how to demonstrate their commitment to the team and to each other by performing supportive and remedial work through disclosure of personal information during these two meetings. Even under those specific circumstances, a player maintained some amount of autonomy by controlling the depth of her personal information that she shared. Furthermore, the team agreed not to share the information disclosed during these two meetings with others outside of the team. As a result, the players did not experience a loss of control over their personal information after they shared it with other team members at the meetings. However, towards the end of the season, the breaking of a team rule by several players challenged the team's harmony, especially when a player refused to conform to the disclosure and remedial expectations of the team. Additionally, I found that the symmetry and reciprocity of disclosure differed between player-to-player and player-to-coach interactions.

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which theories and concepts of face-to-face interaction and disclosure management can be used to understand the construction of privacy on an intercollegiate sport team. The purpose of this research was to examine how team members talked to each other about themselves, and how they managed the personal information shared. Erving Goffman's model of social order and his concepts of "face" and "supportive work" frame the analyses of this study. Through semi-structured interviews and direct observations of the members of an NCAA Division III women's basketball team, I discovered the team's rules and the development of their communication norms, which were particularly prominent during two unanticipated team meetings I refer to as "The Commitment Meeting" and "The Re-Commitment Meeting." The players' commitment to be a close-knit group who got along well and supported each other became a central defining characteristic of this team. Team members negotiated how to demonstrate their commitment to the team and to each other by performing supportive and remedial work through disclosure of personal information during these two meetings. Even under those specific circumstances, a player maintained some amount of autonomy by controlling the depth of her personal information that she shared. Furthermore, the team agreed not to share the information disclosed during these two meetings with others outside of the team. As a result, the players did not experience a loss of control over their personal information after they shared it with other team members at the meetings. However, towards the end of the season, the breaking of a team rule by several players challenged the team's harmony, especially when a player refused to conform to the disclosure and remedial expectations of the team. Additionally, I found that the symmetry and reciprocity of disclosure differed between player-to-player and player-to-coach interactions.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

"Respect for another's privacy is a legitimate expectation in all social relationships. As a value, privacy does not exist in isolation, but is part and parcel of the system of values that regulates action in society" (Simmel, 1971, p. 71). This statement positions the concept of privacy as an important value to both the individual and to society. How individuals behave towards one another in all social situations is affected by one's definition of and respect for privacy.

This study examines the interpersonal behavior of self-disclosure as a way to analyze how privacy is constructed by individuals on a sport team. When we disclose information about ourselves to others, we reveal and share aspects of ourselves for others to know. When we consciously reveal information about ourselves, we understand that this information will be used by the recipient to inform his/her perception of us. Consequently, an individual may decide on the amount and type of personal information shared with others as a way to manage one's identity. When an individual exercises personal autonomy by having the freedom to decide what information about herself will be disclosed, how much, when, and to whom, she actively engages in managing the impression others have of her.

Presenting oneself to others requires the management of the boundaries around one's personal information, which helps to shape a person's privacy. Simmel further describes this relationship as: "privacy boundaries, accordingly, are self-boundaries" (1971, p. 72). When personal information is allowed to pass through the privacy boundaries to another and/or from another, we (re)shape, challenge, or reinforce how we present ourselves to others and the impression others have of us. Herein lies the connection between privacy, self-disclosure, and impression management as "we become what we are not only by establishing boundaries around ourselves but also by a periodic

opening of these boundaries to nourishment, to learning, and to intimacy" (Simmel, 1971, p. 81). Therefore, the act of *willful* self-disclosure to others confirms the existence of privacy, and contributes to the management of one's impression.

A discloser's inability to solely control subsequent telling of the information shared is an additional layer to the construction of privacy. In other words, once information is shared with someone, the power to decide whether or not that information will be further shared with others subsequently also rests with the recipient of the information. The border surrounding that particular set of information becomes managed by multiple caretakers (Petronio, 2000). How the discloser and the receiver negotiate the treatment of the information shared is another aspect of boundary management worthy of attention.

This project examines how the information-sharing norms of a group are constructed, negotiated, and maintained through face-to-face interactions of the group's members. By focusing on the behavioral process of interpersonal self-disclosure and the boundary management of the information shared, I explore how a group socially constructs privacy. How self-disclosure is used to present an impression of self is also examined.

<u>Types of Personal Information</u>

There are different *types* of personal information that can be disclosed. If, when, where, how, and to whom information is shared may be dependent on how a person perceives the nature of the information – as public, private, or secret. For the purpose of this study, I define public information as information one does not feel the need to protect. The dissemination of information deemed public is not discriminatory in nature. Furthermore, public information does not need to be disclosed by the noted individual. It may be shared freely by a third party.

On the other hand, private information is defined and shared on various levels. The disclosing levels of private information range from no disclosure, to disclosure on a

need-to-know basis, to disclosure to anyone at any time, and everywhere in between. For example, information deemed private may be revealed to only a select audience, or private information may be intentionally not disclosed. Furthermore, attempts generally are made to safeguard and control the flow of private information to ensure its disclosure only to certain individuals who need to know it. Examples of this type of disclosure may include medical, financial, or social information.

Personal information also exists in the form of secrets. A secret usually carries with it the connotation of shame or abnormality. When studying families, Bok (1984) describes secrets as events or information that are *intentionally* hidden from other family members or from others outside the family. Moreover, an individual who maintains a secret avoids disclosure of that information (Afifi & Guerrero, 2000). When thought of in that way, the act of keeping a secret may be seen as necessary in order to create or maintain a certain image to others. Possible reasons for keeping secrets may include fear of rejection if the hidden information became known, or fear of having to suffer the consequences for acts committed that were inappropriate or unacceptable. A secret may be shared with an extremely limited audience. When information is shared secretly, the implication is that it will not be retold by the recipient(s) to unintended others. In this study, I examine the participants' differentiation between private and secret information through their defining of each, the boundaries established around the different types of information, and the differences in how those boundaries are managed.

Each individual may categorize personal information about themselves as either public, private, or secret. These decisions vary from one individual to another, from one social group to another, and from one culture to another. As a result, not only may disclosure serve as a mechanism of privacy, but privacy, determined by a group's communication norms, may guide acts of disclosure. How individuals and groups decide what information to share, to whom, when, and how tells us about the information's

cultural value and meaning in that particular situation and at that time, and the information's implication on privacy.

Impression Management through Information Management

The construction, modification, and/or maintenance of a person's *identity* are continually taking place when interacting with others in various activities and groups. An example of such an interaction occurs on social networking sites every day. A person can construct her identity on MySpace, or create a profile on Facebook in order to be recognized by others, or connect with others on Match.com. One's identity is shaped through acts of self-disclosure. When engaged in a social, interpersonal situation where the potential for self-disclosure exists, we generally exercise personal autonomy in deciding what information will be shared (if any), when, and with whom. When personal autonomy is present, it may allow for decisions to be based on how one defines and locates personal information – either as public, private, or secret. In his book, *Public/Private*, Paul Fairfield argued that:

> While the distinction between public and private is ultimately more complex than political theorists have traditionally conceived of it, the distinction remains both intelligible and consequential, its abstract meaning turning upon the manner and degree to which given areas of decision making bear upon meanings and intimacies fundamental to our self-understandings as distinct persons or small groups of persons. (2005, p. 135)

Because every person possesses a public life and a private life, we construct boundaries around public information and private information. The difference in the boundaries surrounding the two types of information is related to permeability. Located within each set of boundaries is information about who we are, our feelings, and our thoughts and beliefs. We must decide what information will and will not be shared that lies within both our public and private spheres during each interpersonal encounter. Often, the results of these negotiations work to (re)shape our self-presentation (i.e., how we want others to perceive us and how others do perceive us), and also serve to either reinforce or challenge the norms of our interpersonal interactions. Therefore, "what

makes things private is in large part their importance to our conceptions of ourselves and to our relationships with others" (Schoeman, 1984, p. 406 as cited in Petronio, 2000, p. 38). Subsequently, each relationship and situation in which we find ourselves is affected by our definitions of public and private information, which leads to our construction of privacy.

When we are allowed to determine for ourselves where the boundaries are between public and private social information, we may exercise personal autonomy to actively make choices of disclosure that (re)shape our impression to others. Conversely, when the boundaries are determined by others, our power to control the access of information and another's perception of who we are is compromised. The issue of power inherent in the construction of identity through information management elucidates privacy as a political concept worthy of further examination.

In my study, I concentrate on how privacy is constructed and managed through disclosure during face-to-face interactions by exploring how members balance the tension between exercising personal autonomy and meeting the expectations a group has regarding its members revealing information about themselves to other group members. How one constructs and navigates through the boundaries of private and public information, and thereby *manages one's own self-presentation*, is a topic worth exploring as the decisions may impact the value and nature of social relationships (i.e., social cohesion) and indicate the presence, or absence, of *personal autonomy* and the *social construction of privacy*. In any situation, the (in)ability to reveal or conceal information reflects or challenges the boundaries one has constructed between public information, private information, and secret information. Each time information is shared or not shared, the definition of privacy and a person's or group's identity are (re)shaped, for themselves and others.

The Erosion of Privacy

More and more endeavors require us to share personal information with persons whom we have had limited previous interactions allowing for little to no development of trust to occur in the relationship. For example, when applying for a home mortgage, a prospective buyer must reveal her social security number and allow the potential lender to access her credit history. We must reveal these critical aspects of our financial identity if we wish to secure a home mortgage. Yet, this is the same private information we are repeatedly told to protect in order to avoid identity theft. However, in the scenario of a home purchase, revealing personal and financial information has become standard and necessary to the point where little, if any, resistance is shown. We are compelled to share personal information with persons we may regard as perfect strangers.

Numerous safeguards have been put in place to protect against unauthorized access to our personal information because of the growing need to reveal personal information about ourselves, such as financial or medical information, in certain situations. Privacy acts have been legislated by the government, privacy notices have been written by financial institutions and distributed to their clients, and protective software programs have been created to minimize the risks of identity theft or unwanted access. While measures are being taken to better secure our financial and medical information, we seem to take fewer precautions with other types of personal information (i.e., social information). At times, we make this social information readily available to others without actually controlling who has access to it. A prime example is the widespread use of internet social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Match.com. Lengthy profiles and photos of ourselves, along with personal thoughts and activities may be posted on the internet for others to access as they wish.

As a culture, we seem to have drawn a line between not sharing financial or medical information with others (unless mandated or there is a claim by the recipient to protect the information), and freely choosing to disclose our likes and our dislikes,

personal stories, and photographs (some of which may portray us in compromising positions) to total strangers. The rewards and the dangers that could occur as a result of a disclosure are present in both types of interaction. While the issues of financial and personal disclosure, as they pertain to consumer privacy and social connections via the internet, are viable topics on their own, they are outside the scope of this project.

<div align="center">Privacy and Intercollegiate Sport</div>

Intercollegiate sport teams present an ideal context for studying the social construction of privacy through its members' expectations, decisions and patterns of self-disclosure. One reason for this is that a new team forms every year with the addition of new players and the loss of graduating seniors or those who quit the team from the year before. Therefore, a team must annually negotiate and/or communicate to the new players the expectations of disclosure. As Sandra Petronio notes, "The expectations for disclosure of proprietary information is not always evident. Thus, how people learn to regulate privacy boundaries seems critical to a smooth transition into the company" (Petronio, 2002, P. 75).

A second reason for examining a sport team is that the issue of privacy has already been identified and is currently being debated on an administrative level in regards to the management of student-athletes' personal information. Legally, athletic administrators and coaches must navigate through federal laws regarding the issue of student-athlete privacy, such as those that address the management of student-athletes' health records and educational records. While these particular types of information inarguably belong to the student-athlete, they also impact the team and decisions made by coaches and administrators. For example, coaches must understand the severity of an injury or ailment when determining whether or not an athlete will compete; and certain administrators must know the grades of student-athletes in order to determine eligibility.

Legal pathways have been constructed to allow access of this information to coaches and administrators with, and sometimes without, the specified consent of the

student-athlete. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) passed in 1996 mandates that health care providers tighten the security measures and internal practices in order to protect the medical privacy and confidentiality of individuals (http://www.hhs.gov/news/facts/privacy.html). For an athletic department's purpose, the legislation allows for student-athletes to give written consent or to withhold the disclosure of their medical information to specific and designated individuals (e.g., coaches, doctors, media, and parents).

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) passed in 1974 protects the privacy of student education records. Because of this legislation, institutions must ask for and receive signed consent from each student-athlete in order to publicly release information regarding physical health or injuries, academic standing, academic awards or honors, and photographs. Ironically, while HIPAA and FERPA portend to *protect the privacy* of a student's medical and educational information, they instead serve as a way to legally *regulate the disclosure* of that same information (Sobel, 2007).

In keeping with Simmel's assertion of an expectation of privacy quoted at the outset of this chapter, an individual's medical information or academic records are seen and treated as personal information whose privacy should be respected. However, as Sobel suggests, it is not a person's privacy that is being respected. Instead, the personal information is being respected by regulating its disclosure. Legislation requiring an individual's written consent to release personal information gives a person the choice to either share or withhold information. However, all other aspects of the disclosure process are taken out of the hands of the individual, such as when it is shared, to whom, and how much information is shared. These other aspects of disclosure indicate the presence and/or amount of privacy possessed. Furthermore, reducing the concept of privacy to the personal information contained in records that are legally protected (e.g., medical and academic records) does not fully address all aspects of a student-athlete's private life, or

the team's management of all personal information. When further applying the ideas expressed in Simmel's quotation, the examination of how a team conceptualizes and operationalizes privacy will allow us to better understand the values that guide its face-to-face interactions.

Examining Privacy on a Sport Team

More questions arise as the concept and areas of a student-athlete's privacy are expanded to include personal information that is not legally protected. Examples of personal information that may fit into this unregulated area include religion, sexual orientation, family life, politics, and mental health issues. Is this type of personal information seen as owned by the individual, with disclosure between team members dependent on the presence of trust or the principle of reciprocity? Or, is the disclosure perceived as necessary to a team's functioning, and mandated by the recipient of the information? Additionally, the scope of managing personal information can be expanded beyond student-athletes to include coaches' and athletic administrators' personal information as well. The potential to unearth rich assessments of privacy and self-disclosure provides another reason for its study within the context of a sport team.

An equally compelling reason to study college sport teams' patterns of self-disclosure and their construction of privacy is that team members sustain intense face-to-face contact with each other, allowing the time for and the necessity of communication norms to form. Participating on a team has often been likened to belonging to a family. Being part of a family implies intimate continual interaction with other family members. When in-season, daily and sustained interactions occur during practices (which may last several hours each day), competitions, inside the locker room before and after each practice and competition, and while sharing the accommodations when traveling to away-from-home contests. Out-of-season, team members continue to spend time together practicing their skills, strength-training, conditioning, and participating in activities designed to increase team cohesion among its members.

Along with the high frequency and lengthy duration of contact among team members, the physical challenges and emotional intensity experienced during that time is important to recognize. Coaches and athletes are constantly being pushed to their mental and physical limits. Often, they may experience emotionally-charged moments together that range from frustration and anger due to athletic defeat or physical injury to unabashed joy and celebration of a team's athletic success. Facing challenges and celebrating victories together may strengthen the emotional attachments felt among the team. As a result of the emotional ups and downs of their competitive season, a team may come to rely on each other on a more personal level as they navigate their way through a season.

Finally, during a team's time together, it is inevitable that its members will go through personal changes or trials and tribulations. Sharing personal issues or challenges could allow for team members to serve as resources, someone to talk to, or a source of encouragement, similar to the way family members would support one another. When a team member experiences a change or disruption to her life, such as a physical injury, divorce of parents, or the experience of a mental health issue, new rules for how a team shares such information must be constructed. Petronio calls these newly-developed regulations, "triggered rules" (2002). How is it that a team determines these expectations of sharing of personal information? For example, does the team have a right to know a member's past or current experiences, or do they have a right to know only if the experience is negatively affecting the performance of the team? Can a team member expect that a teammate or coach listen to her disclosure or personal struggle simply because of her membership on a team?

Two different layers of disclosure must be determined: the sharing of such information among team members, and how they manage the information within the team and with those outside of the team. Self-disclosure can be or become problematic on a sport team for several reasons. First, expectations of self-disclosure held among team

members may be unrealistic or incongruous. Second, personal information may be defined and managed differently by members of the same team. Third, disclosure can be seen as an action that decreases, or altogether eliminates, one's sense of privacy. For example, the use of sanctions for "inappropriate" disclosure or non-disclosure of information is a way for a coach or a player to lessen the existence of personal autonomy when it comes to deciding whether or not certain information is to be shared (Petronio, 2002). Finally, team members may use different strategies to ask for and share personal information.

The Expectations of Team Cohesion

Because of the continuous intimate nature of interaction that takes place within a sport team and a team's interdependence needed within the athletic endeavor, coaches may encourage activities meant to promote and strengthen team cohesion. To the extent that many believe there is a relationship between cohesion and a team's success and participation satisfaction (various studies cited by Turman, 2003, p. 88), team members may cite the development of cohesion as a team goal. Team cohesion has been defined as "a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs" (Carron *et al*., 1998, p. 213, as cited in Carron *et al*., 2007, p. 118). While the objective of this study is not to examine the impact of cohesion on a team's success, cohesion is being presented as a possible motivating factor for the sharing of personal information, values, and beliefs to take place within a team.

When disclosure occurs within a team, members are thought to grow closer as they gain more knowledge of and respect for each other's thoughts, beliefs, and values. Another reason the team's cohesiveness may increase is that the private information shared among its members may be considered secret information, known only by those on the team. Furthermore, the information is not to be revealed by the members to those outside of the team (Vangelisti, 1994).

Paradoxically, self-disclosure may create tension on a team, not cohesion. This could occur if significant differences that exist between individuals are revealed; or the information shared makes others feel uncomfortable; or individual members do not disclose information to the team that other members are sharing; or personal information is shared only with certain members of the team in confidence, and not the team as a whole. Therefore, the meanings and values placed on the personal information shared or not shared becomes (re)shaped by one's decision to disclose or not to disclose and its affect on the team dynamics (either real or anticipated).

The Expectations of Disclosure

To further illustrate the need to study disclosure and privacy on a sport team, let us examine the expectations athletic administrators have of their coaches. One way athletic administrators may measure the success and competency of coaches is by assessing how comfortable student-athletes feel sharing personal information with coaches. For example, an end-of-the-year survey given by one athletic department to student-athletes at a Division I institution asks the students to rate on a scale of 1-5 the statement, "I felt comfortable discussing any personal problems with the coaching staff." A low score on this question implies to the administrator that the coach is not getting to know the student-athletes and is not putting in the time and energy to develop a positive relationship with them. How do coaches develop meaningful relationships with players (to the extent that they feel comfortable sharing personal information) while also respecting their privacy?

At first glance, the aforementioned survey question seems innocuous and even seems to imply the "ideal" relationship between a coach and player. Another implication of the question is that coaches are to serve as sounding boards, mentors, and sources of support to their athletes. However, the suggestion of a directly proportional relationship between the student-athlete's level of comfort in discussing personal problems with her coach and the coach's commitment to the individual is troubled in two ways. First, the

question does not take into consideration the power difference that exists between a coach and a player. Second, disclosure is generally seen as a reciprocating process where both parties reveal a similar amount of information that is also similar in its level of intimacy (Dindia, 2000; Fairfield, 2005). This feature of disclosure would seemingly require the coach to share personal information about him/herself in order for the coach to garner a high score on the survey question. Is this necessary in order for student-athletes to share with their coaches? How do coaches navigate the line between sharing just enough information with their athletes, and not too much?

The first troubling concept of power requires the following question to be asked: How does the power difference between coach and student-athlete affect the decisions made by student-athletes to share personal information? There seems to be a lack of awareness of the power hierarchy in the player-coach relationship in the survey question. Student-athletes may be reticent to disclose personal issues to coaches, such as mental health issues, physical health issues, or sexuality. The decision not to disclose may be one of fear of how the coach will view their mental or physical capability to athletically perform, or how the coach will perceive them if different values and beliefs are revealed. After all, it is the coach who decides which student-athletes will compete. It is the coach who decides how much attention and training from coaches each individual athlete will receive. At institutions that offer athletic aid, it is the coach who decides each year who will receive an athletic scholarship and the amount of that award.

Furthermore, the survey question seems to neutralize a student-athlete's power to control whether or not she shares personal information by normalizing its disclosure. If disclosure by a player to her coach becomes normalized, then it is perceived as appropriate for the coach to ask questions about a player's personal life. A coach's entitlement to an in-flow of information from a player diminishes the power and control that a player has over the impression the coach makes of her. Bok uses the concept of

secrets to describe the interplay of power, information control and impression management when she notes that:

> To be able to hold back some information about oneself or to channel it and thus influence how one is seen by others gives power; so does the capacity to penetrate similar defenses and strategies when used by others. (1984, p. 19)

Therefore, the ability to construct a line between appropriate disclosures and obtrusive questioning becomes critical to a player's sense of privacy and how she manages the impression others have of her. However, the survey question seems to either place all the power with the coach, or disregards the notion of power altogether.

The second troubling concept of disclosure as a reciprocating process does not account for a coach's disclosure to his/her player(s). When attempting to deepen the nature of a relationship, an individual may want to prove her trustworthiness by revealing information about herself. Since disclosure has been described as a reciprocating process, then theoretically, the chances of a player choosing to reveal certain information about herself to a coach increases after the coach has chosen to share information with the player. Moreover, the type of intimate or private information shared usually tends to be similar in intensity and in nature. Is this happening on sports teams? If so, how are the coaches and the athletes handling these expectations?

Topics of Disclosure

If athletic administrators desire student-athletes to feel comfortable sharing information about themselves, what topics are appropriate and should be shared? The idea of building relationships between coaches and student-athletes and among teammates through reciprocating acts of disclosure demands the posing of several questions. First, what information should be shared by a coach with the players in order to produce a relationship where the disclosure of personal problems by a player is possible or desirable? Second, how does a coach determine his/her own expectations of privacy when relating to players? Third, what does a player need to know about her coach? Fourth, what does a player want to know about her coach?

Located within the same Division I end-of-the-year survey, under the "Overall Experience" section, the following two questions were asked:

1. Were you made to feel uncomfortable as a result of being subjected to specific religious viewpoints by coaches, support staff or teammates or by being expected to participate in non-voluntary religious activities?

2. Were you made to feel uncomfortable as a result of exposure to matters of sexual orientation, personal values issues or private matters which you did not consider to be central to participation in your sport?

These two questions seem to contradict the previously mentioned question of whether or not a player felt comfortable discussing personal problems with her coach, because in order to develop the comfort level necessary for that to happen the player usually feels as though she knows and trusts the coach through previous reciprocating acts of disclosure. Unfortunately, for every player who positively relates to a coach's disclosure, there may be one or more players who do not and may feel uncomfortable with certain personal information that is being shared. How does a coach negotiate such terrain successfully in letting their athletes know who they are and being true to their own values and beliefs?

A recent article regarding the public disclosure of personal information by a Division I men's basketball coach shows how the lines between public and private information are continuously being defined and managed. While attending a political rally, as a private citizen, he revealed to the media that he was pro-choice on the issue of abortion. Since he works at a Catholic university, he has been renounced for the public sharing of his belief in the media by the Saint Louis Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church (http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=3210049). The article illustrates the repercussions that could occur when private information becomes made for public consumption. In this case, sharing personal information may be seen as inappropriate disclosure and outside the parameters of what it means to be a good coach.

This situation begs for questions to be asked about the construction of privacy that are similar to those asked in this study. Does the coach have a right to publicly reveal his beliefs knowing that they are in direct conflict with the faith that guides his place of

employment, and possibly others who are members of his team? If the institution agrees with the Archbishop's statement or reprimand, are they unofficially mandating that those who do not share the beliefs of its founding religion remain silent and not act publicly in accordance with their own personal beliefs? In essence, is the administration invoking a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding the employees and their religious beliefs?

The coach's disclosing of this personal information could be framed differently, however. The title of "coach" or "student-athlete" does not encapsulate all that a person is. Each one of us holds beliefs and values that may or may not be in concert with those around us. A spokesman for the Catholic university made it known that the coach "was at the rally as an individual, not as a representative of the school" (http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=3210049). This announcement by the school's spokesperson may publicly create the norm of how other coaches, administrators, and players at this particular university may reveal personal religious views, or any other beliefs thought to be of a private nature: "do ask, who cares?"[1]

The institution's response generates even more questions. How does the public announcement of a coach's personal religious belief (and his political beliefs as the comment was made a political rally) affect how others who know him as a coach, such as coaching staff, players, and recruits, perceive him? Are his religious and political beliefs necessary information a recruit or a student-athlete needs to know? How does the management of these boundaries create meaning and value for the personal information? This particular example emphasizes the need to examine how all members of a sport team manage their impression given to them by others through the delineation between public and private information, the negotiating of those boundaries, and the disclosure of personal information**.** The same questions need to be asked from the players' perspective when relating to their coach, and of the relationships created by teammates.

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[1] Title of a Wall Street Journal article (June 13, 2007) written by Bob Barr discussing the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Normalizing Public, Private, and Secret Information

Public, private, and secret information must be defined by individuals and groups in order to construct boundaries that protect and allow for information to be shared. This process continually takes place when decisions are made to self-disclose or not to disclose personal information, based on the rationale behind self-disclosure and self-restraint. More specifically, when team members assign a meaning of public, private, or secret to their personal information, they are creating rules to be followed dependent upon the meaning ascribed. Through the creation of meanings and rules, a team member can manage her impression to others through the strategies of information management, such as performances and the avoidance of stigma.

This project explores how members of a sport team construct the team's norms of communication, as they relate to the *defining* and *sharing* of personal information. First, the research focuses on how team members define personal information and determine whether a team member's personal information is public, private, or secret. While the main purpose of the project is to study how team members construct privacy through the negotiation of norms of (not) asking and (not) telling personal information, insight should also be gained into the management of the relationships between athletes and coaches and among athletes. To the extent that the management of personal information aids in impression management, this analysis allows me to explore the team's understandings of what it means to be a "good teammate" and what it means to be a "good coach."

Furthermore, I am expecting that how a team constructs its information-sharing norms and manages its boundaries of privacy will allow me to understand a team's negotiated cultural value they create for different categories of personal information. For instance, how a team shares information regarding sexual orientation may indicate whether or not a homophobic environment exists. Whether or not team members feel comfortable discussing their sexual orientation with the team, and whether or not that is

personal information expected to be shared are central questions whose answers depict whether or not certain behaviors are stigmatized or perceived as less than the norm.

When personal behaviors or characteristics are not accepted, persons in the situation become vulnerable to discriminating acts by others. Recently, two lawsuits were settled by Pennsylvania State University and the University of Florida when female student-athletes alleged discrimination by their coaches. Both plaintiffs claimed discrimination based on their sexual orientation, and Jennifer Harris, a women's basketball player at Penn State, also made the claim that her privacy was invaded by her coach, Rene Portland. She felt interrogated by her coach who would repeatedly ask if she was gay. She also had other players report back on any observations made that would lead them to believe that Harris was a lesbian.

Being in a position of power, coaches have the ability to create an environment for how safe or risky disclosures by team members will be. Karen Doering, an attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) who represented Andrea Zimbardi in her discrimination lawsuit against the University of Florida, explained the environment created by the coach's behavior as thus:

> Based on her deep intrusion into [players'] personal lives, outing other coaches and players, and her [religious moralizing], she sends a clear message to the lesbian players that [homosexuality] is not acceptable. She's not doing the 'no-gay-people-can-play-for-me' thing. But she's creating an environment where lesbian athletes feel uncomfortable. (Buzinski, 2003, p. 236)

This example highlights the issue of how coaches and players create an environment for inclusion or exclusion, how coaches manage the athletes' personal information once disclosed, how information is shared with team members and its appropriateness (i.e., the religious beliefs of the coach), and the effect of disclosure and reciprocation of disclosure on how one is seen as a "coach" or as a "teammate."

Summary of Purpose

This project identifies a sport team's construction of privacy by examining its negotiation of communication norms and boundary management strategies of team

members' personal information. Erving Goffman's concepts of face-work, dramaturgy, and stigma are used to understand how team members interact when sharing their personal information and determine their rules for sharing information with each other. Through the approach of this study, I also assess what information is being stigmatized and self-stigmatized, how it is being stigmatized, and the implications of stigma (Weiss, et al., 2001). Examples of this type of information on a sport team may include sexuality, mental health issues, physical health issues, attitudes and behavior towards alcohol and drugs, and commitment level to the team.

This study seeks to contribute to the scholarship of athletic administration, sociology of sport, and communication studies through its analysis of how privacy is constructed, what it looks like, and how it works on a team. Why is it important to study how a sport team constructs and operationalizes privacy through self-disclosure? Knowing how a team conceptualizes privacy to construct its communication norms is important to understanding how a group of individuals, who may hold different positions of power, values, beliefs, and personalities, function as a unit.

The understanding of how privacy is constructed on a sport team becomes particularly relevant as each member: (1) balances the tension between exercising personal autonomy as an individual and contributing to a team's solidarity or cohesion by sharing personal information; and (2) reveals or conceals personal information to present herself as a "good teammate" or as a "good coach." Because of a sport team's sustained intimate interactions, it is imperative to examine the strategies (e.g., dramaturgy, face-work, avoidance of stigma) employed by team members to manage personal information. While not wholly focused on team dynamics and identity, this study may also reveal particular insight into each of these concepts.

Definition of Terms

Self-Disclosure

For the purpose of this study, I define self-disclosure as the direct, intentional, and verbal sharing of personal information about oneself to another (or to a group). The content of the disclosure may be perceived as public, private, or secret information. More discussion on how disclosure has been conceptualized by scholars and how it has been studied takes place in Chapter II.

Privacy

The concept of privacy is complex and multi-layered. Not only may privacy exist as actual personal space, or a location, that is inaccessible from the public's view or knowledge, such as a bedroom or a bathroom, but it can also be discussed as a symbolic space whose dynamic borders (re)produce purpose, meaning, and the value of social information. The borders surrounding private and public information and where one locates her own sense of privacy within her life may be renegotiated and altered at any time. Furthermore, privacy can be seen as a value to be maintained and protected.

Privacy is typically defined in terms of its violations of consent. Violations of privacy include an intrusion on personal space, inappropriate or illegal access to intimate information, and knowledge of intimate actions (Fairfield, 2005). Therefore, we are more aware of the concept of privacy and what it means when we believe it to be absent or taken away from us.

In this study, I draw from the scholarship of psychology and communication studies to define privacy. Altman describes privacy as a dialectical process that works to regulate interpersonal boundaries (1977). It can be used to close off information, or used to make information known. Additionally, privacy allows one to have behavioral control over her interpersonal encounters. This notion of privacy implies the presence of personal autonomy when disclosing one's personal information, and illuminates the use of self-disclosure as a mechanism for regulating the construction of privacy.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. How do team members sort personal information into the categories of public information, private information, and secret information?

2. How is a team member's personal information managed by the team?

3. How does a sport team balance the need for solidarity and cohesion with the need for individual team members' autonomy and privacy?

4. How does the team's understanding of the roles of "teammate" and "coach" affect the expectations of disclosure of personal information?

5. How do new players transition from "outsiders" to team members?

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Contexts

To frame this study, I use concepts and theories from the fields of social psychology and communication. The concepts included are taken from Erving Goffman's models of interaction. The theory of symbolic interaction allows for the study to be premised on the idea that all team members, together, construct the team's communication norms and that privacy is socially constructed within a team. Finally, the theoretical framework of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) guides the analysis of how team members manage the boundaries surrounding their personal information.

Erving Goffman's Concepts

The main metaphor that drives this study is Erving Goffman's observations of the social order of interaction. Each participant of an interaction claims a "face" for oneself based on the role she performs and that which others believe her to be. Goffman uses a dramaturgical model to illustrate his observations of interaction. Face-to-face interactions are defined as performances engaged in by an actor and an audience. He uses rules of demeanor to define what it means to behave as a good actor, and rules of deference to define what it means to behave as a good audience member. Goffman believes that the actor and the audience work together to have a supportive interaction (i.e., a smooth interaction).

"Face": The Donning of Theater Masks

Goffman conceptualizes the notion of "face" as the impression and the image that a person claims for oneself and presents to others (1959; 1967). This image is ultimately determined by the impression one believes others have of him or her. However, the presenter also has a hand in helping audience members form an impression. In order to

ensure a euphoric interaction and avoid dysphoria, one strives for a smooth interpersonal interaction by behaving in a manner that is consistent with the impression she believes others have given her. The impression given may or may not be consistent with who she believes herself to be; however, the hope is to reproduce and preserve the "face" to the satisfaction of the audience during and after each disclosure (Goffman, 1959). Conversely, the presenter may have a hand in controlling another's impression of her by attempting to influence the perception others have of her. The example Goffman uses is a college female. In order to be perceived as popular, she arranges for others to call her in the residence hall. With all calls routed to one telephone in the residence hall, other residents would have no choice but to witness her phone calls leading them to believe that she has numerous friends and thereby reflecting on her level of popularity (1959).

In managing the identity of self, we construct and manage numerous impressions of ourselves that reflect the myriad roles that we possess at all times. Goffman labels this phenomenon as the "simultaneous multiplicity of selves" (1959). Not only will the participants of this study be acting out the roles of athlete, teammate, and student, but also team leader, team follower, first-year player, injured player, daughter, sister, girlfriend, friend, religious follower, and/or political activist, to name just a few. When thinking of these roles and the negotiation of personal information, it must also be said that each and any of these roles may also require the delineation of and maintenance of secrets (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman's sensitizing concept of "face" can be used to look at how social meaning and value are created today. In the United States, the parameter of "don't ask, don't tell" has been, and continues to be, a legal and socially-accepted way of creating and maintaining a space in the military for homosexuals. Certain lines of behavior are intentionally acted out, while others are suppressed in order to stay in face (i.e., only heterosexual soldiers may have sexual relationships, be allowed to talk about them, and display their relationships in public).

The patterns of disclosure, such as "don't ask, don't tell" contribute to more than just the creation of one's "face." Self-disclosure can also be used to perform Goffman's concepts of "face-work" and "supportive work." These concepts can be performed when one is thought to "be out of face" or to "be in wrong face" in order to reclaim her preferred impression (1967). Therefore, this study will use these concepts to examine situations where a team member uses (non)disclosure to create the impression others have of her; to protect the impression others have of her; or when a team member shares information that is not consistent with the impression she has already established or is expected of her.

"Dramaturgy": The Raising and Lowering of the Stage Curtain

Goffman noted a distinction between interactions that occur in public and interactions that occur in private. Using a dramaturgical model that conceptualizes individuals as actors, Goffman describes the spaces where these interactions occur as "front-stage" and "back-stage," or front region and back region (1959). The metaphors of front-stage and back-stage seem appropriate as every actor (i.e., individual or team) must have a stage (i.e., context) and an audience (i.e., recipient) for each disclosure. If one discloses personal information during a performance on the front-stage, the type of information shared could be perceived as public information that may likely be general, expected, and/or stereotypical, in nature. Information shared back-stage could be more personal and intentionally disclosed to an intimately smaller audience, making the information either private or secret.

Acting on Stage

As individuals "act" towards one another during their interactions, impressions of themselves may be formed by others and managed by self through a variety of methods, including self-disclosure (1959). In his most noted work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman writes:

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information may be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. (1959, p. 1)

On the front-stage, situational norms, others' expectations, or policies (e.g., "don't ask, don't tell") may be strong enough to lead a person to believe no choice is available to her as to how a role is to be played. However, when back-stage, one may feel free to choose her own behavior patterns and whether or not to disclose her personal information.

Ironically, the same location may serve as a front-stage in one instance, and as a back-stage in another (Goffman, 1959). Examples of sport team locations that can simultaneously serve as a front-stage and a back-stage include coaches' offices, locker rooms, and players' lockers. Without changing its settings or props these locations are front-stage for the team members, but back-stage to anyone outside of the team. When compared to the front-stage status of the competition site (e.g., basketball court, football field, etc.), where the competing teams are on display, their locker room becomes the back-stage in that context. The locker room and the coach's office are back-stage because the public does not routinely have access to these areas, and are not privy to the conversations that take place there. These are locations where the members may be freer to be who they are as individuals (not just as team members), and may choose to behave or disclose information that is incongruent with their role as a teammate or a coach.

Goffman refers to the athletic locker room, in passing, as an example of a back region in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). However, these areas are also front-stages to the team members because they allow for each individual to act out the role expected of them as either a teammate or a coach. In that context, the back region to the front region status of the locker room could be any other location where another's role such as that of friend, daughter, girlfriend, student, etc is played out privately.

To further complicate the status of a team locker room as a back region, structures within the setting may serve as a portal to a smaller front-stage and yet another back-stage. As an example, players' lockers can also serve as a location of front-stage and back-stage depending on their design. For instance, the lockers may have an open design (front-stage) where the players' clothes, shoes, pictures, or posters are kept for anyone who has access to the room to see. The locker may also have an enclosed space where the players can house items that can only be accessed with a key (i.e., back-stage). Just as Goffman has termed the phrase, "simultaneous multiplicity of self," to describe the multitude of roles one plays at the same time, he could just as easily have coined the phrase, "simultaneous multiplicity of space" to describe a location's ability to be both front and back-stage at the same time.

Goffman also discusses the effect of a person's status on the amount of time spent engaging audiences in the front region versus the back region (1959). The higher the status one attains, the more time one must spend on the front stage. The following quotation could be analogous to the higher status of a head coach:

> Thus the higher one's place in the status pyramid, the smaller the number of persons with whom one can be familiar, the less time one spends backstage, and the more likely it is that one will be required to be polite as well as decorous. (Goffman, 1959, p. 133)

Even though the head coach may spend a considerably smaller amount of time in the back region, the necessity to manage boundaries of communication in both regions remains.

Managing shared information may become a challenge when the two actors involved in an interaction are performing in different regions of the theater. For example, when a coach and a player meet in the coach's office to discuss a failing grade, the coach perceives the meeting as a professional task and conducts herself in accordance with a front stage performance. On the other hand, the player considers her actions and disclosures to be taking place in a back region – away from teammates, parents,

classmates, professors, etc. During the eligibility meeting, the player may provide personal reasons for the poor grade such as family problems or feelings of depression.

Consequently, the coach must recognize the player's self-disclosure of personal information, and manage it accordingly. Not only are the asking and telling aspects of information complicated by one individual operating on a front-stage while the other is operating on a back-stage, but the management of the information disclosed also must be negotiated. Even though the coach is acting on her front stage as the coach of this team, she must decide how to properly manage any information shared to her on the player's backstage.

Furthermore, the coach must decide on her own level of self-disclosure when responding to her player's sharing of personal information. The coach's level of disclosure will determine whether she remains on the front stage during the interaction, or whether she moves her performance to the back stage. In other words, she may put aside her status as the head coach to communicate with the player as a mentor or as a confidante. For example, she might share personal information to show empathy or to provide comfort, motivation, or inspiration to the player. Goffman's concept of dramaturgy does not account for this type of transition. While he identifies the locations adjacent to back and front regions as rich areas to observe because of the ability to watch actors "putting on and taking off character" (Goffman, 1959, p. 121), he does not cast attention to the moments when a performance region changes due to a shift in context and objective.

The context of a performance helps actors navigate through the delineations of front-stage and back-stage and decide when and what types of personal information-sharing may or may not be appropriate for the situation. If one discloses personal information during a back-stage performance viewed by a select few, the type of information shared could be perceived as private information or as secret information. Moreover, one may be expected to share certain personal information simply because of

their position in the back-stage. A person's membership on a team may be the only qualifier needed to gain access to this back-stage.

Multiple back-stages may exist for each team member as the number of people in the audience who has access to the performance becomes smaller as the situation and context changes. For instance, the players could all be interacting together in the locker room after a game discussing its outcome. Then, one-third of the group may go out to eat where they continue to discuss the game, and why they think they lost the game. Finally, two teammates, who are also roommates, may go back to their room and continue to talk about the game. During that discussion, one player may share with the other that her performance on the court was below average because she had not been eating properly, and that she has had an issue with food in the past. This scenario is an example of face-to-face interactions where the actors continually share more personal information as the number of people engaged in the interaction decreases.

The dramaturgical approach used by Goffman allows for the examination of communication boundaries and how those boundaries are used and negotiated. It has been repeatedly stated by scholars that when personal autonomy over the sharing of personal information does not exist, then a sense of privacy also does not exist (Schoeman, 1984, as cited in Petronio, 2002; Westin, 1970). Goffman's concept of dramaturgy will be used as a way to conceptualize privacy through self-disclosure as it allows for the analysis of an interpretation of the rules for social interaction (Donnelly, 2003).

Stigma Management: Intermission with a Costume Change

This study uses Goffman's concept of "stigma" to analyze and discuss how and/or why team members may define any potentially undesirable personal information as private or secret. When a person manages her impression in order to avoid being marginalized, much may be made known about the values and beliefs of that group, at that particular moment in time. If a person actively works to project an inaccurate social

identity that has been normalized or expected, she legitimates the existence of those privileged values in that society. If shame is felt by an individual, then that is further evidence that she has been socialized to believe how a person should identify and behave (Goffman, 1963). This could show itself to be instrumental in examining not only how team members define public/private/secret information, but under what circumstances a decision is made not to share this information with others.

Goffman describes the act of non-disclosure (i.e., secrecy) of discrediting information as "passing" (1963). For example, an athlete who has an eating disorder and is in need of medical and psychological treatment may conceal this information and prove to others that they do not have an eating disorder by eating in public. Because others witness the athlete eating, they do not know the purging of food that takes place secretly in a bathroom. While health professionals have worked vigorously to remove the discrediting notion of eating disorders in order to encourage those who are afflicted to seek help, I believe this could still be included as an example of a stigmatizing attribute in this study if the individual feels shame or embarrassment.

An intuitively illogical technique for managing a stigmatized attribute could be to overemphasize its existence. This may be done to consciously challenge the belief of a "normalized" version of the attribute. Or, this may be done to deflect the truth about a rumor or assumption that has been made. For example, a player may ridicule an accusation made by her coach that she is a lesbian by commenting sarcastically and loudly for other teammates to hear, "I don't like boys – I'm a lesbian, remember?"

While Goffman defined stigma as either being discreditable or discrediting, where one generally was born possessing the stigma, there may be instances where the stigma is situational. In this case, a person brings the stigma onto themselves through poor decisions. For example, a player who breaks one of the team rules must manage the situational stigma of being a "bad teammate" or an unmanageable player. The player must then face the consequences of being an insincere actor.

The concept of stigma informs this study in regards to how values, beliefs, and impressions may be constructed as *unacceptable* by a team. Furthermore, the act of stigmatization may also allow for the understanding of how a team constructs its privacy boundaries, and uses those boundaries as a strategy for managing unexpected or unaccepted behaviors or traits.

<div align="center">Goffman's Connection to Privacy</div>

Since the dramaturgical approach and the concepts of face and stigma are predicated on the idea that we can manage our impressions by managing the disclosure of our personal information, they allow for the analysis of the social construction of privacy. In order for privacy to be constructed, we must have a sense of self. If one does not have a sense of self, then there is no need for protection. When conceptualizing privacy, Irwin Altman (1976) described the connection between privacy and self:

> The essence of this discussion is that privacy mechanisms serve to define the limits and boundaries of the self….But it is not the inclusion or exclusion process itself which is central; it is the *ability* to do so which contributes to self-definition. (p. 26)

Goffman's concepts elucidate one's "ability" to decipher between public/private/secret information, and ultimately to use these differentiations to manage one's sense of self – especially when one's "presentation of self" undermines or contradicts the "face" of "teammate" or "coach." Goffman's concepts provide an appropriate framework for discussing the interplay of privacy, disclosure, and impression management.

This study of female student-athletes uses Erving Goffman's concepts because as sociologist, Robert Prus (1996), simply states, "Goffman argues for the centrality of *impression management* for the study of ongoing community life" (p. 79). Whether or not one's "presentation of self" is authentic is not at issue in this study. The understanding sought is that of how team members use self-disclosure to manage the presentation of themselves to other team members, and how they then manage the boundaries of the information shared. What I may find is that Goffman's approaches to

impression management depict self-reflexive processes used to negotiate and construct a sport team's expectations of privacy for its members through information and boundary management.

Goffman and Sport

While the direct application of Erving Goffman's concepts has been fairly limited by sport scholars, some have used his later model of "strategic interaction" to study behaviors in sport (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004). Goffman explains this model through the use of games, and relies on the competitive nature of games to identify and analyze the use of deception and misdirection by players (Birrell & Donnelly, 2004). Goffman's conceptualizations of embarrassment and face-work have also been used by sport scholars to examine athletes' displays of emotions (Gallmeier, 1987 [professional hockey]; Snyder, 1990 [gymnasts]; Zurcher, 1982 [football]). While his observations have also been used to study the character of sport participants (Birrell & Turowetz, 1979 [gymnasts and professional wrestlers]) and the work of impression management by athletes to construct his/her identity in sub-cultures (Blinde & Taub, 1992 [women athletes]; Donnelly & Young, 1988 [rock-climbers]), his work has not yet been used to analyze how team members disclose personal information about themselves to each other. Goffman's concepts of "social order," "face," "dramaturgy," and "stigma" provide an appropriate framework with which to guide a study on privacy construction and disclosure regulation within a sport team.

More specifically, these concepts allow for an in-depth analysis of how team members share public, private, and secret information in order to construct communication norms and negotiate the management of impressions. Goffman's concepts will permit me to look at how team members manage information about themselves in order to manage their impressions as team members. Finally, Goffman's analyses of the rules of engagement as they pertain to interpersonal interaction, or social

encounters, provide a lens with which to see how norms of communication are created, maintained, or challenged (Donnelly, 2003).

<div align="center">Symbolic Interaction</div>

While Goffman's concepts provide a framework for observing face-to-face interactions, the theory of symbolic interaction provides an understanding of how the members on a sport team, together, construct the team's communication norms and the meanings of disclosure. Herbert Blumer defined the following three basic premises of symbolic interactionism:

1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;

2) The meanings of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and

3) These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with things he encounters (1986).

These premises allow for the members of a subculture, such as a sport team, to construct norms of communication as it relates to self-disclosure.

According to Jay Coakley, interactionist theory describes our decisions to act towards others as active decisions based on our consideration of potential consequences (2007). I would like to expand the scope of these actions and behavior to include the reflexive nature of disclosure. The reflexivity reasoned by interactionist theory allows for this study to assume that the definition of and sharing of information is consciously being managed during every face-to-face interaction based on an individual's risk assessment. The acts of disclosure, or choices made not to disclose, can then be examined in order to understand the meaning the group has created for privacy. More specifically, how members define public/private/secret information, and use those definitions to negotiate communication norms can be studied.

By the mere act of managing personal information, one may argue that a person controls her impression to others when she controls what personal information is shared,

when, and to whom (Altman, 1977). However, when looking at the social issue of privacy through the theoretical perspective of symbolic interaction, the defining of who one is does not rest with the individual alone. Meaning will be created by the discloser, the recipient of the disclosed information, and the norms previously constructed by society will also play a part in creating the social meaning and value of the disclosure and the shared (or non-disclosed) information.

The use of symbolic interaction, along with Erving Goffman's sensitizing concepts, seems to be particularly appropriate as Goffman used his dramaturgical model to explain how meaning is created during face-to-face interactions. Both the actor and the audience work together to create a person's image of self, or "face"[2] through a person's "line"[3] that is acted out and given meaning to by others (Goffman, 1967). Interactionist theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study as it is used to "understand how people define and give meaning to themselves, their actions, and the world around them" (Coakley, 2007, p. 47) as it relates to the concepts of disclosure and privacy.

The theoretical perspective of symbolic interaction has been used by sport scholars over the years to study how athletes on a team create meanings and identities within their subculture. More specifically, it has been used to examine how male college athletes create roles for themselves on a team (Adler & Adler, 1991), and the type of community and atmosphere created by athletes in locker rooms (Curry, 1991; Theberge, 1995). Tim Curry employed an interactionist perspective in his study of male college athletes and how they talked about competition, women, and sexuality while bonding in the locker room (1991).

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[2] Defined by Goffman in his essay, *On face-work*, as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact."

[3] Defined by Goffman in his essay, *On face-work*, as "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself."

In Christopher Stevenson's study on Christian athletes and the management of their identities as an athlete and as a Christian, he used an interactionist perspective because it…

> suggests that the individual makes decisions about whether to present and/or support certain role-identities in given social situations based on a self-reflexive evaluation of the consequences (the benefits or costs, however these may be perceived) of so doing. (1991, p. 373)

These decisions and actions may then allow for a person to manage his/her own identity, as it is perceived by others.

<div align="center">Communication Privacy Management Theory</div>

Communication scholars have theorized various frameworks of boundary management to explain the process of disclosing personal information. Joyce Allman describes the theory of general boundary management as the idea "that individuals create metaphoric protective boundaries that they can use to manage the flow of private information from self to others and that self-disclosure is the means by which individuals manage these personal boundaries" (1998, p. 178). The medical and health-care communities have utilized this framework extensively to study patterns of self-disclosure between medical practitioners and patients (Petronio & Kovach, 1997; Weiss, et al., 2001; Welch, 2005) and the non-disclosure of medical mistakes by physicians to the medical community (Allman, 1998).

In 2002, Sandra Petronio, a communications scholar, put forth a conceptual framework, called Communication Privacy Management, to explain how the acts of revelation and concealment used to manage information about ourselves and/or others work to construct boundaries of privacy. In the foreword of Petronio's book, *Boundaries of Privacy: Dialectics of Disclosure*, Irwin Altman describes the basis of the framework as:

> A dialectical interplay of forces for people and groups to be simultaneously, but differentially, private and disclosing, depending on a variety of factors. Moreover, the dialectical privacy-disclosure dynamic is viewed as a "boundary

regulation" process governed by a set of "rules" and boundary coordination principles. (2002, p. xv)

Petronio's concept of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) could be a useful tool when exploring the research question of how team members balance the tension of coming together as a group to accomplish team goals and maintaining a sense of privacy over their personal information. The theory expands the notion of disclosure and privacy as individual psychological processes to include the negotiations that take place collectively by groups, such as a sport team.

It is important to note how Petronio conceptualizes privacy. She defines privacy as "the feeling that one has the right to own private information, either personally or collectively" (2002, p. 6). Predicated on this notion of privacy, Communication Privacy Management focuses on the way a person, or group, makes decisions on whether to reveal or conceal private information, and presents a rule-based system for these decisions (2002). Petronio's theoretical framework provides a way to examine how people make decisions in order to balance disclosure and privacy. Consequently, the management of privacy through the negotiation of self-disclosure allows interpersonal relationships to be managed (2002). However, CPM does not address the issue, or the possibility, that this balancing act provides a strategy for managing relationships *through impression management*, afforded by the presence of privacy.

The theory of Communication Privacy Management is based on five fundamental suppositions. First, the nature of CPM focuses on private information. By doing so, Petronio makes it a point not to conflate the terms, "private" and "intimate." While she indicates that intimacy may be a result of self-disclosure, it is not a guarantee and may not even be the goal in certain instances (2002). This broadening of the idea of private information becomes pertinent to this study. Instead of citing "privacy" as a possible motive for choosing to conceal personal information, "privacy" can be cited as the *ability* to not share information. Thereby, allowing other motives to come in to play, allowed only by the existence/absence of privacy. This allows me to more easily isolate the

notion of "privacy," use it as a gateway into the management of communication boundaries, and to seek the reasons if privacy may be felt by team members to be lost or eroded.

The second supposition of CPM is the use of a boundary metaphor to "illustrate the demarcation between private information and public relationships" (Petronio, 2002, p. 3). Petronio believes that people keep private information within boundaries. She describes the boundaries in terms of their thickness to show permeability or how open or closed a person is about their private information. The content located within boundaries and the permeability of boundaries change through one's life span (Berardo, 1974, as cited in Petronio, 2002). For example, privacy boundaries increase during adulthood, and then decrease as an elderly or sickly person's level of independence deteriorates. As a result, such a person relies on others to manage her physical needs and financial affairs.

Third, the theory operates from the assumption that people *own* their private information and *control* their revealing and concealing of it. When exercising this control, one often conducts a risk-benefit analysis to determine their comfort level in disclosing. Moreover, when one discloses private information to another, both parties become co-owners of that information. At that point, the discloser sacrifices some amount of privacy, as her vulnerability increases due to the recipient of the information also having control over whether or not it is shared with anyone else (Petronio, 2002).

The fourth supposition is the employment of a rule-based management system to guide how a person or a group regulates their boundaries. This system includes the processes of rules formation, boundary coordination, and boundary turbulence. Once private information is shared, the need for boundary coordination arises as both discloser and recipient become responsible for the information (Petronio, 2002). Boundary turbulence occurs when the two parties do not coordinate the information's boundary in a synchronized way, and the information is not handled in the same way:

> Consequently, there are times when people are unable, for a variety of reasons, to work together so that they have a smooth coordination process. Boundary turbulence illustrates when boundary coordination goes astray and rules become asynchronized. (Petronio, 2002, p. 12)

The fifth supposition is that "the notion of privacy management is predicated on treating privacy and disclosure as dialectical in nature" (Petronio, 2001, p. 3). Petronio describes the tension between keeping information private and sharing that information with others:

> CPM suggests that privacy and disclosure are opposites having distinct features from one another that function in incompatible ways. Disclosure is not privacy and privacy does not represent the act of disclosure. Nevertheless, the two concepts reflect polar opposites. (Petronio, 2002, pp. 12-13)

Can privacy be (re)shaped and (re)constructed through the process of disclosure? Does that make it dialectical, or something altogether different? Petronio argues that once private information is disclosed to another, that the two people or group now share collective boundaries around that information. Hence, through disclosure, one sacrifices some privacy in that she is no longer solely responsible for that information.

However, could it be that a team establishes rules that surround such disclosures, whereby privacy is not lessened through disclosure, but rather privacy is redistributed and (re)defined? After interviewing and observing a team, I may better be able to answer that question. The theory of symbolic interaction explains privacy as a concept that is redistributed and (re)defined with each self-disclosure, while Petronio's Communication Privacy Management theoretical framework is used to explain how a sport team creates rules for managing the boundaries that surrounds the personal information of its members.

Literature Review

Numerous academic scholars have used quantitative methods to study different aspects of college athletics (Potuto & O'Hanlon, 2006; Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Sperber, 1990). However, little *qualitativ*e research has been conducted where the student-athlete is at the heart of the study. Moreover, little research has been done that looks at how student-athletes may or may not contribute to the creation of their own environment within the social world of intercollegiate sport. It is important to examine how players and coaches share and manage their personal information with one another in that it illustrates the team's construction of privacy and social value and meaning of the information shared.

Team Dynamics:
Motivations for Disclosure

Prior to sharing personal information, thoughts, and/or feelings (e.g., sexual orientation, talking about the death of a loved one, revealing one's cumulative grade point average, etc.), an assessment of the potential gain and risk is generally calculated (Weiss, et al., 2001). There may be several different reasons for team members to share their personal information with one another that outweigh the potential risks of disclosure. One possible motivation for self-disclosure may be to get to know one another in the hopes of strengthening the team's dynamics. By attempting to better understand one another through self-disclosure, on and off the playing surface, they may be able to better get along and relate with each other. During interviews conducted by the Booth-Butterfields of a women's college basketball team, the importance of "getting along" was expressed by numerous players (1988). The capability of playing well together was predicated on their ability to "get along" and how well new players "fit in" with the team's style of play and principles:

> Yeah, cause we have to play with them. You know, they could be the greatest basketball player in the world, but if they can't communicate or get along with their teammates, then how are we going to play with them? (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, p. 186, 1988)

To what extent does self-disclosure help or hinder the relationship-building process as a team forms and then works together to achieve a common performance goal?

Another benefit found of self-disclosure was that the level of solidarity felt within a group increases when information about oneself is shared with others (Wheeless, 1978). Believing this to be true, most sport teams take the time and energy to get to know one another on a more personal level. As a result, most members may experience a feeling of "belonging" within the team. If everyone feels like they "belong," feels accepted for who they are, and knows how they can contribute to the team's success, then the team's strength becomes greater than any one individual member. The Booth-Butterfields noted this sentiment when interviewing a female college basketball player who said, "We're one. We're many bodies but act as *one*. We all have our strong points and weaknesses, but we accept those and work together toward our one goal – to be national champions" (p. 185, 1988). Additional motivations for self-disclosure may be to increase the intimacy of a relationship by allowing someone to know more about us; to receive personal validation for who we are; or to increase the likelihood of reciprocation by increasing another's comfort level to share one's private information (Hook, Gerstein, Detterich, & Gridley, 2003).

<div align="center">Conceptualizing Self-Disclosure</div>

<u>Communications Studies</u>

Communication scholars have spent considerable time conceptualizing and researching the act of self-disclosure (Afifi, 2003; Afifi & Guerrero, 2000; Allman, 1998; Cozby, 1972; Gilbert & Whiteneck, 1976; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958; Petronio, 2002; Schmidt & Cornelius, 1987; Thompson & Seibold, 1978; Wheeless, 1978; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). In 1958, Jourard and Lasakow defined self-disclosure as "the process of making the self known to other persons" (p. 91). Cozby defined self-disclosure as "any information about himself which Person A communicates verbally to Person B" (1973, quoted in Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, p. 338). Wheeless & Grotz expanded upon Cozby's

definition by including nonverbal messages. They also take into account the receiver's level of understanding of the message when describing the process of self-disclosure (1976). Therefore, a person's self-disclosing message could vary in the degree to which information is disclosed, and could also vary in the degree to which the receiver understood the message intended by the sender (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). The definition of disclosure may also be narrowed by mandating that the information shared must be intimate or private, in nature (Pearce & Sharp, 1973, as cited by Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). A final characteristic of disclosure is that it allows for the sharing of information that would not otherwise be made available to the receiver (Fisher, 1986).

Some researchers have come to view self-disclosure as a *multi-dimensional concept* (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Cozby, 1973; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). Wheeless and Grotz's quantitative research identified five dimensions of disclosure (1976). The first dimension addresses the level of conscious *intent* a person has when sharing information with others. The second dimension includes the *amount* of information disclosed. Perceiving the nature of the disclosed information as either *positive or negative* represents the third dimension. A fourth dimension is the *honesty and accuracy* of the information shared. The final dimension entails the control over the *depth or intimacy* of the disclosure (1976). These five dimensions are important as they provide a framework for how to think about disclosure and, subsequently, how it can be analyzed in a sport team setting. An expected dimension of "relevance" to the topic under discussion "failed to be perceived as a unique dimension" (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, p. 345). However, by conducting a qualitative study, this project seeks to understand the role of relevance when it comes to disclosure.

More recently, Fairfield has described disclosure as a narrative communication process, in which the *content* of disclosure may depend on three variables (2005). First, the sensitivity of the information shared is proportional to the trust felt towards the recipient. Second, disclosure is a reciprocal process where the intimacy of the

information shared is relatively proportional to the other's disclosure. Third, the information disclosed is contingent on the relationship and one's perception of the other's receptiveness of the information (Fairfield, 2005).

<u>Social Psychology</u>

The early research on disclosure set out to define it and find ways to identify and measure it. Jourard and Lasakow provided questionnaires to their participants assessing the affect of relationship with the recipient (e.g., spouse, father, mother, male friend, female friend), marital status of the discloser, content of the information, and race and gender differences on the act of self-disclosure (1958). The content of the disclosures identified and asked about on the questionnaire included attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, work, money, personality, and body. The results showed the six areas of content falling into one of two clusters: high disclosure or low disclosure. Attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, and work appeared in the "high disclosure" cluster. While the areas found in the "low disclosure" cluster consisted of money, personality, and body (1958).

Furthermore, their research showed a positive correlation between the liking of a parent and the amount of self-disclosure made to that parent (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). This relationship of child to parent better approximates one of the relationships explored in this study: that between athlete and coach. Both roles of parent and coach are authoritative in nature, and hold more power in the relationships than does that of the child or athlete. The distribution of power in a relationship is a factor that must be explored when examining self-disclosure.

While Jourard & Lasakow (1958) laid the groundwork for showing that disclosure is identifiable and measurable, their work revealed a limited amount of factors that may impact the content of self-disclosure and the reasons for disclosing or not disclosing, especially within a group setting. More research has been done to assess a person's likelihood to disclose and patterns of disclosure based on attachment theory, along with

the variable of the receiver's relationship with the discloser (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991).

Gradually, the field of social psychology moved away from the earlier assumptions that self-disclosure was a stable personality trait and that it could be measured by assessing the participants' tendency to disclose as low or high (Berg & Derlega, 1987). This movement led to researchers focusing on disclosers' and recipients' objectives for disclosing and the effects of sharing one's personal information, thoughts, and beliefs (Berg & Derlega, 1987). Presently, self-disclosure is perceived as an action necessary for intimate relationships to form, such as marital, friendships, and patient-to-medical practitioner (Beach, et al., 2004a; Beach, et al., 2004b; de Vries & Parker, 1993; Schmidt & Cornelius, 1987; Welch, 2005).

According to Hook, Gerstein, Detterich, & Gridley (2003), the kinds of information shared will help determine the level of intimacy reached in any relationship. They describe two types of self-disclosure: descriptive and evaluative:

> Descriptive self-disclosure, for instance, occurs when people tell the facts of their lives. This usually happens at the beginning of a relationship. In contrast, evaluative self-disclosure occurs when people reveal their deepest feelings. This becomes more prevalent as people begin to know each other well, because it is the expression of feelings that is crucial to dating and marital satisfaction. (p. 463)

The analysis by Hook, Gerstein, Detterich, & Gridley (2003) does not account for self-disclosures that occur on a daily basis between persons whose relationship lies somewhere between that of strangers and of spouses. For example, there are potential moments for sharing that take place between persons who are not ultimately seeking the highest level of intimacy with one another, such as professional colleagues, casual friends, and teammates on a sport team.

It can be difficult to directly observe self-disclosure as it occurs, because of its usually private nature. Therefore, some researchers attempted to create questionnaires to assess different aspects of self-disclosure [e.g., Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (1958); Self-Disclosure Situations Survey (Chelune, 1976); Miller Topic Survey (Miller,

Berg, & Archer, 1983); and Opener Scale (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983)]. In 1987, Schmidt and Cornelius went beyond the use of questionnaire in their study, "Self-Disclosure in everyday life."

While not observing an act of self-disclosure directly, they did ask their participants to recall and describe to the researchers a recent face-to-face conversation with their best friend "during which he/she told the friend something about himself or herself that was of personal significance" (Schmidt & Cornelius, 1987). Following the description given, the researchers asked questions from a structured interview protocol. After quantitatively evaluating the participants' responses, the researchers concluded that:

> Subjects perceived their act of self-disclosure as helping to bring about the kind of relationship they would like to have with the target person while at the same time helping them become the kind of person they would like to be. (Schmidt & Cornelius, 1987, p. 371)

Schmidt & Cornelius' study sets the stage for future researchers to use qualitative methods to explore the possible reasons people have for choosing to share personal information with those who are present in their everyday lives. Furthermore, possible reasons need to be explored as to why people choose *not* to disclose to others.

<div align="center">Information Management Strategies</div>

Inclusion and Exclusion through Disclosure

If the nature and pattern of disclosure within a group is intimate, consistent, and agreed upon that information shared will not be told to others outside of the group, disclosure may work to increase the sense of inclusion felt by the group's members. In other words, disclosure has the potential to create closeness and social cohesion when the information shared is not made available to everyone. Conversely, by intentionally sharing information with only a select group of people, the disclosure also works to exclude those who do not have access to the information. An example of personal information that may be shared with a select few could be homosexuality. In the recent past, secrecy surrounded the romantic life of gay men and lesbian women due to its

believed stigmatizing effect on one's character (Ponse, 1976). While I suspect that the topic of romantic relationships is discussed among team members, lesbianism may or may not be a subtopic that participants are comfortable discussing openly with everyone on the team.

When studying how disclosure is used in groups, it is important to probe deeper to look at the power of language and how it is used, especially by members of a subculture. Jason Cromwell has studied the use of language among marginalized groups, such as transvestites and transsexuals, and concludes, "The way we speak conveys to the listener a part of our social identity. Our ways of speaking are determined, in part, by our memberships within various groups" (p. 267, 1995). Members of a subculture often create and utilize specific vocabulary when speaking to one another. The use of certain words, and the meaning those words have to the group, can be used to either increase the members' feelings of inclusion and solidarity, or they can be used to exclude those who do not belong to the group.

Indirect and Direct Disclosures

There are varying degrees of asking for and telling personal information. Expounding upon Cromwell's first point that relates to identity, certain words may be used to share personal information about oneself openly or to safely communicate veiled expressions only to be understood by a certain person or group of persons who share a social identity. Barbara Ponse describes this verbal dance as "dropping the pin" and "picking up the pin" referring to the indirect inference to a gay person, place, or event and the receiver's acknowledgement of the inference (1976).

Furthermore, William Leap's ethnographic and narrative analyses of conversations between gay men sheds light on the types of exchanges that take place when trying to determine if another is gay, or when letting others know of their homosexuality using "Gay Men's English" (1996). If an obscure inference is made and noted by the recipient, then a connection of mutual understanding of sexual orientation

may be made by sender and receiver. If the inference is not understood, then Leap's assumption is that the receiver is not gay. If that is the case, then because of the obscurity of the comment, the revelation of the sender's homosexuality is not risked and made known (1996). However, Leap does not account for the variability of a person's background and experiences, and the possibility of an outsider possessing inside information. Therefore, indirectly disclosing one's homosexuality to a gay man who possesses little knowledge of the gay culture or to a straight man who possesses a large amount of knowledge due to having gay friends or family members, may lead to incorrect assumptions or unintended disclosures.

Conversely, directly sharing information or intentionally excluding others from its access may also lead to the mismanagement of one's use of disclosure. Inappropriate disclosures may create an unfavorable sense of privacy for those involved. When interviewing members of stepfamilies, Afifi (2003) used Petronio's framework of Communication Privacy Management to assess the families' regulation of privacy. She found that the parents mismanaged privacy boundaries by making inappropriate disclosures to the children regarding the circumstances of the parent's divorce. These disclosures led to the children's co-ownership of that information, necessitating their management of the information when interacting with the other parent and/or stepparent. Another consequence of these disclosures was the formation of unhealthy alliances and the possible exclusion of a stepparent (Afifi, 2003). Afifi's study positions self-disclosure as a way to cause turbulence in boundary management by minimizing privacy with the construction of alliances through disclosures to a third party (i.e., the children) and maximizing the child's desire for privacy (i.e., closedness) by keeping other family members at a distance.

Non-Disclosure

When information is not shared with others or purposely shared with only a select few, it could be called a secret. Sissela Bok has written extensively about secrets, and

defines a secret as information that is intentionally concealed (1983). Most people

perceive secrets as negative or immoral information that is being kept hidden. However,

Simmel's assertion of the "attractiveness" of secrets apart from its content broadens the

conceptual boundaries of a secret (see Merten, 1999). The defining and function of

secrets have not been examined on a sport team. However, they have been studied in

families and in friendships (Merten, 1999; Vangelisti, 1994).

According to Merten, secrets hold value in the determination of one's social status

and power and were proportional to the intimate nature of a social relationship (1999).

Merten examined how junior high girls perceived and treated secrets. He found that the

girls perceived secrets as social objects to be used as social currency when forming new

friendships or deepening existing friendships. Furthermore, one's social status was

proportional to the amount of secret information told to her by others. Moreover, the

more secrets one knew, the more power she had to use those secrets for her own social

gain (Merten, 1999).

Anita Vangelisti studied secrets kept within a family, and found that "generally

the findings confirm the negative view of family secrets depicted in much of the literature

on family therapy" (1994, p. 130). By seeking to determine what types of information

families keep hidden, she found that a family's secrets generally fall into one of three

categories: taboos, rule violations, and conventional secrets (Vangelisti, 1994).

Vangelisti also looked at the form of a secret to understand the extent to which people

were privy to the secret information, and the form's relationship to the type of secret.

She found that:

> Taboo topics were more often cited as WHOLE family secrets and least often as
> INDIVIDUAL secrets. The pattern for secrets focusing on rule violations was the
> opposite: they were most frequently held as INDIVIDUAL secrets, and least
> often as WHOLE family secrets. (Vangelisti, 1994, p. 131)

Vangelisti uses Karpel's research (1980) to discuss a secret's form, or the extent to which

secret information is made known to others. As discussed by Vangelisti (1994), Karpel

delineates between whole family secrets (information withheld from those outside of the family); intra-family secrets (information not everyone in the family has been told); and individual secrets (information not shared with family members).

<u>Disclosure within Sport Teams</u>

Several scholars have researched different aspects of (non)disclosure among team members (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1988; Curry, 1991; Gough, 2007; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Officer & Rosenfeld, 1985) as it relates to their participation in sport. Officer & Rosenfeld's study (1985) centered on the frequency and patterns of self-disclosure by female high school athletes to male coaches and female coaches. The use of disclosure to build and increase team cohesion was analyzed by Holt & Dunn (2004), and found in Booth-Butterfields' study of women college basketball players (1988).

Because of a disclosure's potential to deepen the relationships between two or more people, it is generally thought of as necessary for team cohesion. Booth-Butterfields' study on the competitive and cooperative communication that takes place within a team found that the players described a positive correlation between communication and team success:

> They (the players) reported that when they talked more about themselves, about the game, problems, relationships, and so on, they won more. In the individual follow-up interviews the women noted a wide range of topics discussed among teammates, everything from sex, to religion, to racial issues, to family members, to homosexuality. (1988, p. 185)

The emergence and discussion of the topics mentioned in the previous quotation, lends more credence to the idea that much more can be learned by studying self-disclosure on a team: under what circumstances self-disclosure takes place and does not take place; how team members "ask" and "tell" personal information; how the team members categorize the types of personal information disclosed, and understanding how both players and coaches construct privacy on a team through self-disclosure. Since the focus of Booth-Butterfields' study was to examine how a women's team deals with the contradictory notions of cooperation and competition and how their communication reflect cooperative

and competitive tendencies, it did not focus on the role of or the normalizing of self-disclosure on a sport team. Furthermore, the participants included only the players. The coaches were not interviewed in this particular study. However, the coach's influence on the team's attitudes regarding "self-discipline," "team concept," and "self-motivation" was noted by the researchers as a strong theme that emerged during the players' interviews (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1988).

Timothy Curry (1991) also studied communication on a sport team; however, he studied men's teams only and observed the face-to-face interactions that occurred in the teams' locker rooms. Curry found that most conversations, accessible to anyone in the locker room, reproduced attitudes of heterosexism and misogyny (1991). While a team's locker room could be defined as a private space, he did not specifically focus on interactions of *self-disclosure*. In fact, his presence in the locker room may have prohibited any sharing of personal information that could have been observable to him. He did note, though, that some conversations took place in whispered tones or in an area of the locker room that provided more privacy (i.e., no access to unwanted listeners) (Curry, 1991). Some sharing of personal information in this space may have occurred, but those conversations were not heard and not asked about by the researcher.

The locker room space and relationships with teammates may serve as variables that dictate (non)disclosure between those on the team and with others outside the team. Communication among players and coaches was also examined by Nancy Theberge (1995) in her ethnographic study of women hockey players in Canada. Like Curry, Theberge observed the face-to-face interactions that took place in the locker room. In contrast to Curry's study, Theberge reports more sharing of personal information among the players, such as occupational information and sexual orientation. However, Theberge did not query the players on their objectives and decisions to self-disclose or not to self-disclose. Information was not sought to explain how they understood the nature of the information shared or not shared (i.e., public, private, or secret), to what extent they

managed the boundaries of their personal information, and under what circumstances it was expected that they disclose or that they not disclose (i.e., how they created their norms of self-disclosure).

<u>Privacy and Sport</u>

Little research has been conducted on privacy and its construction on a sport team by its members. A search of the electronic databases of SportDiscus, Psychinfo, and Academic Search Elite of the keywords "privacy" and "sport teams" revealed that the majority of articles identified concentrated on eating disorders, drug-testing, sexual harassment, and the legal issues regarding mandatory disclosure of medical information of high school, college, and professional athletes. The medical topics of concern that were studied most frequently discussed the disclosure of HIV-infected athletes and the results of athletes who were drug-tested. Furthermore, the research focused on the privacy rights of the athletes only. The studies did not query the notion of privacy for coaches, an issue that has not been adequately examined in the field of college athletics. Nor, did the articles discuss how team members collectively construct, and individually and collectively manage privacy.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

In order to best explore my research questions regarding team members and their social construction of privacy, it is necessary to design a qualitative study. Qualitative data gathered from observing and interviewing the athletes and coaches, will better describe their understanding of personal information, the nature and scope of self-disclosure, and the team's construction of privacy. Furthermore, "when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events, interviewing provides a useful means of access" (Taylor & Bogdan, p. 98, cited in Berg, 2004).

I positioned this project within a multi-layered framework that includes Erving Goffman's concepts of dramaturgy, facework, and stigma; the theoretical perspective of symbolic interaction; and Sandra Petronio's Communication Privacy Management theoretical system. The task at hand is to see how these concepts and theories describe how a sport team determines the amount of access to its members' personal information, and how the members manage the information that is shared. Conducting interviews allowed me to ascertain and probe the participants' perceptions of the meanings of those behaviors within the context of the theoretical concepts and perspectives.

Intently examining one sport team allowed me to chronologically follow the way in which the team members developed, negotiated, and maintained the team's communication norms throughout an entire season. Because different communities often construct unique cultural ways of interacting with one another, the findings of this study cannot be universally applied to all sport teams. However, it serves as an exploratory first step to understanding how a sport team manages personal information about itself and its members.

Participants

The participants in this study were the players and coaching staff of an NCAA Division III women's basketball team. The focus of the study and the sensitive nature of the personal information that the participants shared heightened my sense of responsibility to protect and be a good steward of the information shared. Therefore, pseudonyms were given to each participant to protect their privacy. In addition, I used discretion in deciding how to manage the personal information the participants shared with me in their interviews. While I did not discuss the contents of the team members' interviews with other participants in this project, I was cognizant of how I disclosed their personal information and the depth to which it is discussed. In addition to assigning pseudonyms, the specifics of the participants' personal information are not discussed in detail unless deemed to be germane to understanding my analyses of the research.

Participants at an NCAA Division III level were chosen for two reasons. First, my interest in this topic began during my own coaching experience at an NCAA Division III institution some years ago, providing me with first-hand knowledge of the paradox of the simultaneous need for revealing and concealing information that seems to exist within athletic teams. Second, since student-athletes at the Division III level do not receive athletic scholarships, it is likely that they do not feel the risk of losing their scholarship if they reveal too much personal information. Consequently, non-scholarship athletes may possess more personal autonomy when revealing or concealing personal information than student-athletes who receive athletic aid.

Conversely, scholarship athletes may either intentionally conceal or be made to reveal pieces of personal information about themselves to their team members. For example, they may choose not to self-disclose certain information for fear of losing their athletic scholarship if they believe they will be looked at as a liability by the coach (e.g., pregnancy, mental health issue, etc.). Another possibility is that student-athletes who do receive athletic aid may self-disclose *more*, not because they freely choose to but because

their personal information is demanded by coaches and administrators. This demand to know personal information (e.g., criminal background[4], mental health issues, religious affiliation and involvement, etc.) comes from the need to protect the financial interests of the institution and the athletics department.

Because NCAA Division I athletics relies upon revenues generated by television contracts, commercial sponsorships, the generosity of donors, and gate receipts, each program must protect its image and the public image of its student-athletes in order to safeguard its financial viability. As such, the coach and the athletic administration may feel compelled to find out as much as they can about an individual when deciding whether or not to offer a prospective student-athlete an initial scholarship. As a result, the prospective student-athlete experiences less control over the management of his/her own impression, as coaches solicit their personal information from high school and/or club coaches, guidance counselors, teachers, church leaders, and anyone who has had interactions with the recruit.

The scrutiny of a Division I student-athlete's personal information does not end once he/she receives an initial athletic scholarship. The period of award for an athletics grant-in-aid (i.e., athletic scholarship) may not exceed one year, and is not guaranteed from year to year. The athletics aid is a one year renewable contract that is re-evaluated at the end of each academic year by the coach and athletics administration. In other words, the scholarship athlete relies on the coach's continued impression of her as a "good athlete" and a "good teammate" after each academic year in order to have her scholarship renewed.

Because of the financial risk of having less than perfect student-athletes in a Division I program, a student-athlete's sense of personal autonomy over the decision to

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[4] The athletics department at the University of Oklahoma conducts background checks on all of its incoming student-athletes and Baylor University conducts background checks on all of its incoming transfer student-athletes. Baylor's policy was put into place after one of its men's basketball players murdered a teammate.

share personal information with team members and administrators may be less than that of a Division III student-athlete. A greater sense of personal autonomy presupposes a conscious awareness of deciding whether or not to self-disclose, allowing for the team to socially construct its own notion of privacy. For this reason, a Division III team becomes an intriguing population to study.

With only the student-athletes' participation satisfaction at stake at the Division III level, a team's need for *solidarity* may be the strongest motivating factor for self-disclosure. It is the tension between a team's quest for solidarity and its members' desires for privacy that drives this project. Therefore, studying a Division III team is more appropriate than examining a team at a Division I institution where student-athletes may feel compelled to withhold or disclose their own information in order to obtain and maintain their athletic scholarships; coaches may feel they need to know the athletes' personal information when making recruiting and coaching decisions in order to keep their jobs; and athletic administrators may feel entitled to the coaches' and student-athletes' personal information in order to minimize risk of embarrassment, to maximize contributions from donors, and to ensure that the large amount of financial resources spent recruiting athletes and compensating coaches are well-spent.

<div align="center">Participant Contact Procedures</div>

I attended a team meeting on the fourth day of practice where I apprised them of my intent to observe and individually interview team members during the season, and asked them to consider participating in the study. Participation in the study entailed taking part in two individual interviews. The next day, I individually and privately met with all, but two, of the players to ascertain their willingness to participate in this project. Shortly after that day, I met with the last two team members under the same conditions.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Before any data could be collected, an application requesting permission to research human subjects was submitted to and approved by the University of Iowa's

Institutional Review Board (IRB). Included in this application was a Letter of Agreement from the Director of Athletics of a Division III institution granting permission to observe and interview the school's coaches and players. The Letter of Agreement also permitted me to have access to classrooms and office space on the institution's campus in order to conduct the interviews privately. Finally, I contacted the Head Coach and received approval to observe team practices, team meetings, and to interview the team's members at the beginning of the season and again at the end of the season.

<div align="center">Information-Gathering Techniques</div>

Direct observations and semi-structured interviews were the techniques utilized to gather information on how a particular sport team creates its norms for disclosure and operationalizes privacy. I conducted twenty-eight interviews over the course of the season. I also observed six practices, one intra-squad scrimmage, one away-from-home competition while seated among the players' families, and one home competition where I was allowed to observe all team meetings before, during, and after the competition. Each team function I attended served to increase the team's comfort level with my presence and allowed me to observe the team members in different competitive and increasingly more behind-the-scenes team situations.

Observing the Team Members

During and immediately following each observation of the team, I took notes to document my impressions. When observing the team's events and activities, I found myself having to make several decisions regarding my insertion into the team's public and private spaces. The first decision was where to position myself in the gymnasium when observing the team's practices. I found myself negotiating the apprehension of not wanting to be intrusive yet wanting to be in a central location in order to see and hear as many interactions as possible. For the first few practices, I positioned myself near the players where they gathered during their water breaks. However, I was seated behind them, making it difficult to hear their conversations and to ascertain a sense of the nature

of their interactions. From then on, I sat on the other side of the playing surface. While, I still could not hear everything that was being said, I had a better view of their nonverbal body language, such as facial expressions and gestures.

The second decision I had to make was how I would answer questions asked by non-team members who wanted to know who I was and my purpose for being there. In other words, I had to make conscious choices regarding my own self-disclosure. For example, a few weeks into the season, I attended the team's intra-squad scrimmage to which their families were invited. Even after giving thought to how my presence would be perceived by the parents prior to the scrimmage, I felt nervous and out of place when a player's father approached me. He introduced himself, and quickly asked if I was there to watch a friend or if one of the players was my sister. As I had suspected, my attendance that day did not go unnoticed. Not wanting to make our interaction awkward or to appear evasive, I answered that I was a graduate student studying the team for my dissertation on team communication.

During the season, I attended two games where I was able to observe the team formally and publicly competing against an opposing team. One game was an away-from-home contest against a non-conference opponent early in their competitive schedule. The second game I observed was a home contest against a conference opponent that took place towards the end of the season. When attending the team's home game, I was granted access to all of the team's game-day meetings including pre-game, half-time, and post-game. These opportunities to witness the team during various backstage moments during the competition were invaluable as they provided me with a better understanding of the team's dynamics. Furthermore, these observations prompted additional and supplemental questions asked of the team members during their interviews.

Interviewing the Team Members

       The time frame for conducting the interviews extended from October until March. Prior to October, I conducted two mock interviews with former student-athletes. The mock interviews allowed me to refine the schedule of questions and the manner in which I was to conduct the interview (e.g., tone of voice, length of the interviewer's portion of the dialogue, and the wording of the questions). Every interview was tape-recorded with the participants' permission. Immediately before each interview began, the participants were given three reminders: (1) their responses would remain confidential (i.e., I would not reference their responses when interviewing other team members); (2) their responses would remain anonymous as pseudonyms would be given to each participant; and (3) they could decline to answer any question asked. The length of each interview spanned approximately one hour to an hour and fifteen minutes.

       Two rounds of interviews took place over the course of the season, the first at the beginning of the season and the second shortly after the conclusion of the season. All in all, fifteen members of the team were interviewed for a total of twenty-eight semi-structured interviews. Thirteen participants were interviewed twice, while the remaining two team members were each interviewed only once. One team member was not interviewed at the beginning of the season due to schedule conflicts. The second team member was not interviewed at the end of the season. When attempting to contact her to schedule a second interview, she informed me that she was no longer a member of the team. I responded that I was still interested in having her participate in the second and final round of interviews. However, I did not receive a reply and I made no other attempts to contact her, as I understood her non-responsiveness to mean that she wished to terminate her involvement in the study.

       A semi-structured interview schedule was used in both rounds of interviews to direct the dialogue toward the areas of interest identified in this study, and to allow for the flexibility to probe deeper into the answers given by the participants (Berg, 2004).

The first round of interviews occurred at the beginning of the season after the participants had become formal members, initiated by their attendance at official practices. The questions of the first interview concentrated on assessing how the team members were relating to one another when first beginning to identify as a team and/or teammates. Therefore, they were asked about their interactions on and off the court. Additionally, questions were asked based on observations made during the practices I attended, such as the team members' tattoos, the purpose and leading of team huddles, and the absence of certain team members. The timing of these interviews was especially critical as the team was in the initial stages of becoming a collective unit.

Each new sport season brings the opportunity for a team to create new ways of operating and/or to strengthen its commitment to past behaviors and expectations. The opportunity presents itself every year as new players join the team, in the form of first-year players (e.g., freshmen, transfers, or older students joining the team for the first time), and as players from the season before are lost to graduation or some other form of attrition. Since the graduated seniors from the season before usually served as team leaders, the beginning of a new season brings with it the need for new leadership to emerge among the athletes.

Therefore, the beginning of a new season provides an ideal time to examine the ways in which new players and new leaders are adjusting and (re)positioning themselves within a team. More specifically, conducting interviews at the beginning of the season allowed me to explore how new players managed their personal information as they became acquainted with their new teammates, how the returning players communicated their expectations of disclosure to the new players, and how the new players came to learn, understand, and possibly disrupt the team's norms of disclosure.

The second and final round of interviews took place at the conclusion of the season. The questions asked in the second interview focused on interactions that took place during the season among the team, between teammates, and between players and

coaches. Additionally, follow-up questions to the participants' responses given in the first interview were asked. To that extent, participants could either reconfirm or adjust their initial thoughts based on how interactions between team members played out during the season. Moreover, by conducting the second round of interviews shortly after the conclusion of the season, participants provided thicker descriptions of their interactions. In that respect, events from the season had occurred in their recent memory, but yet the one to three weeks between their last game and their interview provided time to reflect on how the season ended and the season as a whole. Overall, the approach of conducting multiple in-depth, semi-structured interviews served as an appropriate and effective method for acquiring insight into a sport team's social construction of privacy shaped by the negotiations that take place for sharing personal information.

<u>Analyzing the Data</u>

Following each interview, I took notes on my initial thoughts and identified areas for follow-up with the participants for their second interviews, or highlighted intriguing disclosures. Each tape-recorded interview was then transcribed, coded, and analyzed. All of the transcripts were listened to and read several times to identify emerging themes relevant to this project's research questions. Furthermore, contents of the interviews were electronically copied and pasted into different electronic documents by theme in order to identify and organize the data.

Grounded theory will be used to analyze all the information gathered. Grounded theory will allow me to search for a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, "identify categories and concepts that emerge from text and link these concepts into substantive and formal theories" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, pp. 278-279). While the theories and theoretical concepts described in my literature review provided a starting point for identifying concepts, themes, and points of analyses, I allowed myself to be open to other theoretical concepts that may emerge.

CHAPTER IV
BECOMING A (CLOSE) TEAM

With the advancements in technology, such as Facebook and Twitter, it has become increasingly easier to share our personal information with others. Moreover, because of the insatiability of human curiosity, people are also willing and eager to know, or to have access to, the personal information of others. It is typical for those in personal relationships such as family members, significant others, friends, acquaintances, etc., who are separated by a significant amount of distance, to use some kind of mediated method to communicate with each other. They can use technological tools to share information, to give updates on the day's events, and/or to get to know one another better.

Before sharing this information through these methods, an individual can control many aspects of the information's distribution, thus, allowing one to create her own sense of privacy. One's construction of privacy is generally determined by the nature of the relationship. For example, a Facebook user can control access to their information and the types of information shared. Since a person cannot view another's site until she has been accepted as a "friend," the proprietor of a personal site has control over who does and who does not have access to the site. Moreover, once a person is accepted as a "friend," privacy control settings may be used to limit her access to certain categories of information found on the site. For instance, she may allow them to post a message onto the site and read the status update, but deny access to any personal pictures uploaded onto the site. The privacy settings allow the site operator the capability of controlling the access and the amount of personal information disclosed.

The members of a sport team, on the other hand, do not have the same tools available to them to construct their sense of privacy. This study's examination of how one team balanced the tension of preserving the autonomy over their personal information while uniting as a team to accomplish a common goal provides insight into

their negotiation of privacy. When in-season, members of a team engage in numerous daily face-to-face interactions that take place over a substantially long period of time in order to be a successful team. These interactions include working together to achieve performance-based team goals, such as winning a certain number of games or winning the conference championship. The team members' interactions also include those of a more social nature, such as team activities designed to foster relationship-building. Moreover, both the task-oriented and the social interactions are impacted by the differing and changing nature of relationships among the members of an athletic team. For example, a team may include players who are sisters, roommates, classmates, or those who had no previous interactions with each other prior to being introduced as teammates.

As I listened to the members describe the steps they took to become a successful team, it was clear that the process of self-disclosure played a critical role. Therefore, I believe a sharp tension exists between personal autonomy and team solidarity, and that this tension is intensified due to the necessity of face-to-face interactions by individuals who have varying relationships on the team. By analyzing how team members self-disclosed and how they determined what was important to share, I began to see how they negotiated their own individual and the team's sense of privacy.

In the interest of responsibly maintaining the participants' confidentiality, I will generally not discuss the specifics of disclosures made by the participants during their interviews. Suffice it to say that any secret, private, or personal information shared among the team members during the season and/or told to me during interviews, would be akin to the issues that anyone their age may be experiencing. A partial list of those issues, whose mentioning in no way indicates that it was an issue on this team, includes parents' divorce, academic struggles, sexual abuse, pregnancy, addiction, drug abuse, depression, sleep disorders, eating disorders, anxiety, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual orientation, romantic relationship issues, etc.

In this chapter, I begin with an introduction to the team and describe their commitment to becoming a close team. Then, I identify their team rules and communication norms and explain how they were negotiated. Next, I briefly describe the players' disclosures made when discussing their tattoos, and two critical team meetings during the season that revealed the team's management strategies of self-disclosure. The first team meeting took place early in the season and the second team meeting occurred late in the season. I discuss these meetings more in-depth in Chapter V.

<div align="center">The Playmakers</div>

The Playmakers (a pseudonym) were a predominantly young team comprised of sixteen players and three coaches. The team was racially homogenous, and according to the roster all of the players were from the same state in which the institution was located. Two transfer students joined the team that year looking for a different situation than their previous school or basketball program provided. The Playmakers were led under the direction of its coaches and the team's Leadership Group. The Leadership Group was comprised of several players who met certain criteria established by the coaching staff, applied for the position, and whose essays they wrote were voted on by their teammates. It was clear to me, from the start, that all members were motivated to have a successful season. From my observations, I learned that they defined a successful season as one where they won the majority of their games, competed for a conference championship, and one in which they enjoyed the experience of being a member of the team.

Athletically, the team fell short of the high expectations it had set for itself. They won approximately half of their games. Their record of wins and losses was good enough to earn them a spot in their conference tournament, but they did not progress as far in the tournament as they believed they could have. They believed they had the talent, heart, and team solidarity needed to produce more victories on the court than they did. But when it was all said and done, they outperformed the pre-season projections made by the head coaches of their conference opponents who predicted they would finish near the

bottom of the conference. All in all, the final athletic results for this team ended up being somewhere in the middle, which created feelings of disappointment but also optimism when looking ahead to the next season.

But for the most part, the Playmakers did succeed with their other general goal of enjoying their participation on the team. During her first interview, Heidi described her experience on the team as:

> I don't really care if I play here or not, but I'm just having so much fun with the team and being a part of what we have. Because what we have is awesome. We all get along, and it's like the dream some coach would probably have is to have your whole team get along like we do. We work together so well.

When asked to describe the highlights from the season during the second round of interviews, almost all of the members did not have any trouble answering this question. Michelle's description of the season's highlights also illustrates that the members enjoyed being on the team, "For me personally, it would just be how well our team got along; and it was just a lot of fun; and having a good coach…well, good coaches, actually." A couple of players referenced a specific game where the team won and played really well. However, the majority of the players and the coaches referenced the team meeting that I earlier identified as the first of two important meetings, and stated that as a highlight of the season:

> California was a big one, for sure. We..made a huge step our second game that we were out there, and we got extremely a lot closer. We actually got to know everybody. We all hung out with each other since summer, but we never got to really know that person. We were friends with them, we had class with them, we ate lunch with everybody on the team, and were together at practice, but we never really knew each other. (Lindsay)

Lindsay was not the only team member to express "getting closer" or "being close" as a positive experience. During the second round of interviews after the season was over, all but one team member described the team as "close." Even though the one member did not explicitly mention that the team was close, she did articulate that the team had grown closer throughout the year. Throughout their interviews, the players and

the coaches repeatedly promoted themselves as a cohesive entity, rather than a group of individuals who play on the same basketball team.

Committing to being a Close Team

The players were strongly committed to building positive relationships with one another. After having experienced a season of unwanted division on the team the year before where teammates did not spend quality time together off the court, the returning players saw this new season as a fresh start for a new team. The seniors from the year before had graduated, and new players were added to the team in the form of first-year players and transfer students. The players did not wait for the season to begin to get to know one another. The returning players organized team activities and social outings during the summer prior to the start of the new academic year, and invited all new and returning players to all of the events. Because of their commitment to have a good team experience, the returning players worked hard to make the new players feel comfortable as soon as possible:

> We try...really hard to get, especially our incoming freshmen, to get together in the summer. And try to talk to them and get them to come out in June, come to the basketball camps that Coach has set up for the younger kids, helping with that. We get in to the [state] Games, 5-on-5. So we get the team into that, so that kind of helps break the ice for us. Some people will already know each other because they may have played them in high school, or they went to the same school, or they're already friends, and stuff like that. So, they've already kind of got that connection, but we want everybody, especially the newcomers, to feel that we want you to be here. We don't want you to feel isolated because we're already comfortable with each other, and we already know so much about each other. We want you to get comfortable, and be able to come to us when you start school and be like, "What am I supposed to be doing?" And they're not afraid to come talk to us. (Lindsay)

Pre-Season Activities

During the first round of interviews, the players explained how they spent the summer and the early fall preparing for the upcoming season. In the summer, they competed as a team in a state-wide competition, organized a barbecue, and attended open gyms where they could scrimmage and work on their basketball skills. These opportunities to get together were deliberately created by the returning players to get an

early jump on the process of getting to know one another. Moreover, they were mindful to invite all of the players to every activity. They did not want anyone to feel unwelcomed, because they were inadvertently left out of an activity.

When classes began in the fall, the players had several weeks to engage in even more athletic and social activities before basketball practices officially started in the middle of October. They used this time to play pick-up games, strength-train, and condition together. Additionally, they spent time hanging out and socializing with the purpose of getting to know one another on a more personal level. The returning players also used this time to indoctrinate the first-year players into the culture of the team. Due to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules, the coaches were not allowed to be present during their playing and training activities. For the most part, the coaches also did not engage in the team's social activities either in the summer or in the fall, but two of the three coaches were accessible on campus due to their non-coaching responsibilities at the institution. The players could stop into the coaches' offices at this time to talk or ask questions, at their discretion.

Once their practices started in mid-October, the team's focus shifted to getting to know each other's athletic talent and abilities. Both the players and the coaches discovered each other's skill strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies. Furthermore, the coaches determined the roles each of the athletes would play in order for the team to be successful. The start of practices also necessitated that the members spend more concentrated amounts of time together. Six days a week, the players spent approximately three hours a day together preparing for practice,[5] practicing, and engaging in post-practice activities.[6]

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[5] Preparing for practice included changing into their practice gear in the locker room, having injuries taped or treated in the training room, and shooting or hanging out in the gym prior to practice. Occasionally, the team also lifted weights prior to their practice.

[6] Post-practice activities included shooting extra baskets in the gym, receiving treatment of injuries in the training room, changing in the locker room, and eating dinner together.

The Playmakers' efforts to create a welcoming environment where the players felt comfortable spending large amounts of time together were rewarded: during both rounds of interviews at the beginning and at the end of the season, the players described the team to me as being very close. They did not perceive the team as having cliques, where a few members separate themselves from the rest of the group. If they felt cliques were forming due to the natural progression of relationships, the players addressed that issue directly. The team acknowledged that some members were closer to one another than others and that some relationships deepened during the course of the season. However, the team was committed to the principle that those relationships would not instigate any purposeful exclusion of teammates to social events such as on-campus meals, off-campus meals, etc.

While developing closeness, the Playmakers were aware of how they wanted to act towards one another. In general, they wanted their interactions to be genuine and respectful. Furthermore, they wanted to know that their teammates supported them and would do anything for them. The team's efforts to create closeness can be analyzed using Erving Goffman's "Model of Social Order" (discussed in Birrell, 1979).

In Goffman's terms, they wanted to have "euphoric" interactions that were supportive in nature. When respect is shown to others during an interaction, Goffman refers to the interaction as being supportive (Birrell, 1979). Goffman uses the phrases, "supportive work," "supportive ritual," or "supportive interchange" to describe interactions that are ritualistic and concerned with the state of interpersonal relationships (1971). While supportive rituals are typically seen as brief and isolated interchanges, I use the concept here to discuss three particular significant incidents that took place during the season: (1) conversations regarding tattoos worn by several team members; (2) an

unanticipated three hour team meeting on a road trip at the beginning of the season;[7] and (3) an unexpected team meeting at the end of the season.

The Playmakers desired to have euphoric interactions in which their relations with one another were smooth and comfortable. Because they were uncertain as to whether or not disruptions may occur that would lead to awkward or distracting interactions, at best, or interactions that were destructive to the team's dynamics, at worst, they attempted to define what it meant to be on the team before the team even officially came together. The players' goal was to be on a close team where everyone felt comfortable. In order to be close and comfortable, they negotiated how to share their personal information with one another that was relevant to their status of being a "good teammate" and a "good team." Euphoric interactions were maintained when they were known to be following the team rules and norms and sharing personal background information when requested.

Despite the team's efforts to have a close-knit group, there were two unexpected moments during the season that the Playmakers needed to carefully manage. Necessitated by the disruptive actions and behaviors of a select few on the team, the moments came in the form of team meetings where questions were asked and answered. The first meeting occurred because the players thought teammates showed disrespect to others on the team. The second meeting occurred because some of the players were thought to have broken a team rule. In effect, these meetings ended up being critical moments that helped the members define themselves as a team. All of the members regarded the two team meetings as being critical moments, and turning points, in the season. In the context of information management, these critical moments of seeking and sharing personal information crystallized the team's communication norms.

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[7] The meeting was an isolated event that may not appear to be brief (spanning the course of 3 hours); however, the meeting served as a brief, albeit extended, moment in relation to the large amounts of concentrated time the team spends together during the course of a nearly 5-month season.

The Playmakers' Use of Self-Disclosure

Team members shared two general categories of information. The first category of information was rule-oriented, team-focused, and germane to the players' membership status on the team. It was important that the players showed they were following the team's rules and norms. When a player broke a rule or norm, she was expected to provide an explanation or a confession.

The second category of information sought and shared was the team members' personal background information, which was perceived by the athletes as germane to their level of satisfaction experienced as a member of the team. Interestingly, it was the actual *act of disclosure*, itself, that was important to the Playmakers, not the *content of the disclosure*. A willingness to participate in acts of self-disclosure (i.e., sharing and listening) showed a level of caring and trust for each other that the players felt necessary in order to have a successful team experience.

After conducting, transcribing, and analyzing the interviews, it became clear that *what* personal information they shared and *how* they shared it was dictated by the team's rules and norms. Besides providing order and guidelines for behavior, rules and norms also contribute to a team's cohesion when they are being followed. Michelle described the importance of team rules as, "Having a set of rules and saying you're going to follow them, and having that kind of alliance. We have that commitment with the team." Therefore, the Playmakers negotiated their sense of privacy when balancing the need for team cohesion (increased by following team rules and norms) with the need to have control over their own self-disclosures.

Team Rules and Team Norms

Team rules and team norms were established by both the players and the coaches for the players to follow. Two sets of formal rules were put in place prior to the start of the season. The coaches created one set of formal rules, and the players determined the second set of formal rules. Both players and coaches contributed to the establishing of

the norms, or informal rules, which was an ongoing process that began before the season started and continued throughout the season.

The coaches established three rules to guide the players' behaviors and interactions with other team members throughout the season:

1) Attend all classes and required number of study table hours;

2) Be on time to all team-related activities;

3) Have a positive attitude.

These rules reflect a sense of respect and accountability the coaches wanted to instill within the players. For example, they wanted the players to respect their own opportunity to excel as both a student and as an athlete. Furthermore, the head coach wanted the players to show respect for their fellow team members by putting forth their best effort to remain academically eligible; by not putting them in a position to worry that something happened to a player causing her to be late to a team activity; and by demanding that they act appropriately and positively contribute to the team's dynamics and goals.

At a team meeting prior to the start of the season, the athletes were instructed by the coaches to create an additional list of team rules that they were to follow throughout the season. The athlete-generated list of rules included:

1) No drinking alcohol;

2) No drugs or tobacco;

3) Respect your teammates on and off the court.

However, these athlete-generated rules were not central to the players' sense of themselves as a team. For example, one athlete referred to the player-generated list as having five rules, yet was not able to recall more than these three. And when asked directly, only a few of the athletes were able to recite these three rules from memory. Heidi responded, "I don't even know all of our rules, but I just know that they're, you just be a good person and you won't break them. I don't know them off the top of my head." While admitting that she could not remember all of the players' rules, Heidi expressed

confidence that she would not break any of them because they were synonymous with the universal rules of being a *good person*.

Anna equated the athletes' formal rules to an intrinsic set of rules any *athlete* would need to abide by in order for the team to be successful:

> We all kind of knew that there was going to be a no drinking rule and a no drugs rule, which I think no matter what if you're on a college sports team, you shouldn't be drinking or doing drugs anyways. And it doesn't really bother people because I know for us to be a successful team, we can't be doing that stuff. And so, the rules that we came up with, we knew that we had to have these rules in order for us to be successful.

To these players, the mandating and eliminating of certain behaviors dictated by these team rules were necessary for presenting themselves as a good person, a good athlete, and ultimately a good teammate.

While I provided a listing of the team's rules, it is not the content of the rules that is interesting, but rather, the team members' commitment to following the rules and the consequences experienced when they are broken. When the rules are followed, the players maintain their "face" of being a "good teammate." When the rules are not followed, a player must work to get "back in face" if she is to regain her teammates' impression of her as a "good teammate."

Knowing that people sometimes make bad decisions, the Playmakers devised a way for an offending player to make amends for breaking a rule. The head coach incorporated the use of a die to dole out a player's punishment. When a player confessed to breaking a rule or was caught in the act, the offender had to roll the die. Each side of the die represented a punishment,[8] such as cleaning the backboards in the gymnasium and carrying the players' dirty practice gear to the laundry room after practice for one week; or running the length of the court down and back five times in under seventy seconds,

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[8] The punishments were decided at the same pre-season meeting that the coaches' rules were made known and the athletes' rules were created. The athletes determined the punishments and then presented them to the coaching staff for final approval.

three times in a row.[9] The head coach explained the process and the rationale for using a

die to determine a player's punishment:

> I use the dice and they make six consequences. So if they break any of the team
> rules, they roll the dice. Whatever they roll is their punishment, so it takes away
> favoritism - me treating a starter different than a non-starter or a varsity player
> and a JV player. The fact of the matter is you broke a rule. And then it also
> alleviates, I don't hold grudges anyway, but the grudge factor. Then, they know
> flat out what's going to happen to them.

Furthermore, if a player broke a rule from the athlete-generated list, then only the

offending athlete needed to make amends. However, if a player broke one of the coach's

rules, then the entire team was required to carry out the punishment.

Despite the nature of the relationship between an offending player and the coach

(i.e., not close, antagonistic, etc.), the offender generally had an opportunity to regain her

membership status on the team. Rolling a die to determine the punishment allowed the

offender full access to an opportunity to perform "face-work" and to once again claim the

face of a "good teammate." When the head coach further explained her rationale for

using the die, she touched on the strategy's ability to rehabilitate a player's good face:

> Again, it's a natural consequence. I think people spend too much time feeling bad
> about messing up or making a mistake. I don't want people to hold on to it. I
> want them to learn from it and move on. Just like in a game, just roll it and get it
> over with.

In other words, completing the consequence allowed the offender and the offended to

move on and once again focus on the team's goals. By accepting and completing a

punishment, the offending player placed herself back into the good graces of the team,

and prohibited an indiscretion to be used to label her as a troublemaker or a "bad

teammate."

All of the team's formal rules - except one - required an offending player to roll

the die once and perform one designated punishment. That important exception occurred

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[9] These were the only two punishments that corresponded to a side of the die that were ever mentioned to
me during the interviews. However, the consequence for drinking alcohol while in season was that the
player had to roll the die six times and complete the six punishments rolled, and she had to sit out the next
game.

if a player broke the "No Drinking Alcohol" rule. Then she had to roll the die six times (i.e., she had to complete six punishments) and sit out one game. Therefore, one can assume that the players mandated a substantially more severe punishment in order to provide a strong deterrent to an activity that may have been particularly enticing to some of the players. Furthermore, if a player did break the "No Drinking Alcohol" rule, the significant punishment reflected the additional remedial work the offender was required to do in order to once again don the face of a "good teammate" and have it be accepted by the other team members.

When a player confessed or was seen violating a rule, consequences were enforced. For example, one player confessed to the head coach that she had drunk alcohol during the season. As a result of her indiscretion and subsequent confession, she rolled the die six times and sat out the next game. Another time, several players witnessed a teammate speaking disrespectfully to a coach during a drill at practice. One of the players stepped up and told her to roll the die for breaking the athletes' rule, "Be Respectful." Admitting that her teammate was right and that she had been disrespectful, the player rolled the die and completed her punishment.

The Playmakers demanded disclosures to be made in the form of a confession and an apology if an offending player wished to show respect for her position on the team and wanted to reaffirm her commitment to the team. One could argue that the extent to which a player values her membership on a team is measured by whether or not she follows the team rules. However, the way in which this team treated a rules violation and the offending player, I argue that it is the *management of a rules violation* by an offending player that provides insight into how much she values being able to wear the "face" of a "good teammate" and the extent to which the other team members will allow her to reclaim the face of a "committed teammate." The management of a rules violation includes how the rules violation became known to the coaches and to the team leaders

(i.e., confession or accusation); the proffering and sincerity of an apology; and the offender's willingness to perform the remedial work necessary.

Using Erving Goffman's concepts, the team allowed for a specific type of "supportive work" to be done by an offending player in order to resume smooth interactions among the team members: "remedial work." Only when the offender disclosed her inappropriate behavior could the supportive work begin. An offending player was permitted by the rest of the team to make amends for her indiscretion by engaging in the remedial work of confessing, apologizing, rolling the die and completing her punishment. If those steps were taken by the offending player, then all was to be forgiven and the player's status on the team as a member in good-standing could resume.

From the interviews, I discovered what I believe to be several rules, or norms, that operated as the team's informal code of conduct. Goffman (1971) defined a social norm as "that kind of guide for action which is supported by social sanctions, negative ones providing penalties for infraction, positive ones providing awards for exemplary compliance" (p. 95). Throughout the season, the team continuously developed and reshaped a set of informal rules by which all of the players were to abide. After analyzing the interviews, I believe the team members established the following directives and regarded them as the most important to adhere to when interacting with one another:

1. Get along;

2. Be supportive of one another;

3. Do not tell other people's stories;

4. Do not tell a teammate a secret;

5. Be honest.[10]

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[10] I listed them in the order in which they were articulated to me, as I believe that provides a sense of the timing of their development during the season.

Similar to the team's formal rules, these norms served as a guide on how the team wanted

its players to behave when performing their roles of a good teammate and of a member of

a successful team.

While both the formal and informal rules reflect how the Playmakers believed

each of them should behave as a matter of their membership on the team, the informal

rules appear sharper in their focus, suggesting a more intense and basic need for the

members to abide by them. Even though the Playmakers did not gather together

officially to create their informal rules, or even write them down, the members knew they

existed and that they were to be followed. The informal rules were most discernable to

me when the participants discussed a team member breaking one of them in their

interviews. The participants usually described to me either a real or a hypothetical

scenario in which a team member broke one of the unwritten rules. For example, a coach

described a hypothetical scenario to make her point that the players intensely demanded

honesty by its members:

> You'll lie to them. It could be about the littlest thing too. It could go anywhere from drinking to if you went to the library last night for three hours. You say you went to the library, and you really went to McDonald's. If you lie to them about it and you won't own up to it, that's not acceptable.

When an expected pattern of behavior is not followed, an opportunity arises to let the

offender and the rest of the team know that the behavior was unacceptable. By having an

offender face a negative consequence, a message is sent to her and the group that the

behavior is not desired. According to the coach, the consequence of not meeting the

expectation of being honest was "being shunned" or being "left out" of the group.

Just as the team did not establish their norms in the same manner as their formal

rules, the sanctions for breaking a norm were also determined differently than those

established for the formal rules. Whereas the punishment for violating a formal rule was

always handled in the same manner (i.e., decided by the roll of a die), each breaking of a

norm could be dealt with differently, depending upon which norm was dishonored, who

the offender was, the team's perceived severity of the offense, and whether or not the offending party apologized for her misstep. One of the coaches believed the group to be quite capable of forgiving bad behavior: "If you own up to your mistakes and apologize, they'll be the most forgiving people ever and they'll embrace you with open arms." Therefore, the team members allowed remedial work to be done if either formal or informal rules were broken. A closer examination of how the team performed remedial work is done in Chapter V. In the following sections, I take a deeper look at the team's informal rules and how they were formed.

<div align="center">Developing Closeness</div>

In their interviews, nearly all of the team members characterized the players as close. It was clear to me that self-disclosure played a key role in the players developing and maintaining closeness. During the first round of interviews, the returning players expressed their determination to have a better team experience than the year before. They did not feel close to all of their teammates the year before, and thought that was a missing element that prevented the team from being a cohesive group and enjoying their experience. Amanda described the returning players' rationale for wanting to be a close team, "After last year, we want to be really close, because we were so separate last year that it ruined the season. People hated last year. Yeah, people cried a lot last year." This season, most of the players described themselves as close because they enjoyed spending time together on the court and off the court, eating meals, watching movies, or just hanging out:

> Everyone's just a lot closer. Well, there's not a huge gap, like last year's freshmen and seniors…but this year, we all just got together from the beginning, in the summer even. We were all just hanging out, getting to know each other and everyone's really close. So you can just talk to anyone on the team. We don't really get mad at each other that much. (Amanda)

It was important to the team that its members share who they were, as a person, with one another. The returning players expressed their desire to know the incoming players before they were even teammates. For example, Lindsay explained what

information the team wants to know about potentially new teammates when recruits visit

campus and the players meet them for the first time:

> What they've been involved in high school and stuff like that. What they're interested in. We just kind of want to get to know them as a person. Our team does not care like who it is. They can be involved in whatever. We have a wide variety of kids on our team that are involved in everything…We're just interested in who you are as a person. You don't need to be somebody fake. Just be yourself around us.

Another objective inherent in their quest to be a close team was to have its members

genuinely care about each other. Heidi's comments in her first interview at the beginning

of the season lead me to believe that the team was accomplishing this objective: "We

don't put each other down, and we watch what we say about each other. Because we all

do mean a lot to each other."

Get Along

If the Playmakers were going to be closer than last year's team, it was vital to

them that they got along with each other. Amanda talked about certain dimensions of

getting along when she described what it meant to be "a good teammate":

> I think it's being there for people, like not being condescending or…having bad attitudes. Because you could be mean to someone on the team if you want, but it's just going to ruin the drill. It's going to ruin your relationship with that person because they're going to think, "Okay, she's going to be a bitch." That's kind of what happened last year. What usually happens on the court is people get in little fights, because people have bad attitudes or be mean to each other. Then it carries over to off the court, and then the team just separates. So, being a good teammate would be being nice to each other and helping each other out.

At the beginning of the season, having a close team meant getting to know one another

on a more *personal* level and wanting to spend time together away from the basketball

court. Getting along meant enjoying each other's company, and including all players

when organizing non-basketball related activities. Dana described what it meant for the

team to "get along":

> I don't consider there to be cliques, you know like certain groups within our team. We always invite everybody to go everywhere and it's not like the same person always has to sit by the same person…we're comfortable being around anybody, or whoever.

Heidi explained that getting along on their team meant using that closeness to help them

work well together on the court and support one another even when they disagree:

> We joke around all the time. We talk a little smack here and there, and everybody just takes it and dishes it out. Have fun, hang out, laugh a lot, I don't know. We work together pretty well, and we have each other's back. And if something isn't right, we can tell each other like, "Hey, that's stupid." You know. And nobody's really taken offense to it.

Even the head coach saw how important it was to the players that they got along. In fact,

the coach believed it was the team's primary guiding principle: "Now, these girls want to

get along more than they care about winning."

<div align="center">Support Each Other</div>

Supporting each other was a second informal rule that guided the team members'

actions on and off the court in their aspiration to be a close team. Supporting each other

could be taken as looking out for each other, or the players sometimes referred to it as

"having each other's backs." Early on in the season, Maggie cited an example of the

team looking out for one another when I asked her what it means to be a good teammate:

> Probably just supporting each other and being there and helping each other out a lot. Like today, Laney was going to be late for practice…I ran to my locker and grabbed my cell phone, and I called Laney and I'm like, "Hey, you got to get up." Because if we're late, we get in trouble. If any one person on the team is late, then we have to roll the dice and then we get a punishment and all that…She's like, "It's only a quarter to 9:00." I'm like, "Yeah, practice starts at 9:00 there, bud." She thought it started at 9:30. So then I just went and got Laney's clothes... And I brought them in there, and I set them out and I took her socks off the little pin that we have when he washes our clothes. And I set out her socks, and I put her spandex on top of her shorts because I know she needs to put her spandex on before her shorts. So, I kind of just set everything out, just being a good teammate.

The importance of the team's norm, support each other, was also made clear to me when

a returning player identified it as a behavior they would teach the new players who join

the team the following year. Lindsay talked about this in her interview:

> Get them to come up and be involved and be like, "Okay, this is what our team has been about, and is still going to be about is being a team and being there for each other, and being friends, and having each other's backs. And making those life-long friends that you'll always know." And get them to be, get them to take off their mask before school starts, so they actually know they're going to be comfortable around us.

Getting along meant that the teammates spend time together and share personal information about themselves. However, once that sharing led to the discovery of personal differences, it became a challenge to set aside those differences and support each other as teammates – on and off the court. During the season, their ability to get along and support one another was tested as those norms required that they work together even when team members have personality differences or have contrasting beliefs or values.

The Commitment Meeting

Shortly into the team's competitive schedule, the team's norms, "Get Along" and "Be Supportive," were broken and addressed in a team meeting that I have named the Commitment Meeting. During a game, a couple of players on the sideline were criticizing the on-court decisions of one of their teammates. In the locker room afterwards, the players expressed their frustration after having just lost the game and turned their frustration into anger and directed it at one another. At that time, a player who overheard the comments made during the game, told the targeted player of the comments what was said and who said it. This sparked a heated exchange that was overheard by the head coach, and showed the team veering away from its commitment to treat one another as outlined by their team rules and norms. Alicia expressed the state of the team's chemistry at that time as:

> It came down to we weren't really playing well together – girls weren't getting along. I mean, we do have a lot of differences on the team, just like the type of girls we have. And we kind of bring that onto the court with us, and that's what we started noticing.

The next day, the coaching staff called in the members of the Leadership Group to discuss the existing tension among the players that was manifested the night before. The coaches decided that the players would have a players-only meeting. The head coach explained the decision this way:

> I want them to fix the conflict. So I try to kind of take a (laughs), it's their thing right? If they have a problem with me, I expect them to deal with me. If they have a problem with each other, they need to learn to deal with each other. That was kind of what that was for.

During the players-only meeting, each player was asked two questions. From the interviews, it is not clear to me who decided on the questions that were asked in the players-only meeting. The first question asked of *every* player was, "Who has influenced you the most?" The second question asked was specific to each player and addressed an existing or potential issue identified in the earlier meeting with the coaches and the Leadership Group members.

The meeting lasted three hours and had specific ground rules by which all the players had to abide. The rules of the players-only meeting were that everyone must answer the questions, no swearing was allowed, no one could leave the room, and the information shared in the meeting was not to be told to others not in the room. It is not clear to me who established all of these rules. However, the head coach may have influenced the establishment of some of the rules. In one of the interviews, the head coach stated to me that no one was allowed to leave the room until the players "figured out what it was that made everyone feel so tense, feel so unsecure, untrusted." Also in that interview, it was mentioned that the head coach does not know what specific information was shared during that meeting, and explained the rationale for not being present at the meeting:

> We did not meet with the Leadership Group about what was said in there, because I think and I know that my kids will tell me the stuff they want to tell me. More sometimes than I want to know. So I just felt like as hard as it was for me to not be in there, that was something that was going to keep us separate. And they need to keep each other tighter than they need to keep to me. So, I didn't pry, and I just trusted that it got taken care of and I made reference to it because I knew that some big progress had been made. Most of the girls said it was one of the coolest things they had ever been a part of. You know, if they had come out not wanting to talk to each other or whatever, then I would have obviously had to (laughs) figure out some way to put a team on the floor. But it ended up having a positive turnout. It's hard not knowing what's going on. It's hard not sticking your nose in there, but if I truly want to give them the right to free think, I can't get into that. So, I didn't. I have no idea what was said in there. (Head Coach)

By addressing the breakdown of the team's norms, "Get Along" and "Be Supportive" in this meeting, the Playmakers' confirmed the norms' existence. The team meeting also provided the environment for personal information and feelings to be shared

with all of the players. Disclosing this information to one another was not just

encouraged, but it was mandated in the pursuit of being able to once again get along with

each other. Furthermore, by constructing an impermeable border around the meeting in

agreeing that the contents of the meeting are not to be shared with anyone else, the team

also crystallized their third communication norm, "Don't Tell Others' Stories." A further

analysis of this meeting is given in Chapter V.

Managing Closeness

During the process of becoming a close team, the Playmakers shared pieces of

personal information with one another. These disclosures took on different forms, similar

to how Vangelisti (1994) described Karpel's delineation of the extent to which secrets are

shared within a family. Some information was shared with the whole team; other times

the information was shared with some team members, but not all, and finally some

information was not shared with anyone on the team. Despite the form in which personal

information was told or not told, the possessor and the recipient of the information were

expected to manage it. The Playmakers seemed quite aware of the potential damage that

could be caused by not properly protecting another's personal information. Rachel

reflected on the dilemma of how to handle a disclosure when asked to define personal

information: "something that people know about it, but I don't know if that gives me the

right to go and talk about it with other people too or not."

Don't Tell Others' Stories

Sandra Petronio (2002) describes the recipient of a disclosure as a co-owner of the

information in her theory, Communication Privacy Management (CPM). The recipient

may or may not meet the challenge of coordinating "a set of rules that manages the

boundary around this information that is satisfying to all parties" (2002, p. 28). During

the season, the Playmakers did coordinate a set of boundary management rules that

generally closed the boundaries that protected a team member's personal information and

made them impermeable. On the Playmakers, the rule not to share others' information

was explicitly stated when whole group disclosures were made. Information shared with one individual or a select few members of the team was also generally to be protected by the recipient(s).

The Head Coach described two instances, which are the two team meetings of the season analyzed in this study, where she directly stated to the players that a team member's personal information that was made known to the players was not to be shared with others not on the team:

> Well like with everything that happened in [The Commitment Meeting], I said, "If I find that any of that left the room, there will be major consequences. This is not stuff people are saying for you to say to other people. This is stuff they're saying in confidence to you guys. Let people share their stories. Don't share it for them." There are things that, that conversation has had to happen.

> At the end of the year we had some disciplinary things that happened [the Re-Commitment Meeting], which would prod a lot of questions from a lot of other people. I just said, "You can give yourself help in that it was my choice and this is the way it is. You don't have to answer any of their questions, and it doesn't leave this room for any reason, what has happened. You don't need to make anyone else look bad. We are not here to make someone else feel small. So, the problem's addressed. It's done. Do not let it leave this room."

Lindsay's comments on personal information illustrate the team's mindset of protecting another's personal information that was told on an *individual basis* (i.e., not told to the whole team):

> If they wish to tell me, then I would keep it personal. I would keep it to myself. Because again, it's not my place, because it's not about me to be telling other people about. Again, I go back to the thing where if somebody were to ask me, "What's wrong with that person?" I'd be like, "There might be something, there is something wrong, but you just need to be there for them. They'll tell you eventually, or somehow you will find out. Throughout the whole thing, you just need to be there for that person."

How an individual treats another's personal information that has been entrusted to her may ultimately strengthen or weaken feelings of trust and respect for the recipient of the information.

Don't Tell a Teammate a Secret

Because of the high value they placed on trust and respect, the Playmakers were cognizant of the importance of knowing how to handle, not only others' personal

information, but also their own. To assist in deciding when it was appropriate to share information with another team member and when it was not, the Playmakers developed the norm, "Don't Tell a Teammate a Secret."

The Re-Commitment Meeting

Reflecting upon the team's management of information throughout the season, Gina noted that, for the most part, the players handled personal information about teammates appropriately: "I think everybody that knew stuff about somebody made pretty good decisions of whether or not and when to tell." However, each team member also had to make decisions on whether or not to share her own personal information. As it turned out, a few team members decided to individually reveal secrets to teammates that they had broken the team rule, "Do not drink alcohol." The breaking of this particular rule required a punishment to be performed that was more severe than the other rules.

Near the end of the season, the recipients of the secrets revealed their teammates' breaking of the rules to the head coach. As a result of the rules violations, the coaching staff dismissed one player for multiple violations, and enacted the punishment for drinking on another player who confessed. The head coach then organized a team meeting to explain to the rest of the players the dismissal of one of their teammates and to provide an opportunity for the other offending player to apologize to her teammates for her indiscretion.

During the meeting, three important interactions took place. First, the player who had confessed to breaking the rule apologized to the team, answered her teammates' questions about the incident, and rolled the die to determine her punishment. Second, several other players addressed and denied rumors they heard that they too had been drinking. Third, the coaches gave the players ten minutes at the end of the meeting to discuss the indiscretions of the two offending players, with the intention of then putting the matter behind them and focusing on their next competition. During that ten minutes a

teammate accused a third player of breaking the team's no drinking rule. The accusing

player based this claim on a secret disclosure the *accused* made to one of her teammates

that she had broken the team rule. The accused teammate denied any wrongdoing, and

soon thereafter quit the team.

Preventing Discord through Information Management

As a result of the team experiencing this disruption to their season, a second

information-sharing norm was established and agreed upon by the Playmakers, "Don't

Tell a Teammate a Secret." The head coach verbalized the informal rule to the players

during the Re-Commitment meeting:

> I addressed the issue of secrets in this meeting, because I said that, "You do not
> put somebody in a position to keep a secret from somebody that they respect. If
> you tell somebody something that you did that was irresponsible, or a mistake, or
> a bad choice, don't expect them to keep it quiet. Don't put a friend in a position
> like that."

Several members talked about this informal expectation of non-disclosure during their

interviews, and it was clear to me that they had accepted it as a rule everyone should

follow. The players felt that being entrusted with a secret placed them in a no-win

situation. Alicia described the undesired tension experienced in knowing a secret as:

> That's the worst thing you can do as a friend – make them keep a secret for you.
> You're putting them in the hardest position ever, because either they tell you and
> you piss off one of your good friends, or you keep a secret when you know it's
> not the right thing to do.

The team's rules and norms shaped the team's culture, forming guidelines that

directed their behavior towards one another. The athletes played a significant role in

creating the team's culture since they had collectively determined half of the team's

formal rules and contributed to the formation of the informal rules through their

interactions with each other. On a macro-level, the rules and norms identified the

conduct crucial to being "a successful team." More specifically, on a micro-level, the

formal and informal rules assisted the team members in determining what "faces" were

acceptable and appropriate for them to show if they were committed to being a "good

teammate" or a "good athlete." Because these "faces" mandated certain levels and amounts of sharing, it was the team's rules that dictated how the team members were to disclose personal information about themselves to each other.

CHAPTER V
REMAINING A (CLOSE) TEAM

During the course of the season, face-to-face interactions among team members, guided by the team's rules and information-sharing norms, helped to shape the Playmakers' idea of privacy. This chapter focuses on individual, small group, and whole group (players only) interactions that occurred during the season. In Chapter IV, I identified three occasions of disclosure that depicted the Playmakers' commitment level to their team rules and norms and the team's negotiations of information management. These occasions were discussions regarding team members' tattoos, a players-only meeting that showed their commitment to the team and its rules and norms, and a second players-only meeting that asserted their re-commitment to the team and its rules and norms.

In this chapter, I utilize Erving Goffman's model of social interaction to discuss how the team members executed acts of self-disclosure during these moments in order to create a preferred state of being (i.e., supportive work) where interactions are smooth and comfortable, or to return the team to that preferred state (i.e., remedial work). Then, I use Sandra Petronio's Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory to analyze the Playmakers' management of team members' personal information (i.e., deciding what needs to be known and disclosed, and managing the boundaries of others' personal information disclosed). However, a discussion on ritual and how it frames the identified occasions must first take place.

<u>Supportive Work and Ritual</u>

Goffman used the phrase, "supportive work" to describe interactions in which the participants appropriately performed their roles in a ritualistic manner. In *Interaction Ritual* (1967), Goffman notes:

> I use the term ritual because I am dealing with acts through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it. The imagery of equilibrium is apt here because the length and intensity of the corrective effort is nicely adapted to the persistence and intensity of the threat. One's face, then, is a sacred thing, and the expressive order required to sustain it is therefore a ritual one. (p. 19)

Religious studies scholar Catherine Bell discusses ritual and culture from a symbolic interactionist perspective:

> The old Durkeimian description of how ritual orchestrates experiences of collective enthusiasm so as to mold people's identities continues to be recast in less functionalist terms – by asking how symbolic activities like ritual enable people to appropriate, modify, or reshape cultural values and ideals. (1997, p. 73)

This framework is useful in understanding particular interactions in which participants symbolically express beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors, such as the body tattoos worn by some of the players. The players' tattoos and the team meetings symbolize and emphasize who they are as a person and as a team, shape the beliefs a person or the team values, and display their commitment to those beliefs.

Catherine Bell also notes Durkheim's belief that "ritual exhibits and exaggerates real conflicts in order to release tensions and afford a type of social catharsis" (1992, p. 71). Therefore, self-disclosure could be the method used in the rituals of face-to-face interactions (e.g., to discuss a player's tattoo and the two meetings focused on in this study) "to release tensions" and allow for support to be given or change to occur.

Supportive Work and Self-Disclosure

Disclosure may occur in many different ways during a face-to-face interaction. This section will focus on the interactions in which disclosures occurred with the intent to "affirm and support the social relationship between doer and recipient" (Goffman, 1971, p. 63). Goffman (1971) refers to these instances as "supportive interchanges," and he gives one example of the structure and character of a supportive interchange:

> When, that is, one individual provides a sign of involvement in and connectedness to another, it behooves the recipient to show that the message has been received, that its import has been appreciated, that the performer himself has worth as a person, and finally, that the recipient has an appreciative, grateful nature. (p. 63)

As one may expect, these moments are more meaningful when the parties involved have a more personal and intimate relationship.

<center>The Story-Telling of Tattoos</center>

Several members of the Playmakers had body tattoos that were clearly visible to teammates, coaches, opponents, and spectators. After I noticed the players' tattoos, I added questions to the interview schedule in order to understand how they talked about the tattoos with each other. During the first round of interviews, I learned of several other tattoos from players who told me they had a tattoo on less visible parts of their bodies or from players who told me about other teammates' tattoos. Tattoos were commonplace on this team. Most, if not all, of the players knew about each other's tattoos and did not hesitate to share with me the stories behind their own and others' tattoos.

My discussions about the team members' tattoos brought to mind the military policy of the United States regarding the service of gay men and women: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." This phrase establishes specific parameters around certain information. However, by adding "Do Ask" and "Do Tell" as options for managing information, I can use various combinations of these parameters to talk about the dynamics of disclosure. In contrast to that phrase used by the military, tattoos could be understood as an opportunity for open conversation. On this team, tattoos instigated conversations where someone would ask about the significance of one's tattoo. When asked, it was common for others to share the significance of their tattoos. Thus, the players established a "Do Ask, Do Tell" pattern of exchange for discussing their tattoos. Alicia gave a brief overview of the team's treatment of tattoos, "We've always been interested in each other's tattoos. People are just open about it, if you ask them. No one really has a hidden tattoo."

Talking about one's tattoos served as a point of access for a player to share certain elements of her personal story, for the images were chosen as a means of representing a significant piece of herself. For example, one player chose the specific image of her

tattoo because she loved science, and another player chose her tattoo because it symbolized her family's heritage. Therefore, the team members felt that the tattoos generally aided in getting to know each other better:

> We'd ask, "What's that about?" She'd tell and kind of go into more depth. So, I guess we understood her and got to know more about her. And a few of the other girls too, they have a lot of meaning to them. So they explained that to us, and it helps you understand what they're like. (Meghan)

The content of a tattoo's image conveys certain information about the tattooed to those who view it (e.g., affiliation with a specific group, familial status, occupation, etc.). In *Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing* (2008), Sanders and Vail write that tattoos can be used to construct one's social identity and "to proclaim publicly one's special attachment to deviant groups, certain activities, self-concepts, or primary associates" (p. 2, 2008). They used the theoretical perspective of symbolic interaction to focus on the typical stages a person moves through, which includes becoming tattooed; negotiating interactions and relationships; and learning to cope with or avoid untoward consequences of their decisions.

Despite having the social information permanently placed on her body, the tattooed person controls the availability of that information to others. First, the tattooed manages her disclosure at the outset when she chooses the contents of the tattoo's image *and* its placement on her body (i.e., visually accessible to others or not when going through one's daily routines). Then, if asked about the significance of the tattoo by others, she decides to what depth she reveals the story behind the tattoo. Therefore, by controlling these aspects of the image and the amount of information shared, the tattooed person also controls the privacy she wishes to maintain for herself regarding her tattoo and the personal story it represents.

When a tattoo displays personal feelings, meanings, and/or interests and is located on a public space on the body, its possessor must make the choices of if, when, to whom, and how much of this social information they will share with others. An example of how

tattoos provide an opportunity for team members to make these decisions regarding self-discloses occurred on this team during the season. When a particular team member was originally asked about her tattoo by a teammate, she gave an explanation she believed would satisfy her curiosity. Meanwhile, she kept the deeper, more emotional meaning of the tattoo to herself: "I tell people that they mean certain things, which they do. There's just one other thing that I always leave out when I tell people what they mean."

Rather than refusing to answer the question of her tattoo's significance, she chose a deliberate strategy of sharing only a small amount of information with her fellow team members, thus producing a smooth and supportive interaction during the moment of "asking" and "telling." In this way, she avoided a moment of disruption and awkwardness during their interaction. The teller's controlled version of the story behind her tattoo, provides a smooth and comfortable interaction to occur, while also maintaining her boundaries of privacy. By having various levels of meaning for her tattoo, she controlled how much she revealed to others despite everyone having visual access to the tattoo.

Moreover, even though the teller did not reveal the depth of the highly personal meaning of her tattoo to her team members at first, her response demonstrated respect and regard for the asker. Goffman (1967) refers to this aspect of interaction as "deference," and defines it as, "that component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed *to* a recipient *of* this recipient, or something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent" (p. 56). The regard she has for the asker and the asker's position as her teammate obliged her to present a response that contained some amount of personal disclosure.

The sharing of the less personal version of the team member's tattoo illustrated a mild example of what Goffman calls "strategic interaction." That is, she maintained her own privacy while projecting the sincere face of a teammate. She is poised to avoid a dysphoric encounter, which may occur when an unwelcomed question crosses the privacy

boundary surrounding personal information she does not want to share. This is consistent with Goffman's "Rules of Demeanor" used to guide an individual's validation of a projected face. Birrell (1979) identifies a "rule of poise" which "compels the individual to control any elements of his own conduct that might cause disruption to the encounter" (p. 15).

A Collaborative Effort of Disclosure

The visibility of a tattoo is like an invitation to learn more about a person. When a person's tattoo is first seen, interpretations of the tattoo and of the tattooed are created and sought by the on-looker. These interpretations are based on the content of the image, its size, the location on the body, the mere number of tattoos visible on one body, and the motivation behind all of these decisions. When the tattooed shares information about the tattoo, ultimately disclosing information about herself, more meaning and understanding can be created.

The ease with which the Playmakers asked for and shared information about why a person chose a certain tattoo, suggests the team generally conducted supportive work in that they accepted the interaction as appropriate for two people playing the role of teammates and attempting to get to know one another better. The asking for and telling of the personal information also suggests the significance team members placed in knowing more about one another than simply their athletic skills and talents. As persons interacting in a sustained group setting, they sought the personal information that tattoos could provide, and did so in one of their early encounters, if not the first. The insight gained about a person through the sharing of information regarding her tattoo could also be useful during future interactions with that person.

The team member mentioned in the previous example constructed a "Do Ask, Do Tell but Don't Tell" situation where both parties achieve or retain a satisfactory amount of information during the interaction. The information-seeker asked for and received information regarding the tattooed in order to get to know and understand her better.

Furthermore, the tattooed person strategically revealed information, albeit limited and incomplete, about herself that she knows will be used to shape the impression held of her by others. Therefore, the teammate's impression of the tattooed was mutually managed by both parties.

Because of the visibility of her tattoo and others asking questions pertaining to the image, this team member turned what she considered to be "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" social information about herself into a "Do Ask, Do Tell but Don't Tell" response. Under what circumstances might a team member operating under the "Do Ask, Do Tell but Don't Tell" model or a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" model decide to change to a "Do Ask, Do Tell" information-sharing model and disclose deeper social information about herself? This question will be looked at more closely in a subsequent section.

<div align="center">The Supportive Work of Team Meetings</div>

The players used disclosure during two particular team meetings to get to know one another on a more personal level and to bring about smooth interactions within the team. The first team meeting occurred towards the beginning of the competitive season during one of the team's first road trips, and I will refer to it as "The Commitment Meeting." The second team meeting took place near the end of the season, and I will refer to it as "The Re-Commitment Meeting." It is important to note that I was not in attendance at either of these meetings, but I learned of them during the second and final round of interviews conducted at the conclusion of the season.

<u>The Commitment Meeting</u>

As mentioned earlier in Chapter IV, the team assembled for an athlete-only meeting during a road-trip after it became apparent that conflict was emerging among some of the players. The players were disappointed in the team's play and some were starting to point fingers of blame at one another. More specifically, a couple of players were overheard criticizing the play of one of their teammates from the bench during a

game. This behavior did not align itself with the team's formal rule of "respect one another" or with the informal rules of "get along" and "be supportive."

The coaching staff met with the team's Leadership Group after discovering the dissension on the team and decided that the team would have a players-only meeting to better understand each other and accept their differences. During the meeting, every player was to answer two questions. All of the questions were asked by the Leadership Group members during the Commitment Meeting, and determined in the earlier meeting with the coaches and the Leadership Group. However, it is unclear to me if the questions were created collaboratively at this meeting, or if one group or individual was mostly responsible for determining them. The first question was, "Who has influenced you the most?" The second question asked was specific to each player and addressed an issue relevant to that particular player. These questions were designed to facilitate the sharing of personal information that had previously not been asked for or told by team members.

In the end, this meeting was an extended moment of supportive interaction, for the acts of asking for and disclosing of personal information were done without incident and deemed appropriate for confirming each player's commitment to the team. When interviewed, most of the players acknowledged how much more personal information they came to know about their teammates during this meeting and how important it was for them to share this information. Jen's description of the meeting provides a glimpse into why the team believed this was a critical moment in their season:

> We locked ourselves in a hotel room and talked for a good 3 hours about deep stuff that people didn't know about each other – that were kind of necessary to understand why they react to certain things and the way they do. So that was a huge turning point for us.

Interestingly, in the interviews, the players focused on the necessity of others' disclosures to the team, and rarely mentioned the effects of their own disclosures to their teammates in their interviews.

At that point in the season, it became important to the team to get to *know* each other on a more personal level, in order to better *understand* one another. Lindsay described that sentiment in her interview:

> A reason that everything came out is because we needed it to come out, because it was really affecting how we played as a team. So, it was something that everybody just needed to share and get out there and be like, "Okay, I really understand why you act this way."

The hope was that if they understood each other, then they would be able to be better teammates to each other. Dana explained the meeting's immediate effect on the players:

> And it was really emotional when you find out why people are the way they are, and how they feel about each other, and just being on the team… but then everybody's hugging at the end of it. So that was like our first win, because that kind of made us come together and we understood each other better. It made us closer. And so then that night, we played and we dominated them. And that was the game that we were supposed to lose. They're playing in the NCAA tournament right now, and we blew them away by like 15 or 20 points. It just went to show when you play together and have each other's back, how far we could get.

They perceived a better understanding of each other's personalities and backgrounds as a means of getting closer in order to demonstrate a commitment to the team, enabling them to achieve more *success* as a team.

Supportive work was done by everyone acting their part and meeting the expectations that were set for that moment. The players established a "Do Ask, Do Tell" situation in this meeting where anyone could ask questions and it was expected that everyone would answer. Heidi explained her perception of the situation:

> Just the fact that you were called out on it, and you were asked a question and you were expected to answer it. Because everybody in that room was given a question, and pretty much everybody in that room felt uncomfortable. And..it was, not the kind of uncomfortable you might always think of, it's…because we're teammates and we're close, so we weren't uncomfortable, but yet it was a question that you didn't really want to acknowledge or talk about.

Heidi went on to explain that she revealed personal information to her teammates during the Commitment Meeting that she otherwise considered to be of a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" nature: "If I hadn't been asked that question, no I wouldn't have said anything about it." Earlier in the season, Heidi had revealed personal information to one of her

teammates that explained the significance of her tattoo. During the Commitment Meeting, that particular teammate asked Heidi to share that personal information with all the players, which she did upon her teammate's request. Heidi's revelation reflected a deeper meaning of her tattoo than the more superficial meaning she had previously told her teammates. I believe the nature and the purpose of the Commitment Meeting outweighed her personal need to keep that information to herself. Therefore, when demonstrating commitment to the team during this meeting, the players reconstructed their notion of privacy at that moment in time, by willingly sharing information asked of them that they had previously kept private.

Goffman would recognize the Commitment Meeting as an interaction ritual of deference and demeanor. The players expressed presentational *deference* to one another through their active participation in the meeting. They demonstrated respect and appreciation for their teammates by actively listening and genuinely working towards a better understanding of each person. Additional evidence of deference can be seen in that no player mentioned to me that the questions asked intruded on her privacy. In that context, the players viewed the questions as appropriate, and believed revealing the personal information was important to their playing the role of a good teammate.

Goffman (1967) described the importance of demeanor as:

> Most importantly, perhaps, good demeanor is what is required of an actor if he is to be transformed into someone who can be relied upon to maintain himself as an interactant, poised for communication, and to act so that others do not endanger themselves by presenting themselves as interactants to him. (p. 77)

Therefore, a player demonstrated *demeanor* during this meeting by presenting herself as teammate who was committed to following the team norms, get along and be supportive, by revealing personal information. If others believe a teammate is committed to getting along and supporting others, then they are more likely to reciprocate those behaviors.

After listening to the players' accounts, it seems clear that their intention was to have each athlete share information that was of a *personal* nature. They wanted to know

more about each player as an individual: her personality, her previous athletic experience, and perhaps even her upbringing and her family dynamics. Once the questions were asked, it was left up to each individual to decide how to answer appropriately in a way that respected the intent of the meeting and preserved the supportive nature of the interaction.

As with the disclosures of players' tattoos, the athletes had latitude in deciding the amount and the depth of the personal information they shared with the team during the Commitment Meeting. The athletes also had the ability to construct borders around the information that was shared. In one team member's case in particular, personal information was disclosed, but with the understanding that the player speaking did not wish to have any future conversations regarding the matter: "It's something that people maybe should know about me, and it wouldn't hurt them to know about me and like touchy subjects to avoid and things like that" (Heidi).

Furthermore, a better understanding of one another afforded by the disclosures during the meeting also created an opportunity for teammates to *accept one another's differences*. Prior to the meeting, the team members informally noted their differences and allowed those differences to start to negatively impact their relationships as teammates. The head coach noticed that this was taking place prior to the Commitment Meeting, and described it as a main reason for having the meeting:

> Holding grudges against people for things that they can't help. The way that they are, the personality that they have – and to actually get them to understand why people are the way they are instead of just assuming that everyone should be (laughs) the same.

By acknowledging and accepting differences, the lines of communication could be further opened to strengthen relationships both on and off the playing surface. Monica discussed how the meeting impacted her relationship with a teammate she had previously kept her distance from due to a perceived difference in beliefs:

> Not saying too much, I knew some stuff about people, and I was okay with it. But then once we talked about the issue and everything and they saw my side and I

saw her side, we just understood each other… I never would text her before, "Hey, what are you doing tonight?" I could easily text her now and just be like, "What's up?"

The meeting also served as an opportunity to find some middle ground so that future damaging words and actions could be avoided or minimized, and relationships could sustain themselves in a supportive way necessary for teammates to function successfully:

Differences were also talked about in that meeting. They were set up to where they figured out the differences and found a meeting ground about what was going on so that they wouldn't step on each other's toes about what is going on. So, if there were differences with people, they all tried to work it out, or tried to figure out what or how to really approach this so that nobody, so that nothing happens that makes it any worse. (Lindsay)

Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Disclosure

A team member's response to another's sharing of personal information could be symmetrical or asymmetrical. If the response was a reciprocating disclosure with a similar amount and level of intimacy shared, then the response was symmetrical. On the other hand, if the response included no self-disclosure or a lesser amount and level of intimacy, then the response was asymmetrical. Anna explained that everyone was open when they shared information about themselves during the Commitment Meeting:

We learned so much about every single person, and everybody was open and let it all out. I felt like I had so many new best friends. It was a weird feeling but it was a good one. Because it needed to happen, I think too.

I believe the players shared their personal information with each other symmetrically during the Commitment Meeting, allowing for deeper bonds and more trust to develop between teammates.

Conversely, disclosures between coaches and players were asymmetrical. In general, the players disclosed more personal information to the coaches than the coaches shared with the players. Both the players and the coaches used their own discretion to decide whether or not they shared their personal information. Amanda explained how she chose not to talk to a coach about personal issues, but acknowledged that most of her teammates did:

> She'll talk to you about anything. You can talk to her about anything. So, I mean on our team it's a big thing. I know a lot of girls on the team go and talk to Coach about problems. Frequently, I'll go up to say "hi" or talk to her about something, and someone else will have been there right before me.

Furthermore, the players' personal disclosures usually were not prompted by a coach.

The head coach described her perception of how the new players became more

comfortable talking to her over time:

> The freshmen this year, they've been a little slower to kind of ease in to it, but I don't ever force anyone to come talk to me. So, one by one, they slowly come. They'll start off in the door, then the next time they'll take a step inside, then the next time, they'll be sitting in the chair. Then, the next time they're with some of other girls that are now sitting in my chair and on my floor. I never force it. It's totally on them what they want to give, and that's fine. I don't hold it against them. I don't expect them to come and talk to me. I don't need them to come talk to me (laughing).

> When the coaches did ask the players for information, it was generally to

determine the state of a player's mental health. This sentiment was expressed by the two

coaches when I asked what coaches needed to know about a player besides the player's

athletic skills and abilities, and how they obtained it without being intrusive:

> I don't ask personal life questions, unless it's affecting what's going on on the basketball team or their school work – things that I'm kind of responsible for. I try to stay out of the personal life (laughs). But obviously there are situations that come up that I have to address, like if they're having these breakdowns in practice and I call them out to say, "What is going on? What happened? Why are you so upset? What is going on?" That would be more of a question I would ask. I don't pry into what they do on their weekends or, I am not a pryer, so what they share with me is usually when they're upset. (Head Coach)

> I think it's important to know if they're okay, like mentally. I think that's a big, a big issue, especially nowadays. You can tell when a kid's upset or kind of down. But if it stays for a long time or if their moods change a lot, that's when I kind of start to get worried. I try and just take them under my wing and figure out the situation. (Assistant Coach)

> When asked how the power dynamics between a coach and a player might affect a

player's decision to share her personal information with a coach, the head coach did not

believe it deterred players from sharing:

> I think that people are keeping some things personal, but I have gotten plenty of intense situations where I've had to convince kids to talk to their parents or to talk to a counselor, or to talk to somebody beyond what I'm capable of doing, because I want to help them but it's out of my expertise or I don't even know what to say (laughs). I don't think it stops them. I think they trust what I have to say.

Both the players and the coaches believed that the coaches did not need to reveal an equivalent amount of personal information to the players as the players revealed to the coaches, in order to have a good relationship. In her interview, the head coach described the low level of self-disclosures she makes to the players in order to maintain her proper authority:

> I don't think they need to know a ton about me. I need to keep some boundaries, because I think I still can relate to them a little bit too much. I can be totally open about stuff, but they know a lot about my values. They know what is important to me. They know enough to respect me, but not to feel like too comfortable. I don't want them to feel too comfortable. Although they're very comfortable around me (laughs). I can't imagine them feeling more comfortable. But they don't want to talk about my personal life. And I don't really think that they need to. I guess I'm open to answering any questions if they want to pry. If they don't want to pry, then I won't offer that information. And it depends too. If a kid is coming in to talk to me about something that's going on in their life and I can personally relate to it, then I will often share a personal story to either show them an option or whatever. So, depending on their situation, I guess that they would get to know a little bit more about me if they're in here about something. But otherwise, if they wanted to ask, I guess I would tell. But they've never really asked me anything except to make fun of me. So they don't really ask a lot of questions. I mean I would answer them I guess. I don't know. I don't really talk a lot about my personal life.

The assistant coach also explained that she does not share her personal life with the players, but mentioned that she would not answer questions posed by the athletes if deemed inappropriate:

> Sometimes they get, I wouldn't say pushy, but just jokingly teasing, "Oh, what are you doing tonight?" "That's none of your business." And I'll say it like I'm not being mean, but I'm definitely not telling you. They don't take it personally.

On this team, the low level of disclosures by coaches to players did not preclude a player from feeling comfortable sharing her own personal information with a coach. Therefore, the players' sharing of personal information was not a reciprocated disclosure to a coaches' previous disclosure of a similar nature. In order to feel comfortable sharing, the only thing the players needed to know about their coaches was that they cared about them as a person. Dana explained how the head coach let the team know of the commitment being made to the players as athletes and as individuals:

> You can tell she cares about you personally, not just as an athlete. She'll do anything and everything for you. At one of our first team meetings, Coach made sure that we knew that on October 15th, starting then, that we were [coach's] top priority and that we came first.

Finally, the players' willingness to share personal information with coaches suggests that the power differential in their relationship did not dissuade a player from opening up to a coach. According to the head coach, the players did not seem to be deterred by the fact that the coaches determined their playing time:

> I know that they know that I do not hold grudges, and I do not bench somebody because of something they said or did. I don't believe in carrying things over. So they're not afraid to say something. They know that I would prefer them to tell me and for us to figure it out than to let it blow up.

Most of the players trusted the coaches' judgment and believed they cared about them as people, not just as athletes. All in all, the coaches readily accepted their roles as mentors and as a resource for the players to seek out if they needed help with an issue:

> You name it since I've been a college coach - STD's, abortions, depression, attempted suicides, date rapes, abuse in families - I've heard enough. I really wish I would have gotten a degree in counseling. I do, I wish I would have. Well maybe not because then I can't deflect it. I'd have to actually deal with it. It is important that they have someone to go to. I'm glad for my kids that I'm a person that they can actually open up to and we can actually get some headway. Otherwise, they'd be graduating from college keeping it in, and never addressing the issues they need to address. (Head Coach)

Returning to the discussion on the symmetry of player-to-player disclosures, the mutual and symmetrical interactions of asking for and telling of personal information that took place among the players during the Commitment Meeting created a supportive interaction that made everyone feel relevant and accepted. It is important to note that the Playmakers accepted each other for their *willingness to share* and reciprocate the level of intimacy of their personal information, not by *what they shared*. The players developed trust and loyalty through their willingness to share and to listen to one another. Thus, the symmetrical sharing of personal information paved the way for them to behave as good teammates towards one another.

By establishing the expectation in that meeting that they would listen and support one another when sharing their personal information, the athletes began to trust one

another. Despite having differences or a less than perfect family life or background, the

athletes worked to let each other know at this meeting that those variables would not

negatively affect the *impressions* they had of each other or their *acceptance as a*

teammate. In fact, the sharing of these differences or personal stories strengthened the

players' resolve to appreciate one another and to trust each other. The athletes often

described this support as "having each other's backs." Alicia used this phrase when

explaining the impact of this meeting on the team and its season.

> It was a big deal…we had a such a big turnaround having that talk and then coming out and playing the best team ever. [Head coach] always references that…basically what came out of that meeting is that we all have each other's backs and that we can trust each other.

The development of trust after sharing their personal information enhanced their

team chemistry and improved the team's performance on the court during the next

competition. Some of the teammates attributed their improved athletic performance to an

increase in loyalty and unity felt among the team. Dana also used the phrase, "having

each other's backs." When asked to explain what that means, she described the team as

having an increased sense of unity and loyalty:

> We kind of knew what each other had gone through in their lives, or what we were going through. And..to kind of make you know more about them and understand them..it kind of made you want to fight for them. And when they did something good, cheering them on. Or if something bad happened to them, just tell them it was okay and you'll get it next time. We were really a united team that game after we had that big talk. Everybody was for everybody that game.

The Necessity of Disclosure

The athletes perceived a *need* to know more personal information about each

other as a way to galvanize their loyalty for one another with trust. Interestingly, the

head coach discussed the same outcomes of loyalty and fighting for one another during

an early season interview. However, the coach's regard for sharing personal information

in order to achieve those outcomes was different than the athletes'. When I asked the

coach what the athletes should know about each other in order to be teammates, the

response was:

> I don't necessarily think they need to know anything personal. They just need to know that that person cares about them, regardless of what they do or if they're having a bad day, that they're going to pick them up. I don't necessarily think that they need to know personal information. Plenty of them share. Plenty of them share personal information. But, I think it's just more important that they know that those girls will fight for them. They'll fight together, and they'll lay down their own personal like, "what's best for myself" to help the greater good of the group. I think that's the most important thing for them to learn and to be a part of. And if you do get the opportunity to be on a team that's like that, it's a pretty incredible feeling to know you have that many people that would put themselves aside to help you.

While the head coach did not see the sharing of personal information as necessary, the athletes found the *process of sharing information* essential for strengthening their relationships and displaying their commitment to the team and to each other.

The head coach and the players had different understandings of the value of supportive interaction. The head coach believed that supportive interactions enabled an understanding of the team's goals, while the players believed that supportive interactions mandated an understanding of the team's goals plus an understanding of their teammates on a more personal level. By the athletes' accounts, the team accomplished the coach's goal of creating a strong team that puts the needs of the team and their teammates ahead of their own. However, they seemed to *need* to know more about the teammate they were fighting for and competing alongside. Surprisingly, the players explained that the knowledge was not to be used to judge or to ensure that they were all similar and like-minded, but to understand an athlete's behavior when it seemed to be out of step with the team's rules and expectations or when there were perceived differences.

The Impact of Disclosure

The head coach made another noteworthy distinction between two of the team's rules: the players-generated formal rule of "respecting each other" and the team's informal rule of "getting along." When discussing the need to have the Commitment Meeting, the coach gave this explanation:

> These girls want to get along more than they care about winning. It's not important [to me] that they get along. It's important that they respect each other, and that's what I'm trying to teach them. There's a difference between getting

along and respecting each other. And they want to get along *and* respect each other, which is great but it's not always going to be the case.

Clearly, the coach believes that having respect for a teammate can be achieved without self-disclosure. Players should give each other respect due to the fact that they are on the same team, abiding by the team rules, and competing together to win. In the head coach's mind, the personal dynamics of the team should not dictate the players' experience on the team or the team's success:

> I think that my brain and their brains, the way that I would deal with a basketball team is obviously way different than the way most of them deal with the basketball team. Like I don't care whether or not you get along with everyone. If you can play, I want you on my team. I'll tell you to shut-up if you need to (laughs).

As long as the players are putting forth their best physical effort to win, the coach believes mutual respect should be given and received by the players.

In contrast, the members of a team are not performing only the role of a teammate to one another. Through their "multiplicity of selves," they are also performing the social roles of friend, sister, roommate, love interest, to name a few. For example, two of the Playmakers were sisters and also roommates, two players entered the program as "best friends," two pairs of players were roommates, and two players became best friends through their participation on the team and later became roommates. Relationships can become even more intensely personal, when for example, teammates engage in a same-sex relationship while playing on the same team. Therefore, role boundaries between teammates (i.e., as teammates and friends) may become blurred if they also have a personal relationship with another, making a player's commitment to the team's rules not the only behavior assessed when managing a relationship. With the many different potential types of relationships on a team that reach a high level of intimacy through reciprocating and symmetrical sharing of personal information with each other, it is easy to see how the players believed that "getting along" was integral to "being a good teammate."

When asked "What does it mean to be a good teammate?" the athletes responded with a list of behaviors that I believe are in concert with the team rule, "Be Respectful" and with the team norms, "Get Along" and "Support Each Other." For example, the players mentioned a good teammate is nice to their teammates, helps out their teammates when they need it, supports their teammates, cares about the team more than her individual statistics, has a good attitude, leads the team, and is willing to listen to others. With the exception of "leads the team," their responses corresponded with behaviors expected of those involved in a social relationship (e.g, friend, roommate, etc.). If the players treated their teammates in the same manner they treated those in their life with whom they have close relationships, it would further explain their perceived need to get along with one another. In other words, their teammates have become their friends, their best friends, their roommates, and their family members. Therefore, the players believed that getting along with one another was an essential aspect of being teammates and necessary for enjoying their participation on the team, because of the multiple roles the players were performing for each other.

Whether or not self-disclosure occurs may be the variable that distinguishes "getting along" from "respecting each other." Jen described her relationship with one of her teammates the year before that was devoid of disclosure:

> Last year I did not want to be with her. She bothered me because her attitude was bad. So I just kind of left it like that, and then she was just another one of my girls I play basketball with. Because last year when she would have a bad attitude, people were like, "Fine, I don't care." and wouldn't talk to her. This year, it's a lot closer and a lot better to be around her… Like the girls I live with aren't just girls I basketball with. They're like my friends. They're the ones I go to. They get me completely. I don't know if I have any of the girls this year that they're "just girls I basketball with" because we are really close. It's cool. I've never personally been on a team where I don't feel like that. Usually there's one or two that are just there, type of thing.

Whereas the coach believed that *respect* was the necessary ingredient for caring for a teammate and for achieving team success, the players viewed the ability to *get along* as

the necessary ingredient to caring for one another and performing well as a team athletically.

The difference in these two fundamental beliefs of how teammates should behave towards one another led to the calling of the Commitment Meeting. The athletes wanted to get along, or to have smooth interactions with one another. But in order to do so, they needed to understand each other better. In order to understand and be aware of where each of them was coming from, they needed to know more about who they were and why they acted the way they did. From this understanding gained during the Commitment Meeting, additional supportive work could be done throughout the rest of the season as teammates came to understand and accept others' behaviors that were previously seen as offensive. Meghan explained how the disclosures impacted future interactions:

> I know one person in particular said that at a past school she was treated a certain way. So I think everyone on the team tried to avoid treating her like that, because they knew that it bothered her. There were just little things that bothered people. We all knew that now, so we just tried to avoid that.

With the athletes perceiving these benefits of information-sharing, it is surprising they did not disclose the personal information asked about themselves earlier. The athletes articulated several reasons why they had chosen not to disclose the personal information shared before the Commitment Meeting. Some of the athletes felt that others would not listen because the other players did not care enough about the person or what she had to say. If the players did listen, the fear was that they would judge the person for what she was saying and the possible impression her teammates would then have of her. Amanda believed one of her teammates held that fear: "Actually, you could probably venture that she'd be scared that we wouldn't like her as much because of the stuff she'd share."

The players expressed feeling a lack of trust in everyone as a reason why they chose not to share their personal information with each other prior to the Commitment Meeting. However, the tone and the purpose of the meeting helped the athletes feel

comfortable divulging personal information to their teammates. Anna described the behavior of the audience in that meeting:

> Everybody was listening, and they just wanted to learn about you, just because that was the type of thing that was happening in that room. And I knew nobody was judging me. I mean people wanted to hear what I had to say. So I felt like what I was saying mattered.

Lindsay also explained her perception of the meeting and how it empowered some of the players to disclose information they had previously kept hidden:

> I think [the Commitment Meeting], again, was a big turning point for a lot of people where they can just finally feel relieved that people know this. "I can be who I am because they do know this about me and they know why I act this way in certain situations or why I'm not close with my family. They can understand why I don't go home."

After previously being reticent to share personal information or information they may have seen as shameful or private, the supportive work of listening and not judging others, allowed the team to "confirm that the new presentation of self is accepted and approved" (Goffman, 1971, p. 67-68).

The participants of this particular meeting were met with three directives initiated by the head coach and given by the Leadership Group, with the last two mandating information management plans. The first directive was that no one was to leave the room prior to the conclusion of the meeting. The second directive was that everyone must answer the questions posed to them. The third directive was that the information shared was not to be discussed with anyone not in the room. There is some question as to the explicit directness of the third and final edict. However, the participants innately felt that the information shared should not be discussed with anyone who was not present at the meeting:

> I can't remember if it was said or if it was just kind of implied. I think it was said but, it's just stuff that you *wouldn't* anyway. You just had that feeling that why would you even go tell somebody this? It was stuff that you wouldn't even go in conversation and talk about to other people, because you just wouldn't. Because it's stuff that you probably don't even talk to that other person about anyway. (Heidi)

The meeting concluded with hugs given and received, which served as the participants' farewell gesture.

In summary, the team's Commitment Meeting served as a "maintenance rite," where the "parties to a relationship may engineer a coming together because business, ceremony, or chance has not done so recently enough (it is felt) to guarantee the well-being of the relationship" (Goffman, 1971, p. 73). In order to prevent antagonistic feelings towards one another from growing and festering if left unchecked, the players met to work on their relationships with one another. The meeting mandated a sharing of personal information behind closed doors, and renegotiated the players' commitment to having interpersonal relationships with each other that were close, worthy of trust, and loyal. Furthermore, by having all of the players attend the meeting and mandating that the information shared was not to be discussed with others, the potential for rumors was eliminated.

The supportive work done by the athletes served as 1) a means to *ask* for personal information and to *tell* personal information; 2) a promise to accept each athlete as a valued member of the team because of her willingness to share the information, not in spite of it; and 3) as a promise to safeguard the shared personal information. Taken altogether, self-disclosure enabled the athletes to achieve a preferred state of "getting along" in order to behave as good teammates toward one another. Behaving as a good teammate involved caring about teammates, and caring about the commitment to being on the team.

The Re-Commitment Meeting

When smooth interactions are broken or disrupted, conscientious participants engage in a form of interaction Goffman calls "remedial work" (1971). Goffman describes this process as follows: "to change the meaning that otherwise might be given to an act, transforming what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable" (p. 109). During the season, the Playmakers were put in a situation which

called for such remedial work. In order for a person to remain in one's "face," Goffman observed three main devices people use to do remedial work: 1) accounts; 2) apologies; 3) and requests.

The act of remedying an offense and more specifically, the *willingness* of the offender to disavow the unacceptable behavior and repent are important aspects of social interaction (Goffman, 1971). By disclosing personal and/or private information that may provide a possible explanation (i.e., account) for an indiscretion or by disclosing the execution of an unacceptable act and apologizing for that indiscretion, a team member shows that she understands the existence and the validity of the rule or norm she has transgressed. Furthermore, the disclosure is an attempt to communicate to those she has offended that she wishes to be seen as a good teammate who is worthy of once again attaining the status of "a team member in good-standing."

The infraction of an organization's or a society's rules or norms often produces a negative impression of the offender, no matter how minute or great its overall impact on the offended. Goffman (1971) explained why remedial work is of great importance for the offender:

> They whose expectations are not sustained must show that they are not to be delineated by what the offense expresses about them and that at whatever cost to themselves they have a proper relation to the sanctioning system, for their failure to commit themselves to this social mechanism can reflect more harshly on them than does the original offense. (p. 100)

Therefore, remedial work allows the offender an opportunity to manage others' impressions of her by re-establishing her commitment to the team in a sincere and believable manner. Conversely, the offender may increase the negative impression held by others that was initially created by the offense simply by refusing to engage in any remedial strategy designed around self-disclosure.

Engaging in remedial work is a ritualistic event, just as the interactions that occur during supportive work. The stage upon which remedial work occurs (Turner uses the term "redressive action", not "remedial work"), allows for a performance to take place

that transforms one's place in the social order (Turner, 1986). In the event of remedial work being done, the transformation could involve getting back into face or taking on a new face more befitting of one's most recent actions. Examples of both an offender conducting remedial work and of another offender refusing to partake in an acceptable remedial strategy played out in the team's Re-Commitment Meeting. Although I was not in attendance at this meeting, I learned a great deal about it during the second round of interviews.

It was made known near the end of the season that several players had broken the team's no drinking rule. A few of those players had told a teammate, in confidence, about their indiscretion. However, the recipients of those secrets could no longer keep that information to themselves, and told other teammates and their head coach of their teammates' violations. As a result, one player was dismissed from the team for multiple and repeated violations of team rules, another player remained on the team by confessing to the team and completing her punishment, and one player quit the team after she denied breaking the rule and refused to carry out her punishment. Therefore, a second impromptu, athlete-only meeting was held to discuss these consequences given to their teammates who did not play their expected and agreed-upon role of a teammate who cared about the team and who was committed, honest, and trustworthy.

During the Re-Commitment Meeting, one athlete admitted her transgression, offered an apology to the team, allowed for members of the team to ask questions pertaining to the indiscretion, and agreed to complete her punishment. Once her apology was made and accepted, she promptly and willingly performed the punishment[11] for that particular violation the team had pre-determined prior to the start of the season. By confessing, apologizing, and performing her punishment, the team was able to once again accept the offending player's face as a good teammate and move on from the incident

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[11] For her punishment, the player had to roll the die six times and complete each of the punishments rolled, plus she had to sit out one game.

without future negative implications for the offending player. Gina described her

observation of this process in her interview as "the other one that did confess is still on

the team, and nobody really cares anymore since she took her punishment and she

confessed about it."

Goffman understood that an apology serves as an admission of guilt that can work

to allow the offender to once again legitimately occupy space alongside the offended. He

grounded these two almost seemingly incongruous functions with the act of impression

management:

> Apologies represent a splitting of the self into a blameworthy part and a part that
> stands back and sympathizes with the blame giving, and, by implication, is
> worthy of being brought back into the fold. (Goffman, 1971, p. 113)

Goffman's observation of the function of an apology to split the self is reminiscent of his

concept of "simultaneous multiplicity of self" as the apology permits a dual presentation

of roles for the self as offender *and* as one of the offended. At this particular meeting, the

athlete's apology seemed to convey to her teammates that she broke the rule and that she

was sorry for her action. The sincerity of her apology also served to express that she was

trustworthy enough for them to believe that she would not break the rule again and could

therefore return to her status of being seen as a good teammate. She wished to be

"brought back into the fold" and to not have herself seen as an uncommitted teammate, or

worse yet, as a person who has done irreparable damage to her status as a teammate or as

an athlete.

In contrast during the Re-Commitment Meeting, a second member of the team,

Lisa, first attempted to do remedial work by offering her *account* of the accusation, not

an *apology* for the behavior. Lisa had been accused by her teammates of also breaking

the no drinking rule. The accusing player was told of the infraction by another teammate,

who claimed Lisa told her, in confidence, she had broken the rule. Lisa denied to her

teammates that she had broken the rule, and offered the explanation that the teammate

must have misinterpreted what she said. When it became clear her teammates did not

believe her account, Lisa quit the team. In Goffman's terms, Lisa refused to perform the remedial work required to salvage her reputation as a credible teammate: the outcome was a broken interaction.

During the meeting, another set of players engaged in a form of preventive work through disclosure. Prior to the meeting, they had learned of rumors circulating that they had also broken the team's no drinking rule. Concerned that their teammates may have heard the rumors, each stood up in front of the team and denied any inappropriate behavior:

> When we had our team meeting, we just opened up and were like, "If anyone else has heard this rumor, that I drank." I was like, "It's just false. It started from Tonya." I guess I've earned everyone's trust, so they believed me. (Alicia)

These particular players reasserted their innocence and their commitment to the team by proactively addressing the rumor. Furthermore, their teammates allowed them to maintain their appropriate faces, because they gave their teammates' accounts more credibility than the rumors.

Self-disclosure was a central act of these remedial interchanges. When these players broke the team rule, they individually disclosed the rules violation to a teammate. The offending players shared their indiscretions in the form of a secret to teammates they trusted not to tell anyone because of their particularly close relationship. However, by doing so, the offending players ultimately diminished their control over the information as the recipients now co-own the information. In fact, the recipients of the secrets no longer wished to conceal the violations. Their subsequent co-management of the information included revealing it to another team member with the intent of the violation being appropriately addressed. For example, the player who confessed was first approached by a teammate about her indiscretion and told that if she did not self-disclose her rule violation to the coach, then she would tell the coach herself. Moreover, an offending player may self-disclose additional personal information prompted by the discovery of her rules violation. For instance, a player may reveal her addiction to

alcohol or drugs to her coaches and teammates when confessing and apologizing for her indiscretion. To facilitate the team members' deeper understanding of her behavior, she may further reveal any personal issues of which she was using alcohol and drugs to cope. I do not know whether or not this happened on the Playmakers.

As mentioned in Chapter IV, another information management strategy that came out of the Re-Commitment Meeting was "Don't tell a teammate a secret." The coach emphasized the importance of this norm at the meeting. The players fully embraced the norm after having to manage the negative effects of a player telling her teammate that she broke one of the team's formal rules and expecting her to keep it a secret. The no-win situation the recipient of the secret was put in by the discloser not only caused a difficult decision for her, but also led to a complete breakdown of trust between the discloser and the recipient.

Boundary Management

Boundary management strategies were used to handle the secrets told prior to the Re-Commitment Meeting and the disclosures made during the meeting. The recipients of the disclosed information became co-owners of that information, and they needed to negotiate the circumstances in which the information would be revealed or concealed and how that would be done (Petronio, 2002). When talking about secrets, Meghan mentioned that determining how to handle individual secrets had come up at the end of the season. She provided her perception of how a person decides whether or not she can disclose information to a teammate that she considers a secret:

> I think if the secret is about like them personally – it doesn't affect the team at all, like has no affect on the team or its rules or anything, then it's fine to share the secrets. But if it has something that's going to shine a bad light on the team, or it's going to…break team rules or anything like that, then it's not good to share.

The individual secret told by a player to her teammate was desired by the player to not be told to anyone. However, keeping the secret became too heavy of a burden to the recipient, because its contents were in direct violation of a team rule they had all agreed

to honor. Therefore, she exposed the secret in the hopes that the player would confess, apologize, and pay the consequences.

The disclosures made to all of the players during the meeting in the form of accounts and confessions also needed to be managed by all the players present and the coaching staff. The head coach re-told the conversation she had with her players about how they should treat the information shared during the meeting:

> No, I never told them not to talk freely about it. I never said, "You cannot speak about this ever." I just told them to be respectful for the fact that Lisa and Tonya still go to school here. Don't be spreading rumors. Don't talk about it. If people ask about it, you can tell them what I said."

Essentially, the coach advised the players to tell those outside of the team who asked only the bare minimum of the facts, as it was not their business to know anything more:

> They kept asking me, "What do I say? What do I say?" "Well, that Lisa chose not to play, and that Tonya got removed for disciplinary reasons. If they want to ask why, you say you don't know."

The head coach was not instructing her players to lie in order to avoid answering the question because, by design, the players did not know the whole story of what happened. While they knew what happened during the Re-Commitment Meeting, they were not privy to the discussions held before or after the meeting between the coaches and the departing players. The head coach gave this rationale for not fully explaining the situation to all of the players: "I don't want to put them in a position where they have to answer questions, or interpret something that they were not a part of."

Certain moments of disclosure that occurred during the season crystallized personal information-sharing norms and information boundary management norms for the team to follow. These critical moments occurred due to the team's communication norms and formal rules being broken. During those moments, the Playmakers engaged in ritualistic interactions where supportive and remedial work was performed in order to create or fix the face of the interactions' participants. The supportive work permitted and encouraged smooth interactions to take place and for the players to get along and support

one another. The remedial work was necessary when there was a disruption to the roles

people were playing.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

My purpose in this dissertation was to explore how Erving Goffman's theoretical concepts of face-to-face interaction can be used to understand the social construction of privacy on a sport team. My intention was to use Goffman's observations and rules of social order to understand how members of an athletic team handle the moments of personal disclosure and non-disclosure that occur during a season. This research made possible a better understanding of how an individual team member manages her own personal information, and how team members treat the personal information of others that is shared.

I have examined how the members of a team construct their sense of privacy – that is, what they are willing to reveal and what they are not willing to reveal. I gained insight into how the team members balanced their own need for privacy and their need to be seen as a good teammate if the role of teammate required considerable sharing of personal information. At a time when the personal and medical privacy of student-athletes and their teams appears to be dwindling due to disclosure regulations, examining the negotiation of their communication norms and the regulation of the team members' personal information is important to understanding how team members construct and manage an individual's own and the team's privacy. Interviewing the student-athletes and coaches provided an insight into their interactions and into the inner workings of disclosure management by the team members.

I also examined what the members of this particular team felt they needed to know about one another in order to be a successful team, how they talked about themselves to each other, and how they managed the personal information of others. These questions were the foundational base for this study. In Chapter IV, "Becoming a

(Close) Team," I introduced the team, the Playmakers, described the Playmakers' rules and how they negotiated their team norms, and identified the players' tattoos and two team meetings as having provided important moments of disclosure during the season.

In Chapter V, "Remaining a (Close) Team," I used Erving Goffman's model of social order to analyze the moments of disclosure during the two team meetings, and Sandra Petronio's Communication Privacy Management theory to examine the team's negotiation of information boundary management strategies. I referred to the first team meeting that took place at the beginning of the season as the "Commitment Meeting" to reference the players' pledge to be a close team and to follow the team norms of getting along and being supportive. The players essentially committed themselves to be better teammates to one another after having shared personal information and developed a newfound sense of trust and loyalty among the players. I referred to the second meeting that took place near the end of the season as the "Re-Commitment Meeting" to reference the players' renewed pledge to follow the team rules after a few of the players were caught breaking them, leaving the other teammates to question their commitment to the team's rules, norms, and goals. The Re-Commitment Meeting also crystallized how the players were to manage their own secrets and how the Playmakers were to manage former teammates' information with those outside the team.

The personal autonomy each member had over her own personal information was high when the information was non-basketball related, and this team built high and impermeable borders surrounding the personal information of its members. When a team member was asked about another's personal information, only general information was usually told. The discloser maintained the privacy of the individual member and the team by not giving specific details of an individual's situation. An example given by players was a teammate who was not in practice for a couple of days. If other teammates ask the player closest to the missing player why she is not at practice, she may answer only that she has gone home for a funeral without going into any more detail.

However, the Playmakers negotiated a decreased level of personal autonomy over their own personal information if it was deemed to affect the team. For example, if a player violated a team rule, such as drug use, then the expectation was that the information be shared to the entire team in the form of a confession, or it was not to be shared at all. The violation was not to be told to anyone as a secret at the offending player's discretion. Although team members generally retained control over their own privacy, a player was not to share a rules violation with her teammates and expect them to keep it a secret. This type of disclosure was unwanted because it put the recipient of the information in a difficult position of having to either contribute to the offending player's false impression of a teammate who is following the rules by not revealing the secret, or tell the coach of the indiscretion and not "have that player's back." The breakdown of this particular information-sharing norm, "Don't tell a teammate a secret," led to the second team meeting where the Playmakers renewed their commitment to following the team's rules and norms.

I also set out in this study to determine what personal information team members felt they needed to know about each other in order to become a unified team. It became clear that team members most valued the need to be a good teammate *and* to know that others were being good teammates. This orientation dictated the topics, the amount, and the level of disclosure needed on this team. A good teammate was someone who was willing to put in the time and energy to become a close team, someone who followed the team's rules and norms, someone who showed respect to the other team members by making amends when a rule or norm was broken, and someone who was willing to forgive a teammate when she broke a team rule if she performed remedial work properly. The Playmakers' fierce commitment to the concept of being a good teammate was related to the unsatisfying experience of the previous year. In that sense, this commitment could be seen as remedial in trying to make up for the previous season's lack of perceived closeness and productivity.

The team members saw disclosure as a key ingredient for a successful team experience. Self-disclosure was used before the season started and at the beginning of the season to get to know one another on a more personal level when spending time together off-the-court becoming a close team. When the team's norm of "getting along" was endangered, the team attempted to remedy the situation by mandating the sharing of personal information and backgrounds. By increasing their understanding of each other's personal background through a willingness to open up and share during a team meeting (the moment I have identified as the Commitment Meeting in Chapter IV), they felt better able to get along and support one another. In other words, the players believed increasing social cohesion through personal disclosures would lead to an increase in task cohesion and ultimately more wins for the team.

The head coach did not share this same perspective as the players, and believed task cohesion should be generated through coordinated actions on the court. The head coach was not sure that the level of social cohesion aspired to by the players was necessary in order to win more games. Furthermore, the head coach did not believe knowing personal information about a teammate was necessary in order to demonstrate respect for teammates and commitment to the team. In fact, at one point during the season, the head coach told the players to distance themselves from each other during a rare weekend when they did not have practice or a game.

The extent to which the athletes were committed to being a close team led to the two team meetings identified and analyzed in this study. The pressures to conform to the personal information-sharing norms that were established and expected during these meetings and to the idea of being a close team may have had unintended negative consequences. Perhaps not all players were comfortable with the high level of sharing personal information that was required. We can look at the two meetings as examples of where this worked and did not work. During the Commitment Meeting, all the players were on board and shared the personal information that was asked of them. Toward the

end of the season, as my interviews indicate, there were cracks in the team's facade that later led the Playmakers to engage in the Re-Commitment Meeting. At that time, not all players were willing to meet the pre-established demands for conformity.

The Re-Commitment Meeting occurred because several players were thought to have broken the team's "No Drinking Alcohol" rule. The way the accused players responded to this challenge, and the way the team then reacted to the players' responses provide a useful map to understand how these norms had been negotiated. At that meeting, one player admitted to the transgression, performed the remedial work required, and was brought back into the team's fold. Another player had built up a critical mass of infractions over time, and because of this her status as a team member could not be salvaged through remedial work. She was dismissed from the team by the head coach. A third player denied breaking the team rule, and quit the team rather than perform remedial work for an indiscretion she may or may not have committed.

Although a Goffman approach might locate these patterns of incidents within the notion of supportive interaction, from the team's perspective, another approach might be to look at the removal of these players, from their perspective, as a consequence of their unwillingness to conform to the team's idea of what it means to be a teammate in good standing. The closeness strived for by the team may have driven the players to sacrifice these two teammates due to their refusal to conform to wholeheartedly embrace the team rules and norms. In a sense, these players might be seen as scapegoats whose removal cleansed the team of any non-conforming behaviors, allowing the team to start anew with only those players ready and willing to re-commit themselves to the team's rules and norms. Gina explained her feelings on how the team losing two members reaffirmed the players' belief in the value of commitment to their teammates:

> The people that were left on the team, we all decided that we'd rather lose with all of us that were the people that actually cared about the team than win with those two that didn't care. So I think even though we lost both games when we didn't have them, it was still better. Like the next day in practice, it was like everybody was just having fun because it was just so much more, like the mood was a lot

lighter and everybody was happy. So, I think we came together pretty well after that being such a big deal. And even though we lost, it was still, everybody had fun. That's all that really matters.

While Goffman's sensitizing concepts and model of social order were helpful in understanding face-to-face interactions on the Playmakers, this study reveals some limits to his theories. To the extent that Goffman's work privileges a focus on interactions that generate consensus, it might be seen to overlook the potentially high personal costs that conformity to consensus might exact from reluctant members. Thus, while Goffman's commitment to a model of system-sustaining euphoric interaction provides useful insight into the group dynamics that contributed to the Playmakers' need for conformity, that very focus can also be seen to overshadow a more critical analysis of the constraints of conformity.

Striving to be close was a characteristic of the team to which all players had to conform. In the team's pursuit of cohesion, a disruption would occur if a player did not share the team's vision to be close and did not participate in the mandated activities deemed necessary for generating closeness and cohesion. On the Playmakers, a player faced consequences if she did not behave in a manner that helped the team to become closer or was inconsistent with that of a "good teammate." There were other consequences of this team's perceived need for closeness. The Re-Commitment Meeting that took place to explain one player's dismissal from the team and where another player voluntarily removed herself from the team may be indicative of what happens when a player does not conform to the two concepts of being a "close team" and a "good teammate."

Finally, during the Re-Commitment Meeting at the end of the year, the team managed the disclosures of players who broke team rules and discussed how they would treat that information when asked by others outside of the team. The dismissal of a team member and the self-removal of another player prompted numerous people (e.g., parents, friends, professors, etc.) to ask the remaining players why those two players were no

longer on the team. Because they were both significant contributors to this team, their absence was obvious. In fact, the head coach remarked that coaches from other teams in the conference called the school's basketball office asking why those two players were no longer on the roster.

Originally, I also sought to determine how team members sort their personal information into the categories of public, private, and secret. I thought this vocabulary would be helpful in understanding how they share each type of information. However, when asked how they understood these terms and the information they would label as such, the team members seemed to hold little regard for these terms. When talking about public, private, and secret, what emerged was what an anthropologist terms "native categories." Even though the team members did not maintain a distinction between how these words were used, their concept of what "personal information" was and how it was to be managed was clearly articulated. Therefore, the pre-determined vocabulary was not beneficial in terms of how these words were used on this particular team as it was sometimes difficult for the participants to articulate differences among these terms. Ultimately, the manner in which the team developed their communication norms and how they negotiated the boundaries of disclosure proved to be more interesting and more salient.

The team I observed demonstrated varying levels of symmetry and reciprocity of disclosure, dependent upon the status of the participants. The participants in the Commitment Meeting included only the players, and required a symmetrical amount of disclosure by everyone involved, in regards to the type and level of intimacy. The required symmetry of disclosure was initiated by posing the same question to every player. Furthermore, the reciprocity of disclosure was also built into the process by mandating every player answer the same question.

However, disclosures between coaches and players were asymmetrical and were not of a reciprocating nature. Coaches consciously erected boundaries around their

personal information by consciously choosing not to share this information with their players, even if directly asked. The coaches made self-disclosures only in order to relate to the players if they thought it would help a player navigate through a problem she was experiencing, such as a relationship issue. Moreover, for the most part, the players indicated they did not need to know their coaches' personal information in order to have a positive relationship. In addition, a player did not require self-disclosures from a coach before feeling comfortable sharing her own personal information with that coach.

Insights gained in this study reflect the construction of privacy and the negotiation of communication norms of one specific team during one particular season: my findings do not represent all sport teams or even all women's teams. But my research offers insight into the interactive process of determining how team members share information about themselves with each other. Several team members expressed uncertainty over what information and how much of it they would share with me during the interviews, attesting to the fluidity and the negotiating of information-sharing strategies that occurs during every face-to-face interaction. Rachel described her thought-process when she answered my questions during her interview as, "I tried not to say too much, but I said everything. I was only going to give you the gist of it."

In this study I have provided a description of how one specific team learned how to ask its members for information, how to share personal information, and how to manage the information that was shared. While the analysis cannot be generalized to all sport teams, organizations, or groups, it does provide an understanding of how the Playmakers required some sharing of personal information, agreed not to share their teammates' stories, and agreed not to burden a teammate with a secret of an action that disrespected the team. In other words, this study shows how privacy can be socially constructed through negotiated strategies of disclosure management as dictated by communication norms.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PLAYERS

General Background - Individual
- What made you decide to play college basketball?
- What do you bring to this team?

General Background – Team Relationships
- How would you characterize this team?
- How is this year's team different than last year's team? (when interviewing a returning player)
- How much time does the team spend together?
- How close are the players?
- What does it mean to be "close"?
- How important is it for the players to be close?
- How close are the players with the coaches?
- How important is it for the players and the coaches to be close?
- How does your head coach relate to the team?
- How do the assistant coaches relate to the team?

Information Levels
- How well do you know your teammates?
- How important is it that you know personal information about your teammates?
- How well do your teammates know you?
- How important is it that your teammates know more about you than your basketball skills and athletic goals?
- As teammates, what do you need to know about each other?
- How do you find these things out?
- Other than the players' athletic strengths and weaknesses, what do the coaches need to know about the players?
- How do the coaches find out this information?
- Other than a coach's basketball knowledge and philosophy, what do you need to know about your head coach? Assistant coach?
- How do you find these things out?
- Why is it important for the players and the coaches to know this information?

Sorting of Information – Among the Players
- What sorts of information should be shared openly between teammates?

- What do the players do or say to encourage or mandate that information be shared?
- What happens if a player does not share one of the types of information you just mentioned?
- What might be some reasons a player may not want to share the types of information you mentioned?
- If there is an expectation of disclosure, how do players avoid that expectation and not tell the expected information to their teammates?
- Is it okay for players to keep their personal information to themselves, and not tell their teammates?
- What sorts of personal information is it okay for teammates to keep to themselves?
- Is there a difference between private information and a secret?
- What is a secret?
- Is it okay for players to have secrets from one another?
- What sorts of information <u>are</u> shared amongst the players?
- How do you find out this information about each other?
- How do you know that it is okay to share that information about yourself?
- Have you shared information with your teammates that you have not shared with people outside the team?
- Have players ever told others outside the team information about a teammate shared within the team?
- How do you know teammates will not share that information with others outside the team?

Sorting of Information – Between Players and Coaches
- What sorts of information <u>should</u> be shared openly between a player and coach?
- What do the coaches do to encourage or mandate that information be shared?
- What if a player does not share that information with a coach?
- What might be some reasons a player may not want to share with a coach the types of information you mentioned?
- If there is an expectation of disclosure to the coaches, how does a player avoid that expectation and not tell the expected information to their coach?
- Is it okay for players to keep their personal information to themselves, and not tell their coaches?
- What sorts of personal information is it okay for players to not tell their coaches?
- Would you categorize that sort of information as a secret? If not, then what?
- Is it okay for players to have secrets from their coaches?
- What sorts of information <u>are</u> shared between the players and the coaches?
- How does a coach find out that information about a player?
- How does a coach ask the player for that information?
- Does a player typically tell the coach the information directly?
- How may a player indirectly let the coach know about herself?
- How do you know that it is okay to share that information about yourself with your coach?

- Do players tell their coach things about themselves that they have not shared with their teammates?
- How do you know a coach will not share that information with others?
- Under what circumstances would a coach share personal information about a player with others?
- How do the players find out that information about a coach?
- How do the players ask the coach for that information?
- Does a coach typically tell the players the information directly?
- How may a coach indirectly let the players know about themselves?
- What if a coach does not share that information with the players?
- Under what circumstances would a coach not share that information with players?
- Have players ever told others outside the team information about a coach shared within the team?

New Players – Asked of Returning Players
- How can a new player best fit in with this team?
- What does it mean to fit in with a team?
- How important is it for the players on a team to get along?
- How could a new player give off a bad impression to the team?
- How do you know that would not be valued (or accepted) by the team?

New Players – Asked of New Players
- Tell me about your experience as a new player on this team.
- How can a new player best fit in with this team?
- How did you come to find that out?
- What does it mean to fit in?
- How could a new player give off a bad impression to this team?
- How did you come to find that out?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR COACHES

General Background - Individual
- What made you decide to coach college basketball?
- What do you bring to this team, as a coach?

General Background – Team Relationships
- How would you characterize this team?
- How is this year's team different than last year's team?
- How much time does the team spend together?
- How close are the players?
- What does it mean to be "close"?
- How important is it for the players to be close?
- How close are the coaches with the players?
- How important is it for the coaches and the players to be close?
- How do you relate to the team?
- How do the other coaches relate to the team?

Information Levels
- How well do you know the players?
- How important is it that you know personal information about the players?
- How well do the players know you?
- How important is it that your players know you personally?
- Other than the players' athletic strengths and weaknesses, what do the coaches need to know about the players?
- How do the coaches find out this information?
- Other than a coach's basketball knowledge and philosophy, what do players need to know about the head coach? Assistant coach?
- How do the players find these things out?
- Why is it important for the players and the coaches to know this information?

Sorting of Information – Among the Players
- What sorts of information should be shared openly between teammates?
- As a coach, what do you do to encourage or mandate the sharing of personal information amongst the players?

- What happens if a player does not share one of the types of information you just mentioned?
- What might be some reasons a player may not want to share the types of information you mentioned?
- If there is an expectation of disclosure, how do players avoid that expectation and not tell the expected information to their teammates?
- Is it okay for players to keep their personal information to themselves, and not tell their teammates?
- What sorts of personal information is it okay for teammates to keep to themselves?
- Is there a difference between private information and a secret?
- What is a secret?
- Is it okay for players to have secrets from one another?
- Would you expect players to tell their teammates information about themselves that they have not shared with people outside the team?
- How do the players know that it is okay to share that information about themselves with their teammates?
- Have players ever told others outside the team information about a teammate shared within the team?
- How do players know that teammates will not share that information with others outside the team?

Sorting of Information – Between Players and Coaches

- What sorts of information <u>should</u> be shared openly between a player and coach?
- As a coach, what do you do to encourage or mandate the sharing of personal information amongst the players?
- What if a player does not share that information with a coach?
- What might be some reasons a player may not want to share with a coach the types of information you mentioned?
- If there is an expectation of disclosure to the coaches, how does a player avoid that expectation and not tell the expected information to their coach?
- Is it okay for players to keep their personal information to themselves, and not tell their coaches?
- What sorts of personal information is it okay for players to not tell their coaches?
- Would you categorize that sort of information as a secret? If not, then what?
- Is it okay for players to have secrets from their coaches?
- What sorts of information <u>are</u> shared between the players and the coaches?
- How does a coach find out that information about a player?
- How does a coach ask the player for that information?
- Do you ever feel obtrusive when asking players personal questions about themselves?
- When asking players personal questions about themselves, do you ever reciprocate by telling them something personal about you?

- Does a player typically tell the coach the information directly, without being asked?
- How may a player indirectly let the coach know about herself?
- Are players more apt to share personal information with you without you asking, or is it shared because you asked?
- In what ways do you respond to a player who tells you something personal about themselves?
- Do players tell their coach things about themselves that they have not shared with their teammates?
- Under what circumstances would a coach share personal information about a player with others?
- How do the players find out information about you?
- How do the players ask you for information about yourself that you have not already shared?
- Does a coach typically tell the players the information directly?
- How may a coach indirectly let the players know about themselves?
- What if a coach does not share that information with the players?
- Under what circumstances would a coach not share that information with players?
- Are you aware of players telling others outside the team information about a coach shared within the team?
- How does a team protect the personal information about its members?

New Players

- How can a new player best fit in with this team?
- What does it mean to fit in with a team?
- How important is it for players to get along?
- How could a new player give off a bad impression to the team?
- How do you know that would not be valued (or accepted) by the team?

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