

## *No Timeouts in soccer: Women's transitions to the corporate university*

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As sport has become increasingly corporatized, low profile sports have begun to emulate high profile sports (Shulman & Bowen, 2001; Bowen & Levin, 2003). The corporate university and corporate sport model indicative of high profile college programs, such as the one involved in this study, use (sporting) bodies as resources, rendering them detached and alienated from many college experiences. The first year of college is a unique experience for young adults and is a period of transition for new students, often resulting in increased independence, self-development, and maturation (Schilling & Schilling, 2005). For athletes, however, sporting participation alters the operation of these processes. Freshmen athletes, in addition to academic work, are subjected to demands and expectations of higher athletic training and performance, and more difficult competition than their previous sporting engagements (Miller & Kerr, 2002), with demands on their time that far exceed those of non-athletes (Adler & Adler, 1985; Kimball, 2007; Jolly, 2008).

This paper explores the first-semester experiences of eight women soccer players at a major Division-I university in the Southeast. To achieve depth of interpretive analysis, three qualitative data collection methods were employed: participant observation, journaling, and semi-structured interviews. Following Kincheloe (2001), these methods were chosen to avoid one-sided reductionism and enabled participants' voices to be heard. Upon gaining access to the research site, participant observation and note taking served to inform journaling questions and interviews. Participants were then asked to respond to prompted questions about their experiences in the form of a journal during their first fall semester. Subsequently, journal responses served to shape future interviews (each ranging from 45 minutes to two hours).

As evidenced in the data from this study, the semester was largely a positive and successful experience for these eight participants. However, it came with acceptance of a lifestyle for which participants were unaccustomed and unprepared. Stress and tension were common daily experiences, and the constant activity and demands combined with their devotion to meeting school and soccer expectations left these college freshman athletes with feelings of isolation and loneliness. After their first semester, two of the eight women chose not to continue playing soccer because of their fall experiences. Though for different reasons, these women demonstrated a resistance to the corporate sport model, which raises serious questions about the demands that are placed on young adults who, as incoming college freshmen, get caught up in the demanding world of college athletics.