

THE COACH AS A MORAL LEADER AND EXEMPLAR FOR COLLEGE-AGED
YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The old aphorism says, “sport builds character,” but research by Bredemeier (1984, 1986), Hall (1986), and Stoll (1995) suggests that athletes have a lower morality than non-athletes, that sport somehow stunts moral development, possibly at all levels of participation. Recent headlines in the world of sport, about illegal steroid use in several professional leagues and the Olympics, about tremendous marriage infidelity by golfer Tiger Woods, and about college athletes accepting gifts from wealthy boosters would perhaps corroborate this finding. But stories, like that of Mallory Holtman and Liz Wallace, who carried an injured opponent around the bases allowing her to get credit for a home run in a crucial game, hint at a more complex issue, with underlying factors. Some coaches like Duke’s Mike Krzyzewski are able to seamlessly integrate moral lessons with their functional, sport-specific lessons, and in doing so help their players become more mature reasoners, in addition to better athletes. In effect, they serve as a moral exemplar for their student athletes.

In this thesis, I explored the coach as a moral leader of college-aged youth. I found that most coaches’ conception of athletic leadership reflected Colby and Damon’s (1992) definition of the moral exemplar:

1. A sustained commitment to moral ideals or principles that include a generalized respect for humanity; or a sustained evidence of moral virtue
2. A disposition to act in accord with one’s moral ideals or principles, implying also a consistency between one’s actions and intentions and between the means and ends of one’s actions
3. A willingness to risk one’s self-interest for the sake of one’s moral values
4. A tendency to be inspiring to others and thereby to move them to moral action
5. A sense of realistic humility about one’s own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one’s own ego (pp. 29)

The coaches I interviewed largely felt it was not only their place to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics, but it was very important to do so, ranking it alongside the teaching of technical skills, and recruitment of new student-athletes as the most important aspects of their job. They were, however, inconsistent in their intentions and actions, with some considerable differences in the values that coaches say they teach and students say they learn. Both groups reported the value of hard work/doing your best was taught and learned, while coaches said they also emphasized honesty/integrity, respect, and teamwork. On the other hand, student-athletes said they most learned perseverance, attitude, commitment/dedication, mental strength, and teamwork. I also found that coaches were inconsistent in their willingness to risk self-interest (e.g. winning) to teach a moral lesson. While most of them felt like they wanted to do so, they found it more difficult, in reality, to do so when choosing to suspend or reprimand a star player, or when assigning playing time to favorite, hard-working players who are not as talented as other players on the team, and dealing with institutional pressure, job politics, parents, and emotions. Overall, coaches reported believing they should inspire their student-athletes to act in a more moral fashion, but were humble about their relative importance, and understand they were just one moral exemplar in their lives.

Ultimately, the coaches I surveyed wanted to set a positive moral example for their student-athletes, and in doing so, help them develop into more mature moral reasoners, but many of them expressed some uncertainty about whether they actually observe their student-athletes consistently practicing those values. While it is unclear if athletics actually impedes or fosters moral development, it is clear that a coach who is a mature moral reasoner, and acts as a moral exemplar, can help their student-athletes develop a stronger moral identity by serving as what Colby and Damon might consider morally exemplary, and what Walker and Frimer (2007) refer to as a

“significant mentor” and developing “secure attachment” among athletes during their formative years.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eric Seideman is a twenty-eight year old college lacrosse coach, who has been lucky enough to work with, and learn from, four different coaches who have been selected as the national coach of the year. He graduated from Haverford College in 2004 with a B.A. in English. While at Haverford, Eric was a four-year starter on the lacrosse team, and was twice named to his conference's all-star team.

Based upon the excellent advice of a particularly-influential high school teacher, Eric decided to find a way to work in sports. Prior to his senior year in college, he interned as a journalist at *Sports Illustrated*, but ultimately decided to coach because of the positive effects his coaches had on him and his teammates, serving as a mentor, modeling mature moral skills, and showing that it is possible to strike a balance between teaching functional, sport-specific and moral skills.

He has lived the life of a Division III assistant coaching vagabond, starting his career at Vassar College, moving on to SUNY Cortland, then Ithaca College, and finally to Gettysburg College. While coaching at Ithaca, he attended Cornell from 2007-2009. He and his wife, Melissa, live in Gettysburg, PA.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Coach K: Mike Krzyzewski, Duke University Basketball Coach

ESPN: Entertainment Sports Programming Network

HBVCI: Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory in the Sport Milieu

IU: Indiana University

NBA: National Basketball Association

NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association

NFL: National Football League

NIT: National Invitation Tournament

PLC: Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series

SC&C: Sports, Character, and Citizenship Program

SDF: Sportsmanship Defined Federation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Recently, morality questions have come to the forefront of public consciousness in the realm of athletics, with steroid scandals in Major League Baseball and Olympic competition, college athletes taking gifts from athletic boosters and sports agents, and college coaches covering up illegal behavior by their athletes and themselves. For example, these are three recent negative headlines involving famous athletes or coaches which have graced our nation's newspapers and internet web pages:

“La Salle coaches resign amid scandal. Men's players involved in two rape investigations.” (Associated Press, 2004)

“Sampson receives NCAA's harshest penalty” (Katz, 2008)

“Apologetic Vick gets 23-month sentence on dog fighting charges” (ESPN.com News, 2007)

How does this breach of moral behavior happen? Does sport and competition press the moral fabric so hard that it turns it into tatters for both coaches and players? It used to be thought that sport built moral character by emphasizing teamwork, cooperation, and good sportsmanship. With the seemingly increasing immoral conduct in sports, we have to ask the question of who is leading these young athletes in the development of their character; are they doing so in a moral way and toward moral character? What might interfere with the moral character-building mission of sports? This thesis examines these questions and others, as it explores the behaviors and intentions of coaches and athletes. I begin with examples from the world of coaching to illustrate how different coaches exemplify different leadership styles, some moral, some not, in character-building in college sports.

In his 34 years as a collegiate head basketball coach, at West Point and Duke, Mike Krzyzewski (known as “Coach K”) has attained a record of 822 wins and 269 losses, for an overall winning percentage of 75.3 percent. His teams have won three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national championships and one Olympic gold medal, and he has been honored three times as the national coach of the year. In his 42 years as a collegiate head basketball coach, at West Point, Indiana University, and Texas Tech, Bobby Knight attained a record of 902 wins and 371 losses, for an overall winning percentage of 70.8 percent. His teams won three NCAA national championships, and he was honored one time as the national coach of the year.

While both Krzyzewski and Knight have been inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame, and are both generally acknowledged as two of the best coaches in the history of college basketball, they have vastly different legacies. As Scott Snook says, “different styles, yes, but the results [wins] are similar” (Snook, as described in Silverthorne, 2006). The “different styles” refer to the moral quality of their interactions with athletes and their reputation for very different kinds of “leadership.” Ironically, Krzyzewski played for and learned from Knight at West Point, and Knight’s recommendation helped Krzyzewski secure his position.

Krzyzewski is often held up as a shining example as a coach who exemplifies morality and excellent leadership qualities. The Fuqua School of Business at Duke boasts a Center for Leadership and Ethics that is named after “Coach K,” and he has written a book about leadership titled, *Leading with the Heart*.

Knight, known as a disciplinarian, but lacking the discipline to control himself (Knott, 2008) is more controversial and his case is far murkier. Despite the fact that he has more wins than any other NCAA Division I men’s basketball coach, Knight is perhaps more well known for his “legendary imperfections and combustible nature”

(Knott, 2008). He is known for his firing from Indiana due to conduct violations, for throwing a chair across the court during a game, for allegations that he choked and hit players, and for his harsh temper with members of the media. These are hardly the moral traits of an excellent leader. This very simple example poses the questions central to this thesis of what is a moral leadership. Why is it important in athletics; in a domain where winning is thought to be everything? Can one both win *and* be a moral leader? Can we conceive of “winning” in greater terms than the scores of the games of the season; particularly by the outcomes of the athletes who complete? And, finally, how is it that the athlete can learn to be moral even/in spite of an immoral coach?

According to Greenfield, the core of the relationship between the leader and the led is moral considerations. “The education of the public’s children is by its very nature a moral activity...relationships among people are at the very center of the work of school administrators and teachers, and for this reason school leadership is, by its nature and focus, a moral activity” (Greenfield, 2004, pp. 174). Yet many leaders and teachers often shun moral considerations, saying that their role is purely to teach content knowledge, and not share their own values, or help students develop theirs. Spencer (1996) asserts that many physical educators and coaches do not even try to teach sportsmanship and ethical behavior because they believe it is nearly impossible to do. But in some cases, like the story of Knight and Coach K, we see that winning games isn’t everything. Coach K, his athletes, and all the students who will become moral leaders through the Fuqua School of Business at Duke, benefit more from their moral leadership than they would from being the victor of a game. It goes beyond the sport.

Students also seem to know winning at sports isn’t everything. I now turn to two other examples, student-athletes Mallory Holtman and Sara Tucholsky, where the

balance between functional, physical, sport-specific and moral lessons is achieved. Real, powerful, and influential moral skills are being taught by coaches and learned by students, to make the case as a basis for my thesis—that coaches can, and should be, moral exemplars for their student athletes. Teaching moral leadership can begin on the playing field, and, this thesis argues, should continue into the lives of student-athletes in the “game of life.”

“The Way it Should Be:”¹ The Mallory Holtman Story

Sara Tucholsky had just hit a three-run home run to give her Western Oregon softball team (NCAA Division II) an early lead in a crucial game at the end of her senior season. It was a truly special homerun, not only because it gave her team the lead that they would never relinquish, or because it was the first and only of Tucholsky’s life. There was really nothing special about the hit—the physical act of a bat colliding with a ball and traveling over the fence that marked the boundary of the field—it was what happened afterward that sticks in the minds of anyone lucky enough to hear the story. ESPN, which does not traditionally report on Division II softball called it “a homerun memorable not for the distance it traveled, or the game it decided, for the meaning it carried” (Touching them All, 2008).

Mallory Holtman was the all-time homerun leader for both her Central Washington (NCAA Division II) team, and also the entire Great Northwest Athletic Conference. While Holtman had hit many homeruns in her career, she had always dreamed of playing in the NCAA tournament, so far unrealized, and in this, her senior season, she had a batting average of .360, and had her team on the brink. The final home doubleheader of the season, against Western Oregon was an opportunity to pick

¹ The title of this section has been borrowed from an article in Sports Illustrated by the same name, which can be read at <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1157051/1/index.htm>.

up two crucial wins, which might help make her dream a reality for the first time. Two losses would eliminate Central Washington from playoff contention, and Western Oregon had already won the first game of the day.

Tucholsky, also a player in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference, was primarily a backup outfielder for her four years. Although she was not a strong hitter, with just 3 hits in 34 at bats for the season, she was chosen to start in the second game of the doubleheader. After a starter misplayed a line drive by Holtman in the first game, an 8-1 victory by Western Oregon, Tucholsky was given the start for defensive purposes. In the second game, in the top of the second inning, Tucholsky was batting with two runners on base, when she made the swing of her life at maybe the fattest pitch she had ever seen. As she ran past first base, in her jubilation, she accidentally missed touching it. A few strides past the bag, she tried to stop and turn around to touch the base and continue on her way toward home. Her cleat caught in the dirt, her knee buckled, and her ligament tore instantly. The game came to a screeching halt, with an injured Tucholsky lying in the dirt, having managed to crawl back to first base. An obscure rule said that if any member of Tucholsky's team, coaching, or training staff touched her, she would be called out. Knowing it was her first home run, and not wanting to lose the run, her coach left her for the moment. The umpires conferred and decided that if Tucholsky could not make it around the bases, she must be substituted where she was, and the result of the play would be a two-RBI single. A later analysis of the softball rule book would show that the umpires made a mistake. Rule 15.10.2.3 was designed for a similar circumstance, where a fielder or runner was badly hurt while the ball was still in play. The rule gave the umpire the discretion to stop the play and award any bases that the runner might have reached in the umpire's judgment, if the play had not been stopped. In this case, the clear answer would have been a home run for Tucholsky (Lake, 2009, 60).

The (incorrect) rule interpretation would have given Holtman and her team an advantage, and it is with that context in mind that Holtman acted. In a crucial game, they would have one fewer run scored against them. Without conferring with any teammates, or even her coach, Holtman walked up to the umpires and says, ‘Can I help her around the bases?’ (Lake, 2009, 62). Enlisting the assistance of teammate, Liz Wallace, Holtman picked up the tiny Tucholsky and slowly but surely carried her 180 feet around the infield, stopping at each corner to gingerly touch her foot to the base. When Tucholsky thanked them, Holtman replied, “You hit it over the fence. You deserve it.” (Lake, 2009, 62). Even though Tucholsky was small and light at just 125 pounds, the trip took a while. The situation was unprecedented; Holtman, Wallace, and Tucholsky started giggling, wondering what the spectators must be thinking, and how it must look, two players from one team carrying a player from the other team around the bases. Holtman recalls, “when I looked up, I didn’t see giant smiles and screams. I saw emotion and tears...and people crying” (Touching them All, 2008). Seven days and a few games later, Central Washington’s season and Holtman’s career were over. With a torn anterior cruciate ligament, Tucholsky never played again either.

In the year that followed, Holtman, Tucholsky, and Wallace have become a national sensation. Amongst many other honors, they attended the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Yankee Stadium, they were honored by Congress, they won the ESPN “Espy” award for “Best Sports Moment” of 2008. They received thousands of letters and emails praising them for their sportsmanship, their character, and their moral values. Nearly \$25,000 was donated in very small increments, from people so touched by what Holtman and Wallace had done that they felt compelled to return the favor however they were able (Lake, 2009, 62). One such letter, from a Connecticut man, said, “I would like to treat you and your team to a small something, an ice cream,

a soft drink, or maybe a slice of pizza. Please accept the enclosed check with that in mind, or if you wish to donate it for another cause, feel free to do that. It is little enough. I have three daughters, and thank God, I know they would have acted in the same manner as you and your team did, given the opportunity” (Lake, 2009, 62). Another who had witnessed some of the greatest moments in baseball history--Willie May’s legendary catch in center field, Bill Mazeroski’s homerun in the bottom of the 9th inning of the seventh game to win the World Series—said that “nothing will live in my memory longer or with greater impact than the sportsmanship of Mallory and Liz.” (Lake, 2009, 63).

But why did Holtman (with help from Wallace)² act in that way? Was it simply good sportsmanship, or was it something more? What compelled her to help the other team in such a crucial game, at such an important moment?

Some will say that only a woman would have done what Mallory did, that a baseball player in the same situation would have left his opponent in the dust. Some will say that only an amateur would have done what Mallory did, and only a player from a Division II college or lower, because in Division I and professional sports the purity of competition is tainted by money. There will be plenty of debate, except on one point. Almost all of us who hear Mallory's story will search the high meadows of our souls for hope that we would have done the same thing, or that we will, if we are ever given the chance (Lake, 2009, 63).

This is a powerful example of moral exemplarity. Holtman saw a fellow competitor, someone she knew from reputation but not personally, who was in pain, and made the decision to help her. She empathized with Tucholsky, who she must have known was not a great hitter, and felt like she “deserved” her homerun. Her action demonstrated core moral values, and from her own perspective, had moral foundations.

Additionally, her action moved witnesses to tears, and induced a strong national

² While Liz Wallace did help Mallory Holtman carry Sara Tucholsky around the bases, and the trio were all recognized for the act together in the subsequent months, I give primary credit for the morality of the action to Holtman, who first conceived the idea, presented it to the umpire, and solicited help from her teammate, Wallace.

reaction. Most people would agree the action was strongly moral. For Holtman, who grew up in a loving, blue collar family, the youngest of three children in rural Oregon, it was a simple decision that didn't require much thought, nor any discussion. Her parents taught her values, kept her humble, and raised her to be a kind, compassionate person. Her brother and sister protected her when she needed it. Her coach reinforced these values and helped her assimilate them into her personality and the culture of the team. Being moral was simply a strong part of her being, and didn't require a significant cognitive process. Perhaps it was her moral personality, perhaps it was her upbringing, or perhaps it was a combination of the two. In either case, moral behavior can occur, and it seems a compelling argument can be made, given Mallory's story, for the moral exemplarity shown to her by her significant others such as her coach and parents, as well as for her own moral exemplarity which may encourage others to do likewise in similar situations.

A Coach as a Moral Exemplar

Holtman's coach at Central Washington, Gary Frederick, whom she now assists and hopes to succeed when he eventually retires, has proven over a lengthy career that he cares more for his players than for the wins and losses, demonstrating a sustained commitment to their personal and moral development through consistent action. Once in a district championship that was disrupted by rain, he did far more than was reasonable to find a playable field after the storm. His team would have won the championship given their victory in the first game before rain ruined the field. Instead, he made numerous phone calls to find a replacement field to make sure his team earned a series victory rather than win by default. After losing both games on the new field, and thus the championship, his answer to grumbling players was, "I'm sorry you feel that way, but I don't want to back into a championship" (Lake, 2009,

58). He taught his players that victories are made to be earned, and some lessons are more important than winning. That lesson delivered consistently by Coach Frederick inspired Mallory Holtman's and Liz Wallace's act. Holtman believes that any of the players on her team would have volunteered to carry Tucholsky had they realized that they were allowed to touch her. She credits the atmosphere that Coach Frederick created and the "kind of people" that make up the program (Hays, 2008) for helping her develop the moral ability to make such an action.

For the purposes of this study, this story has been highlighted because Coach Frederick's style of coaching leadership, and Mallory Holtman's action, embody the concept of the moral exemplar, having a very real effect on the people close to him through his words, lessons, personal conduct, and professional actions, helping them develop a moral identity at a time when their sense of self is still in flux, through his own actions and messages. While he has worked in relative obscurity for most of his career, like many of the moral exemplars around the United States, Coach Fredrick's messages are now being spread nationwide in the simple story of a homerun.

The present study examines coaches' and athletes' thoughts and behavior. It centers on the idea of the coach as a moral leader and the personality traits that characterize moral exemplarity, as well as other concerns that get in the way of being a moral exemplar. The main research questions are:

1. To what extent do coaches' conceptions of athletic leadership and the traits of a leader reflect that of a moral exemplar?
2. What importance do coaches give to various aspects of their job? How important are moral concerns as compared to other aspects?
3. What gets in the way of coaches teaching moral lessons, being a moral exemplar/leader, or generally placing a greater emphasis on morality?
4. What values, morals, principles, or ethics do athletes learn from their coach? Do they practice the values? Do they think of their coach as a moral leader or example?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Morality in Sports

Questions of morality are as ingrained in sport as are the seams on a football. Sports have always been a hot-button topic because of the sway athletes hold in the public consciousness. Recently, rumors of steroid use and rampant cheating have followed many top baseball players like Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Alex Rodriguez, and a star quarterback, Michael Vick spent time in jail for dog fighting. Stories of womanizing and alcoholism followed Babe Ruth, one of our most larger-than-life legends, and Tiger Woods, perhaps the most famous athlete alive today, has had the stories of his sordid affairs plastered across all forms of media. Professional (and a large number of our inter-collegiate as well!) athletes are worshipped as heroes by our children. At the lower levels of intercollegiate athletics, athletes represent their professors, classmates, and alumni by wearing their school's name on their uniform.

The old aphorism says, “sport builds character,” but is this really true? Research by Bredemeier (1984, 1986), Stoll (1995), and Hall (1986) suggests that athletes have a lower morality than non-athletes, that sport somehow impedes moral development or reduces moral reasoning ability, possibly at all levels of participation. Opinions on the value of athletics vary—some feel the focus on competition is bad, with a history of coaches and athletes who attempt to win at any cost (Rader, 2004, as quoted in Rudd, 2008); others believe that sport can provide a “unique medium for developing moral character (Rudd, 2008), and being part of a group of people working toward the same goal encourages teamwork and fair play (Noble, 1955). There is a theoretical gap in the value of athletics in the learning process. In choosing to participate in college athletics, student-athletes have elected to include coaches, along with professors, in their educational process. Our coaches spend as much, and in

many cases, more, time instructing our students than their academic peers, and from a practical standpoint, this is time that could be well used to teach both functional and moral skills. Otherwise, as Malloy and Rossow-Kimball (2007) explain, “without meaning, sport becomes a mindless distraction as opposed to a medium through which life values can be acquired” (p. 311).

There are several contextual factors to be weighed when studying morality in sports. School size/division alignment (Division I-scholarship, Division III-non-scholarship, etc.) would appear to be a crucial factor, with more financial interest and media exposure, higher coaching salaries, and bigger budgets. The dichotomy and differences in budget spending and emphasis on winning may have direct or indirect effects on the development of student-athletes’ moral reasoning that bare investigation, either at the divisional, or at the individual school level. Various sports and/or teams may have different cultures associated with them, and thus may have different focuses on value-laden lessons. In some sports, messages of morality may be wholly absent, while they may be more prevalent in others. Individual coaches may or may not have a major effect on their student-athletes, as compared with the overall effect of athletics? There may be a difference between male and female sports.

Sharon Kay Stoll (1995) produced empirical data that seems to suggest that “participation in athletics, either at a Division I or Division III, adversely affects moral reasoning” (Stoll, 1995, p. 3). Stoll has found that Division III athletes scored similarly low as Division I athletes, when compared with their non-athlete peers, using the Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory in the Sport Milieu (HBVCI), a tool for measuring moral reasoning. However, Stoll has theorized that not athletics, nor competition itself, but the way we “interpret competition” is the cause of the moral detriment of athletes. Stoll quotes Keating (1965), who writes that competition is “a seeking after something of value (the win), to the exclusion of others (ours alone),

while following agreed upon rules” and thus it “becomes an easy step to violate others while justifying the action” (Stoll, 1995, p. 4).

Bredemeier and Shields (1986) agree with Stoll that sport and competition can negatively affect the moral reasoning ability of student-athletes. They write that sport creates a unique “world within a world” where “typical concerns and moral restraints of everyday life are temporarily set aside” (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986, pp. 7).

Bredemeier and Shields reference several researchers including Piaget (1932), Jantz (1975), Turiel (1978), and Weiblem (1972) who have studied moral development and moral reasoning in the context of games, as they state that “game reasoning is situationally operative subset of everyday life morality,” and that “sport may represent an atypical setting for exploring moral growth because it may involve atypical moral norms” (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986, pp. 8). In fact, Bredemeier and Shields believe that a person will reason more maturely in the context of real life, than in the context of sport or a game because the context of a sport or game does not allow for open dialogue between opponents, temporal constraints limit time for thought and discussion, and because the entire premise of competition is based upon each side seeking self-benefit. Bredemeier and Shields’s findings echo Stoll’s, that participation in college athletics is associated with lower moral maturity. Bredemeier and Shields found that basketball players scored lower than the norm on Rest’s Defining Issues Test (1984), and on Haanian dilemmas (1986), but swimmers did not. Bredemeier and Shields concluded that participation in collegiate basketball is associated with a lower level of moral reasoning in both sport and life, but would not go so far as to make that claim for all athletics. While other researchers who study morality and sports feel that the methodology used by Bredemeier and Shields is flawed (Jones & McNamee, 2000), the findings still paint a disturbing picture. On a more positive note, Colby and Damon found that in their moral exemplars, high stage is not necessary for high moral

action. Thus, perhaps there is a much more complex dynamic involved. Perhaps there is something special, and particular, about the sports context that can either inhibit or promote moral reasoning and action. The question is which is more likely to be exhibited on the field of sports, the moral actions, or the immoral ones?

Programs and Institutions to Change the Culture of Sport

A variety of organizations, groups, and programs have been created to discuss and study morality in sports from a variety of different angles. F. Clark Power's *Play Like a Champion Today* Educational Series (PLC), housed at the University of Notre Dame, seeks to transform the culture of sports, with a "child-centered, research-based approach to coaching and sport parenting by offering interactive coaches clinics and parent workshops" (PLC, 2009). Created by college educators and researchers in the fields of education, psychology, coaching, and ministry, PLC is targeted at youth sports groups. The theoretical core of PLC is based around the principles of justice, tolerance, cooperation, respect, and solidarity. The workshops are interactive and discussion-based, allowing parents, coaches, and administrators the opportunity to practice role-taking and delve deeper into moral issues that are directly concerned with youth sports. PLC has focused programs like "Coaching for Character," which teaches coaches how to better integrate lessons of morality and character into their sport instruction, and "Parent Like a Champion," which teaches parents how to motivate their children to excel in sports in a positive manner.

Through the Center for Character and Citizenship at the University of Missouri-St.Louis, Brenda Bredemeier and David Shields operate the "Sports, Character, and Citizenship Program" (SC&C). SC&C has collaborated with other

organizations³, organized summits, planned awareness days, and produced research which seeks to promote “coaching practices and sports cultures that contribute to positive character and citizenship development” (CC&C, 2009). After their lives were connected in April of 2008, and together they became a national sensation for all that can be good about sports, Mallory Holtman and Sara Tucholsky created the “Sportsmanship Defined Foundation” (SDF), where they serve as the President and Vice President. The organization’s mission is to “help give back to communities, families, individuals and teams who exemplify sportsmanship and morality in their day-to-day lives as well as when they are faced with a hard decision” (SDF, 2009). Organizations such as these work to change the atmosphere of sport, and take on the underlying forces that seek to push aside other values that can be developed through sport, and focus purely on the competition. Most importantly, these programs illustrate how moral exemplars can, and do, have an impact on the ethical thinking and behavior of young athletes.

Institutional Pressures on the Job

When considering this question of morality in sports, there are several relationships that have been shaped by and affected by institutional pressures and can influence the way a coach’s prioritizes various aspects of his job. At the forefront is the relationship between academic faculty and the athletic department faculty. In my experience, having worked at four different colleges and universities, there is a sense that many academic faculty members look down on their athletic brethren, and may not want to give them credit as being an educational peer.

³ Characterplus (www.characterplus.org) and Positive Coaching Alliance (www.positivecoach.org) are two other such organizations that Shields and Bredemeier have worked with.

Another dynamic is between the coach and the chancellor or president. This is most often seen at the big-time Division I football and basketball programs, where wins and losses and post-season results are held above all other factors, including graduation rate, job placement, and personal, emotional, and moral development. A recent example of this dynamic can be seen at the University of Nebraska, where Athletic Director Steve Pederson was fired for a “lack of progress” with the football program (i.e. wins).⁴ According to Stoll (1995), there is no difference in the morality level of Division I and Division III athletes, but leadership decisions like the firing of Pederson, which are prevalent at the Division I level, but rare at the Division III level, hint at underlying factors at play. Clearly Nebraska placed the on-field success of its football program above any other factor, when deciding to fire Pederson. Along these same lines, there exists a power relation between different sports. Stoll and Beller (n.d.) have found that student-athletes in revenue sports (i.e. basketball and football) score considerably lower on tests measuring than student-athletes in non-revenue producing sports. At most Division I Universities, football and basketball are by far the top priority of the athletic department, with millions of dollars at stake from alumni donations and postseason tournaments, while other sports are treated much less importantly. With just a handful of Division I athletic departments earning a profit (Kelderman, 2008), despite the millions of dollars brought in by football and basketball ticket sales and postseason rewards, it is clear just how poorly off those departments would be without the revenues created by those sports. In the 2006-2007 season, the University of Washington football team earned a profit of 11.7 million dollars, which was used to pay for other departmental expenses (Condotta, 2007). This emphasis on certain higher-profile sports can be seen at lower levels of

⁴ See <http://sports.espn.go.com/nf/news/story?id=3064861> for more information on Pederson’s firing.

competition as well, manifested through coaches' salaries, travel and recruiting budgets, help with the admissions department, and other factors.

Finally, there is a major dynamic between coaches and athletes. Within their own teams, a coach can serve many roles, including teacher, mentor, academic advisor, life skills teacher, psychologist, parent, and friend, but some coaches choose to purely focus on the functional skills of their sport. The variance of focus can have a tremendous effect on the "value" of the lessons being taught, as I will discuss below.

Institutional Pressures for Student-Athletes

Kristen Renn (2003) has found that peer culture can be a crucial factor influencing outcomes, with negative connotations. Renn found that while there is much discussion on pressure from peers and more specifically, "the influence of peer attitudes" has a considerable impact on undergraduate "undesirable behaviors" like binge drinking, sexual harassment and assault, incivility, and cheating" (Renn, 2003, p. 264). Renn's findings echo Philip Zimbardo's (1971) classic prison study that peer pressure and atmosphere can lead to action that is not consistent with an actor's moral judgment. Zimbardo writes, "the situation won; humanity lost. Out the window went the moral upbringings of these young men, as well as their middle-class civility" (Zimbardo, 2007). Otherwise normal, conventional moral thinkers, lacking a strong moral guide to set a positive example for them, were transformed into "monsters" because of their environment and the behavior of their peers.

Additionally, representations of decadent values are heaped down upon college students through the media, whose culture has become increasingly sensationalist, as blogs, social networking sites, 24/7 news channels, and numerous other sources jockey for attention and revenue. The misdeeds of famous figures they idolize are torn apart for all to see, in an extremely graphic manner. While public opinion may have

different views of John F. Kennedy's alleged affair with Marilyn Monroe and Tiger Woods' affairs, people are seeing public "heroes" as, at least partial, moral failures, and not the moral exemplars or leaders they ought to be, or are seen to have been before those incidents were made public. The public may be confused as to how to interpret this discrepancy; to know what is morally acceptable, and what is not. But student-athletes, can have a strong moral guide to set a positive example for them: their coach. Knowing how strong peer culture can be for college students, and understanding how the media seeks to portray such amoral stories, a coach have a strong responsibility to help their student-athletes develop a strong moral self, to navigate the difficult presses of college, and to serve as a role model and moral example, and thus encourage their student-athletes to be more moral in their future roles as star players, coaches, leaders, parents, managers, bosses, and citizens.

Stages of Moral Reasoning and the Relationship to Action

According to Kohlberg, the most substantial moral situations comprise a conflict between a "standard or norm that the individual accepts as being right and some other value or norm" (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 516). This "other value or norm" can manifest itself in the way of a conflicted moral self, or socio-moral pressure. Kohlberg defines moral action as one which considers the actor's concept of the right or proper action and his responsibility and/or judgment to follow through with that action (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 518). So to know whether an actor thinks that action is moral, must we understand how the actor judges the situation. As Kohlberg writes, "moral judgment is essentially a way of seeing and resolving moral conflicts" (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 516). That is, to say, moral judgment is a way to resolve a moral conflict, but research shows, there is not necessarily an action follow-through from that judgment. Kohlberg and Candee describe moral principles that lead to two

different types of judgments: deontic, judgments of “what is right” and the universal morality approach. According to the deontic principle, an actor who has made a moral judgment has the “responsibility” to act on what he perceives to be right. And Kohlberg believed that “responsibility is centrally a metaethical concept and judgment” (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 533). The more opportunities a person has to reflect on, and responsibility for making moral judgments, the more there is an opportunity to cognitively restructure his or her thinking to a higher moral stage. Research indicates that the higher a person’s moral stage, the more likely it is that there is a greater consistency between what they think is the right thing to do, and what they actually do (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987).

Kohlberg also describes the universal morality approach, the idea that all post-convention thinkers (stages 5 and 6) would agree with a certain principle or action. As an example, Kohlberg found that 90% of Stage 5 members agree that Heinz should steal the drug, compared to 60 percent of subjects at lower stages (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 526). Kohlberg found that in a laboratory setting, people of higher intelligence, who had more opportunity for moral cognition, tended to score higher on the moral reasoning tests. Yet laboratory tests of honesty are fraught with peril. Turiel reports that Kohlberg himself referred to tests like the ray gun or circle test as being “Mickey Mouse” (Turiel, 1990, p. 37).⁵ Turiel argues, if the child does not care about the test, has nothing invested in it, nothing to lose by doing poorly on it, how are we to assess the morality of his choice? And furthermore, as we see when considering other moral concepts such as the moral self and the socio-moral, there is a real life tension between judgment and action. This may not manifest itself clearly in the laboratory, through measures like Rest’s Defining Issues Test, and Stoll’s HBVCI, which lean on Kohlberg’s stage theory, with an emphasis on cognition, and analysis of reasoning.

⁵ See Blasi (1980) for a further review of the laboratory tests.

More recently, researchers have become unsatisfied with the rigidity of stage theory, seek to expand upon it, and propose creating a model with more complexity.

Most now agree that Plato's famous dictum that 'to know the good is to do the good' is empirically unsubstantiated, what has become known as the 'judgment-action gap'. Contemporary moral psychology is univocal in recognizing that a complete account of moral personhood requires looking beyond the single variable of moral cognition in search for the glue that might hold moral thought and action together in a causal way (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 334).

Researchers like Turiel, Blasi, and Walker believe there is often a gap between judgment and action; they feel that the single variable of moral cognition is not enough to explain moral action, and have expanded the study of moral development to include other concepts such as the moral self, the socio-moral, and the moral exemplar. I will discuss this later in the discussion, where several of the coaches I surveyed said that they would risk losing to teach a lesson to a student-athlete, but when faced with the actual choice, found the action to be much more difficult to make.

The Moral Self

As coaches gain experience and develop a coaching style that is most comfortable, and best fits their personality and abilities, their sense of a coaching "self" is constantly in flux. This is also true of students in higher education, who are approaching the crux of their formative years, where their sense of self is still developing, and is influenced by a variety of people and events. During this developmental period for both coaches and student-athletes, moral considerations may play a significant role in actions, but it is clear that other, non-moral considerations, can be equally or more important. As Blasi (2004) explains, "people subscribe to many values in addition to moral values" (Blasi, 2004, p. 340) and Brown &

Hernstein (1975) agree that “in cases where moral choice is universally agreed upon, differences in behavior are due to nonmoral considerations” (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 562). Moral judgment is just one piece of the action-driving puzzle. College is often referred to as a time of experimentation, where proper judgment is thrown out the window in the name of fun, difference, and sensation. It is through these new experiences and role taking that the identity is forged. “Identity is considered equivalent to the essential self. Each individual, beginning relatively early in development, has an image a perception, a scheme, or a theory of himself or herself” (Blasi, 1984, p. 131). With the wide variety of opportunities available for perspective taking in college, this image or perception of the self, as described by Blasi can change weekly or even daily. For a student, an influential book read in class, an interesting talk over lunch, or a memorable lesson from a coach or professor can cause a monumental ideological shift that thrusts a new or different value to the forefront and pushes an old value system aside, if only for the moment, until the next influential book, interesting discussion, or difficult practice. For a coach, there are constant discussions with colleagues and students, conferences with speeches by other coaches or leaders, books about coaching and leadership, and a plethora of other opportunities for thoughts about leadership. Slowly, after opportunities for metacognitive self-reflection, the self may begin to take on a greater congruency (Schrader, 2006) where it was before a bit “messy” and unstructured. This “organization,” as Blasi refers to it, is essential for a person to define him or herself, and be comfortable with the hierarchical organization of the self (Blasi, 1984, p. 131). For people whose reasoning is conventional level and beyond, or those who are Moral Type B, moral considerations tend to be more related to stage and action (Schrader, 2003). With more opportunities for perspective taking, and more time and occasion for reflection, people might place more emphasis on moral reasoning, and therefore reconstruct their

moral reasoning, which allows them to construct higher, more complex reasoning stages (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). Though it is possible for a person to decide, after much perspective taking and metacognitive reflection, that morality is just not a (large) part of their being, and while they may still speak the language of morality, “a moral perspective will play no significant role in his or her life, in the decisions that really matter” (Blasi, 1984, p. 132). They may, for example, choose to suppress their moral compass, in order to maintain their important relationships.

More recently, Walker and Frimer (2008) expanded upon the work of Blasi to help the field of moral psychology begin to develop a new paradigm of moral personhood, to better approach closing the gap between judgment and action. While the content of the new paradigm discussed by Walker and Frimer differs strikingly from Kohlberg’s, they believe “the spirit of his enterprise” (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 333) is maintained. Walker and Frimer believe that “those with a well-developed moral personality are more likely to be motivated to carry out their moral judgments in the face of competing interests than are those bereft of such a personality” (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 334-335). They thus argue that both a developed state of moral reasoning as well as a personality where morality plays a large part are crucial. While Blasi was most concerned with actions the actor views as being moral (the first-person perspective), Walker and Frimer believe that both moral judgment and moral action are important to understanding moral functioning, especially “the ways in which they converge and the ways in which they diverge” (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 338). They also mention how most moral judgments occur quickly; in real life situations, individuals rarely have the opportunity to engage in Kohlbergian reasoning. Going back to the case of Mallory Holtman, she saw a member of the other team in pain, empathized with her, and quickly made the moral decision to help her, at the expense of her own team. She did not need to ponder the situation to be moved to moral

action, and both a first- and third-person perspective would agree that the action derived from moral roots.

Walker and Frimer mention Hartshorne's study when they discuss how "the postmodern self may watch itself engage in prosocial action (e.g. consent to organ donation) at one moment and act irresponsibly (e.g. drive dangerously) at another and, yet, the observing self is entirely unperturbed by any inherent incongruity therein" (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 346). This could explain a good portion of Stoll's findings that many athletes, acting within the confines of an athletic competition, do not reason morally at the same level as their peers might in the same context. Acting in certain moral ways (e.g. correcting a referees call in the name of fairness) would seem a "silly" thing within that social context, by someone with a strong understanding of the social context, where the same person might not hesitate to correct a cashier's mistake, and return the extra money, if given change for a \$20 when paying with a \$10. Yet it is clear that, as Walker and Frimer say, the moral exemplar, a person who has been so "deeply socialized into a richly moral path, has consciously worked through a range of moral issues and has come to have highly elaborated and accessible moral schemas that collectively represent as moral expertise" (Frimer & Walker, 2008, 339). Perhaps this explains the actions of Mallory Holtman. She was being herself, by acting morally. She automatically placed her personality into action; there was no real need for metacognitive reflection or moral reasoning.

Social Psychological Forces

When Bredemeier and Shields began their investigation of morality and athletics, they assumed that context did not play much of a role in moral judgment. As more and more empirical data has been collected, they began to change their theory. They adapted theories from philosophy and other social sciences on play, games, and

sport, and now view these contexts as being “set apart from everyday life” (Shields & Bredemeier, p. 2). They quote Huizinga (1955), who described play as “a stepping out of ‘real life’ into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own” (Shields & Bredemeier, p.2). From an intuitive standpoint, it makes sense that athletic competition must exist in its own reality, as the many actions that make up sport (i.e. dribbling a basketball, passing a hockey puck, scoring a goal in soccer, etc.) have no intrinsic value outside of the game. It is perfectly common for an athlete to play viciously and aggressively during a game, and then be as soft and cuddly as a teddy bear off the field. “Many actions that may be seen as totally illegitimate in everyday life—such as inflicting pain on another human being—may be accepted and even embraced as a routine part of some sports” (Shields & Bredemeier, p. 4). While it is not socially acceptable to run up and tackle someone in the office, on the street, or anywhere else, the act of slamming another person to the ground is the crux of football. And yet, amidst the seeming chaos, a very formalized set of rules exists that govern each sport, designed to guarantee fairness to all participants, and minimize risk of injury (for example, the dangerous act of blocking another player in the back is illegal in all levels of football) So as Shields and Bredemeier (p.5) quip, “one could say, perhaps, that they are based on the moral concepts of justice and care!”

They, in fact, concluded where Piaget began. Piaget (1932) used a "sport" of sorts to develop his theory of moral judgment. That is, for Piaget, people learn morality through games, and learn to both follow and construct rules, respect one another and authority, and participate as a social group. This does not set sports apart from the development of morality, but places sports squarely in the domain of moral judgment.

Eliot Turiel's work in domain theory reflects upon the tension between moral judgment and moral action. He writes, “actions are based on judgments brought to

bear on social contexts” (Turiel, 1990, p. 46). Humans are social beings, in the sense that they generate much of their identity from their relationships with others. Turiel refers to the Milgram (1974) experiment, where actors were asked to continue to give electric shocks to a confederate of the experimenter, despite the victims crying out in pain. According to Turiel, the Milgram experiment shows that some people act in a manner that is inconsistent with their moral judgment, by continuing the shocks, while others act in a way that is inconsistent with their judgments about social establishment by “ruining” the study by discontinuing the shocks or quitting the study (Turiel, 1990, p. 45). Thus we see that an actor may be willing to put aside his own moral (or nonmoral) feelings for the good of society, even if the action is unfavorable to him. This “pushing aside” can occur in a cognitive or instinctual way, and could explain why an athlete would suppress his or her own feelings of fairness (e.g. correcting a referee’s mistaken call) for the good of his or her team. The culture of most sports could play a role in suppressing moral action. Within that culture, it is accepted that the referee’s job is to “police” the rules of the game, and the players are not expected or required to assist in that job. One clear exception is golf (Tiger Woods’ off-course misdeeds withstanding), where players are expected to call penalties on themselves, should the situation arise. In a recent professional tournament, golfer Brian Davis called a two-stroke penalty on himself during a playoff hole, costing himself the victory. While he could have pretended nothing happened, and nobody would have noticed, Davis felt it would not be possible to not call the penalty on himself, saying, “I could not have lived with myself if I had not” (Iacobelli, 2010). For the sake of *doing the right thing*, or for having a moral conscience, Davis cost himself his first professional golf championship and more than \$400,000. The action was not received by the golf community as being out of the ordinary, though the stakes perhaps were high and the larger community may not have acted similarly. Perhaps for this reason,

golf is often referred to as “the gentleman’s game.” with the concept of "gentleman" indicating some sense of moral character or personality.

While it would be easy to say that sports are based within an entirely different social context than “real life” and thus standard ideas of what is moral and what is not moral may not apply, this domain specificity is not morally justifiable. The actions of Mallory Holtman and the leadership of Coach Krzyzewski show that it is possible to be successful in athletics (e.g. win at a high rate, hit lots of home runs, etc.), while stepping above and beyond the moral norms of the sport, and showing genuine care for players on the other team. If it is possible for the sport of golf to create a culture where self-regulation in the name of fairness is common, even at the pinnacle of the sport, when \$400,000 is at stake, then perhaps it is possible for other sports to develop a similar culture. It is precisely this type of reasoning and formulation that perhaps set Piaget on the track of looking at the "rules of the game" of the "sport" of marbles in the first place, when he began the study of moral judgment.

Moral Exemplarity

In their role as a mentor of college-aged youth, do coaches have a moral responsibility to serve as a moral leader or example for their student-athletes? The concept of the moral exemplar is complex, encompassing personality, responsibility, consistency between actions and intentions, ability to inspire, and more. As I will explore in the case studies below, some coaches are able to expertly and adroitly tailor their lessons to develop the functional, fundamental, sport-specific skills of their student-athletes, while at the same time teaching them to be better, more moral-action oriented people, or people of good moral character, or what Coach K calls, “Leading with the Heart.” Other coaches, like Bobby Knight, are not as skilled at teaching, or inclined or able to teach, both moral and athletic skills, and some coaches may even

purposefully choose to leave moral lessons out of their curriculum altogether. They may feel personally uncomfortable, or believe that it is not their job to do so. Or, they may simply not have the moral character to do so. Clearly it is a complex and complicated task, but for those coaches who are up to the challenge, being a successful moral exemplar can make the job about more than simply teaching athletes how to throw a ball.

While the traditional cognitive-development view on moral psychology focuses on the thought-processes and moral reasoning of a subject, Colby and Damon believe that moral reasoning may not tell us much about a person's real social behavior as we would like. After researching moral judgment for decades, they are "highly uncertain about the connection between reflection and everyday social contact. Character and commitment are played out in the realm of action, not reflection. Pondering moral problems is not the same as dedicating one's life to their solution" (Colby and Damon, 1992, pp. 6). The moral exemplar, by their definition, does not simply advocate morality through reasoning, but demonstrates it on a daily basis through action, acting as a compelling model for those who follow them.

When conceptualizing the moral exemplar in their seminal book, *Some do Care*, Colby and Damon (1992) looked to push beyond the stereotype that is usually used to characterize a moral leader. While the image of Mother Teresa nursing a hopelessly sick child or of Mahatma Gandhi on a hunger strike protesting a cause, are particularly striking, moral exemplars live around and among us with far less glamorous, but no less poignant images. While the media often seeks to portray America as a culture of decadent values, Colby and Damon found that "in virtually every place we looked many more dedicated moral leaders than we could ever study" (Colby and Damon, 1992, p. 21). So while examples of moral depravity get more attention by a media that is increasingly sensationalist, moral exemplars toil all around

us, without the fanfare of Mother Teresa or Mahatma Gandhi, like Suzie Valdez, the “Queen of the Dump,” who has provided food, clothing, medicine, and support for the poor residents of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico for decades, and inspired scores of volunteers to lend a hand to make life better in a brutal living environment. In his “Be Your Own Hero” program, Bill Puka has given students the “opportunity to learn of everyday, self-realized heroes” (Puka, 1990, p. 1), people much like Suzie Valdez, who live inspired lives doing things like running soup kitchens, providing loving foster homes, and helping the elderly and the abused. While many of today’s educators and community leaders “bemoan the lack of positive role models for youth” (Puka, 1990, p. 1), every day exemplars are out there, and programs like “Be Your Own Hero” seek to connect students with those exemplars.

According to Colby and Damon, the phrase “moral exemplar” is 'loaded' for a couple of reasons. People disagree not only about the characteristics of moral standards, but also about how to assess whether the person in question’s behavior actually does exhibit those standards. And just like any other person, moral exemplars struggle with what Colby and Damon (pp. 26) call the “inevitable problem of human imperfection.” Walker and Frimer agree, when they say that “no one is an unblemished paragon of morality,” and “one person’s saint is often another’s scoundrel” (Walker & Frimer, 2007, 846). We can see this clearly with the example of basketball coach, Bobby Knight (see the case study below), who may have had a moral message to give, but it was ultimately lost (at least to some people) due to his own personal problems of impulsiveness and vicious temper.

When seeking to define the term “moral exemplar,” Colby and Damon first looked to other philosophers, like Rawls and McIntyre (for more information, Colby and Damon, 1992, pp. 27, notes 2-3), before settling on their own definition. Colby and Damon explain that, “in calling someone a moral exemplar, we mean to imply that

the individual exemplifies some widely shared ideas of what it means to be a highly moral person (and we do not mean in a neutral sense), but not that the individual is morally perfect or ideal” (Colby and Damon, 1992, pp. 27). They created the following guidelines for moral exemplarity:

1. A sustained commitment to moral ideals or principles that include a generalized respect for humanity; or a sustained evidence of moral virtue
2. A disposition to act in accord with one’s moral ideals or principles, implying also a consistency between one’s actions and intentions and between the means and ends of one’s actions
3. A willingness to risk one’s self-interest for the sake of one’s moral values
4. A tendency to be inspiring to others and thereby to move them to moral action
5. A sense of realistic humility about one’s own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one’s own ego (pp. 29)

By demonstrating these five principles, a leader is able to help his/her followers develop a stronger moral identity, and inspire them to place a greater emphasis on morality. For the purposes of this study, I use the terms “moral leader” and “moral exemplar” interchangeably, following the example of Colby and Damon. In analyzing and discussing the way coaches lead their student-athletes, I will examine the ways in which they set positive moral examples.

Using their definition as the basis for discussion of the coach as a moral leader, basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski (see below for a more in-depth case study on “Coach K”) acts as a moral exemplar, even despite a few minor personal issues that have cropped up over his career. He has consistently demonstrated a “sustained commitment” to moral issues over the years, and proven to be an inspiration, to the point that the Duke Fuqua Business School named its Center on Leadership and Ethics after him. Also, he was the handpicked choice to restore the tarnished reputation of

USA Basketball, after years of negativity brought on by selfish professional athletes. Bobby Knight, as mentioned above, is more difficult to assess. Knott (2008) writes that “his ideals were impeccable. He just could not live up to all of them. It just was not in him.” While Knight’s values, “discipline, dedication, loyalty, smarts and toughness” (Knott, 2008) are definitely moral, his personal imperfections nearly obscure his moral action, to the point that he has stopped being an inspiration to others and subject to scorn by many. Knight highlights, perhaps, the sense that his moral personality failed, even if his moral reasoning did not. This failing is consistent with the failings that some models of the judgment-action relationship articulate, as described above. While “Coach K,” Bobby Knight, Lou Holtz, and Tony Dungy, the subjects of the case studies below, and Gary Frederick in the story above, are just four famous examples of athletic coaches, there are thousands of other coaches who toil in relative or total obscurity, but still act as leaders, some morally, others not. These four coaches were chosen as the subject for my case studies because their autobiographies offer a deep investigation into their development of a personal coaching style, with deeply ingrained philosophies forged over long careers, which provide a sturdy platform to examine Colby and Damon’s guidelines of moral exemplarity in the context of athletic coaches.

The Personality of a Moral Exemplar

Traditionally, the dominant philosophical perspectives in the field of moral psychology and moral education have been in the formalist tradition, as represented by Kant, “with its meta-ethical assumptions emphasizing individualism, justice, rights, and duties,” and the principal framework has been cognitive-developmental, as demonstrated by Kohlberg (Walker, 1999, pp. 145). While other influential models in moral psychology have had a similar emphasis on moral reasoning ability, while

paying little attention to other aspects of moral personality, Lawrence Walker and others have become disillusioned with the moral cognition construct, due to “the accumulating evidence of its generally weak relation to moral action, typically explaining only about 10% of the variability” (Walker & Frimer, 2007, pp. 845). With a relationship between judgment and action in mind that he believed to be “tenuous,” Walker has taken Colby and Damon’s work on the moral exemplar and expanded it to study moral action by way of personality. Walker believes the field needs to move beyond single-variable theories, and include more of the range and complexity of the domain, by paying more attention to “moral personality and to the intrapsychic aspects of morality that have long been eschewed” (Walker & Frimer, 2007, pp. 845), such as the moral exemplar.

Following the work of others who have studied moral concepts like justice (Rawls, 1971), bravery (Miller, 2000) and caring (Noddings, 1984), Walker expanded upon Colby and Damon (1992), and the studies of philanthropists (Monroe, 2002), rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe (Oliner & Oliner, 1988), hospice volunteers (Oliner, 2003), and heroes who risked their lives to save others (Oliner, 2003) (Walker & Frimer, 2007, pp. 846). Based on these works, as well as Midlarsky, Jones, and Corley’s (2005) study of Holocaust survivors, Walker believes that moral maturity can be seen in different psychological profiles, showing there are multiple ideals of moral maturity (Walker & Frimer, 2007, 858). In his three studies, Walker (1999, 2004, 2007) has attempted to create a working definition for the moral exemplar, and examine the effect different personality traits can have in shaping a moral personality, and the effect they have on moral action.

Walker (1999) identified the personality traits that characterize moral excellence and compare them to personality descriptions for both religious and spiritual exemplars. To do so, he surveyed a wide variety of adults across the lifespan,

asking them to list personality traits which characterize each of those types of exemplars, and used the template of the Five-Factor Model of personality to categorize them. Walker found that the traits of conscientiousness and agreeableness were most salient for the moral exemplar. His full results are shown in Table I (Walker, 1999, pp. 150).

Table 1. Most frequent attributes of the Big-Five personality factors.

Extroversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional Stability	Openness to Experience
High Pole				
Joyful	Loving	Faithful	Calm	Open
Active	Caring	Moral	Content	Intelligent
Proud	Kind	Respectful	Balanced	Meditative
Involved	Thoughtful	Trustworthy	Satisfied	Open-Minded
Leader	Peaceful	Truthful	Mature	Reflective
Low Pole				
Humble	Stubborn	Impractical	Emotional	Rigid
Follower	Self-righteous	Casual	Fearful	Conservative
Quiet	Critical	Flighty	Uptight	Narrow-Minded
Submissive	Authoritarian	Frivolous	Sad	Traditional
Introverted	Impatient	Informal	Obsessive	Naïve

While conscientiousness and agreeableness were found to be the most salient personality traits for the high pole (desirable trait) for the moral exemplar, the other three were of least salience, and did not differ from each other. For the low pole (undesirable trait), for the moral exemplar, it was found that Agreeableness and Openness to Experience were most salient here, with very few terms reflecting the other three factors. For the religious exemplar, conscientiousness and agreeableness were also the most salient factors for the high pole, with openness to experience and agreeableness being most salient for the low pole. For the spiritual exemplar, agreeableness and openness were most salient for the high pole, with extroversion

being most salient for the low pole (Walker, 1999, pp. 154-155). While this study was telling, it is important to keep in mind that participants were describing their ideal exemplar, not actual people.

In subsequent studies, Walker & Hennig (2004) expanded upon the concept of the moral exemplar, splitting it into three different concepts: just, caring, and brave, based on the idea that moral excellence can be exemplified in different ways. The general purpose of the research was to “augment the contemporary emphasis on moral rationality by examining conceptions of moral personality and thus to help the field move toward a fuller and more balanced account of moral functioning” (Walker & Hennig, 2004, p. 630). In their Study A, adults generated a broad list of attributes that are seen as being descriptive of their idealized concept of three types of moral exemplars (just, brave, caring). In Study B, 401 undergraduates were given the list of personality traits created in Study A, and asked to “rate how accurately each word describes a highly *just* [or *brave* or *caring*] person,” using an 8-point Likert scale (Walker & Hennig, 2004, p. 633). In Study C, 440 undergraduates were given small cards which were printed with each of the 60 more representative attributes from Study A, and asked to sort them into categories representing similar and different characteristics. From these studies, Walker & Hennig concluded that “excellence can be exemplified in rather divergent ways.” (Walker & Hennig, 2004, p. 643). The just exemplar was characterized predominantly by Conscientiousness and Openness, the brave exemplar by Dominance/Extraversion, and the caring exemplar by Nurturance/Agreeableness, and there was minimal overlap between the three different types of exemplars. “Each typified a relatively distinct moral personality” (Walker & Hennig, 2004, p. 643).

In another later study, Walker & Frimer (Walker & Frimer, 2007) analyzed the personality of two different types of moral exemplars, one which exemplified brave

characteristics and one which exemplified caring characteristics. The moral exemplar participants were recruited from national award winners of the Canadian *Medal of Bravery* and *Caring Canadian Award*, and were compared to “ordinary” citizens who were closely matched demographically on a subject-by-subject basis, apart from the awards. The primary research question was to see if there was a foundational core to the moral domain, and if there were different personality profiles of moral exemplarity (Walker & Frimer, 2007, p. 846). Walker & Frimer found that for the group of brave exemplars, moral reasoning did not contribute to the prediction of moral action, but once the 14 personality variables were entered, the improvement in the prediction was statistically significant. In the regression analysis for the caring group, the level of moral reasoning did have a significant effect (Walker & Frimer, 2007, pp. 852-853). Walker & Frimer concluded that aspects of moral personality can help bridge the gap between moral judgment and action, especially where caring exemplars are concerned.

Thus, they conclude by agreeing with Blasi (2004) when saying that “moral motivation does not arise primarily from moral understandings or moral emotions, but rather from the formation of a moral identity” (Walker & Frimer, 2007, p. 856), which can be forged and developed, with considerable influence from “significant mentors” and “secure attachments,” during the formative years (Walker & Frimer, 2007, p. 857). This idea that significant mentors during the formative years can have a tremendous effect on moral development serves as one of the major motivations for this project.

Research has shown that coaches, for good or bad, are often more memorable than even teachers. With that in mind, I wanted to investigate the extent to which the coaches themselves and student-athletes perceived the role to be that of a moral exemplar. While Walker’s research exploring moral exemplarity by way of personality is more recent than Colby and Damon’s, I have chosen to use Colby and

Damon's concept of the moral exemplar as the basis of this study due to its grounding in philosophy, its emphasis on the socio-moral, and its more holistic approach.

Walker's approach is more quantitative, with deeper roots in the psychological and the personality literature, and would also make for an interesting approach to studying the coach as a moral leader, but I am choosing to focus on the larger question for this study of whether or not the basic qualities that Colby and Damon's moral nominators suggest exist in coaches before moving on to the deeper personality factors that Walker and Frimer explore.

As we will see in the case studies below, if they choose to be, coaches can serve as significant mentors, and have a tremendous impact on the moral development of their student-athletes, by incorporating moral lessons into their practices and the day-to-day operation of their program. This is where, with planning, effort, and the "understanding of the real moral dynamics that characterize sport experience" (Shields & Bredemeier, p. 6), the cultural aphorism that "sport builds character" can really come true.

Case Studies of Moral Exemplarity in Athletics

Mike Krzyzewski, College Basketball Coach

In his nearly thirty year career as the head basketball coach at Duke University, Mike Krzyzewski has established the Blue Devils as the standard bearer of everything that can be right about college athletics, with three NCAA national championships (1991, 1992, 2001), a plethora of final four appearances, and a history of graduating his players at a high rate, while developing excellent leaders and citizens. In *Leading with the Heart*, Krzyzewski details the game plan that he uses to achieve success both on and off the court, and surprisingly, little emphasis is actually placed on winning basketball games; victories and championships happen on the court at Duke because

of what goes on off the court. At the heart of his coaching and leadership style is teaching, as Krzyzewski writes, “if my goal had to be only winning games, I wouldn’t be a coach...when our goal is to try to do our best, when our focus is on preparation and sacrifice and effort—instead of on numbers on the scoreboard—we will never lose” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 216). Coach K embraces his role as a moral exemplar. Preparation, sacrifice, and effort are just three of the values Krzyzewski preaches to his student-athletes, along with truth, looking someone in the eye, mutual commitment, character, honesty, integrity, and at Duke, it all begins with a handshake.

While some coaches may promise potential recruits the world to convince them to attend their university to play for their team, Coach K makes no such promises. In fact, he seals his promise to not guarantee anything with a handshake. Writes Krzyzewski, “I won’t do that. I’ll promise him only that I’ll be honest and fair—and that he’ll be rewarded on his performance” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 15). While this policy has no doubt caused Coach K to lose many recruits over the years, superstars-in-their-own-eyes who wanted a guarantee of playing time, and no doubt received such promises from other coaches, it is emblematic of the way Coach K places his principles over absolute winning, as his top priority. Krzyzewski grew up without luxury in Chicago, raised by parents who stressed the importance and value of education, a value which stuck with him throughout his career. “To each kid, I say: ‘I’m going to give you my best. I’m going to give you 100 percent. In return, I expect you to graduate. You’ll be coming to Duke for more than just basketball. If you don’t understand that, then don’t come to Duke. I want you to be passionate about basketball, but I also want you to obtain a great education” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 15). With more and more players jumping to the National Basketball Association (NBA) after just a year or two in college, and several top teams seeming to recruit such players purposefully, it is refreshing to see Duke consistently compete,

and thrive, with three and four year players, most of whom may not go on to become NBA all-stars, or even play in the league at all. Krzyzewski believes that “as leaders, coaches, and as decent human beings, we owe it to our young people to help them develop their character as well as their jump shots” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 308), a philosophy that is demonstrated by a career’s worth of actions.

Christian Laettner is perhaps the most well-known, and most highly-decorated Duke basketball player, with two national championships, a national player of the year award, numerous Duke and NCAA records, an Olympic gold medal, and a thirteen year NBA career. Laettner was at the center of two moments that represent Krzyzewski’s role as a moral leader and exemplar to perfection. When he was a freshman, Laettner, missed a crucial free throw to lose a huge game against Arizona. Immediately, the senior captains, Danny Ferry, and Quin Snyder, who would later become an NBA General Manager and NCAA Head Coach respectively, rushed over to console him. Says Coach K, “for me, that moment when the team rallied around Christian was better than winning any national championship. It was one of the best examples of collective responsibility I have ever witnessed” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 77). It is little moments like these, value lessons come to fruition without any interference from him, more than any wins, which truly matter to Krzyzewski. Taking their inspiration from Coach K’s messages, Ferry and Snyder placed aside their own disappointment at losing to comfort their friend and teammate, showing they cared more about him and his feelings than the game. This principle would become ingrained in Laettner, who would later pass it on to Grant Hill, who would pass it on to Chris Collins, who would pass it on to Trajan Langdon, who would pass it on to Shane Battier, and so on. But it all began with Krzyzewski.

Three years later, in perhaps the most famous game involving Coach K, the 1992 regional final between Duke and Kentucky, Laettner, now the best player in the

country, hit a turn-around jump shot at the buzzer to send Duke to the Final Four. Even though reaching the Final Four was Coach K's biggest basketball goal every year, he placed aside his jubilation to console Kentucky senior Richie Farmer, who was feeling the opposite emotion. Says, Krzyzewski, "My job isn't just to win basketball games it is to lead my team, to take care of my men. And that kind of leadership is ongoing. So my responsibility was not going to end on that last shot—especially if the ball had not gone in the basket. If we had lost, my heart was going to have to go out to my team, to console the players. But as it happened, they did not need me. So I instinctively tried to help the first person I saw who needed help—Richie Farmer" (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 163-164). No one would have begrudged Coach K for being excited, or for running around the court looking for someone to hug, like his good friend Jim Valvano had famously done when his North Carolina State team won the national championship in 1983.⁶ But Coach K's act of placing the feelings of Farmer, not even a player on his team, above his own excitement, clearly demonstrates that his principles are backed with real action. On a smaller stage, Coach K also shows consistency between his moral philosophies and actions on a day-to-day basis. During a basketball camp that Coach K was running at Duke, there was a fairly innocuous moment where he spilled a cup of water on the floor. The team manager rushed to get a towel to clean it up, and while most people would have left him to it, Coach K insisted on taking the towel and doing it himself. As he wiped up the spill, Coach K told the manager, "When you are the CEO of your own company, I want you to remember that you should still clean up your own mess" (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 46)—philosophy in action. Coach K also gives much of his personal time to various causes including the Jimmy V Foundation (which provides funding for Cancer research), the Duke Children's Hospital, Duke's Fuqua

⁶ See Jim Valvano celebrate here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=815N2eKdvL4>.

School of Business, where he is an executive-in-residence, and the Emily Krzyzewski Family Life Center, a community center named after Coach K's mother (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 303).

Bobby Knight, who will be discussed in depth below, was Coach K's college basketball coach at West Point, and served as the basis for many of his coaching philosophies. When Coach K was a senior in college, and the captain of the team at West Point, his father died suddenly, before the last week of the season. Coach Knight joined Krzyzewski in Chicago for a few days, to support his player and his player's family, through the difficult time, encouraging Krzyzewski to return whenever he felt ready. Even though the West Point team needed to win both games to qualify for the National Invitation Tournament (NIT), which was a huge deal for Coach Knight and the basketball team, Coach Knight showed that he "was more concerned about me than those two ball games" (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2000, p. 56). This had a considerable impact on Coach K, who would later share and demonstrate this same philosophy. Krzyzewski made it back just in time for the games, both of which West Point won, to make it to the NIT.

Bobby Knight, College Basketball Coach

Bobby Knight is one of the most controversial figures in the history of college coaching. While none can question his on-court success, with three national championships, five final four appearances, an Olympic gold medal, and despite the fact that he has more wins than any other NCAA men's basketball coach, Knight is perhaps more well known for his "legendary imperfections and combustible nature" (Knott, 2008), for his firing from Indiana due to conduct violations, for throwing a chair across the court during a game, for allegations that he choked and hit players, and for his harsh temper with members of the media. Some may not like Knight's

methods, or the way he conducted himself around his players and the media, while others, who were able to look past the antics and see the moral messages that underlay Knight's outbursts, see him as an "old school" coach and teacher, in the image of coaching legends Vince Lombardi or Woody Hayes. One small anecdote, as told by Knight in *My Story*, perfectly encapsulates the way Knight's moral message was often lost in his delivery. While driving after midnight one night in the 1960s, Knight ran out of gas, and needed to hitchhike to the nearest gas station. A kind woman, who had recently given birth, picked up Coach Knight, with her new baby in the backseat. Coach Knight thanked her for her kindness, and then lectured her about how dangerous it was to pick up hitchhikers, and how she should never pick up a stranger, especially with her baby in the car. Writes Knight, "She may not have cared much for my style, but I hope she listened" (Knight & Hammel, 2002, p. 85). Like many other incidents in his career, Knight meant well, but could have delivered with more tact.

Knight presents an interesting case study in moral exemplarity. Knott (2008) writes that "his ideals were impeccable. He just could not live up to all of them. It just was not in him." While Knight's values, "discipline, dedication, loyalty, smarts and toughness" (Knott, 2008) are definitely moral, his philosophies backed up by action, and supported by a clear willingness to risk personal interest to teach those values, his personal imperfections nearly obscure his moral action, to the point that he has stopped being an inspiration to some and subject to scorn by many. According to Colby and Damon, moral exemplars, just like any other person, struggle with the "inevitable problem of human imperfection" (Colby & Damon, pp. 26), which can be seen with Knight.

Knight cared deeply about the universities in which he worked, and made countless actions to improve the experience of the students and professors. At his initial interview at Indiana University (IU), Knight said, "I told them I would get kids

who would represent the university well, who would be students and would graduate, and I would expect them to be part of the student body, not just basketball players” (Knight & Hammel, 2002, p. 112). While many coaches personally keep the money earned from shoe contracts, Knight used it to supplement the incomes of his assistant coaches, to benefit the cheerleading teams who supported his program, to endow a chair for two Indiana University Professors, and made large donations to the IU Library totaling five million dollars according to former IU president Tom Ehrlich (Knight & Hammel, 2002, p. 258), and other university causes. While he was the head coach at West Point in 1968, Knight turned down an invitation to the NCAA Tournament to instead participate in the lesser NIT, because it allowed the school to bring 2000 cadets for a day in New York City. To Knight, the opportunity was “bigger than our playing basketball—something for the whole corps” (Knight & Hammel, 2002, pp.95). It is inconceivable that a coach would do this today. He would be met with derision and scorn on the 24/7 sports news channels like ESPN and by internet bloggers, tweeters, and Facebookers, not to mention face losing his job, for not pushing the team and program forward.

Knight never hesitated to bench players, or risk losing (or in a few cases, guarantee a loss!) to teach a value to his team. In a game against Illinois, he once benched several starters, including his best player, Steve Alford, to teach them a lesson about effort, accepting an 11-point loss in the process. Says Knight, “if we had to lose a game to teach them what was important, in terms of their recognizing their responsibility and handling their responsibility, then that’s what I was perfectly willing to do” (Knight & Hammel, 2002, pp. 280). Knight is unalterably opposed to drinking, smoking, and using drugs. After an incident where several members of his team smoked marijuana during the season, an act which is firmly entrenched in the

culture of basketball⁷, he dropped three players, and put seven others on probation, including frequent testing, and the threat of automatic dismissal for a single other positive test. Knight put a strong emphasis on character in the recruiting process, and once stopped recruiting one top-ranked player in the middle of a home-visit, when the teenager spoke to his mother “in a way [Knight] couldn’t tolerate” Knight & Hammel, 2002, pp. 34-35). The player ended up playing in the Big Ten, and had a nice career, but not at Indiana. Knight was a stickler for following NCAA rules to the letter. When taking the Indiana job, Knight made it clear that he would not tolerate any NCAA rule breaking, and his first act was to eliminate a number of boosters who had been breaking rules, while the administration looked the other way. Even though it may not have garnered a lot of good will toward the new coach, pushing away boosters, alumni, and area businessmen who had been heavily invested in the program, it was the only way Knight would run his program. The Big Ten had a policy against giving scholarship to non-predictors—student-athletes lacking a strong enough combination of grades and standardized test scores to qualify—from outside the school’s home state, which other programs from other schools were breaking. So Knight and Indiana broke the policy to get Scott May, who was a crucial part of their 1976 NCAA championship. Says Knight, “The hell with this. If those two schools are going to take him [Minnesota and Michigan], we’re going to take him. We’re not going to lose Scott May because of adherence to a policy that nobody else follows” (Knight & Hammel, 2002, p. 142). Knight allowed this because it was only an unofficial, unwritten Big Ten policy, not an official, in-the-books rule, so technically speaking, he would not be breaking a rule, but additionally, the policy did not match

⁷ A *New York Times* article by Selena Roberts asserted that 60-70 percent of NBA players smoke marijuana and drink excessively.

up with any philosophy or value of Knight's, so he felt no impetus to follow the spirit of it.

Toward the end of his time at Indiana, Knight had become villainized by many people, mostly members of the media, and the new Indiana University administration, led by President, and future NCAA head, Myles Brand. The chair throw, what Knight is perhaps most well-known for, is emblematic of Knight's quick temper, and impulsive nature. He had recently switched from wearing a sports jacket and tie to a golf shirt and sweater, and reaching for his jacket to throw, and finding it not there, grabbed the chair, the nearest thing. The rest is history. He didn't throw it at or even near any person; he immediately regretted it, and was thrown out of the game. History and instant replay has blown it out of proportion, considering how many coaches or players have kicked chairs, water bottles, Gatorade buckets, and other inanimate objects which are unlucky enough to be in the line of fire during a hotly-contested game. While Knight surely could have dealt with the media more tactfully, his highly-publicized outbursts had little effect on his relationship with his players, with other college and high school coaches, and (according to him), even with the referees.

Longtime, renowned, Emmy Award winning broadcaster Dick Schaap, best summed up Knight when he said, "Always, he is what he is. There is absolutely not one phony bone in Bob Knight's body. I don't always agree with everything he does, but I always know that he's doing it for a good reason" (Knight & Hammel, 2002, p. 106). In the wake of his firing, Knight received letters or statements of support from public figures like Norman Schwarzkopf, George Bush, Florida State's hall of fame football coach Bobby Bowden, and Sarah Ferguson, the Dutchess of York. Respect from one's peers, colleagues, or competitors is one of the best indicators of a job well done because they are best able to identify with and appreciate the intricacies behind the task at hand. It is telling that Knight has developed such warm and respectful

relationships with many coaching legends like Bill Parcells, Bo Schembechler, and Bobby Bowden (Football), Clair Bee, Pete Newell, Red Auerbach, and Henry Iba (Basketball), and Tony La Russa, Sparky Anderson, and Don Zimmer (Baseball). Says Zimmer, former Boston Red Sox manager and the right-hand man beside Joe Torre in the New York Yankees recent run of four championships in five years, “I know if I had two sons playing basketball, the only coach I’d want ‘em to play for is Bobby Knight. They’d either grow up quick or melt” (Zimmer & Madden, 2004, pp. 216). Zimmer does not say that Knight would teach his sons how to shoot a three-pointer, or how to dunk, but focuses on the moral concern of growing up. Perhaps the best indication of the way Knight inspired others, is the career of his protégé Mike Krzyzewski, as detailed above. Coach K played for Knight at West Point, and later served as his assistant coach at Indiana, before being offered the West Point head job, based on a recommendation by Knight, and then the Duke job, again based on a recommendation by Knight. Knight’s actions in the wake of the death of Krzyzewski’s father had an especially long-lasting impact on Coach K, and helped shape his coaching and leadership philosophy. Following Colby and Damon’s definition, Knight’s actions definitely inspired Krzyzewski to moral action.

Lou Holtz, College Football Coach

Lou Holtz grew up in the 1930s and 1940s in West Virginia, where his family lived on a meager income, with few material things, but plenty of familial love. Holtz, who would later become one of the top ten winningest coaches in NCAA football history, collect three national coach of the year awards, and lead six different schools to bowl games, was never a star athlete or student, and had a speech impediment about which he was tremendously self-conscious. From this inauspicious beginning, his high school football coach told him he might make a good coach some day, though he

later remarked, “Lou, when I told your folks you should go into coaching, I meant in a high school. I wasn’t talking about Notre Dame” (Holtz, 2006, p. 23). Holtz surprised many in his town, who didn’t think him college material, when he attended Kent State, and slowly but steadily advanced up the coaching ranks. Through it all, he still maintained his small-town roots, and a definite sense of humility, thankful to those who gave him a chance to surpass their expectations. Using the guidelines set forth by Colby and Damon, Holtz is a fine illustration of a moral exemplar, with his commitment to moral and spiritual values across jobs at universities with varying levels of athletic success, his consistent parallel between his moral intentions and actions, his proven willingness to risk the interests of both himself and his team to uphold moral principles, his humble nature, and the inspiration he has served as a coach, television broadcaster, and motivational speaker.

A deeply religious Catholic, Holtz’s dream job was always to coach at the University of Notre Dame, where he would have the ability to connect religious and spiritual values with life lessons, while at the same time training football players for a successful life with or without football. The word typically used to describe Holtz’s coaching style is “disciplinarian,” which is usually used with negative connotations, but Holtz embraces it, believing that it is nearly impossible to be successful “parent, teacher, coach, manager, entrepreneur, husband, wife, or friend without understanding the role discipline plays in life, and without in some form or another being a good disciplinarian” (Holtz, 2006, p.147). Holtz would teach this value throughout all his jobs, as an assistant at Iowa, Connecticut, South Carolina, Ohio State, and as a head coach at William & Mary (where he also served as an assistant), North Carolina State, Arkansas, Minnesota, Notre Dame, and South Carolina. Holtz often referred to a story of two young men raising dogs, one with a choke collar and leash, the other with free rein, to teach the lesson about the lasting effects of discipline. In this story, the dog

with the choke collar and leash learned the boundaries of acceptable behavior, and was eventually allowed to run free because it had proven to have discipline, while the dog which had free rein ultimately had to be confined indoors, lest it terrorize the neighborhood. Holtz believed that teaching discipline was born out of love and care, and felt his “job as a coach was to prepare the young men on our teams for a life of success and happiness” (Holtz, 2006, p.149), which didn’t necessarily include the National Football League (NFL).

Holtz taught his players that “in order to be a student-athlete, you first have to be a student...every student-athlete must make academics his or her number one priority” (Holtz, 2006, p.76). Holtz backed up this statement with a statistic that the average stay in the NFL is just 4.2 years, so even if his players are good enough to make it, which might include a few players from any given college team, their career will be over, on the average, at age 27. Holtz always stayed on his student-athletes to do well academically and never allowed or advised them to take an “easy” course, or discouraged them from aiming high. Holtz believed that all his student-athletes could be successful students, which he had already proved in his own life, by overcoming his slow academic start and speech impediment, to attain a Master’s Degree, and a career as a successful educator. Indeed, most of Holtz’s core principles and teaching points came straight from his own life. While he was in the army, Holtz was hired to teach, on the spot, because of his immaculate appearance. He spent the next 50 years teaching his student-athletes about the importance of making an excellent first impression (Holtz, 2006, p.48-49). Never a highly-decorated player himself, Holtz drilled the scout team just as hard as the varsity, under the philosophy that “you work hard and suffer because it makes you a better man...internal rewards, the ones you gain from pain, sweat, and tears, stick with you forever” (Holtz, 2006, p.78) while external rewards like praise and adulation fade. As an assistant at South Carolina,

Holtz's scout team scrimmaged the freshman team (at this time, freshmen were not eligible to play for the varsity team, a rule which was lifted in 1973), winning handily, and surprising everyone but themselves.

Holtz's teaching standard throughout his career has been, "to play the best, and be committed to being the best we can be. We are going to do it the right way, with honesty, integrity, class, and togetherness, not only within the letter of the law, but in the spirit of the law as well" (Holtz, 2006, p.207). Holtz faced the ultimate test to the strength of his moral convictions in 1977, in his first year as head coach at the University of Arkansas. Holtz's team was ranked sixth in the country, and was to face the second-ranked University of Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl. The day before the players were released to go home for Christmas, three star players were arrested for an incident involving a young woman. Even though the school and police refused to pursue the matter, file any charges, or give any disciplinary action, and thus the letter of the law would give him leeway, Holtz suspended the players, who had accounted for 78 percent of the team's touchdowns that season. This was the first major challenge to Holtz's "Do right" rule, and he felt strongly that it would violate his principles to allow the players to play. Holtz saw no reason to make public what had been done, to protect the players and woman, so speculation was rampant, and considering the state of race relations, in the 1970s, in Arkansas, allegations were made that Holtz had made a frivolous suspension out of racist motivation. John Walker, a high-profile, highly-successful lawyer pushed the suspended players to sue their coach, and even though it would have been easy to give in, lift the suspensions, and not risk his career, Holtz refused to back down. He was ultimately defended by the young Arkansas Attorney General, Bill Clinton, who finally was forced to expose the accusation against the players, which resulted in John Walker withdrawing the suit "before the lunch break" (Holtz, 2006, p.156-165). Behind 205 yards rushing from

backup running back Roland Sales, Arkansas beat the heavily-favored Sooners 31-6, a happy ending for Holtz, who was more than willing to risk such a crucial game to uphold his principle. This incident only served to strengthen Holtz's resolve, and over the rest of his career, he never hesitated to suspend a player, before a big game, or meaningless game, if the situation warranted, and refused to back down to public pressure.

Through it all, looking back on his career, Holtz hopes to be remembered more for the impact he had on people than for his record of winning football games. Says Holtz, "I don't think about the wins and losses these days, so I hope no one remembers them when they think of me after I'm gone...the only thing I hope is that when I die, someone says, 'that Lou Holtz was significant to a lot of people.' It is the best thing that can be said of a person. I hope it will be said of me" (Holtz, 2006, p.303). He is acutely aware of, and desiring of being an inspiration to others, and since his retirement from coaching, has given many motivational speeches to groups, and been given four honorary doctorate degrees.

Tony Dungy, Professional Football Coach

When he was fired as the head coach of the NFL Tampa Bay Buccaneers after the 2001 season, Tony Dungy had reached a crossroad in his life. While contemplating retiring from coaching and taking the opportunity to move on to something "more important," Dungy was sought by Indianapolis Colts owner, Jim Irsay, who wanted "an organization—and team—that emphasizes character, values, and family" (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 202). Dungy, whose coaching philosophy revolves around teaching, positive reinforcement, and family values, was the only person he wanted for the job. In the 22 years in which he had been an NFL coach, Dungy had served as an inspiration to some, and an example to many, of how to live a

spiritual and moral life, sticking to his convictions, while at the same time achieving tremendous success in a competitive and aggressive business, and surrounding himself with assistants and staff members who were people of character and integrity. Dungy is a fine example of Colby and Damon's definition of moral exemplarity, with a lifetime's worth of actions that are consistent with his intentions, a sustained commitment to not only bettering himself, but inspiring the betterment of others, and a proven willingness to risk his own self-interest and that of his team and family in the name of moral values. For Dungy, the impetus for his moral exemplarity derives from an unyielding faith in God, which was put to the ultimate test in 2005, when his oldest son, Jamie, for reasons that may never be explained, committed suicide . Putting his faith in God, Dungy refused to "quit living just because times were tough." Even though Dungy and his wife did not understand why their son had taken his own life, they continued to "follow the Lord no matter what" (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 257).

By backing up the faith he had preached for many years with clear action, Dungy would serve as an inspiration for many. One father, worried about his own child's mental state, got in touch with Dungy and asked him to speak with his son, and Dungy was able to help the troubled boy get through a difficult period. Dungy had established legitimacy as a father through an organization he created, called "All Pro Dad." The goal of All Pro Dad was to reach out to fathers across the United States and encourage them to spend more time with their children, to be a positive role model, and generally help men become better fathers (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 199). What started as a small organization in Tampa Bay quickly grew into a national organization with 54 NFL spokesmen, 1,000 chapters, and daily emails that reach 40,000 fathers a day (All Pro Dad, 2009). In the months following the death of Jamie Dungy, many parents across the country contacted Dungy via letter and email, to help

him through the difficult time, as he had helped others through All Pro Dad. Dungy's commitment to family and parenting was backed up by years of action: as the head coach of an NFL football team, Dungy had the right to organize and run the team office as he saw fit. Dungy ran his office under the idea that it was important for the players, coaches, and staff to be "connected spiritually" (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 209). In what is typically a sterile, cold environment, a child's laughter became a common sound, as coaches were encouraged to bring their children to work. Dungy's sons, Jamie and Eric were constant visitors to the office, and frequently joined their father on the sideline during games.

The job of a coach, with constant film sessions, team meetings, practices, and never-ending preparation for upcoming opponents, typically consists of very long work hours, often from early in the morning until late at night. Dungy experienced this as a young assistant, before he had a family, and vowed that if he ever had the chance to make the schedule, he "wouldn't spend, or allow [his] assistants to spend, that much time in the office" (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 76). Even though he would allow other coaches, or other teams to spend more time on preparation and thus risk his self-interest comparatively, Dungy values family, parenthood, and being a well-rounded, moral individual (with a number of causes and organizations he worked for), over the unyielding pursuit of NFL success, as would be defined by wins and losses. This is a core value for Dungy, which is echoed by his favorite bible verse, Matthew 16:26: "What good is it to gain the whole world but lose your soul?" (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 272). In the ultra-competitive NFL, where coaches are typically judged, hired, and fired based purely on their win/loss record, Dungy never hesitated to place a lesson or moral message above an athletic message. In his first season as a head coach, Dungy's Tampa Bay Buccaneers had achieved a 1-9 record through ten games. When two players missed scheduled public appearances, Dungy, used a team

meeting/film session to discuss accountability, and attitude, instead of using the time to discuss their upcoming opponent, the Oakland Raiders (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 123). Ten years later, one of the offending players, Regan Upshaw, credited Dungy with turning around his life, and helping him grow into a responsible husband, father, and citizen (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 299).

Perhaps a more tangible example of Dungy's willingness to risk his own self-interest to stick to a moral principle, and of his sustained commitment to moral ideals and principles, came in 2001, when Dungy refused to run up the score in a blowout win over his mentor Denny Green and the Minnesota Vikings, even though point differential was a crucial tiebreaker, and the Bucs needed every point they could get to be sure of making the playoffs. Dungy said, "I believed that our principles were more important than worrying about the slight chance of missing the playoffs. I knew that if I was going to emphasize character, then I had to be willing to back it up with actions, even if those actions were difficult" (188). Before the 2001 season, Dungy had been told by the owner of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers that he would be fired if the team did not win the Super Bowl that season, a threat which was ultimately carried out, but Dungy was willing to take that risk, and refused to embarrass his friend by scoring extra points in a blowout victory. Similarly, in 1997, Dungy supported kicker Michael Husted, whose performance suffered as his mother battled, and ultimately died from, cancer. Even as the team, which had begun the season 5-0, lost three games in a row, Dungy did not waver in his support for the struggling Husted, even as public discontentment grew (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 137). Dungy always directed the scout team, often the last and least consequential players on the roster, who did not even dress for games, because he believed it raised their value in the eyes of the rest of the players (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 80), and he was always on the look out for little things (like organizational policies on towel usage) he could fix to show his

players that he cared about them (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 114). When making cuts, and potentially ending dreams and breaking hearts of hopeful players, Tony always brought in players to speak with them face-to-face. Said Dungy, “I used to think that all head coaches did that, until I received a call from an agent who wanted to thank me for the way I had released his client. It was the player’s third time being cut, he told me, but the first time that a coach had ever spoken to him personally” (216). This personal touch, showing a player decency and respect when they needed it the most, was so deeply ingrained in Dungy’s nature, that he didn’t even realize how unique it was.

Through a 30-year career in the NFL as both a player and coach, with two super bowl championships and a career coaching record of 139-69, Dungy has maintained grace and humility. With three siblings who are all in health care, and are dedicated to providing service to those who need it most and may not be able to afford it, Dungy maintains a strong sense of perspective. Says Dungy, “My line of work gives me more notoriety in some circles, but they’re all doing things that are much more important in the long run” (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 8). He was reluctant to even write a book, until the cards and letters poured in following the death of his son, and he realized that he could use the book as an opportunity to spread his moral and spiritual message. Dungy has finally retired, after the 2008 season, but unlike other retired or onetime-retired coaches like Bill Parcells, Joe Gibbs, and Bill Cowher, one gets the sense that Dungy will move on to “bigger and better” things. Indeed, Dungy never viewed his job as being that important (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007, p. 197), but he has used it as a means to reach and inspire many people, and serve as a fine model of moral exemplarity.

Contextualizing the Case Studies

Each of the coaches included in these case studies has demonstrated, over a long successful career, the desire to teach both the technical skills of their sport with life values of both the moral and the non-moral, and encouraged their players to develop into strong, positive, contributing members of society, with a sense of self that included a firm moral identity. While some of them were better able to handle the balance than others, each of them embodied some or all of Colby and Damon's guidelines for moral exemplarity.

I have selected these coaches for study because of the way they connect to Colby and Damon's concept of the moral exemplar. Both Coach Krzyzewski and Coach Dungy place a high value on character, to be weighed with athletic talent, when considering prospective student-athletes for his team. They then place a clear emphasis on their moral and personal development, emphasizing values like sacrifice, truth, looking someone in the eye, mutual commitment, character, honesty, and integrity. Krzyzewski's actions support those values, through the way he determines playing time, his interactions with student managers, and the care he shows toward his players. The way he comforted Kentucky's Richie Farmer, following a close victory, rather than celebrating with his own team, puts weight behind his words, that he cares more about the people than the wins and losses. With Bobby Knight, we see a more opaque case of moral leadership, of a leader who had a positive moral effect on many, but also turned off others through his temper and sometimes harsh lessons. Though Coach Knight acted charitably with his money over the years, endowing university positions and donating to school libraries, and provided other benefits to the schools in which he was employed, at his own expense, and he, like all the other coaches highlighted here, showed a clear willingness to risk a game to teach a lesson. Lou Holtz stuck to his "Do right" rule, suspending three star players before a postseason

game, and refusing to reinstate them, and not even caving to legal pressure and (incorrect) speculation that his action derived from racism. These four case studies show that Colby and Damon's definition of the moral exemplar works in the context of coaching, and provide a sturdy platform to study the coach as a leader of college-aged youth.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

This research project examined coaches' perception of their role as a moral exemplar and leader of college-aged students, the forces that impede their capacity to work in the moral domain, and how student-athletes perceive their coach's role in their moral development. To this end, I selected the athletic departments at several small to medium sized universities in the eastern United States for my sample. The schools were selected based on proximity to me, with all but one located within approximately 300 miles of each other. They were chosen for participation to achieve a mix of schools with varied educational and athletics rankings. The educational rankings (as assessed by the *US News and World Report*) varied from top-5 in the Liberal Arts Category to top-10 in the "Regional Universities – North" to #77 in the "Regional Universities – North" category, and many in-between. All the schools have athletic programs which compete in NCAA Division III. By definition, Division III is governed by one official guideline: "Award no athletically related financial aid to any student," and the Division III Philosophy Statement states that Division III universities should, amongst other things,

- Place special importance on the impact of athletics on the participants rather than on the spectators and place greater emphasis on the internal constituency (students, alumni, institutional personnel) than on the general public and its entertainment needs
- Encourage the development of sportsmanship and positive societal attitudes in all constituents, including student-athletes, coaches, administrative personnel and spectators
- Assure that the actions of coaches and administrators exhibit fairness, openness and honesty in their relationships with student-athletes⁸

8

http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/NCAA/Legislation+and+Governance/Committees/Division+III/General+Information/d3_philosophy_stmt

Some of the schools in this study have successful athletic teams, which are consistently ranked in the top ten nationally, compete for national championships, and have student-athletes who are selected as All-Americans, while others do not. All of the schools but one had at least one team qualify for the NCAA postseason tournament. Some of these schools are private; some are public. (The participating universities can be found in Table 2, below).

Stereotypically, private and public schools cater to different student bodies. By sampling coaches and student-athletes from both public and private institutions, I sought to improve generalizability by being more representative of the college experience for student-athletes from all types of backgrounds. I chose to focus on Division III institutions because I believe they are more accessible than the bigger, higher-profile, Division I universities.

Study 1: Coaches

Participants

This project was made up of two different studies; Study 1 looked at coaches, and Study 2 at student-athletes. To recruit participants, I initially started by contacting the Athletic Director at two schools (one private, one public), explained the study, and asked for their assistance. The private school, (Northern College) was immediately interested in participating, while the other did not respond. I attended a staff meeting at the participating school, briefly introduced the study and distributed materials to every head coach in attendance. Each participant was given a card which contained a link to an online survey which was conducted through the website www.surveymonkey.com (Survey Monkey), along with a small compensation of two

dollars, which was attached to the card.⁹ Eight of the 16 head coaches in attendance chose to participate in the survey, for a response rate of 50%. After receiving no response to two emails from the second school, I decided to expand the subject group considerably, asking the Athletic Directors of seven more schools for an opportunity to request participation from their coaches. Two (Historical College and Branch State) granted permission to reach out directly to coaches via email. Two others responded that their coaches were too busy to participate. Three did not respond at all to two emails, and were dropped from consideration. Due to the increase in requests for participation and the change in solicitation methods, the two dollar compensation had to be dropped. Due to the small sample size, the findings of Lesser et al. were not born out here, and removing the small compensation did not negatively affect the response rate. A few of the coaches who chose to participate asked permission to send the survey link to some of their colleagues, and informal discussions between the researcher and some of his colleagues yielded participation from coaches at another four schools (Tree College, Apple State, Old College, Lush College). In one case, a participant felt more comfortable with a paper copy of the survey which was provided as requested, and then entered in to the survey website manually by the researcher, while the rest of the participants used the online survey. Overall, at the institutional level, seven of the fourteen schools participated, for an institutional response rate of 50%.

⁹ Research by Lesser et al. has shown that small, token incentives of just a few dollars, if included with the request for survey participation, increases the likelihood that subjects will respond, while guarantees of larger cash rewards when the questionnaire is returned, does not. Lesser et al. found that a \$2 incentive improved response rates by an average of 18.9 percent, as well as decreasing non-response bias.

Table 2. Participant Data - Institutional Level

School	Type	US News Rank	Category	Student Body Size	2008-2009 Directors' Cup Rank
Tree College	Private	Top	Liberal Arts	750-1500	Middle
Historical College	Private	Top	Liberal Arts	2000-3000	Middle
Old College	Private	Top	Liberal Arts	2000-3000	Bottom
Lush College	Private	Top	Liberal Arts	2000-3000	Middle
Northern College	Private	Top	Universities - Master's Regional	6000-7000	Top
Branch State	Public	Top	National Universities – Branch Campus	2000-3000	Bottom
Apple State	Public	Bottom	Universities - Master's Regional	6000-7000	Top

At the individual coach level, the second round of solicitation for the survey resulted in 20 participants, of which two did not complete the entire survey. With 31 subjects solicited, this equaled a participation rate of 58%. In total, 28 out of 47 subjects chose to participate in the study, with two failing to complete the entire survey, for an overall response rate of 55%. Within the institutional level, participation rates varied, from 100% at “Old College” to 50% at “Northern College.” The other institutions had such low sample sizes that it does not make sense to discuss their participation rates.

Because the number of participants was so low, and the fact that the sample was a convenience sample for the most part, this study should be considered exploratory. This is an early attempt to understand the thoughts and conceptions of coaches, about their own actions. A more rigorous study with a larger subject group, from a stratified random sample of schools, could seek to verify and expand upon my findings.

Procedure and Materials

After reading and accepting the consent form, participants were first given a brief demographics survey which collected information about their education level, school of employment, age, and coaching history. Participants were then given a moral exemplar questionnaire with three different areas of focus (The survey recruitment materials and survey instrument are included in Appendix A and B).

The first question on the moral exemplar questionnaire was “What importance do coaches give to various aspects of their job?” Teaching technical skills, providing academic support, serving as a mentor, recruiting, scouting/evaluation, and teaching moral lessons were the major components listed, and space was given to fill in other aspects that were not listed, but the participant might feel was important. Each component was then listed as a five-level Likert Item, with participants asked to assign a weight of Strongly Not Important, Not Important, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Important, Strongly Important. Participants were also asked to rank the components from 1 (least important) to 6 (most important).

The second question on the survey was “What gets in the way of moral lessons, being a moral exemplar/leader, or generally placing a greater emphasis on morality?” I gave participants several different options, including idea of the self, emotions, institutional pressures, other concerns, and a feeling that it isn’t important. Again, I used Likert Items to assess the strength of each concern.

The third question I explored was “to what extent do coaches’ conceptions of leadership and the traits of a leader reflect the moral exemplar?” I defined a moral exemplar using Colby and Damon’s (1992, pp. 29) guidelines for moral exemplarity. Using Likert Items and short answer questions, I examined the attitudes of the subjects toward moral leadership, the role of the coach and whether they have any obligation to act as a moral leader, and the effect they have on the student-athletes they work. I also

asked subjects to cite personal examples of moral principles or values they feel are important (such as respect, responsibility, character, and consideration) and stress in their own work, and how they teach moral principles or values to their student-athletes, and of a time when another concern got in the way of moral lessons.

Study 2: Student-Athletes

Participants

Each coach who participated in Survey 1 was asked to provide a list of email addresses for their student-athletes, if they were willing to allow them to participate in Study 2. No coaches were willing to send their email list, but several of them offered to forward the letter to their student-athletes, personally. An estimated 120 student-athletes should have received a request for participation, with 19 choosing to participate. I have no way of verifying whether or not each coach actually sent the email to the athletes. After beginning the survey, 15 of the 19 participants completed the survey, for an estimated participation rate of 12.5%. After concluding the survey, 8 of the 15 participants chose not to register for the iPod drawing, which would have required them to submit their name and contact information. Assurances were made that their names would not be associated with their answers to the survey, but this may have detracted from participation in the survey and/or the drawing.

Because the number of participants was so low, this study can only be considered to be a preliminary attempt to understand the way student-athletes view the actions of their coaches. A more rigorous study with a larger subject group could seek to verify and expand upon my findings.

Procedure and Materials

Subjects who logged on to the survey site were first given a very brief demographic questionnaire which asked for their gender, age, school year, and years as a starting player (see Appendix C). Subjects were then to answer three questions. The first asked them to list any values, morals, principles, or ethics they have been taught by their coach (they were given space to list five). The second asked them if they practice the values their coach teaches them, with space to give an example. The third asked them if they thought of their coach as a moral leader or exemplar, with space to explain why or why not. This survey was completely anonymous, and no information was requested that could possibly link the student-athlete and their school, team, or coach. It was also conducted online via Survey Monkey.

As incentive for participation, all subjects of Study 2 (student-athletes) were given the option to enter in a drawing for an iPod MP3 player. Following the conclusion of the survey, on the “Thank You” page which appeared after submitting completed results, a link was provided to enter in the iPod drawing.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Study 1, coaches were first asked to fill out a brief demographic survey to provide some context to their responses. The 28 respondents included 19 males and 9 females, with an average age of 42 years. The youngest participant was 19 years old and the oldest was 57. Aside from the one 19 year old coach, the rest were over the age of 27, with four in their 20s, seven in their 30s, seven in their 40s, and nine in their 50s. From an educational standpoint, 75% of the participants had a master's degree, 17.9% had a bachelor's degree, 3.6% had an associate's degree and 3.6% had "some college." From an institutional standpoint, 75% of the participants worked at a private college or university and 25% worked at a public college or university.

A diverse cross-section of a typical athletic department was represented in the sports coached by the participant group:

Table 3: Participants by Sport

Basketball	4
Men's Soccer	4
Cross Country	3
Softball	3
Baseball	3
Men's Lacrosse	2
Women's Lacrosse	2
Track and Field	2
Tennis	2
Women's Soccer	2
Crew	2
Field Hockey	2
Football	2
Gymnastics	2
Volleyball	1

The participants averaged 13.07 years of experience as a head coach, with the "greenest" having just one year of experience, and the most "veteran" having been a head coach for 30 years. Overall, it was a veteran-heavy group, with 60% having at

least 10 years of experience as a head coach, and 25% having at least 20 years of experience. In terms of wins and losses, 82.1% reported winning at least 50%, with four (cross country, track and field, gymnastics) reporting that their sport did not keep wins and losses, and one said she was unsure of her record. Fifty percent of the subjects reported winning over 60%, with four over 74%. Forty-six percent had been honored as their conference's coach of the year, with 14.3% honored at least five times, while 28.5% had been honored as their region's coach of the year, with 10.7% honored at least four times, and 25% had been honored as the national coach of the year, with 10.7% honored more than once. Conference titles had been won at least once by 53.5% of the subjects, with 32.1% winning it at least five times, while 28.6% had led their team to their regional title at least once, and 10.7% had led their team to the national championship.

The subjects were then given a series of statements relating to their feelings toward the teaching of values, morals, principles, and ethics, and were asked to list their level of agreement with the statement. Again, a Likert scale was used to measure their response, with values from strongly disagree to disagree to neither agree nor disagree, to agree to strongly agree.

The overwhelming majority of coaches surveyed saw themselves as a moral exemplar for the student-athletes they mentor, and teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics is one of their top priorities. Similarly, in Study 2, the overwhelming majority of student-athletes surveyed view their coach as a moral exemplar who teaches them moral and value-laden lessons.

Results by Research Question

This study began with four major research questions, and I will address each question in order. :

1. What importance do coaches give to various aspects of their job? How important are moral concerns as compared to other aspects?
2. What gets in the way of coaches teaching moral lessons, being a moral exemplar/leader, or generally placing a greater emphasis on morality?
3. What values, morals, principles, or ethics do athletes learn from their coach? Do they practice the values? Do they think of their coach as a moral leader or example?

Moral Exemplarity in Coaches

Question 1: To what extent do coaches' conceptions of athletic leadership and the traits of a leader reflect the moral exemplar?

To consider the first question, I used Colby and Damon's (1992) guidelines for moral exemplarity. These guidelines will be addressed, in turn.

Sustained Commitment to Moral Ideals or Principles

Colby and Damon's first guideline for moral exemplarity is "a sustained commitment to moral ideals or principles that include a generalized respect for humanity; or a sustained evidence of moral virtue." I found that, overall, the coaches I surveyed report that they are committed to teaching moral ideals or principles.

Every coach but one agreed that it was the place of a coach to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics, and only 15.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was important to teach them. None agreed that they felt uncomfortable teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, and none agreed that pressure to win could override moral concerns. Coach 10 explained:

Countless teachable moments (about sportsmanship, integrity, composure, etc) present themselves through athletics. In these ways, coaches help athletes learn lifelong skills. Coaches need to be able to teach these skills, as well as demonstrate and live by them. As coaches, we expect our athletes' respect and compliance. To be respected, one needs to be respectable.

It is plausible that as a coach gains more experience, he or she becomes more comfortable with who he is and what he believes in, and teaching methods become more streamlined and focused. Our sample group, overall, was veteran-heavy, with 60% having at least 10 years of experience as a head coach, and 25% having at least 20 years of experience, perhaps more so than would be representative of all coaches, and overall, expressed a strong commitment to being a moral exemplar for their student athletes.

Consistency Between One's Actions and Intentions

Colby and Damon's second guideline for moral exemplarity is "a disposition to act in accord with one's moral ideals or principles, implying also a consistency between one's actions and intentions and between the means and ends of one's actions." I found that, overall, the coaches I surveyed were varied in their actions and intentions where morality is concerned, which was reflected in the values that coaches report teaching and student-athletes report learning.

Several subjects of Survey 1 responded that they felt coaches should lead by example, and represent the values they feel are important. All the coaches surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that the way they coach is consistent with their own values, morals, principles, or ethics, and all but two agreed or strongly agreed that they consistently work to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics without fail, even if it might mean losing a game. All but one agreed or strongly agreed that they work to treat all players with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their value to the team in terms of winning. So, the overwhelming majority of the coaches I surveyed at least have the intention of serving as a moral exemplar, and try to be consistent about it. We saw this in our case study of Mike Krzyzewski, where the Duke coach chose to console a player on the opposing team, following an emotional win, rather than

celebrate with his own players. His values transcended the sport, and when he saw a student-athlete in need (despite the fact he wasn't even on his own team!), he comforted him.

The coaches were also asked to list the values, morals, principles, or ethics they teach.¹⁰ The question was open ended, with room to list as many values as they wanted. Twenty-four of the subjects responded, with all of them listing at least three responses. Coach 3 responded that he taught “very little” values. In total there were 108 values listed, which were broken down to their core value, standardized, and categorized.

By far the most common responses were Honesty/Integrity, which was listed 22 times, Hard Work/Doing Your Best, which was listed 12 times, and Respect, which was listed 11 times. Coach 18 discussed why integrity, character, and citizenship were so important to him, “I expect student athletes to hold themselves to a higher standard because their actions can reflect positively or negatively on the program.”

Proponents of the value of athletics in the education process often cite Teamwork (6 responses), fair play/sportsmanship (5 responses), accountability, responsibility, and commitment/dedication (4 responses each), loyalty (2 responses), communication (2 responses), and time management (1 response), and they were well represented here. Also listed were values pertaining to mental abilities, including mental strength and discipline (2 responses each), and attitude (1 response).

Several values traditionally associated with morality were also popular, including Honesty/Integrity (22 responses), Respect (11 responses), Fairness (3 responses), Humility (2 responses), and Consideration, Caring, Empathy, Faith, Love, Objectiveness, Open-Mindedness, and Social Responsibility (1 response each). Coach

¹⁰ See Appendix D for the full list of categorized responses.

17 elaborated, “Knowing what is right and doing what is wrong is the most cowardly act you can ever perform.”

In Study 2, student-athletes were asked to list values, morals, principles, or ethics they learn from their coach, and were given space for five.¹¹ Of the 16 subjects who participated in the study, 15 listed five responses, with the 16th listing four. In total there were 80 responses, which were broken down to their core value, standardized, and categorized.

By far the most common response was the value of hard work and always trying your best, which was listed by all but one of the participants. Student-Athlete 19 responded that, “Both on and off the field I try to conduct myself in a manner that is in accordance to these principles. I always strive to do the best in anything I do, I always want to win, but if I fail or mess up I always own up and take responsibility for my actions.”

Also commonly listed were values pertaining to mental abilities, with mental strength (five responses), perseverance (six responses) being popular replies. Student-Athlete 2 explained that his coach taught him the strength to play “through the hard, miserable practices to get to the better days, and what we're trying to achieve.”

Several values traditionally associated with morality were also popular, including Character, Honesty/Integrity, Respect (3 responses each), Fairness (2 responses), and Compassion, Kindness, and Generosity (1 response each). Student-Athlete 20 said, “The values that my coaches teach me my I apply to the world around me. Working hard and having good character have helped me be successful in whatever I do.”

Proponents of the value of athletics often cite responsibility (five responses), teamwork (four responses), accountability (three responses), leadership (three

¹¹ See Appendix E for the full list of categorized responses.

responses), time management (one response), and sportsmanship (one response) as important lessons that can be learned by participating in athletics, and they were well represented in the responses. Student-Athlete 4 wrote, “Nearly all the things coach teaches can be applied to real life weather [sic] I realize I am doing it or not.” Values relating to personal countenance or being were also listed frequently, including attitude (five responses), commitment/dedication (five responses), humility (two responses) and pride (one response) listed.

Competitiveness (two responses), experience, fun, knowledge of the game, life lessons, understanding, and passion (one response each) were each mentioned as well. Student-Athlete 8 said, “I know the game I play and try to pass that knowledge on and use it to respect the game to the fullest each day on the field.” The knowledge and love of the game passes from coach to player, and from that player, to the new players that join the team, and to future children and community members.

Overall, the most commonly listed values coaches teach were:

Table 4: Most Commonly Listed Values Taught by Coaches

Honesty/Integrity	22
Hard Work/Doing Your Best	12
Respect	11
Teamwork	6
Fair play/Sportsmanship	5
Accountability	4
Commitment/Dedication	4
Responsibility	4
Fairness	3
Loyalty	3
Communication	2
Discipline	2
Humility	2
Mental Strength	2

The most commonly listed values that student-athletes learn from their coach were:

Table 5: Most Commonly Listed Values Learned by Student-Athletes

Hard Work/Doing Your Best	15
Perseverance	6
Attitude	5
Commitment/Dedication	5
Mental Strength	5
Responsibility	5
Teamwork	4
Accountability	3
Character	3
Honesty/Integrity	3
Leadership	3
Respect	3
Competitiveness	2
Fairness	2
Humility	2

There is considerable overlap between the two lists, with 9 of the 14 values coaches intend to teach being recognized by student-athletes. However, two of the three most commonly listed values that coaches say they intend to teach—Honesty/Integrity and Respect—moral values pertaining to how the student-athletes conduct themselves, are not being reported as being readily learned by the student-athletes. The student-athletes instead reported that they are learning perseverance, mental strength, and attitude, mental values in response to difficult situations or tasks. It is possible that the difficult tasks that coaches ask players to perform on the field, court, or other playing surface are teaching the players a slightly different lesson than the coaches plan, or are not putting enough emphasis on their intended value.

Willingness to Risk Self-Interest for the Sake of Moral Values

Colby and Damon's third guideline for moral exemplarity is "a willingness to risk one's self-interest for the sake of one's moral values." I found that, overall, the

coaches I surveyed were inconsistent in their willingness to risk winning to teach a moral lesson.

The coaches surveyed were inconsistent in their responses where self-interest was concerned. In the Likert Item, all but two agreed or strongly agreed that they consistently work to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics without fail, even if it might mean losing a game. Coach 10, who did not agree that pressure to win could override the concern for teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, discussed a situation when it did:

Late in a tie game with playoff implications, one of my players broke a team rule by talking back to an umpire about a call. Concerned about disrupting the team atmosphere by benching a starter, I chose to reprimand her instead. In the moment, giving us the best chance to win was more important to me than making an example of her. My action was effective in that her behavior was perfect for the rest of the day (and most of the season), but we lost anyway. If I could do it again, I'd bench her.

Coach 12, faced with a similar situation, chose to suspend a star player, and used the situation as a teachable moment, speaking with the whole team about the decision, to help them understand why it was being made, and what effect the suspension was meant to have. “Despite the fact that these suspensions put us at somewhat of a competitive disadvantage, the message it sent was extremely valuable to those particular individuals and to the rest of our team,” the coach said. “Ultimately, these suspensions reinforced some of the core principles and values of our team.” Coach 22 chose to play back up players in a match “because of the hard work, discipline, dedication they displayed. [the team] Lost the match, [but I] would not do anything different.” The coach chose to reinforce the message that all players on the team were valued, and recognize back up players for representing stressed values, even though

the match was risked, and eventually, lost. Overall, this seemed to be a prickly subject for the coaches, one which they struggled with. Coach 12 finds it difficult “to take firm, decisive stances on some issues because I understand that people make mistakes and that I get to coach quality individuals who are really good people.” While Coach 22 had no problem giving back up players a chance to play in a non-critical match, despite the fact that the team was likely to lose as a result, it would have been a more difficult decision in a “big” game, like the one faced by Coach 10.

While coaches at the Division III level are not typically fired based purely on wins and losses, like at the Division I level (see the case of Steve Pederson’s firing from Nebraska), Coach 4 said that their athletic department now includes wins and losses as significant part of the evaluation process, “which can certainly influence a coach’s goal of rewarding a hard working but not-so-talented player with playing time.” It would not be a stretch to say that after a few sub-par years, with other issues (off-field problems, poor academic performance by student-athletes, etc.) a coach might feel pressure to try and pull out a win at the expense of a moral lesson. So while none of the coaches agreed in the Likert Item, the pressure to win can override their concern for teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, they also acknowledged that the decision is more complicated, and difficult, in reality.

Inspiring Others and Moving Them to Moral Action

Colby and Damon’s fourth guideline for moral exemplarity is “a tendency to be inspiring to others and thereby to move them to moral action.” I found that, overall, coaches strongly believe they should inspire their student-athletes to act in a more moral fashion, but they are unsure if they are successful.

Eighty-one percent of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed that coaches should inspire their students to act in accordance to values, morals, principles, or

ethics that they teach, with the remaining 19% choosing the neutral option, and when given the space to describe an example of a time when a student-athlete demonstrated a value, moral, principle, or ethic that they teach, many of the coaches were ebullient in their accounts. Several coaches gave accounts of a time when a player walked away from intense and potentially volatile situations, refusing to respond to taunts, racial slurs, and pushing and shoving. Other coaches talked about how they love the culture or atmosphere of their program. Said Coach 12, “I’m proud of the fact that our team has become more respected, better integrated, and more successful in the classroom and on the field in my time.” Numerous coaches talked about times when team members confronted other team members about their attitude, character, and actions, reinforcing values the coach had taught, and expectations that had been set forth. Other coaches talked about community service projects, good deeds, students self-reporting themselves for breaking rules or laws, and even one case where a women’s lacrosse player corrected a referee’s call and awarded the ball to her opponent.

Humility About Relative Importance

Colby and Damon’s fifth guideline for moral exemplarity is “a sense of realistic humility about one’s own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one’s own ego.” I found that, overall, coaches are humble about their relative importance, as one moral exemplar in the lives of their student-athletes.

Coach 12 said, “We should try to serve as positive role models, but we also need to make sure that we don’t erroneously pass ourselves off as perfect or take a high-and-mighty approach to moral issues.” No coach can act with perfect moral dignity all the time, but they can stay humble, admit their own mistakes and use their own failings as a starting point for discussions on morality and personal development.

Ninety-six percent of the subjects of Survey 1 agreed or strongly agreed (with the other 4% choosing the neutral option) that they are just one moral leader in their student-athletes' life, and that they also learn values, morals, principles, or ethics from others, including parents, relatives, professors, and peers. Coach 17 sees the coach's role as more of a guide than a teacher. "I think that a coach has a duty to provide your student athlete with enough guidance that THEY make an educated and well thought out decision," the coach said. "It's not about telling the athlete what they should do or how they should believe. It about being informative [so] they can make the choice!" Coach 24 added that coaches "may give guidance into a proper direction, but the athlete needs to come up with their own morals and beliefs." This fits with Blasi's concept of the hierarchical organization of the self, where the coach can help play a part in the structural development, but the student-athlete must eventually decide his or her own balance.

Importance of Moral Concerns in Coaches' Jobs

Research Question 2: What importance do coaches give to various aspects of their job? How important are moral concerns as compared to other aspects?

The coaches were asked how much importance they placed on several different aspects of their job, which was presented as a Likert item, with the following values: Not Important at All, Not Important, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Important, and Very Important.

*Table 6: Importance of Job Aspects
(Percentage of responses)*

	Not Important at all	Not Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Academic Support	3.8	3.8	7.7	50.0	34.6
Serving as a Mentor	0.0	0.0	7.7	34.6	57.7
Recruiting	0.0	0.0	3.8	11.5	84.6
Scouting/Evaluation	3.8	0.0	3.8	46.2	46.2
Teaching Values, Morals, Principles, or Ethics	0.0	0.0	4.0	40.0	56.0

Not surprisingly, most of the subjects felt that all of these job aspects were either important or very important. Only one participant chose the neutral option for “teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics,” while 40% said it was important, and 56% said it was very important. Interestingly, 84.6% of respondents placed the highest possible value on recruitment of new student-athletes. In the extra space that was provided, Coach 19 wrote that “marketing your program” was important, and Coach 23 said “designing and implementing a periodized training program” and “teaching mental training skills” were both very important, and Coach 24 said “teaching motor skills” was very important.

Given the same list of aspects of their job, the subjects generally believed all to be *important* or *very important*, the coaches were asked to rank them from 1-6, with one being the most important, and six being the least important. Space was given to list other aspects of the job, in place of these six.

Table 7: Relative Importance of Job Aspects, All Subjects, Ranked 1-6 (Percentage of responses)

Job Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teaching Technical Skills	23.1	34.6	15.4	19.2	3.8	3.8
Providing Academic Support	0.0	20.0	8.0	20.0	28.0	24.0
Serving as a Mentor	16.0	20.0	16.0	24.0	16.0	8.0
Recruiting	26.9	23.1	19.2	3.8	19.2	7.7
Scouting/Evaluation	0.0	3.8	19.2	15.4	23.1	38.5
Teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics	34.6	15.4	11.5	19.2	3.8	15.4

As seen in Table 7 above, the most common responses for the most important aspect were *teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics*, at 34.6%, *recruiting*, at 26.9%, and *teaching technical skills*, at 23.1%. When looking at the job aspect that was listed either first or second, *teaching technical skills* was most common with 57.7%, followed by *teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics* and *recruiting*, each with 50%. *Teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics* was the most polarizing response, with 15.4% subjects also listing it as the least important aspect of their job. *Scouting/Evaluation of opponents* was clearly the last priority for the subjects, with zero listing it as the most important aspect, and 38.5% listing it as the least important aspect of their job. In the extra space provided, Coach 4 said that, “Teaching leadership, social responsibility, personal accountability can all be lumped in with values and morals and it should be a top priority,” and Coach 23 listed “training program” as number one, and “mental training program” as number three. It makes sense that coaches would place a high importance in the teaching of technical skills. This is their “content.” A history professor might teach about the American Civil War, a Chemistry professor might teach about covalent bonds, and a Basketball coach teaches how to dribble and shoot. At the highest and most competitive level of college athletics—Division I football—there are entire websites devoted to the recruitment of

high school players who become college student-athletes. ESPN has live television coverage as prospects sign a “letter of intent” to play at the school of their choice, and there are numerous rankings and scouting reports of players and classes by university. At the Division III level, minus all the pomp and circumstance, recruiting is still a crucial part in developing and sustaining a program, by replacing those who graduate or decide not to continue playing with new players.

To consider the question of “how important are moral concerns as compared to other aspects,” I broke down the subject group into several subgroups.

*Table 8: Relative Importance of Job Aspects, by Subcategory, Ranked 1-6
(Average Rank of Importance)*

Category	#	Teaching Technical Skills	Providing Academic Support	Serving as a Mentor	Recruiting	Scouting/Evaluation	Teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics
Overall	28	2.58	4.28	3.28	2.88	4.73	2.88
Male	19	2.59	4.06	3.71	2.82	4.53	3.06
Female	9	2.56	4.75	2.38	3.00	5.11	2.56
Private	21	2.43	4.70	3.20	2.71	4.76	2.90
Public	7	3.20	2.60	3.60	3.60	4.60	2.80
Master's Degree	21	2.60	4.26	3.21	3.15	4.85	2.90
Other Education	7	2.50	4.33	3.50	2.00	4.33	2.83

Overall for the whole subject group, *teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics* was the second most important priority, with an average rank of 2.88, just after *teaching technical skills* (2.58), and tied with *recruiting* (2.88). I broke the subject group into

sub-groups, isolating for gender, type of school, and education level. Interestingly, subjects with a master's degree did not place a greater emphasis on *teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics*, than their less educated brethren. Traditional dictum says that graduate students, who spend time discussing and contemplating complex issues, have greater opportunities for role taking, and thus develop a stronger moral identity, but this was not reflected here. The only group who prioritized moral lessons tremendously different than the overall average was female coaches, with an average rank of 2.56, which was tied with *teaching technical skills* as their first concern. Female coaches also placed more emphasis on *servicing as a mentor* and placed less emphasis on *scouting/evaluation*, suggesting they are less concerned with maximizing their chances of securing wins in individual games, and more interested in their day-to-day relationships with, and the development of their student-athletes. Female coaches also placed less emphasis on *providing academic support*, which might seem like a negative, like they are not concerned with the academic success of their charges, but more likely it implies that they don't believe their student-athletes need as much academic guidance. Both male and female coaches valued the teaching of technical skills pretty evenly.

Coaches who worked at public schools and private schools did not differ tremendously in their priority ranking of *teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics*, but their ranks of the other job aspects were considerably dissimilar. Coaches at public schools valued *providing academic support* as their chief concern, with an average rank of 2.6, while coaches at private schools valued it as their second least important concern, with an average rank of 4.70. Research has shown that students at private universities graduate at a much higher rate than students at public universities (Scott, 2006, pp. 256), so it makes sense that coaches at public universities would spend more time providing academic support to their student-athletes, helping them

stay in school and work toward their degree. Coaches at public universities, in turn, put less emphasis on *teaching technical skills*, with an average rank of 3.20, as compared to 2.43 for coaches at private universities. Overall, the public sub-group had an average experience of 8.86 years as a head coach, while the private sub-group averaged 14.48 years of experience. So it is possible that the public coaches, with just 60% the experience of the private coaches, feel less comfortable, or have developed less knowledge of coaching the fundamental skills of their individual sport. The private university sub-group put a greater priority on *recruiting*, with an average rank of 2.71, while the public university sub-group assigned it an average rank of 3.60. This may be due to the fact that public schools tend to be larger than private schools. In our sample, the public sub-group averaged 5019 students, while the private sub-group averaged 2961. A coach at a larger school would have more “walk on” players who have experience with the sport, but were not necessarily recruited for it, and thus it will be easier to fill out the roster. There was no correlation between age or winning percentage and the value placed on teaching of values, morals, principles, or ethics. Interestingly, coaches with a master’s degree placed slightly less emphasis on teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics than coaches with a lower education level, but placed felt serving as a mentor was more important. Coaches without a master’s degree valued recruiting much higher than coaches with a master’s degree.

Obstacles to Teaching Morality

Research Question 3: What gets in the way of coaches teaching moral lessons, being a moral exemplar/leader, or generally placing a greater emphasis on morality?

The data I collected suggests that coaches report that they believe in the importance of modeling moral values for their student-athletes. Along with this trend in the data, I was also interested in understanding what forces get in the way of

coaches actually teaching moral lessons. As a starting point for the consideration of this question, considering Walker's studies on the personality of the perception of a moral exemplar, some coaches may just not have a personality that lends itself to moral exemplarity. However, only one subject agreed that it was not the place of a coach to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics. The subject group was given a list of statements relating to teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, and asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

*Table 9: Level of Agreement with a Series of Statements
(Percentage of responses)*

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I do not feel it is the place of a coach to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics.	61.5	30.8	3.8	3.8	0.0
I feel personally uncomfortable teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.	50.0	46.2	3.8	0.0	0.0
Emotions like empathy get in the way of teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.	42.3	30.8	15.4	11.5	0.0
Pressure to win can override my concern for teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.	38.5	50.0	11.5	0.0	0.0
I do not feel it is important to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics.	65.4	19.2	7.7	3.8	3.8
The way I coach is consistent with my own values, morals, principles, or ethics.	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.8	46.2
I work to treat all players with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their value to the team in terms of winning.	0.0	0.0	3.8	46.2	50.0
I consistently work to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics without fail, even if it might mean losing a game?	0.0	0.0	7.7	61.5	30.8
Coaches should inspire their students to act in accordance to values, morals, principles, or ethics that they teach.	0.0	0.0	19.2	34.6	46.2
I see my students demonstrating the principles, values and ethics that I am teaching them.	0.0	0.0	46.2	34.6	19.2
I am but one person in my student-athletes' life...they also learn values, morals, principles, or ethics from others.	0.0	0.0	3.8	50.0	46.2

- 84.6% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to teach them
- None agreed that they felt uncomfortable teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics
- None agreed that pressure to win could override moral concerns
- 100% of subjects either agreed or strongly agreed that the way they coach is consistent with their own values, morals, principles, or ethics
- 92.3% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that they consistently work to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics without fail, even if it might mean losing a game
- 96.2% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that they work to treat all players with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their value to the team in terms of winning
- 80.8% of subjects agreed or strongly agreed that coaches should inspire their students to act in accordance to values, morals, principles, or ethics that they teach, with five choosing the neutral option
- 46.2% of subjects chose the neutral option when asked if they see their students demonstrating the values, morals, principles, and ethics that they teach, with the rest agreeing or strongly agreeing

Overall, these results indicate that coaches report a strong level of concern with the teaching of values, morals, principles, or ethics, with little standing in the way of those lessons. But when given space to describe an example of a time when something prevented them from teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, several coaches were less effusive about the likelihood in which they would push aside all other concerns for the moral, and brought up some very real obstacles that get in the way of action, including emotion, institutional pressures, unwillingness to risk winning, vocal parents of student-athletes, and job politics. Many discussed difficult situations where they had to decide between benching a star player and risking losing the game, or failing to teach a value they felt was important. While Bobby Knight, as shown in the case study, had no problem benching his whole starting lineup, if the situation necessitated it, several of the coaches I surveyed ultimately chose to reprimand, but not bench the player, and a few reported that if they could do it over again, they would have been stricter in their punishment, even if it meant risking the game. This action is clearly easier said than done for coaches. Several subjects talked about how their

judgment can be affected by emotions they feel toward certain (or all of the) players. Coach 21, finds it hard to assign playing time when favorite players are not as talented. Coach 12 said, “the respect and admiration that I have for my student-athletes sometimes makes it difficult for me to issue tough love.” A third found it difficult to not give a player preferential treatment when they were dealing with an illness in their family that was affecting their athletic performance. This is exactly the same situation I discussed in the case study, where Tony Dungy stood behind kicker Michael Husted, even though his performance was suffering, as his mother died from cancer. By favoring the human being, rather than the team’s results, Dungy reinforced a moral message. Generally, these emotional issues made it difficult for coaches to follow their moral compass, though showing compassion toward a person whom the coach cares about on a personal level is hardly a sign of moral weakness, but the message may not get through to the student-athletes, unless the coach explicitly vocalizes these thoughts to them.

A few coaches discussed pressure to win, but none of them reported that they felt like there was a tremendous amount being placed on them from the institutional level, so the pressure must come from either the coaches’ own internal drive, or from the innately competitive nature of sport. Coach 17 talked about a difficult situation in their first year of coaching, while in the position of “Interim Head Coach.” The coach wanted to cut a senior who was not a strong player and had a bad attitude, but “it was highly recommended to me that I do not cut her because it will hurt my career since I was a first year coach and only interim... so I kept her and didn't play her and she was a cancer. I felt like I was backed into a corner.” In this case, the interim coach did not want to rock the boat, to have a better chance of securing the position on a permanent basis. With one or two-year contracts being normal at the Division III level, this is a very present, and common concern for less experienced coaches, who

may not have proved and established themselves yet. Consider Lou Holtz, who was actually sued by two student-athletes for benching them before the team's final game. While Holtz was ultimately defended by the state attorney general, and the case was dropped, the threat of parental or legal intervention is ever-present, and a coach may receive institutional pressure to avoid such hassles.

If the overwhelming majority of the coaches surveyed report that they believe they should act as a moral exemplar, and feel like their actions are consistent with that belief, why are nearly half of them unsure about whether their student-athletes demonstrate the moral values they teach? According to Colby and Damon, character and commitment are played out in the realm of action, not reflection. Pondering moral problems is not the same as dedicating one's life to their solution" (Colby and Damon, 1992, pp. 6). So it is possible that coaches would like to place a greater emphasis on teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics, but when push comes to shove, simply do not. Perhaps, as Blasi describes, the wide variety of opportunities available for perspective taking in college causes the student-athletes' perceptions of themselves to change daily, and they are learning many values from many different influential people besides their coach?

Coaches as Moral Exemplars

Research Question 4: Do student-athletes think of their coach as a moral leader or example? What values, morals, principles, or ethics do athletes learn from their coach? Do they practice the values?

The majority of the student-athletes I surveyed said that they saw their coach as a moral leader, and was someone they looked to as a moral guide. Of those who responded, 69.2% said their coach was a moral leader, without reservation, with 7.7% expressing reservations, 15.4% said their coach was a moral person, but not someone

they viewed as a moral leader, and 7.7% said their coach was not a moral person or leader.

All of the respondents said they practice at least some of the values their coach teaches. The values learned from their coaches that were most commonly listed by student-athletes were: hard work/doing your best (15 responses), perseverance (6 responses), attitude (5 responses), commitment/dedication (5 responses), mental strength (5 responses), responsibility (5 responses), and teamwork (4 responses).¹²

Summary and Conclusions

While the results of this study must be viewed as exploratory, most of the coaches I surveyed reported that they believe it is important to act as a moral exemplar for their student-athletes, and help them develop both on and off the athletic field. In turn, most of the students I surveyed see their coach as a moral leader, or at least a moral person. There were a few obstacles reported by the coaches I surveyed, which can limit their efforts to teach moral lessons, namely institutional politics and parental pressure, unwillingness to risk losing, emotional attachment, and personality factors.

Limitations

Although there are many limitations to this work due to its small sample size, there are methodological lessons that can be learned from this to further study moral exemplarity in coaches and in student athletes. Unfortunately, few athletic directors at the universities I contacted were interested in or willing to participate, leaving a small sample base that may not have had great generalizability for the entirety of the Division III athletics experience. The participant group in “Study 1,”

¹² For more detail on the values listed by both coaches and student-athletes, see the “Consistency Between One’s Actions and Intentions” section.

was very experienced overall, and consisted mostly of coaches with excellent win/loss records. “Study 2,” which ultimately included just sixteen student-athletes who completed the entire study, was especially affected by the small sample size. Participation could have been increased by more actively reaching out to coaches and athletics directors to solicit their support for the project before contacting student-athletes. Since contact was initiated with the potential subjects via email, it was too easy for them to simply delete the email and/or choose not to participate, and I did not pursue subjects with numerous follow up emails to increase participation. Face to face solicitation at various colleges and universities might have increased participation.

With such a small sample, and the fact that the study was anonymous, it is impossible to say how representative the group was of all student-athletes, and there was no way to follow up and clarify answers, or get more information, so some answers on the survey are incomplete. Both groups may have suffered from some self-selection bias, with volunteers who chose to be helpful perhaps having more moral tendencies than the average. Additionally, since the coaches were asked to self-report, there exists the likelihood of some halo effect, with coaches reporting what they would like to be, not necessarily what they are.

Ultimately, due to the small sample sizes reflected in these studies, the results can only be preliminary. Future studies of a more robust nature, with a larger participant group, could seek to verify and expand upon my findings.

Future Research

The results of this study suggest a paradox: coaches say they teach values, and players say they learn them. So, why is it that student-athletes are reasoning at a lower moral level than their non-athlete peers, as shown in the studies by Stoll, Bredemeier and Shields, and others? A larger, more exhaustive study could explore whether the

group of coaches surveyed in this study, who overall placed a high priority on being a moral exemplar, are representative of the overall coaching population, and whether their self-reports actually match up with what truly happens. Thorough, in-depth interviews with student-athletes and coaches could further probe their moral relationship with their coaches and provide more robust qualitative data for analysis, and probe the differences between sports, gender, division (scholarship vs. non-scholarship), school type (private vs. public), and more. A more focused, narrower study on coaches like Central Washington's Gary Frederick, from the Mallory Holtman story, could explicitly analyze the moral lessons they teach, the way they teach them, and how they balance their role as a teacher of the technical skills of their particular sport and a mentor, educator, and moral exemplar of young men and women. A longitudinal study could follow a cohort of student-athletes and see what effect participation in college athletics has in their moral development over time, and attempt to understand what factors influenced that development. Sponsorship by a large association such as the NCAA could provide the legitimacy and financial incentive for more coaches and student-athletes to participate, and allow for a more exhaustive study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study helped me, a college lacrosse coach at the Division III level, to clarify the way in which the moral development of my student-athletes can be balanced with technical and competitive concerns. While the pronouncements of researchers like Sharon Stoll, that “participation in athletics, either at a Division I or Division III, adversely affects moral reasoning” (Stoll, 1995, p. 3), are disconcerting, I found through this research that it is definitely possible, both in theory, and in practice, to integrate the teaching of important values into team development program, winning games at a successful rate while also helping student-athletes develop a moral identity, and grow into better people. By thinking about the way I address my student-athletes, by structuring lessons in such a way that they learn both technical and moral skills, by holding them to a high standard, while demonstrating that standard myself on a daily basis, I hope to teach my student-athletes that there is more to athletics than wins and losses, and that certain values transcend sport. Mike Krzyzewski says he places an equal emphasis on character and talent while considering prospective student-athletes, paying attention to minutiae like how they act when their mother asks a question. Anecdotally, his players at Duke are held up by the media as an example of “all that is right” in athletics. Grant Hill, JJ Redick, and Shane Battier are just three examples of Duke basketball players who have reflected upon their coach so positively, as being great people in addition to outstanding basketball players.

Seeing the way Lou Holtz stuck to his principles, upholding his “do right” rule, even in the face of accusations of racism, and a lawsuit, shows me that I do not need to bow to political or parental pressure. The fact that he risked his career to uphold his rule only strengthens his commitment in my eyes. Similarly, the way Tony Dungy stood behind the struggling Michael Husted, whose mother was battling cancer, shows me that the ultimate risk of losing a game is not such a huge deal after all, when

considering the fact that NFL football is a much “bigger deal” than any league I will ever coach in. As I see with all of these coaches, especially Bobby Knight, being a moral exemplar does not mean being a paragon of ideal values, and does not require a national following like Coach Krzyzewski or even Gary Frederick. It can be as simple as helping one individual develop the strength to live their life in a successful manner. Consider the story of Wayman Tisdale, and the coach that helped him fight cancer.

Tisdale was a three-time All-American basketball player at the University of Oklahoma, an NBA star, and an Olympic gold medalist. After playing professional basketball for 12 years, he retired to pursue a career in music, and “recorded eight jazz albums, performed on worldwide tours and collaborated with artists like country music star Toby Keith” (Clemmons, 2008). In early 2007, Tisdale was diagnosed with cancer, endured “bouts of chemotherapy so painful that he sometimes refused to let his children see him. When his treatments all failed, he agreed to let doctors cut off his right leg” (Clemmons, 2008). And yet Tisdale put on a brave face to the world, started a foundation to raise funds for amputees, and continued recording music.

To push through, the 6-foot-9 "gentle giant" recalled the challenges he faced during his basketball career. "I had some coaches that literally didn't want me to make it, and one in particular was [Team USA coach] Bobby Knight," Tisdale says. "At the time, I frowned on that ... I look at it today that had I not persevered through a lot of the stuff he put me through, I probably wouldn't be here today. I thank God for that dude because he pushed me (Clemmons, 2008).

Tisdale only encountered, and was mentored by, Bobby Knight for a short while, as a member of the 1984 United States Olympic team, which was coached by Knight, and while he may not have appreciated or understood Knight’s methods, and surely had many other influences at the time, including his own coach at Oklahoma, the lessons

Knight taught him helped Tisdale to cope with and persevere through cancer, and live out the remainder of his life in a positive and significant manner.

Tisdale's physical therapist, Brad Potts, who helped him acclimate to his prosthetic limb "attributes the quick recovery, in part, to Tisdale's athletic résumé. "The drive that he has to succeed as an athlete is the same drive that you have to have here," Potts says. "If you give him [Wayman] two to three keys, he picks up on the concept almost immediately. His muscle memory is incredible and he's very coachable" (Clemmons, 2008). The lessons he learned, about perseverance, attitude, coach-ability, grace under pressure, and teamwork, through participation in basketball, helped strengthen Wayman Tisdale, and allowed him to focus his energy and give cancer a valiant fight. While many may question the methods of coaches like Bobby Knight, including even Wayman Tisdale, during his time on the 1984 USA Olympic team, the lessons they teach, when that balance between functional, physical, sport-specific and moral lessons is achieved, can be life changing. The result can have a long-lasting effect beyond the game, and help a student-athlete become a more developed person, a better husband, wife, sibling, employee, or friend, and even bravely fight against cancer and serve as an inspiration to all.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

Email to athletic directors

Dear Athletic Director,

My name is Eric Seideman; I am a graduate student at Cornell University studying Education, and an assistant coach with the men's lacrosse team at Ithaca College. I am doing a research project studying the coach's role as an educational leader of college aged youth. This study is under the supervision of Dr. Dawn Schrader, a professor in the Department of Education. Contact Prof. Schrader if you have any questions at dawn.schrader@cornell.edu.

The research project is survey-based, and should take no more than 20 minutes for your coaches to complete. Please let me know if you are willing to cooperate in this study by return email. What I am asking of you is for five minutes to speak to your coaches at your next department meeting, to introduce the study, and hand out materials, ideally in the next week or two, before the end of the school year. I will be happy to share the results of the study with you, but each coach's answers to the survey are confidential.

Thank you in advance, for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Eric Seideman
es534@cornell.edu
802-249-8963

____ Yes, I am willing to cooperate with your study:

Athletic Director's name: _____

____ No, I am not willing to participate
reason:

Placard to Coaches

Dear Coach,

I am a college lacrosse coach doing a master's degree in Education at Cornell University. I am studying the coach's role as an educational leader and mentor of college aged youth.

My research project is survey-based, and should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. If you are willing to participate, the survey (and more information) can be found at:

www.collegecoachingsurvey.com

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Eric Seideman
Cornell University
es534@cornell.edu
802-249-8963

Email to student-athletes

Dear Student-Athlete,

I am a college lacrosse coach doing a master's degree in Education at Cornell University. Through this research project, I hope to gain insight to the coach's role as an educational leader of college aged youth. I hope you might be willing to participate in the study.

My research project is survey-based, and is made up of three questions, which should not take more than 5-10 minutes to complete. If you are willing to participate, the survey (and more information) can be found at:

www.collegecoachingsurvey.com/student-athlete

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Eric Seideman
Cornell University
es534@cornell.edu
802-249-8963

Appendix B – Coach’s Survey Instrument¹³

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY—COACH’S STUDY

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Eric Seideman, a graduate student studying Education at Cornell University, is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Dawn Schrader, a professor in the Department of Education. Contact Prof. Schrader if you have any questions at dawn.schrader@cornell.edu.

WHAT WILL WE ASK YOU TO DO?

This study involves a series of questions concerning your thoughts about leadership, the personality of leaders, the role of a coach, and moral values and principles taught in sports contexts. This study is anonymous but does ask you to indicate the sport you coach and describe your school in general terms. This study is expected to take 20-30 minutes to complete.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to you. Participation in this study will help expand the scope of knowledge in the field of Education, by studying the coach as a leader, and help coaches mentor youth who participate in college sports.

WILL THIS STUDY COST YOU ANYTHING OR WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION?

Participation in this survey is voluntary and will cost you only the time it takes to complete. ~~**REMOVED THE SMALL COMPENSATION OFFERED FOR PARTICIPATION~~

WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your consent to participate in this research is entirely voluntary, and your refusal to participate will involve no prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled, and will not affect any relationship that you might have with Cornell University, present or future. You may stop your participation in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RECORDS BE PROTECTED?

While some personal and background information will be requested, in order to perform statistical analysis, the researcher seeks to maintain the confidentiality of all

¹³ The consent form and survey instrument were actually given online using the website www.surveymonkey.com. This is a recreation of how they appeared, though the formatting was slightly different.

data and records associated with your participation in this research and will refer to responses with pseudonyms and disguise any information that might link your response to you. No statements will be written that link your comments with your particular school and sport.

WHOM TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY

If you have any questions pertaining to the research you can contact Eric Seideman via email at es534@cornell.edu to discuss them, or contact Professor Schrader at dawn.schrader@cornell.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at <http://www.irb.cornell.edu>. You may also report your concerns or complaints anonymously through Ethicspoint or by calling toll free at 1-866-293-3077. Ethicspoint is an independent organization that serves as a liaison between the University and the person bringing the complaint so that anonymity can be ensured.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by completing and returning the questionnaire following the hyperlink after this paragraph. Please print and retain this consent cover form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research survey.

CONTINUE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Information and Coaching History

Gender: Male/Female

Age: _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed:

- High School or Equivalent: _____
- Some College: _____
- College: Associates: _____
- College: Bachelors: _____
- College: Masters: _____
- College: Doctorate Ed.D., Ph.D., JD or MD: _____

Are you a head coach? Yes/No

Sport(s) you coach: _____

How many years have you been a Head Coach: _____

What is your approximate winning percentage as a Head Coach: _____

How many (if any) of the following awards have you won:

- Conference Coach of the Year: _____
- Regional Coach of the Year: _____
- National Coach of the Year: _____

How many (if any) of the following championships have your teams won:

- Conference: _____
- Regional: _____
- National: _____

Categorize your institution of employment: Public/Private

Section I

Indicate the importance of various aspects of a coach's job by placing an X in the appropriate box.

1 = Not Important at all

2 = Not Important

3 = Neither Important nor Unimportant

4 = Important

5 = Very Important

In the final column (Rank), assign a relative weight, with 1 being most important. Extra space has been provided for you to write in other aspects of a coach's job that you feel are important.

	Job Aspect	1	2	3	4	5	Rank
1.	Teaching Technical Skills						
2.	Providing Academic Support						
3.	Serving as a Mentor						
4.	Recruiting						
5.	Scouting/Evaluation						
6.	Teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics						
7.	Other:						
8.	Other:						
9.	Other:						
10.	Other:						

Section II

Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements by placing an X in the appropriate box.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

In the final column (Rank), assign a relative weight, with 1 being the concern that most often gets in the way of teaching moral principles. Extra space has been provided for you to write in other concerns that you feel get in the way of teaching moral principles and values.

	Concern	1	2	3	4	5	Rank
1.	I do not feel it is the place of a coach to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics.						
3.	I feel personally uncomfortable teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.						
3.	Emotions like empathy get in the way of teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.						
4.	Pressure to win can override my concern for teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics.						
5.	I do not feel it is important to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics.						
6.	Other:						
7.	Other:						
8.	Other:						

Section III

Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements by placing an X in the appropriate box.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Do Not Agree

3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The way I coach is consistent with my own values, morals, principles, or ethics.					
2.	I work to treat all players with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their value to the team in terms of winning					
3.	I consistently work to teach values, morals, principles, or ethics without fail, even if it might mean losing a game?					
4.	Coaches should inspire their students to act in accordance to values, morals, principles, or ethics that they teach.					
5.	I see my students demonstrating the principles, values					

	and ethics that I am teaching them.					
6.	I am but one person in my student-athletes' life...they also learn values, morals, principles, or ethics from others.					

Section IV

Answer the following questions with as much detail as possible.

1. Should coaches be moral leaders? Why or why not?

2. What values, morals, principles, or ethics do you teach?

3. Give an example of how you teach values, morals, principles, or ethics to your student-athletes. What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What was the outcome? Would you do something different now that you think about it?

4. Give an example of a time when something prevented you from teaching values, morals, principles, or ethics to your student-athletes. What was it that got in the way? Why was that more important than teaching the value you wanted to teach? How difficult was it to make that decision?

5. Give an example of a time when one or some of your student-athletes demonstrated a value, moral, principle, or ethic that you teach. What happened? Who was involved? How did you feel?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C – Student-Athlete Survey Instrument¹⁴

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY—STUDENT ATHLETES’ STUDY

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Eric Seideman, a graduate student studying Education at Cornell University, is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Dawn Schrader, a professor in the Department of Education. Contact Prof. Schrader if you have any questions at dawn.schrader@cornell.edu

WHAT WILL WE ASK YOU TO DO?

This study involves a handful of questions concerning your thoughts about leadership, the personality of leaders, the role of a coach, and moral values and principles taught in sports contexts. This study is anonymous but does ask you describe your school in general terms. This study is expected to take 5-10 minutes to complete.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to you. Participation in this study will help expand the scope of knowledge in the field of Education, by studying the coach as a leader, and help coaches mentor youth who participate in college sports.

WILL THIS STUDY COST YOU ANYTHING OR WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION?

Participation in this survey is voluntary and will cost you only the time it takes to complete. It offers no compensation for participation.

WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your consent to participate in this research is entirely voluntary, and your refusal to participate will involve no prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled, and will not affect any relationship that you might have with Cornell University, present or future. You may stop your participation in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RECORDS BE PROTECTED?

Your participation will be completely anonymous. No personal information will be requested that can link you to your answers.

WHOM TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY

¹⁴ The consent form and survey instrument were actually given online using the website www.surveymonkey.com. This is a recreation of how they appeared, though the formatting was slightly different..

If you have any questions pertaining to the research you can contact Eric Seideman via email at es534@cornell.edu to discuss them, or contact Professor Schrader at dawn.schrader@cornell.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at <http://www.irb.cornell.edu>. You may also report your concerns or complaints anonymously through Ethicspoint or by calling toll free at 1-866-293-3077. Ethicspoint is an independent organization that serves as a liaison between the University and the person bringing the complaint so that anonymity can be ensured.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by completing and returning the questionnaire following the hyperlink after this paragraph. Please print and retain this consent cover form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research survey.

CONTINUE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information

Gender: Male/Female

Age: _____

Year: Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior

Seasons as a Starting Player: 0/1/2/3/4

Section I

1. What values, morals, principles, or ethics do you learn from your coach? List 5.

2. Do you practice the values your coach teaches you? Give an example.

3. Do you think of your coach as a moral leader or example? Why? Why not?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix D – Results from Survey 1

What values, morals, principles, or ethics do you teach?

Honesty/Integrity	22
Hard Work/Doing Your Best	12
Respect	11
Teamwork	6
Fair play/Sportsmanship	5
Accountability	4
Commitment/Dedication	4
Responsibility	4
Fairness	3
Loyalty	3
Communication	2
Discipline	2
Humility	2
Mental Strength	2
Appreciation of others	1
Attitude	1
Balance	1
Be considerate	1
Caring	1
Class	1
Empathy	1
Encouragement	1
Faith	1
Good citizenship	1
Gratitude	1
Hope	1
Listening Skills	1
Love	1
Maturity	1
Mindfulness	1
Objectiveness	1
Open Mindedness	1
Selflessness	1
Self-respect	1
Social Responsibility	1
Time Management	1
Trust	1
Value in Wins and Losses	1
Value in Having Fun	1

Appendix E – Results from Survey 2

What values, morals, principles, or ethics do you learn from your coach?

Hard Work/Doing Your Best	15
Perseverance	6
Attitude	5
Commitment/Dedication	5
Mental Strength	5
Responsibility	5
Teamwork	4
Accountability	3
Character	3
Honesty/Integrity	3
Leadership	3
Respect	3
Competitiveness	2
Fairness	2
Humility	2
Compassion	1
Experience	1
Fun	1
Generosity	1
Kindness	1
Knowledge	1
Life Lessons	1
Passion	1
Pride	1
Sportsmanship	1
Time Management	1
Understanding	1

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