

Follower-Leader Development: Uncovering Micro-moments of Female Student-athlete Leader Development

Zack J. Damon¹, Jon Welty Peachey², Janelle E. Wells³,
Andrew C. Pickett⁴, Jeff Ward⁵

¹Texas Tech University, ²Gordon College, ³University of South Florida,
⁴Indiana University-Bloomington, ⁵University of Louisville

Most scholarly attention within sport management leadership research has focused on four main leadership theories: authentic, servant, transactional, and transformational. While recent research included the social construction of leadership and a call to explore more follower-centric aspects of leadership, little empirical research has focused on how leaders develop, or more succinctly – leader development. Much of the leader development literature to date has mainly focused on large interventions or outcomes, oftentimes overlooking day-to-day, micro-moments of leader development. In sport-related research there has been a paucity of research directly addressing development of women and girls as leaders. The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to determine how female intercollegiate student-athletes develop into leaders through micro-moments. This study employed a qualitative approach using interviews and observations. Participants included two National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III female teams. Three themes emerged from qualitative semi-structured interviews (N = 30) and observations (12 hours total) identifying the micro-moments of development: empowerment, modeling leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership. Findings explain how these micro-moments aid in the leader development process. The study enhances a theoretical understanding of intercollegiate student-athlete leader development.

Much of the research on leadership in sport has centered on leadership theories such as transformational, transactional, servant, and authentic (Billsberry et al., 2018; Ferkins et al., 2018; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). There has also been an emphasis on linking each theory or leadership style to specific outcomes, which is important to sport organizations, intercollegiate athletics, and to student-athlete development (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Typically, most of the sport leadership research has focused on leaders and the leadership level of analysis. While valuable, this foundation has a substantial gap in the literature related to the process(es) of leader *development*, which has mostly gone unattended in both the parent leadership discipline and in sport management (Ferkins et al., 2018; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). The lack of research on leader development is surprising given the inherent role it plays in benefiting organizations across all industries (Day et al., 2014; Frost, 2016). Further, Hammon et al. (2017) argued the leader development process spans multiple domains of life (e.g., work, personal life, various communities). Damon et al. (2022) recently alluded to the gap of leader development by calling on future sport leadership research to consider how followers and others develop into leaders as well as enhancing our understanding of how women can continue to forge into leadership positions.

Historically, leaders and leadership have been constructed and embedded in a context influenced by assumptions and beliefs often associated with men and masculinity (Leberman, 2017). Thanks to Leberman (2017) there has been some focus on leader or leadership development for girls and women, despite the historical emphasis on men and boys. This is particularly important because in masculine-oriented cultures, women's leadership experience and development have otherwise been marginalized and excluded (Elliott & Stead, 2008; Leberman, 2017). Therefore, as a shift in emphasizing the leader and leadership development of women and girls continues, such a shift makes our study for women's leader development ripe for research. For example, Ernst Young (EY) and espnW (2015) reported of executive women attributing their success to sport participation, further underlining the importance to continue to explore this area of research and leader development that women experience through and around sport. Namely, it is important to understand how women intercollegiate student-athletes develop into leaders during daily, micro-moments, including interactions with their leaders and peers.

Avolio and Vogelgesang-Lester (2011) noted much of the leader development literature focused on large interventions, which may miss significant developmental moments that occur in individuals' day-to-day lives. Micro-moments are defined as both commonplace (e.g., daily) and dynamic (i.e., creative or unplanned) opportunities for development of leadership skills and practices (Beghetto, 2015). Beghetto (2015) argued these times provide leaders the greatest opportunity to reinforce or change their legacies through their behaviors; paradoxically, micro-moments are defining moments for a leader. Similarly, Stokes and Harris (2012) highlighted that how one behaves in micro-moments is important to successful organizational change, corporate responsibility, and overall ethics.

Beghetto (2015) highlighted the need for increased study of micro-moments to understand the process of leader development. For intercollegiate athletes, who often have myriad responsibilities and roles, there are several potential micro-moments for leader development worth exploring. Given the paucity of sport-related research directly addressing how National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) women student-athletes develop into leaders, the purpose of this study seeks to determine how women student-athletes develop into leaders through micro-moments and daily interactions with others (i.e., leaders, peers). Through a case study approach, the current study provides a foundation for further student-athlete leader development research in sport as well as general leader development research across contexts.

Conceptual Framework

To form our conceptual framework, we drew from literature related to leader development and the social construction of leadership, as well as leadership and leader development for women in sport. Leader development is often described as the development of individual leaders, with a focus on intrapersonal capabilities related to individual knowledge, skill development, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence (Day, 2000; Iles & Preece, 2006). Compared to leadership development, which focuses on social capital, network building, and interpersonal relationship skills development within the process of leadership; leader development instead focuses on intrapersonal and human capital skill development (Day 2000; Day et al., 2014; Iles & Preece, 2006). Day (2000) argued in support of the notion that when researchers examine how one develops into a leader, the individual's experiences are of utmost importance (Bettein & Kennedy, 1990; Day et al., 2014). Experiences can span one's journey in their professional life, reconciling their personal and professional lives, and socializing or interacting with others around them and how the individual reflects on such interactions to change or not change aspects of their professional or personal life (Day, 2000). These experiences one possesses can influence their development into a leader, however, such experiences are not simply limited to major moments or conventions on developing oneself. Thus, underlining the importance to uncovering micro-moments of leader development that can take place daily and without the fanfare of going to a leader development retreat or similar outing.

Leader Development

Leader development is distinguished by the inherent emphasis on individual or intrapersonal-level development involving one's experience and reflection on experiences, skill development, and one's personality (Day et al., 2014). Despite each aspect of leader development possessing standalone value, researchers have found it best to incorporate all aspects when examining leader development (Day et al., 2014; Mumford et al., 2007). For example, a leader's experiences – namely length of experiences and how many experiences – relate to how high up an organization's hierarchy a leader can reasonably progress towards or hold a formal position (Hirst et al., 2004; Mumford et al., 2007). However, to encapsulate the leader develop-

ment process more fully, it is important to link a leader's learning experience (Hirst et al., 2004) with their advancement within an organization as higher-level leader positions require greater strategic and business skill development (Mumford et al., 2007), which can be foreshadowed by a leader's previous learning experience related to strategic skills. This illustrates the importance of examining all aspects of leader development (Bettin & Kennedy, 1990).

Bettin and Kennedy (1990) illustrated that time and experience are mutually exclusive, with experience not time, as a significant predictor of performance among United States Army Captains who had similar tenure of service. Additionally, researchers have posited that activity related experience among early-aged adults is more formative in leader development than activity related experience as adults (Zacharatos et al., 2000). Zacharatos et al. (2000) revealed early aged adults (i.e., typical college-aged adults) were developing their own transformational leader behaviors when their parents and those around them exhibited such behaviors. Further, Ericsson (2008) differentiated between how general experience related to performance had a weak correlation, yet deliberate practice as *focused* experience on improving specific skills led to expert performance. Skills and tasks related to leader development that can be engaged in deliberate practice stand to reason, then to further help contextualize what leader development through micro-moments can entail. The above research illustrates the appropriateness and need to examine leader development among those early-aged adults including women NCAA student-athletes.

In addition to experience and skill development, leader development also incorporates the personality of the leader as well as an emphasis on self-development (Day et al., 2014). Strang and Kuhner (2009) found when a leader possessed the personality trait of conscientiousness, this trait positively influenced leader performance when assessed by peers, followers, and superiors. As for self-development, Boyce et al. (2010) illustrated certain personality characteristics predict a one's engagement in self-development activities: work orientation (commitment to one's job and organization); mastery orientation (an emphasis on intellectual maturity, openness to experiences, and self-efficacy); and career-growth orientation (those who seek out feedback from others, a curiosity towards future career paths). Additionally, Duckworth and Quinn (2009) found their concept of grit or one's trait aptitude for persevering towards long-term goals significantly influenced skill and career outcomes and growth. In their work, Duckworth and Quinn (2009) discovered that when measuring grit among adults it had significant influence on their educational attainment and fewer career changes, meaning that adults were more likely to be successful in their initial career and would not need to change careers as often as their counterparts who were low in grit. Thus, further illustrating that one's leader development related to mastery development, grit, and career-growth orientation are relationships to further understand in the women NCAA student-athlete context since these student-athletes could be set up for significant success after college depending on the development level of these skills.

Despite a foundation based in various aspects of leader development, the above research lacks an emphasis or understanding of the exact micro-moments of leader

development. While a few studies have emphasized a leader's experience and potential to reflect on experiences (Bettin & Kennedy, 1990; Day et al., 2014; Mumford et al., 2007), an emphasis on the micro-moments of development is missing. Further, as Damon et al. (2022) noted; in sport leadership research there is greater understanding to be gained by focusing on what the leader development process entails for followers or those who are not in formal leadership positions. Given the fact that early-aged adults are already in the prime age range for developing their own leader behaviors (Zacharatos et al., 2000), studying leader development of women NCAA student-athletes and what micro-moments aid in their development can help to inform how women in sport can develop their leader capabilities and skills. However, little is known about what the process is or what role micro-moments have in leader development in sport and for women in sport. Therefore, a potentially important aspect of the women NCAA student-athlete leader development process is mostly missing from the student-athlete development literature and sport management leadership literature (Ferkins et al., 2018; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Additionally, as Chalfin et al. (2015) found, leader experience of student-athletes played a significant role in how potential employers valued a student-athlete's athletic participation as it relates to being skilled and a potentially successful employee. This further underlines the importance of uncovering greater understanding of student-athletes' leader development.

Social Construction of Leadership and Leader Development

Ferkins et al. (2018) highlighted a shift in sport leadership research away from the leader-centric focus and towards a more leader development perspective. There is a greater emphasis on leadership theories focused on including followers, and developing leaders to create a better tomorrow, such as authentic and servant leadership (Ferkins et al., 2018; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). The integration of these two leadership theories has helped give rise to greater scholarly attention on the social construction of leadership (Billsberry et al., 2018; Dee et al. 2018) and provides further evidence of the shift toward a more developmental focus.

Arguably, the social construction of leadership further takes into consideration the reality and perception of the individual or observer (Billsberry et al., 2018); however, social construction still does not fully address *how* leaders develop or what micro-moments aid in leader development. In sport, the social construction of leadership paradigm views leadership as an experience based on interactions and formations of people through shared experiences (Ferkins et al., 2018; Ospina & Foldy, 2009). Often these shared experiences are most effective in creating the social construction of leadership when a formal leader in a group does not exist (Ferkins et al., 2018) or when anyone in a group can potentially step up to lead the group through a particular situation. Additionally, at the root of social construction of leadership is that anyone in a group can perceive anyone else as a leader. To this point, gaining feedback or insights into how one perceives another in the group to be developing or have developed as a leader, builds off the perception focus of socially constructed leadership. If anyone can be perceived as leader, then anyone perceiving a specific

person as a leader would then also be able to offer perspective on how that person develops as a leader. This can then provide a 360-degrees view of insights towards one's leader development when that person's leaders (i.e., supervisor or coach), peers, and followers detail how that person has developed into a leader or continues to do so. Therefore, understanding of the interactions between leader and follower, and peer-to-peer needs to be greater, especially on the type, quality, and quantity of interactions. Such interactions are representative of potential micro-moments of development that are otherwise missed in large intervention-based leadership research (Avolio & Vogelgesang-Lester, 2011).

Lacking in the current research stream is an exploration of how a leader develops through micro-moments, along with identification of these micro-moments of development. Leader development research has been slow to progress due to the complexity of trying to merge two complicated constructs (leadership and development) into one (Day & Sin, 2011). We believe that incorporating the social construction of leadership paradigm and an emphasis on micro-moments of development can aid in advancing the leader development research, particularly as it pertains to how women NCAA student-athletes develop into leaders.

Leadership and Leader Development for Women in Sport

Leaders in many contexts, especially in male-prevalent positions and cultures like sport, have been influenced by gender-appropriate behaviors, expectations, and representation expectations (see Burton, 2015; Eagly, 2007; Schull, 2016), so it is important to note girls and boys have learned to lead in different ways (Hoyt & Johnson, 2011), and society expects them to behave accordingly in their leadership roles (Eagly, 2007). However, research on leader and leadership development of young women has only recently garnered attention (Rorem & Bajaj, 2012; Leberman, 2017), and the focus has been on youth sports and sport participation (see EY & espnW, 2015; Leberman, 2017;).

Stevenson's (2010) research revealed women who played high school sports earned more when they entered the workforce and had developed valued attributes like teamwork, communication, assertiveness, competitiveness, and discipline. Additionally, EY and espnW (2015) highlighted the value of sport participation for C-suite executive women. Although sport participation has been a tool for developing leader skills (see Leberman, 2017), particularly building confidence, increasing self-esteem, fostering positive health behavior, and physical activity for women (Barr-Anderson et al., 2012; Taylor, 2014), simply being an athlete and participating in sport does not translate into leadership (Extejt & Smith, 2009), so it is necessary to provide opportunities to develop and exercise being a leader (Gould & Voelker, 2012).

Addressing the gap in understanding women NCAA student-athlete leader development can advance the understanding of micro-moments' role in the leader development process. As such, and drawn from the leader development and social construction leadership literature above, the following research questions were developed to guide the current study:

RQ1: What micro-moments impact women student-athlete leader development in the context of NCAA Division III sport?

RQ2: How do women student-athletes perceive the relationship between micro-moments and leader development in the context of NCAA Division III sport?

Method

To address both research questions, a case study method was implemented to understand the complex phenomenon of micro-moments and leader development. Given that case study methodology involves examining a real-life setting to help provide in-depth exploration of a bounded system (i.e., case) over time through various data collections (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2013), we believed this to be the most appropriate approach to allowing the rich data to reach its full impact. Further, recent sport leadership research has successfully implemented a case study methodology (O'Boyle et al., 2023), illustrating the value of a case study approach in the sport leadership area to help create enhanced understanding and insights in a specific context. In the current case study, we aimed to enhance the understanding and insights of women student-athletes' leader development through micro-moments and the dynamic, complex nature of such development. The main source of data were semi-structured interviews with women student-athletes and head coaches of two NCAA Division III teams. Given the current research was aimed at uncovering what micro-moments impacted women student-athlete leader development and how they perceive the micro-moments in their leader development journey, the case study approach with in-depth interviews of women student-athletes and their coaches was determined to be the most appropriate way to gather the necessary information. To further enrich the data in our case, we included observations of the two teams during practice as well as during each of their respective leadership council meetings. Direct observations were included to holistically see interactions of as many participants as possible across a variety of team contexts that they may be involved in (i.e., leadership council meetings and practices) as opposed to only one context, such as practice, meetings, or games. Although each team had defined positions of leadership in the head coach, the assistant coach, and team captains, we did not assign any of the remaining participants to be a follower or leader in the spirit of the social construction of leadership to allow for participants to determine who a leader was (including whether they themselves were a leader), or if they believed anyone was a leader (Ferkins et al., 2018).

Setting and Instrumentation

Using a purposive sampling technique to help address the lack of focus on women leadership development (Leberman, 2017), two women's intercollegiate athletic teams at a NCAA Division III university in the southern part of the United States (US) were chosen for the current study. One team was a soccer team and the other was a lacrosse team. All players interviewed identified as women, as did the lacrosse

head coach, and only the soccer team's head coach identified was a man. We interviewed and observed each head coach and the players, while also including the assistant coach of each team in the observations. However, the assistant coach for the lacrosse team left mid-season before we could interview her, and the assistant soccer coach was unable to be scheduled for an interview due to time conflicts. In addition to the typical team structure of a head coach, assistant coach, and team captains, both teams happened to also have a leadership council, which consisted of the coaches and team-elected player representatives. The leadership council meetings were observed regularly to enrich the context of the current study through another potential context through which development may occur. Leadership council duties included communicating non-game related information to the rest of the team (such as team events outside of practices and games), and relaying information from other players on the team to coaches (such as attitude issues, players losing focus, and cliques forming). Both head coaches wanted leadership councils on their teams to offer another leadership experience avenue to players who may not be elected as a team captain but would still serve the team in these other leadership capacities. While not an intended emphasis of the study at the outset, the leadership council context added supplemental data that enriched the entire case study of both teams.

Data Collection

Data were collected during each team's practices and leadership council meetings throughout their respective seasons. Qualitative interviews were conducted by two of the authors during team practices and lasted between 20 and 35 minutes each. All team members had an opportunity to be interviewed. We determined the best approach to conducting the interviews was to include a multilevel view (i.e., coaches, leadership council members, team captains, and regular players) to offer a robust depiction of each participant's development and role in developing others. Further, this approach allowed us to determine whether participants viewed any fellow participants as leaders. A multilevel interview also helped to guard against a participant (e.g., coaches) inflating anyone's own (e.g., a favorite player of the coach) development and leadership skills. We instituted a multilevel or 360-degree interview, which encompassed a supervisor in each head coach as well as team captains for those who were not in a leadership position while also offering the peer level to be included (i.e., captain to captain, player to player) and the follower to leader level (i.e., player or captain to coach, player to captain). The 360-degree interview, which involves interviewing the person or level of interest as well as their supervisor and peers has been used in corporate coaching research (Lawler, 2011). Additionally, such a multilevel feedback process involving one's own interview, the interview of a supervisor, and the interview of a peer has proved beneficial in education leadership research (Feldhoff et al., 2014) as a natural way to highlight how leadership contexts continue to be co-constructed by leaders and followers (Ferkins et al., 2018; Spillane, 2006). In total, we conducted 30 semi-structured interviews; 15 student-athletes, and the head coach from soccer, and 13 student-athletes, and the head coach from lacrosse.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study was granted and allowed for the interviews to be audio recorded as well as for the observations to take place.

Participants

All participants were women, with the exception of one male coach. Student-athlete ages ranged from 18-22 years old, the years in school ranged from freshman (6), sophomore (6), junior (8), to senior (8). Coaches' ages are withheld to maintain confidentiality. A majority of the 30 participants ($n = 25$) identified as White, followed by three Black/ African American participants, and two Asian-American participants. All names listed are pseudonyms, to further ensure confidentiality.

We constructed an interview guide informed by leader development and social construction of leadership theory and literature (Day & Sin, 2011; Ferkins et al., 2018). Sample interview questions included "Do you want to become a leader?"; "What does becoming a leader mean to you?"; "Do you feel as though there are any specific interactions, incidents, or routines that have contributed to your development as a leader? If so, what are they?"; "What are your perceptions of the coaching staff's ability to develop you and your teammates as leaders?"; and "Do you perceive that anyone on the team has developed as a leader? If so, how have they developed as a leader?" The coaches were asked the same questions with only minor word adjustments when appropriate, such as: "What are your perceptions of the players' ability to develop their teammates as leaders?"

The two authors who conducted the interviews also conducted observations during practices and the leadership council meetings throughout each team's season to observe interactions for additional leader development moments. Direct observation was completed at 12 practice sessions, each lasting approximately 30 minutes for a total of six observation hours, with field notes recorded at each observation. We also observed six leadership council meetings, with each meeting lasting 60 minutes. Field notes were compared and a debriefing session (Creswell, 2012) took place between observers to ensure reliability and accuracy of field notes. Consent for observations was gained through each of the coaches, with each player verbally consenting before the start of each practice or meeting.

Data Analysis

After transcriptions were transcribed by hand by the same authors who conducted the interviews and observations, the data analysis process began for the interview transcriptions and observations' field notes. The first step of coding consisted of the same two authors who conducted interviews and observations to code the same transcription independently for common words, phrases, and themes related to micro-moments and leader development (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). After coding the first interview, the two authors then compared their coding and interpretations. Both authors demonstrated similar initial codes of 14 and 16 each, with slightly different wording for a code that held the same meaning across the authors for example, peer-to-peer interactions and peer influence held the same meaning to

each respective author as their way to describe the peer-level interactions that influenced one's leader development. Consensus was arrived at during this second comparison with only minor semantics (i.e., communication skills versus learning better communication) used to describe the same passage. Through discussion the authors arrived at the consensus 12 codes to be used. After this consensus was gained on the first interview, the same authors coded another (same) interview independently and then compared their codes and meanings a second time. After the success of being able to arrive at consensus after this interview, the authors went about coding the remaining interviews independently, splitting the interviews while following these initial groupings. The same approach was used when coding the observation data as the authors coded one date's observation notes independently at the same time of the first interview being coded. Observational data included instances of the same groupings from the transcriptions, such as different women student-athletes taking the lead and being vocal in different team settings (i.e., practice, leadership council meetings, post-practice or game meetings). In following with the case study methodology, we took the resulting 12 groupings or subthemes and through axial coding (Creswell, 2012; O'Boyle et al., 2023) had three major themes emerge: empowerment, modeling leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership. The subthemes and themes can be found in Table 1. While the coding process was inductive by nature, we were able to link the major themes to the leader development literature and social construction of leadership scholarship (e.g., Billsberry et al., 2018; Gardner et al., 2005; van Dierendonck, 2011) while also recognizing that many of the interactions and reflections noted by the participants represented micro-moments. Though Table 1 is meant to help organize the themes and subthemes, through the coding process as is often the situation for case study research, we saw overlap of a subtheme potentially relating to more than one main theme. This is noted in the findings section when appropriate.

Lastly, member checks with interviewees were conducted to verify accuracy of the transcripts and to confirm study interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Study participants generally agreed with our interpretations and only had minor grammatical changes to their transcripts. Trustworthiness and credibility were ensured with two of the authors constantly comparing their interpretations throughout the coding process, and by testing interpretations with a third reviewer who was not involved in data collection but has theoretical background in the research topic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

Below, we present the findings related to both research questions, which aimed to identify participant perceptions of the micro-moments of leader development and examined participant perceptions on how micro-moments develop leaders. Three themes emerged: empowerment, modeling leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership. Each theme is detailed below along with supporting quotes and observations.

Table 1. Subthemes, major themes

Subthemes	Themes
Opportunities to grow as a leader Interactions with the leader Experience Reflection on their development How not to be a leader	Empowerment
Experience and familiarity with the sport Communication skills Servant and authentic leadership Relatability	Modeling leadership
Peer-to-peer interactions Support for one another Peer leaders' approachability	Peer-to-peer leadership

Empowerment

Participants spoke about the importance of existing leaders facilitating their personal development into leaders. All 30 participants talked about empowerment, and our direct observations corroborated the theme's importance as a micro-moment of leader development. Empowerment emerged from each team, and from players and coaches alike. We present the findings related to empowerment through connecting the subthemes that composed it as a major theme. Day et al. (2014) and Hirst et al. (2004) noted how one's experience and skill development during the process of gaining experience is integral in one's leader development. In the current study, Emily, a soccer player, noted her and her teammates' opportunities to grow as a leader as an important experience when she mentioned "we get to figure out what went wrong, and own the solution. He's (Coach Mark) there to make sure we get it eventually." At practice we observed specific examples of participants taking action when given opportunities to grow as a leader, such as when Coach Mark asked the team to give him an evaluation of how they played during a weekend along with an action plan on how to address issues. Coach Mark then allowed the team's action plan to become that day's practice plan. Participants were able to essentially be coach or leader for a day and critique their own performance while constructing a plan to address weaknesses in their performance. Similar opportunities were evident on the lacrosse team.

For example, Heather noted “we were able to go to Coach Leigh with ideas for practice plans and justify how the plan would help us address what we needed to work on based on our recent games.” Heather went on to mention how Coach Leigh “was more impressed or concerned with *why* we believed we needed to do certain drills or practice plays because she knew then that we were growing and not just picking easy or fun drills.” The participants illustrated development into a leader through their actions when they were given the opportunity to act as a leader. As Day et al. (2014) mentioned related to experience in the leader development process, part of the experience included learning experience with a leader. This proved to be important in our study such that Emma (soccer) noted:

I also think it helps that coach texts me all the time, calls me into the office to watch film, so that when I am on the field, I know that I’m going to give correct instructions . . . because it’s coming from those interactions and coming from him.

We later observed Emma give instructions and encouragement from the sidelines during practices, even when she was injured. Darcy (soccer) perceived interactions with the Coach Mark to help her own development as she mentioned she learned how to interact with people on a higher level (i.e., as a leader’s peer). Specifically, Darcy noted: “Learning how to interact with people on the same level, because they’re older than me. Speaking to him and people like him, our assistant coach, our leadership council, was important because that’s what you’re going to do outside of soccer.”

Further, we saw experience correspond to empowerment which tended to be related to those participants who were more tenured or had been playing the sport for several years. As Hirst and colleagues (2004) found, one’s length of experiences can strongly contribute to how high up an individual can climb in a group’s hierarchy. Those participants who had already gone through experiences such as opportunities to grow as a leader, had been playing longer, and were more vocal took charge during specific drills. For example, Ina (soccer) perceived that she will be better equipped to lead in future seasons because of the experience she gained: “I will be able to step up and lead next year for sure because of my experiences with the team in my first couple of years here.” Additionally, we observed Julie, a senior and team captain, who was on both teams, enact a vocal approach to keep them on task. During soccer, Julie would often be the most vocal player during a team huddle while in a timeout. Julie mentioned how her experience playing both sports in college gave her confidence to be a leader in her next steps in life:

I know that when I go to work or grad school, now I can lead there too because I came in and led these teams. I didn’t know everyone when I started, and it will be the same at work or in a grad program. I feel confident that I can keep leading myself and leading others even when I’m not playing a sport anymore.

While we analyzed the data, it was evident that many aspects of empowerment were intertwined, including reflection on their development. Recent research has even noted how important reflection and reflexivity in reflection can be for both a research

process and development process (Damon et al., 2022). Ashley (lacrosse) represented how reflection on their development and experience interacted when she stated: “When I first got here, I was new, I was shy, and now I’m not as shy, I’m more comfortable with everyone, I’m experienced and it’s easier to speak up.” Further, Coach Leigh shared how she set out to give her team more opportunities to grow as leaders and gain experience: “This year I did more to push it back on them for ownership.” She elaborated on an instance where a game did not go well, and she asked the team to reflect on its performance, and reflect on their development: “Here’s everything I did to prep you for the game, did everyone understand?” When the team replied in the affirmative, Coach Leigh then put the onus on her team to come up with a solution: “I just turned it back on them, and said okay you all understood, you’re all saying I did my job, I can’t fix this so where are [we] going to go from here?” Coach Leigh concluded her message with “they have to take ownership and understand that it’s their program as much as it is my program.” Thus, Coach Leigh gave her players opportunities to grow through their interactions with the leader, by reflecting on their development or performance and co-creating future plans.

We also found that while most participants spoke to wanting to become a leader (80% indicated desires to be a leader), a few did not. Those who did not wish to be leaders reflected on their role(s) in interviews. For example, Sandra (soccer) did not perceive herself as a leader: “I don’t necessarily see myself as a huge leader on the team or that I want to. Wherever I’m needed, that’s where I go, I just do my job.” While it was surprising to hear participants admit that they did not desire to be a formal leader, with the backdrop of both social construction of leadership (Billsberry et al., 2018) allowing them to still potentially be perceived as a leader by someone, along with these being young age-adults who are growing in their self-awareness of leader development (Zacharatos et al., 2000), we recognize that there was still evidence of *some* development overall and micro-moments allowed for such self-development. An interesting aspect to emerge from the data was when participants spoke on previous leaders that they did not want to emulate as their illustration of how not to be a leader. While each of the participants spoke to this in some fashion, some pointed to a previous coach or compared two current coaches. Specifically, Payton (lacrosse) mentioned how “my field hockey coach . . . helps to create cliques among everyone there (on the field hockey team). Coach Leigh doesn’t create a bad culture like (she) does with field hockey. I try to be like Coach Leigh.”

Other participants on the soccer team spoke to how Coach Mark evolved as a leader, from one whom they once were not sure they wanted to follow to the leader he is now. Riley explained her perception: “When he first got here, it was a shock. He micromanaged everything and had a short temper with us. I didn’t think I would keep playing if Coach was like this every year.” Riley then mentioned the perceived change in Coach Mark throughout the last couple of seasons:

It is night and day with how he communicates more effectively with us, and he trusts us more. I think he realized after being here for a couple of seasons that his system was in place and he did not have to micromanage us.

Thus, overall, empowerment was perceived as a micro-moment process that aided

an individual's development into a leader by providing that individual the necessary opportunities to gain leadership experience.

Modeling Leadership

Twenty-eight of the 30 participants perceived modeling leadership as being a critical micro-moment in leader development. More specifically, modeling leadership was often various micro-moments for participants. Similar to empowerment, modeling leadership also related to experience.

As noted earlier, some of the participants played multiple sports, which added a comparison aspect to their reflections as well as additional experience to their empowerment and ability to reflect on their development (Day et al., 2014). Modeling leadership also took on a different perspective towards experience as it related to the players' assessing a coach's experience with a sport and whether that imbued the player to integrate the coach's experience and knowledge into their own. Allie noted differences between Coach Leigh and her field hockey coach when she mentioned Coach Leigh's experience and familiarity with the sport: "Coach Leigh knows so much about the game. She's a better fit as coach. She's even better (at lacrosse) than my field hockey coach is at field hockey." Further, we observed each head coach rely on his or her experience and familiarity with the sport throughout practices, specifically when Coach Mark or Coach Leigh would stop the team during a drill or scrimmage to breakdown why what they were practicing was important to being successful in soccer and lacrosse, respectively. When leaders explained the purpose behind a part of practice, they aided their players' development by illustrating their own experience and familiarity with the sport, while also enhancing the trust that players had in their coaches' experience and knowledge.

Beyond observing each coach use his or her experience and familiarity during practice, participants also spoke about the passion each coach had for the sport, and how this passion was evident when the coach would speak. For example, Beth (soccer) explained her perception of how Coach Mark's years of soccer experience showed when he would talk with the team formally (during practices and games) and informally (outside of the practices and games): "Coach has a passion for soccer that you notice when he speaks. Whether it's about our games or about the National team, it's evident that he's in tune with soccer. I think he lives it and breathes it."

Next to lend itself towards modeling leadership were communication skills. Communication skills were often intertwined with the previous experience and familiarity with the sport subtheme. Emma (soccer) pointed to the new assistant coach's (Sarah) experience and familiarity with the sport and her communication skills:

Coach Sarah *knows* what she is talking about. She says things in a way you can understand, and she gives an example of how to implement it on the field. The assistant last year, I didn't really respect her leadership or communication.

Emma believed she was developing with Coach Sarah because of her experience as a soccer player and how she communicated with Emma. Emma did not feel that

she developed as a leader with the previous assistant coach, sharing that she would not even adhere to what that coach had to say at times. Additionally, communication skills were evident among leadership council members. Specifically, Pam (soccer) mentioned how one of the soccer team's leadership council member's (Blakely) communication skills changed over time and perceived this change to represent Blakely's leader development. Pam shared: "Last year Blakely was so aggressive, I never asked her anything. I was worried about her being a leader this year, but she has turned it around. She works so hard in practice and is always encouraging everyone." Pam further punctuated Blakely's development through her communication skills when highlighting how "Blakely now talks so much more respectfully to everyone and is welcoming. She realized she's a leader now, and that she has responsibilities to her team, not just herself."

While authentic and servant leadership were intertwined with one another, one of the common threads connecting these two in our study was the personality trait of conscientiousness, a previously found important trait of being positively assessed as a leader by one's own leaders, peers, and followers (Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). The interview data and observations illustrated study participants perceived that both head coaches exhibited aspects of authentic and servant leadership styles, namely relational transparency, stewardship, and self-awareness (Gardner et al., 2005; van Dierendonck, 2011). These traits of each leadership style were perceived as manifesting in a few ways, such as stewardship when each leader always started off the leadership council meetings by asking how each member was doing that day in school, in their personal life, and if they had any issues they needed to speak on. Doing so helped participants know that their leader cared about them and their development beyond the sport; often encouraging development in other areas besides sport. While working with Coach Leigh on her honors leadership project, Penny shared: "I had never thought about grad school, but Coach told me I could go for an MBA to get into business. She helped me layout a plan on how to get extra experience and when to apply."

Coach Leigh had a 'no questions asked' mental health day that each player was allotted whenever she needed a break from practice, and Coach Leigh also shared how "I want to create people who can think critically." As for self-awareness and addressing their own weaknesses as a leader, Coach Mark specifically noted: "I always felt that having an assistant coach, especially one who played on the team at some point would help me convey how I care and relate to the team more than I could on my own as a male." Further, relational transparency came through when Leigh mentioned, "I try to be open and communicative, and open and transparent with my team." We confirmed that the followers believed Coach Leigh accomplished transparency as Ashley believed "she's very good at taking into account what we have to say and making sure everyone has a voice."

Lastly, relatability was another important part of modeling leadership. Relatability helped players believe they were on a similar leader development path as their coach or peers they perceived as a leader since their leader could relate to what players were experiencing. Julie (soccer and lacrosse) highlighted a difference she per-

ceived between the two coach's relatability: "I can go to Coach Leigh about anything and feel comfortable. I like Coach Mark, he's helped me a lot with soccer . . . but personal life, I ask her since she's been in our shoes as a female college athlete." Coach Mark recognized he may have a relatability shortcoming and attempted to address the shortcoming with his hiring of a former player (i.e., female) as an assistant coach. Overall, participants then wished to emulate their leaders, as Allie noted: "Coach Leigh is someone I want to be like. If I were to coach one day, or in general life be a leader, I want to be like her." The modeling leadership theme as a micro-moment demonstrated how participants perceived that they were aided in their leader development when a leader has related sport experience, enacts positive communication skills, embodies aspects of a servant and authentic leader, and illustrates relatability.

Peer-to-peer Leadership

The final theme to emerge from the data was the perceived importance of peer-to-peer leadership as a micro-moment of leader development. Specifically, peers were perceived as helping create a support network for participants to lean on while developing into leaders. Most participants ($n = 25$) mentioned an aspect of peer-to-peer leadership during their interviews. However, most younger participants (freshman) did not make note of this theme. Peer-to-peer leadership allowed players to feel comfortable around one another and express their authentic selves, while also building a welcoming culture – similar aspects to authentic and servant leadership as noted in the modeling leadership theme.

The foundational aspect of peer-to-peer leadership were peer-to-peer interactions, which referred to participants interacting with each other both outside of the sport setting and inside of it. Ina (soccer) shared her perception of the difference in the leadership council members from year one to year two as it related to creating a welcoming environment to foster development. She specifically mentioned the difference led to deeper peer-to-peer interactions and manifested greater confidence: "Outside of soccer . . . you're like, wow this person is a lot like me, and look at what they can do on the field, I can do that, too."

Additionally, Ashley (lacrosse) noted peer-to-peer interactions with leadership council members helped her realize that she could become a leader, an early step in the development process. Through interacting with one specific leadership council member, Ashley was able set a goal to become a leader (as she perceived a leader to be) and understand how to achieve her goal. She recalled Brittany (leadership council member) as being "the first person I actually knew to tell me people respect you, and she was the first person who taught me to be a leader and to believe that I could be a leader." In addition, we were able to observe Payton and Allie, who both played on the lacrosse team and the field hockey team, bond during warmups at lacrosse practice. Specifically, Payton and Allie performed warmup drills together, with one waiting for the other at the beginning of practice so they were not alone during drills. They also offered encouragement and support to each other in regard to their progress in learning lacrosse.

Building off the peer-to-peer interactions, there was evidence of a specific type of valued interaction among participants. We observed participants on both teams offer support for one another. This was evident as players offered encouragement on the sidelines during practices, as well as support for one another's ideas during the leadership council meetings. For example, during the third lacrosse leadership council meeting, Jesse offered Kate support not only for her pregame warmup routine idea, but also for her play on the field as Kate had demonstrated negative self-talk during that meeting. We later asked Jesse about this specific interaction, and she replied: "I know Kate would have done the same for me, and she has done the same. I've seen her grow a lot as a person and player and didn't want her believing otherwise." The above interaction illustrates how perceived support for one another can aid in keeping the leader development process moving forward positively, for both an individual and a group. Further, this also sheds light on the role of socially constructing leadership in the leader development process during specific micro-moments. Jesse and Kate needed to have perceived one another as a leader in order to have the micro-moment of support and encouragement in the first place.

Support for one another was also evident when participants recognized not all of their peers had played the sport before, and provided support for those who were simultaneously trying to learn a new sport while competing at the intercollegiate level. Bridget (lacrosse) specifically discussed supporting her teammates who had not played lacrosse before but joined the team in college:

I think you have to put yourself in their shoes, because if I were to just pick up a sport that I never played, like basketball or something, I would have no idea what to do...I have a lot of respect for what they're doing.

We often observed Bridget interacting with the new lacrosse players on the sidelines, many times before she would interact with players who had experience playing lacrosse prior to college.

Lastly, peer leaders' approachability played a key role in determining the quality and frequency of peer-to-peer interactions, and thus peer-to-peer leadership. Ina (soccer) once again spoke to this aspect as she perceived leadership council members to be more approachable in year two compared to year one: "We didn't have nearly as welcoming of a group (leadership council) last year when it was basically one girl running everything. This year everyone can speak, and everyone is heard!" In addition, the lacrosse players emulated Coach Leigh by allowing everyone to have a voice through peer leaders' approachability, as Raegan (lacrosse) stated: "It's the support for one another that lets us take risks or express our own voices. I think we have all grown into leaders by being able to find our own voice through that support. No one's voice is diminished." Raegan's quote particularly highlights the possibility that anyone can be perceived as a leader, a premise found in the social construction of leadership literature (Billsberry et al., 2018). In addition, we observed 18 instances across both teams where a participant approached another, more senior, participant to get help with a skill. Often this would lead to at least the two participants, if not more, staying after practice to perform their own drills. Julie highlighted the

importance of these sessions: “I realized they wanted to get better and believed that I could help. We really bonded during those extra sessions.” These sessions demonstrated another application of support through peer leader’s approachability.

Overall, the qualitative data and observations answered our two research questions. We identified the perceived micro-moments of leader development to be the daily interactions, decisions, and reflections among leaders and participants. These moments happened during leadership council meetings, practice, and other interactions between peers reflected on by the participants outside of the sport. The development through the micro-moments revolved around empowerment of participants, modeling leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership interactions. Next, we discuss the findings, illustrate theoretical and practical implications, and note limitations and future research directions.

Discussion

The purpose of this case study was to determine how women intercollegiate student-athletes develop into leaders through micro-moments. We constructed two research questions to guide our study: what micro-moments impact women NCAA student-athlete leader development in the context of sport (RQ1)? and how do women NCAA student-athletes perceive the relationship between micro-moments and leader development in the context of sport (RQ2)? Research question one was answered through the three major themes of empowerment of women student-athletes, modeling leadership around women student-athletes, and reflecting on the peer-to-peer leadership provided from woman student-athlete to woman student-athlete. Research question two was answered as participants reflected on specific micro-moment interactions and opportunities to lead and the experience gained as the key relationship between those micro-moments and crediting them for their own leader development.

Overall, RQ1 and RQ2 were answered through three themes that emerged from the qualitative and observational data: empowerment, modeling leadership, and peer-to-peer leadership. First, the concept of empowerment here accurately reflects how empowerment has been described in literature related to servant leadership and follower development (Conger, 2004; van Dierendonck, 2011). The constant micro-moment of potential empowerment allowed participants to flourish in contexts that best suited their leader development level and overall personality traits. For example, as noted earlier, Ina (soccer) and Ashley (lacrosse) reflected on their own growth in confidence to be a leader in the future whether it was in lacrosse or in other contexts of their lives, thanks to being empowered consistently to gain leader experience through their sport participation. Next, the identified micro-moment of modeling leadership is done constantly, whether intended or not and whether in a positive or negative way. While several participants noted key examples of how they do not wish to develop as a leader based on seeing poor leadership being modeled around them, some, such as Ashley (lacrosse) took the role to model leadership to others seriously. She noted “when I am leading, I am not leading the whole team

and I'm okay with that. If somebody needs my help, I can help them and be a role model to that person." Finally, in similar fashion to modeling leadership being a near constant micro-moment, peer-to-peer leadership as a micro-moment of development was identified to answer RQ1 while also providing strong evidence for RQ2 as evidence of the relationship between micro-moments and leader development. For example, Riley (soccer) noted how "it's more important for the people around you to have success than yourself. If I am a boss, I would want to make sure my employees were successful first." Riley's statement not only points to the emphasis on how to lead one's peers but also how to continue to lead others even when a formal leadership position has been attained. Further, her statement identifies the conscientiousness trait mentioned by Strang and Kuhnert (2009) as an underlining current to the micro-moment of peer-to-peer leadership. Through Riley's desire to set up those around her for success, this interaction and leadership micro-moment sets her up for positive feedback from those around her, enhancing her leader development and reaffirming it being on the correct path.

The micro-moments occurred through a mix of both intentional and organic avenues. The leadership councils designed by both coaches are examples of intentional efforts to create space and opportunities for others besides team captains to potentially develop as a leader. Within this intentional micro-moment effort, through authentic leadership, the coaches and student-athletes recognized what their own strengths and weaknesses were and how to supplement the decision-making process or actions through allowing those whose strengths filled their own weakness to step in, particularly in different contexts. For example, Lily (soccer, sophomore) did not speak unless directly spoken to during the leadership council meetings, a weakness of speaking up in front of her peers in a close context. However, when she was on the field during practice, Lily was one of the most vocal people on the field as she communicated directions and called out coverages to her teammates, illustrating a clear strength for recognizing game situations and confident to communicate them in this context. However, she noted that if it were not for interacting with more peers and the coaches directly through the leadership council context, she may not have developed enough to exhibit her own leadership on the field. In addition to the intentional avenues of micro-moments, organic micro-moments also existed and were developed. While hanging out as a team outside of the sport functions had intentional design, the unknown nature of how peer-to-peer interactions and leadership during those unstructured times lends them to organic micro-moments. Similar to the quote mentioned earlier, Jesse (lacrosse) noted how learning more about her peers during movie nights and discovering she had similar interests with several peers led to deeper trust and support with those peers during practices and games. Thus, further highlighting not only an example of micro-moments in an unstructured, organic context, but also how such micro-moments can positively impact peers in structured and intentional contexts such as a sport.

Lastly, the current case study discovered micro-moments of women NCAA student-athlete development at the DIII level. DIII is inherently aimed towards the most balanced emphasis of all NCAA divisions between academics and athletics. As such,

the context we studied may lend itself to more opportunities for micro-moments around a sport rather than through the sport, such as a DI team would, given the greater emphasis on winning, more travel, and depending on the sport; pressure to be successful from a revenue generation viewpoint compared to the DIII teams studied here.

Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, leaders (such as the coaches in our current study) should encourage empowerment, model leadership, and allow for peer-to-peer interactions to facilitate leader development. Leaders of student-athletes (i.e., coaches) can accomplish this by empowering individuals to lead groups such as instituting their own version of a leadership council or creating groups to handle team-specific tasks such as organizing activities during road trips or give alternating groups of players a chance to design and run their own practice. Individuals will gain leadership experience while a leader can evaluate an individual's leader development progress. Additionally, coaches can create spaces to facilitate peer-to-peer leadership interactions by rotating members of groups during practice or in less formal spaces such as non-sport-related gatherings like movie nights. Leaders can be present during such interactions to ensure each follower has an opportunity to interact, however, some gatherings without a leader are recommended to allow followers to speak freely among their peers. Through empowering individuals and allowing for peer-to-peer leadership, coaches need to ensure that they are modeling leadership behaviors to their student-athletes. One way for a coach to ensure this is to solicit feedback from their student-athletes or an objective source (such as a higher up leader) regarding the leadership style the leader is exhibiting. A final general implication for those in athletic departments is to engage in similar practices of micro-moments to allow for and encourage follower leader development off the field. For example, developing an assistant athletic director or other follower in the department can prepare them for a greater role or enhance their leader capabilities in their current role. When an opening for a promotion comes to be, the athletic department will be potentially better prepared to fill that role internally with a capable replacement; thus saving on costs, keeping their own best talent in-house, and setting an example of how follower leader development through micro-moments can aid all levels of athletics, from administration to coaches to student-athletes.

For those in the NCAA DIII level of athletics, further practical implications are recommended. First, given the nature of DIII to emphasize a balance between athletics and academics; coaches, sport administrators, student-athletes, and teachers can all recognize the unique opportunities for micro-moments that can exist on the playing field and in the classroom. Recognizing how micro-moments can be instituted in various contexts can help to further enhance their positive impact on the leader development of the student-athletes. This is especially true since DIII does not have the same travel requirements as the DI level or emphasis on preparing student-athletes for potentially turning professional. The smaller nature of DIII campuses can allow for greater communication and synergy between coaches, sport administrators,

and teachers to help reinforce micro-moments for student-athletes in each context. Next, the DIII level also separates itself from DI and DII by having more women athletic directors than the other levels. This can also help enhance the modeling leadership aspect of micro-moments by providing a likelier chance that women student-athletes can see a woman in a sport leadership position at their own institution and further broaden the context through which micro-moments can be reinforced and open potential mentorship opportunities that are not as easily found at other NCAA levels. Lastly, other DIII institutions and teams can look to integrate similar leadership councils as the teams in our study have, or otherwise more easily create leadership opportunities for a higher percentage of their student-athletes compared to DI, where a greater emphasis on winning is typically placed along with greater travel requirements, which detract from a student-athlete's time to potentially gain leadership experience elsewhere.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the current findings advance leader development research in sport (Welty Peachey et al., 2015) through focusing on intercollegiate female student-athlete leader development through micro-moments. Our findings revealed that a continued emphasis on follower-centric research perspectives in sport (Ferkins et al., 2018) is needed to make important and distinct contributions to the leader development research in sport. The current study also illustrated how despite making valuable contributions, current leadership theories in sport (Ferkins et al., 2018) have not adequately addressed the leader development gap or adequately focused on student-athletes as developing leaders. Particularly, focusing on this stage of development allowed us to explore student-athletes discovering their authentic selves, developing autonomy, and increasing their decision-making authority. Additionally, much of the leadership research has been focused on large interventions (Avolio & Vogelgesang-Lester, 2011), and thus, the current study makes an important theoretical contribution by showing that micro-moments are also critical to the understanding of how leaders develop. These micro-moments of leader development help explain part of the black box of the leadership process (Yammarino, 2013) that has not yet been thoroughly examined. Additionally, through continuation of this work and other follower-centric research in sport, we can potentially turn back the page from trying to solve leadership issues at the leadership level to solving issues at the follower or pre-formal leadership level by ensuring followers develop into better leaders to begin with (Damon et al., 2022). As we further our understanding of the leader development process through micro-moments, we can then emphasize followers as the next generation of leaders and strive to develop them as better, more ethical, and more conscientious leaders. We provide further guidance on future questions to address in the future research section below.

Limitations and Future Research

We would be remiss not to mention limitations to the current study. First, the current study used a case study approach by interviewing and observing participants

about their leader development journey. Such an approach possesses the limitation of relying on the participants' views and recollections of their own leadership abilities, a romanticizing of leadership biased by the participants' views of themselves (Bligh et al., 2011; Meindl et al., 1985). We triangulated our data to mitigate this risk as much as possible. To further address this limitation, future research should examine micro-moments of leader development longitudinally, as well as through a grounded theory approach to incorporate many views on a leader's development. A beneficial question to be answered through such an approach includes, do these student-athletes individuals move into leadership roles after transitioning out of their intercollegiate playing time (Smith & Hardin, 2020)?

A second limitation was the current study only examined intercollegiate student-athlete leader development in two women's NCAA teams. However, as we conducted a case study approach, we do not intend that our findings be used to generalize all other sport contexts or even different NCAA divisions and teams. Future research should aim to examine leader development in men's NCAA teams who have been coached by men and women to potentially gain insights into whether men and women student-athletes develop differently or through different micro-moments. Further, to expand beyond on-the-field sport teams into other campus contexts. For example, examining micro-moments in leader development across other contexts that student-athletes are involved in would further expand our understanding of how micro-moments outside of sport can potentially carry an effect over into one's sport participation and leader development through sport. Future research should also examine how various micro-moments may be emphasized or how different micro-moments may exist across different NCAA Division levels. For instance, a sport organization with a highly competitive culture (Division I) may not emphasize peer-to-peer leadership micro-moments as much as at the Division III level. In addition, it could be helpful to examine if sport teams (meaning the coaching staff) at an institution or athletic departments (i.e., athletic department personnel) themselves that strategically focus on leader development experience more effective leader development in their student-athletes than those that do not. Determining if there is a sort of trickle-down effect of leader development through different or similar on-field and off-field micro-moments would further enhance our understanding of any contextual differences or similarities of micro-moments impacting sport leader development. Lastly for a limitation, we acknowledge the sample is comprised of certain demographics (i.e., mostly college aged, White, female student-athletes). Future research would do well to examine how people of different races, gender, and age differ in their leader development and in the micro-moments and interactions that are part of this process.

Conclusion

The current study addresses a research gap of leader development through micro-moments, an area lacking in leadership related research within sport (Damon et al., 2022; Ferkins et al., 2018) and specifically pertaining to student-athletes.

Current findings advance the social construction of leadership and leader development among student-athletes through a focus on the micro-moments or day-to-day instances that affect leader development, as opposed to the broader interventions of previous research (Beghetto, 2015). More work is required within the student-athlete leader development area and an explicit theoretical conceptualization via grounded theory would bolster future research in this area. We encourage scholars to take part in developing this promising research stream .

References

- About NCAA Division III. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ncaa.org/about?division=d3>
- Avolio, B. J., & Vogelgesang-Lester, G. (2011). Beginnings matter in genuine leadership development. In S. E. Murphy, & R. J. Reichard (Eds.), *Early development and leadership: Building the next generation of leaders* (pp. 179-204). Routledge.
- Baker, S. D. (2007). Followership: The theoretical foundation of a contemporary construct. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 14(1), 50–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002831207304343>
- Barr-Anderson, D. J., Laska, M. N., Veblen-Mortenson, S., Farbaksh, K., Dudovitz, B., & Story, M. (2012). A school-based, peer leadership physical activity intervention for 6th graders: Feasibility and results of a pilot study. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 9, 492–499. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.9.4.492>
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.
- Beghetto, R. A. (2015). Creative leaders define themselves in the micromoments of leadership. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 9(3), 72-74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21412>
- Billsberry, J., Mueller, J., Skinner, J., Swanson, S., Corbett, B., & Ferkins, L. (2018). Reimagining leadership in sport management: lessons from the social construction of leadership. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(2), 170-182. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2017-0210>
- Boyce, L. A., Zaccaro, S. J., & Wisecarver, M. Z. (2010). Propensity for self-development of leadership attributes: Understanding, predicting, and supporting performance of leader self-development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(1), 159-178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leafqua.2009.10.012>
- Burton, L. J. (2015). Underrepresentation of women in sport leadership: A review of research. *Sport Management Review*, 18(2), 155–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2014.02.004>
- Chelladurai, P., & Kerwin, S. (2017). *Human Resource Management in Sport and Recreation*. Human Kinetics.
- Chalfin, P., Weight, E., Osborne, B., & Johnson, S. (2015). The Value of Intercollegiate Athletics Participation from the Perspective of Employers who Target Athletes. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 8(1), 1-27.

- Conger, J. A. (2004). Developing leadership capability: What's inside the black box? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(3), 136-139. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2004.14776188>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Damon, Z. J., Leberman, S., Wells, J. E., Burton, L., Ferkins, L., Weese, J., & Peachey, J. W. (2022). Privileging practice in sport leadership: Applying relational reflexivity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 36(4), 394-407. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2020-0407>
- Day, D. V., & Sin, H.-P. (2011). Longitudinal tests of an integrative model of leader development: Charting and understanding developmental trajectories. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(3), 545–560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.04.011>
- Dee, K., Bryham, G., & Ferkins, L. (2018). Advancing leadership in sport management: Revealing the significance of emotional intelligence. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 82-109.
- Doherty, A. J., & Danylchuk, K. E. (1996). Transformational and transactional leadership in interuniversity athletics management. *Journal of Sport Management*, 10(3), 292–309. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.10.3.292>
- Duckworth, A. L., & Quinn, P. D. (2009). Development and validation of the Short Grit Scale (GRIT–S). *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 91(2), 166-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890802634290>
- Eagly, A.H. (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: Resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00326.x>
- Elliot, C., & Stead, V. (2008). Learning from leading women's experience: Towards a sociological understanding. *Leadership*, 4(2), 159–180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715008089636>
- Ericsson, A. K. (2008). Deliberate practice and acquisition of expert performance: a general overview. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 15(11), 988-994. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1553-2712.2008.00227.x>
- Extejt, M. M., & Smith, J. E. (2009). Leadership development through sports team participation. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 8(2), 224–236. <https://doi.org/10.12806/V8/I2/RF7>
- EY & espnW (2015). *Where will you find your next leader?* Retrieved from www.ey.com/gl/en/newsroom/news-releases/news-sport-is-a-critical-lever-in-advancingwomen-at-all-levels-according-to-new-ey-espnw-rep
- Ferkins, L., Skinner, J., & Swanson, S. (2018). Sport leadership: A new generation of thinking. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(2), 77-81. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2018-0054>
- Frawley, S., Favaloro, D., & Schulenkorf, N. (2018). Experience-based leadership development and professional sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(2), 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2017-0124>
- Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., May, D. R., & Walumbwa, F. (2005). “Can you see the real me?” A self-based model of authentic leader and follower devel-

- opment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(3), 343–372. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.003>
- Gould, D., & Voelker, D. K. (2012). Enhancing youth leadership through sport and physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 83(8), 38–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2012.10598828>
- Hoyt, C., & Johnson, S. (2011). Gender and leadership development: The case of female leaders. In S.E. Murphy & R.J. Reichard (eds.) *Early development and leadership: Building the next generation of leaders* (pp. 205–228). Routledge.
- Lawler, S. E. (2011). *Coaching for sustained change: How is it accomplished?* (Doctoral Dissertation, Benedictine University). [ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global](https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/global/docview/23456789).
- Leberman, S. (2017). Future sport leaders: Developing young women to lead. In L. J. Burton & S. Leberman (eds.). *Women in sport leadership: Research and Practice for Change* (pp. 116–129). London: Routledge.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- O’Boyle, I., Shilbury, D., & Ferkins, L. (2023). Leadership in and out of the sport boardroom: New empirical insights. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(1), 188–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1838591>
- Ospina, S., & Foldy, E. (2009). A critical review of race and ethnicity in the leadership literature: Surfacing context, power and the collective dimensions of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(6), 876–896. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.09.005>
- Roem, A., & Bajaj, M. (2012). Cultivating young women’s leadership for a kinder, braver world. Kinder & Braver World Project: Research Series. Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Retrieved from <https://cyber.harvard.edu/node/97245>
- Schull, V. (2016). Female athletes’ conceptions of leadership: Coaching and gender implications. In N.M. LaVoi (ed.) *Women in sports coaching* (pp. 126–138). New York: Routledge.
- Smith, A. B., & Hardin, R. (2020). The transition experiences of Division I and III collegiate athletes. *Journal of Athlete Development and Experience*, 2(3), 142–161. <https://doi.org/10.25035/jade.02.03.01>
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Stevenson, B. (2010). *Beyond the classroom: Using Title IX to measure the return to high school sports*. NBER Working Paper 15728, National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.1162/rest.2010.11623>
- Stokes, P., & Harris, P. (2012). Micro-moments, choice and responsibility in sustainable organizational change and transformation: the Janus dialectic. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 25(4), 595–611. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534811211239245>

- Taylor, J. A. (2014). The impact of the “girls on the move” leadership programme on young female leaders’ self-esteem. *Leisure Studies*, 33(1), 62–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2012.727459>
- van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228–1261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310380462>
- Welty Peachey, J., & Burton, L. (2017). Servant leadership in sport for development and peace: A way forward. *Quest*, 69(1), 125–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2016.1165123>
- Welty Peachey, J., Damon, Z. J., Zhou, Y., & Burton, L. J. (2015). Forty years of leadership research in sport management: A review, synthesis, and conceptual framework. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(5), 570–587. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2014-0126>
- Yammarino, F. (2013). Leadership: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(2), 149–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051812471559>