

**The Uniform Effect: Collegiate Student-Athlete's Experiences with Competition  
Athletic Apparel and Self-Perception**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Competition athletic apparel plays a large role in the world of NCAA Division I college athletics. New and innovative designs, styles, and fashions are continually introduced by athletic apparel manufacturers as they attempt to find the latest and greatest uniforms, footwear and protective equipment. Still, little research exists on the impact that athletic apparel has on college athletes. What does an athlete feel as they don their competition athletic apparel to compete at this top level of collegiate sport? The purpose of this study was to examine student-athlete experiences with competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception. Did the apparel worn in competition by student-athlete's play a role on their mental state as they entered competition?

Sixteen participants from a large NCAA Division I athletic program participated in this study during the spring semester of 2011. A stratified sample of eight female student-athletes and eight male student-athletes was used. The participants were drawn from the sports of Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer, Men's Basketball, and Women's Basketball.

Participants completed face to face interviews that employed a semi-structured approach. Interview questions addressed aspects of the Functional, Aesthetic, Expressive (FEA) consumer needs model as well as Self-Perception Theory. All interviews used a grounded theory approach to foster the emergence of data as interviews progressed. Data was analyzed using qualitative methods that stressed the importance of true lived experience.

The results of the study revealed that student-athlete self-perception was indeed impacted by various aspects of competition athletic apparel. Each participant revealed one or more concerns about their competition apparel in relation to the different categories of the FEA. Further, many of these concerns followed important aspects of Self-Perception Theory.

The results of this study further revealed that coaches, athletes, and competition apparel manufactures would benefit from understanding the impact that competition apparel has on athlete self-perception. Results showed that athletes wanted competition apparel that looked good, felt good, and fit properly.

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife Katie. Your endless love and encouragement have allowed me to achieve goals that I never thought were possible. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their encouragement during my time of study. I love you all!

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# **The Uniform Effect: Collegiate Student-Athlete's Experiences with Competition Athletic Apparel and Self-Perception**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

“If you look good, you play good,” a favorite statement made by college athletes when referring to his or her competition athletic apparel. This is a strong statement that raises interesting questions about the importance of competition athletic apparel to college athletes. The apparel worn by athletes in competition not only protects them, it allows everyone involved in the event to differentiate one team or individual from another. It's their identity in competition. It is one of the first physical characteristics that fans recognize when watching an event (Feather, Ford, & Herr, 1996).

Similar to college athletics, athletic apparel is big business. Athletic apparel companies pay colleges and universities large sums of money to have them wear a particular brand in competition. In 2008, a large athletic apparel company agreed to pay a major NCAA Division I college \$7.5 million over eight years to be the exclusive provider of athletic equipment and apparel for the school (Vosgerchian, 2007). It is clear that athletic apparel plays a large role in college sports, but just how large?

Much research exists on the impact of apparel in everyday life. The terms “dress for success” and “power suit” or “power tie” come to mind when discussing what apparel says about a person. One's apparel makes a statement about a person. It creates an identity as well as a public image. One's clothes have a value to the wearer. Further, one's clothes send a message to others about the person who is wearing them (Stone, 1970). McCracken and Roth (1989) suggest that clothing can take the form of a language,



or a code that is used as a means for communication. Yet, with all its significance, little research has been conducted on the importance that competition athletic apparel holds for athletes.

An athlete's mental state or self-perception plays a vital role on performance in the competitive sports arena. An athlete's self-perception can impact performance significantly. "Self-perception can be broadly defined as people's thoughts, attitudes, and feelings about themselves in general or about their skills, abilities, and characteristics in a particular achievement domain" (Horn, 2004). For athletes, a positive self-perception helps them to achieve positive results (Gill & Williams, 2008). Therefore, factors that can impact self-perception become important constructs for athletes to consider. For this study, competition athletic apparel will be examined to determine its importance for college athletes prior to, and during competition.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to examine student-athlete experiences with competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception. Does the apparel worn in competition by student-athlete's play a role on their mental state as they enter competition? If it does play a role, to what extent could student-athlete's benefit from understanding the impact of competition athletic apparel on self-perception? The emergent outcome will provide a clearer picture of the role that athletic apparel plays on student-athlete's self-perception prior to and during competition.

### **Definitions**

1. Competition Athletic Apparel – Any clothing that is worn by an athlete as they participate in a sporting event.

2. FEA Consumer Needs Model – An apparel needs assessment model that considers the importance of Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic (FEA) factors of apparel design (Lamb & Kallal, 1992).
3. NCAA Division I – The top level of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sanctioning. Member institutions must maintain fourteen sports including at least two team sports for both men and women that participate in fall, winter, and spring seasons (NCAA, 2010).
4. Self-perception – Broadly defined as “peoples thoughts, attitudes, and feelings about themselves in general or about their skills, abilities, and characteristics in a particular achievement domain” (Horn, 2004, as quoted in Gill & Williams, 2008).

### **Significance of the Study**

Little research exists on the impact that athletic apparel has on college athletes. A Certified Athletic Equipment Manager fields questions and requests from athletes regarding athletic apparel on a daily basis. On a game or competition day, Equipment Managers are continually asked for different items that an athlete wants for that particular event. Each athlete diligently prepares for competition by adjusting his or her uniform and accessories until they feel they have achieved the proper comfort level, function, and look. A favorite statement that I hear athletes repeat over and over again is; “If you look good, you play good.” In this day and age of college athletics, coaches and athletes are constantly looking for an edge to help them achieve success. Therefore, anything that potentially contributes to “the edge” becomes extremely important. Understanding the value that college athletes place on competition athletic apparel will help determine if this

is yet another factor that could provide an “edge” for the athletes entering competition. Further, this study will be beneficial to coaches, athletes, equipment managers, administrators, and athletic apparel companies as they consider athletic apparel strategies and needs.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

Many factors affect the performance of an athlete in the competitive sports arena. An athlete's self-perception is one of the most important factors that can affect performance. What people perceive they can accomplish in athletics, academics, work, and life helps to explain their performance, feelings, and thoughts. Positive feelings tend to be associated with positive outcomes (Gill & Williams, 2008). Understanding factors that affect athlete self-perception affords an opportunity to help improve performance or "get an edge."

An important factor of self-perception is appearance. Appearance helps a person to communicate his or her identity, values, moods, and attitudes (Stone, 1970). Apparel is one of the main tools used by individuals to manipulate appearance. Stone (1970) argues that in appearances, selves are established and mobilized through the intimate linkage of the self and clothing. In the competitive sports arena, one's competition apparel or uniform is one of the important aspects of appearance. When an athlete wears a uniform, it creates an identity. The uniform creates a pattern of behavior from the athlete that might be outside their everyday personality. Further, other athletes place value in the uniform appearance and respond to the wearer accordingly (Frank & Gilovich, 1988). This literature review will provide an overview of germane studies and theories used to understand self-perception as they relate to this study. Relevant factors of self-perception such as self-esteem, self-presentation, self-concept and body image in sport will be reviewed for concepts relating to this study. Further, it will examine

literature pertaining to competition athletic apparel using components of the Functional, Expressive, Aesthetic Consumer Needs Model (FEA).

### **Self-Perception**

Self-perception or how we view ourselves and how we think the world views us, plays an ongoing role in everyday life. A review of relevant literature on self-perception as it relates to this study, uncovers Self-Perception Theory (Bem, 1972). Simply put, individuals come to know their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which the behavior occurs (Bem, 1972). Appearance has frequently been shown to have a direct effect on interpersonal judgments. Self-perception theory tells us that any variable, such as appearance, that affects our views of others can also have an effect on impressions of ourselves (Kellerman & Laird, 1982). Therefore, according to the Self-Perception Theory, we are holding ourselves to the same appearance standards that we use to judge others. This is important to the study of athletic apparel and self-perception because it potentially uncovers a factor relating to an athlete's perception prior to competition. If an opponent is viewed as superior or inferior in appearance, self-perception is potentially affected.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem and self-concept are two of the more historic and popular constructs of self-perception (Gill & Williams, 2008). To gain a more complete understanding of self-perception, it is important to understand the roles played by each of these constructs in relation to the study.

Self-esteem has been one of the most studied constructs of self-perception. Self-esteem is defined as the evaluative aspect of the global self (Gill & Williams, 2008). A person makes positive or negative evaluations of the self and thus, increases or decreases self-esteem. Many factors can affect one's overall self-esteem. A review of literature on self-esteem as it relates to this study reveals Harter's (1990) Multidimensional Approach to self-esteem. This approach utilizes numerous life domains that combine in a unique way to form self-esteem. Overall or global self-esteem is at the center of this model while life domains such as physical appearance, social appearance, and athletic competence all have an independent effect (Harter, 1983). In this model, athletic apparel would be a sub-domain that exists within each of these constructs thus, giving it a potential impact on overall self-esteem and thus, self-perception.

### **Self-Concept**

Self-concept is another relevant construct of self-perception. Self-concept is the overall perception or the descriptive aspect of the self. Self-concept consists of different factors of understanding such as, social characteristics, physical appearance, and body image. It is more likely to change due to moods, attitudes, values or beliefs (Gill & Williams, 2008). Self-concept not only reflects on behavior, it has the ability to influence it. Self-concept is dynamic and active to the point that it can bring about change in a person's thoughts and actions. Further, it is an organizer of self actions and experiences, creating the incentives, standards, plans, rules, and scripts for behavior. Self-concept is adjustable depending on the social environment that exists (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Research on self-concept as it relates to this study, reveals Markus' (1977) Dynamic Self System. Within this system, self-concept is a dynamic system that consists

of different collections of cognitive representations of the self that are known as schemata (Markus, 1977). Schemata are self-beliefs that a person holds that are related to specific attributes and abilities (Gill & Williams, 2008). Everyone possesses a unique set of self-schemata based on factors relevant to their lives. People are classified as schematic, aschematic, or nonschematic depending on the attribute and the domain in which it exists (Kendzierski, 1988). For example, athletes concerned with the look, fit, and fashion of their athletic apparel would be considered schematic. Athletic apparel in this context is relevant and important to their overall sense of athlete self-concept. On the other hand, an athlete that understands the function of athletic apparel but does not believe it is an attribute that is important to their overall athlete self-concept is considered aschematic. A nonschematic would not think athletic apparel is important or relevant to athlete self-concept.

Much debate exists as to the definitions of self-concept and self-esteem. For the purpose of this study it is important to provide a clear distinction of the two. Self-esteem is the affective or emotional aspect of the self. It refers to how a person values or feels about themselves in a more global sense (overall self-worth). Self-concept is the cognitive or thinking aspect of the self (Huitt, 2009). It is "the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence" (Purkey, 1988, as quoted in Huitt, 2009). Self-concept refers to a more general idea of the self whereas self-esteem refers to more particular measures of the self. Both concepts are very closely related and are sometimes used interchangeably (Huitt, 2009). For this study, it is important to understand that both are constructs of self-perception.

## **Self-Presentation**

Self-presentation is another important construct of self-perception that is relevant to this study. Self-presentation is “the process by which people attempt to control and monitor how they are perceived and evaluated by others” (Schlenker, 1980). People want others to have a positive impression of them, so they attempt to control and present information that they feel will be viewed in a desirable manner.(Hausenblas et al., 2004) Clothing is one of the means that people use to manipulate self-presentation. In the competitive sports arena, competition athletic apparel is potentially one of the means used to attain desired self-presentation.

Body image is the last construct of self-perception that needs to be reviewed as it relates to this study. Body image is the perception that an individual has of his or her physical appearance (Secord & Jourard, 1953). Much research exists on body image. The Body Cathexis Scale (BCS) created by Secord and Jourard (1953) and the Body Esteem Scale (BES) by Franzoi and Shields (1984) provided early measures of body image. Using different questionnaire style assessments, each of these provided valid results of body image measures. Further, Franzoi and Shields (1984) confirmed the multidimensionality of body image.

Apparel plays an important role in body image. Clothing is often considered as an extension of the physical self and thus, plays a role in one’s body image (Feather et al., 1996). In a study by Feather et al. (1996), female collegiate basketball players were surveyed concerning body cathexis, body form, garment fit satisfaction, and uniform design preferences. The study concluded that perceived satisfaction with the body was



closely related to perceived satisfaction with an individual's clothing (Feather et al., 1996).

Each construct of self-perception reviewed provides a background and relevant connection point to the study of competition athletic apparel. In the next section, literature will be reviewed pertaining to function, expression, and aesthetics (FEA) of competition athletic apparel.

### Competition Athletic Apparel

Competition athletic apparel is the next construct that needs to be reviewed to provide a firm foundation for the present study. To do this, the Functional, Expressive, Aesthetic Consumer Needs Model (FEA) proposed by Lamb and Kallal (1992) will be used as a framework (Figure 1). The FEA is used to determine the needs that a consumer has for a particular garment. Used during design and assessment stages of a garment, the main categories of this model include: Functional, Expressive, and Aesthetic. Each of these categories can have more or less importance to the garment depending on its intended use.



Figure 1. *Functional, Expressive, Aesthetic consumer needs model (FEA)*. Reprinted from Lamb, J & Kallal, M, A conceptual framework for apparel design, *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10(2), 42-47, 1992, Sage as publisher, reprinted with permission.

A study by Wheat and Dickson (1999) examined satisfaction that female collegiate golfers had with team uniforms. Concerns over the lack of golf apparel specifically designed for women included fit and ease of movement. Female golfers were being forced by their school to wear clothing designed for males that produced a baggy fit. In most cases, the school had an exclusive apparel contract that was causing this dilemma. Some golfers were concerned that the sleeve length of their shirt was inhibiting their ability to swing a golf club correctly. Overall, 66% of the athletes were dissatisfied with the fit of their team uniform (Wheat & Dickson, 1999).

Women's basketball players have also expressed concern over the fit and function of their competition athletic apparel. Feather, Ford, and Herr (1996) found that women's basketball players were concerned with fabrics that promoted and retained perspiration. Further, players favored shorts that were bigger and baggier in size as to not restrict movement (Feather et al., 1996). A similar trend continued into the sport of cycling where athletes desired garments that produced a skin-tight fit that reduced aerodynamic drag. Not only did they want a tight fit, they wanted garments to cushion the body at the contact points with the bicycle. Further, the athletes often picked garments based on their perceived ability to impact performance (Casselman-Dickson & Damhorst, 1993).

### *Expressive*

Expressive considerations relate to the communication and potential symbolism of a garment. Consumers tend to want apparel that sends a message about who they are. They seek the "ME" factor or in other instances where uniforms are required, people

want to make a visual statement about their individual group (Lamb & Kallal, 1992).

This aspect of the FEA model speaks to self-perception and relates nicely to this study.

Casselmann-Dickson and Damhorst (1993) studied the expressive effects of apparel used in the sport of female cycling. In particular, two groups of female athletes were studied: those who had high competence in the sport and those who were beginners. Each group was concerned about the athletic apparel they chose and its reflection of their competence in the sport. Athletes that had a high level of sport competence were careful not to select athletic apparel that they felt would be used by a beginner. Conversely, beginners chose athletic apparel that reflected their sport competence. Both groups of athletes felt for the most part, that their athletic apparel made them look attractive. Still, a minority of athletes, mostly in the low sport competence category, felt their athletic apparel made them look unattractive (Casselmann-Dickson & Damhorst, 1993). Overall, the athletes wanted a look that symbolized their particular level and involvement in their sport.

Collegiate women's basketball players viewed expression as an important aspect of their competition athletic apparel. Feather et al., (1996) concluded that the athletes wanted competition athletic apparel that included features used by prominent university women's basketball teams. Further, perceived satisfaction with an athlete's body was indeed correlated to perceived satisfaction with their competition athletic apparel. The authors concluded that the correct apparel for an athlete has the potential to create a "new and better perception of the body" (Feather et al., 1996).

Collegiate women's golfers championed expression as one of the more important aspects of their competition athletic apparel. Golfers stressed concerns over how they are

perceived while wearing their team uniforms in competition. Further, they wanted uniforms that expressed team unity and school spirit. One golfer in the study stated “when you are in uniform, it seems that people have a high respect for you” (Wheat & Dickson, 1999).

### *Aesthetic*

Aesthetic considerations for apparel relate to the use of elements such as line, form, color, texture, and pattern. The aesthetic component of the FEA model can be considered the “look” in the “if you look good, you play good” mantra used by some student-athletes. Further, it is important for aesthetics to not prevail over function in competition athletic apparel.

Color is one of the most studied aspects in competition athletic apparel. Wheat and Dickson (1999) found that color played a role in aesthetics as female collegiate golfers wanted uniforms that reflected their school colors. They felt uniform colors that coincided with their school colors expressed “school and team spirit” (Wheat & Dickson, 1999).

Frank and Gilovich (1988) studied the impact that the color black had on self and social perception. In particular, teams that wore black in competition were studied to see if increased aggression existed in athletes based on apparel color. The findings did indeed show that athletes donning black apparel were inclined to increase aggressive behavior. Wearing black within the context of competition was enough to influence the athlete to adopt a more aggressive stance. This further shows the “flexibility or situated nature of the self” (Alexander & Knight, 1971; Goffman, 1959; Mead 1934; Stone 1962 as cited in Frank & Gilovich, 1988).

Red competition athletic apparel was studied by Ioan et al. (2007) to determine if a psychological distraction was created by the color. It was found that the color red did produce a distraction to men in competition. This distraction was attributed to psychological cues that men get when viewing the color red. These cues are created from a man's psychological perception of the color red in relation to sexual competition. This study showed that men viewed red as a signal of dominance (Ioan et al., 2007).

The pattern and form of competition athletic apparel also play important roles in aesthetics. Collegiate women's basketball players studied by Feather et al. (1996) expressed the need to have apparel specifically designed for women. Players desired competition jerseys with a feminine v-neck, sleeveless armholes, and v-cut hem. Shorts that fit baggy with a low crotch area were also desired. The study further suggests that proper uniforms "provide physical and psychological comfort for players to perform at their optimum" (Feather et al., 1996). Wheat and Dickson (1999) suggest that specifically designed women's competition athletic apparel is psychologically beneficial to the athletes.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to examine student-athlete experiences with competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception. In particular, athletes will provide their views on the importance of athletic apparel and its relationship with self-perception prior to and during competition. The emergent outcome will provide a clearer picture of the role that competition athletic apparel plays on student-athlete's self-perception. This chapter will examine participant selection, research method, data collection, data analysis, researcher reflexivity, and the rationale for qualitative inquiry.

#### **Participant Selection**

Participants for this study were student-athletes selected from a large NCAA Division I University located in the Southeast United States. The participants were selected based on their active involvement in a Division I collegiate sport. Specifically, participants were eighteen to twenty-three years of age, currently participating in competition and agreeable to share experiences related to the study. A stratified sample of eight female student-athletes and eight male student-athletes was used. In accordance with a data driven design, the sample size was determined to be appropriate when data saturation occurred. The sample was drawn from sports or strata that have a male/female equivalency. These consist of: Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer, Men's Basketball, and Women's Basketball. A random sample of four athletes from each sport or strata was utilized. The head coach of each sport provided a roster of athletes currently participating in competition. Each name on the roster was assigned a number. Numbers were marked on a note card, shuffled, and drawn at random. The head coach of each

student-athlete selected was asked for permission to conduct research during the competition season. If the student-athlete selected did not want to participate in the study, that number was withdrawn and another was chosen.

### **Description of the Participants**

This section provides an introduction to each of the participants used in the study. This will provide a better background to understand each participant. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to insure confidentiality.

#### *Jim*

Jim is a twenty-three-year-old African-American male participating in the sport of Men's Basketball. He is currently in his senior season and is on track to graduate at the end of the school year. Jim has participated in the sport of basketball since age nine. He became involved in sports as an after-school-activity and has participated in both football and basketball. He chose to play basketball at his current school because he liked the overall atmosphere of the area. Jim admits that competition apparel does get him excited when he walks in the locker room and on game day and sees all the uniforms hung up and ready to go. (Jim Transcript, p.1, March 7, 2011).

#### *Eddie*

Eddie is a nineteen-year-old African-American male who participates in the sport of Men's Basketball. Currently a sophomore at his school, Eddie became involved in basketball when he was five-years-old. He credits his love of the game to his family who got him involved in the sport at such an early age. Eddie has also participated in the sports of baseball, football, soccer, and track at various stages of his athletic career. His choice to attend his current school was based on his like of the coaching staff as well as

the athletic conference that the school participates in. Eddie was aware of the competition apparel brand and style used by his current school when he made his selection. He says that the brand used by the school was one of the factors that went into his attendance decision.

*Tommy*

Tommy is a twenty-two-year-old African-American male who participates in the sport of Men's Basketball. He is currently a senior at his school and plans to graduate at the end of the semester. Tommy played football, tennis, and basketball but ultimately chose basketball because of his height. "I was tall and it worked out for me" (Tommy transcript, p.1, March 7, 2011). He selected his current school because they offered him a full athletic scholarship. Tommy explains that wearing his competition athletic apparel makes him "feel like I walk around with my chest stuck out" (Tommy Transcript, p.3, March 7, 2011).

*Michael*

Michael is a twenty-year-old African-American male participating in the sport of Men's Basketball. Currently a sophomore, Michael has participated in his sport since he was seven-years-old. Michael decided to play basketball at his current school because he knew one of the current players on the team and wanted to be within driving distance of his hometown. He was aware of the brand, style, and amount of competition athletic apparel that his school used and this did play a part in his decision to attend. "I knew my year coming in, we was going to be a big Nike Elite team so, that made a big effect" (Michael transcript, p.1, March 7, 2011).

*Jill*



Jill is an eighteen-year-old Caucasian female who is currently a freshman Women's Soccer player. She's played soccer since the age of seven when her parents registered her to play in a youth league. She fell in love with the sport and has played every year since then. Jill enjoys apparel and was excited about the brand of competition apparel that her school used. "I knew it was Nike, and I like Nike" (Jill Transcript, p.1, March 15, 2011). Jill also admits to being a little superstitious when it comes to her competition athletic apparel saying, "I always put my equipment on in the same order, right side first" (Jill Transcript, p.2, March 15, 2011).

### *Katie*

Katie is a twenty-one-year-old Caucasian female participating in the sport of Women's Soccer. She transferred from another college and is currently a red-shirt sophomore at her new school. Katie has played soccer since age five, gaining interest in the sport from her older sister. "My older sister played, so I was the little girl that followed her sister" (Katie transcript, p.1, March 15, 2011). Katie decided to attend her current school because she liked the larger feel that it had. She did know the brand of competition apparel worn by her school but it didn't play a role in her attendance decision. She does admit that putting on competition apparel is exciting and she does have some superstitions about it.

### *Laura*

Laura is a twenty-one-year-old Caucasian female who plays the sport of Women's Soccer. Laura is currently at Junior at her school and has played soccer since the age of eight. Her interest in soccer started while watching her brother play the game. She feels that competition athletic apparel does play a role in perception especially when viewing

an opponent before a game. “When I first step out there, I always analyze the other side of the field. I mean, talking about uniforms and stuff, their uniforms will sometimes make them intimidating or make them not as intimidating” (Laura transcript, p.2, March 15, 2011).

### *Abby*

Abby is an eighteen-year-old Caucasian female who currently participates in the sport of Women’s Soccer. As a freshman at her school, Abby is relatively new to the sport with only three years of playing experience. She played the sports of softball, lacrosse, and basketball before her father got her interested in soccer at age fifteen. Abby was aware of the brand or apparel that her school used during her recruitment process and admits that it played a small role in her decision to attend. “It wasn’t a main decision but I do prefer Nike over Adidas” (Abby transcript, p.1, March 15, 2011). Abby is also somewhat superstitious when it comes to the fit and function of her competition apparel saying: “I have to have my socks pulled up a certain way and I never tuck in my shirt” (Abby transcript, p.2, March 15, 2011).

### *Liza*

Liza is a twenty-two-year-old Caucasian female who participates in the sport of Women’s Basketball. Liza started playing basketball at age six and has loved the game ever since. She has also played volleyball, softball, and ran track but says those sports did not “have enough action” (Liza transcript, p.1, March 23, 2011). The overall recruiting process and prior admiration of the school led to Liza’s decision to attend. While not a main factor in her attendance choice, the brand of competition apparel worn by her school was “a plus” (Liza Transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011). Liza spent much of

her senior year having to play through an injury that forced her to use unorthodox protective equipment and altered competition apparel.

*Molly*

Molly is a twenty-year-old African-American female currently playing Women's Basketball. Molly, currently a sophomore at her school, has played basketball since the age of six. She also played the sports of volleyball, softball, and track but says that basketball is her favorite. Coming from a big city, Molly says that the overall atmosphere and distance from home were the main reasons she decided to attend her current school. Molly admits to being a little superstitious when it comes to her competition apparel. She says, "I have to wear a certain pair of colored socks" (Molly transcript, p. 2, March 23, 2011).

*Jen*

Jen is a twenty-year-old Caucasian female participating in the sport of Women's Basketball. Jen is currently a sophomore and has played this sport since she was in the second grade. She also played soccer throughout high school but decided to pursue basketball because it was her favorite sport. Jen says that the brand of competition apparel used by her school did play a secondary role in her decision attend. "I actually was between an Adidas school and a Nike school and this school was Nike so, I had to go there" (Jen transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011). Jen also believes that competition apparel can shape one's initial perception of an opponent in competition.

*Amy*

Amy is an eighteen-year-old African-American female who plays Women's Basketball. Amy, a freshman, has played basketball since the age of four and attributes

her interest in the sport to her parents. Amy has never participated in any other sports. She feels that competition apparel has to fit and feel comfortable at all times during a game. “I’m a material type person, so if I’m able to breathe in it and feel comfortable moving in it, then it’s fine and it looks good” (Amy transcript p.3, March 23, 2011).

### *Ricardo*

Ricardo is an eighteen-year-old African-American male who participates in the sport of Men’s Soccer. He has played soccer since he was six, participating at the recreational league level. When presented with the opportunity to compete at an NCAA Division I school, Ricardo easily accepted the challenge. “I just saw...not only to help me see for myself but others around me see how great I was in the sport, which really made me see how good I am, to be able to go to the next level such as Division I soccer” (Ricardo transcript, p.1, March 31, 2011). Ricardo enjoys the different color combinations of his competition apparel and feels that color plays a role in how he feels during a game. “I definitely like those brighter colors really. Kinda like a snake, the more venomous it is, kinda the same idea” (Ricardo transcript p.2, March 31, 2011).

### *Matt*

Matt is a twenty-year-old Caucasian male who plays Men’s Soccer. Matt has played soccer as long as he can remember explaining “I’m pretty sure since I was born my parents had me kicking a soccer ball around” (Matt transcript, p.1, March 31, 2011). Matt does subscribe to many superstitions relating to his competition apparel. “It’s something really small like my cleats and my socks have to fit on perfect. If they are not perfect, I hate it when they are not perfect; like you know when they have the lines on the

socks, if it's not perfect then I can't like, play (Matt transcript, p.1, March 31, 2011).

Matt is currently a junior at his school.

### *Reuben*

Reuben is an eighteen-year-old Caucasian male competing in the sport of Men's Soccer. He is currently a freshman at his school and has played soccer since the age of four. Reuben's interest in soccer came from his father who got him involved in the sport. Reuben feels that competition apparel can play a role with self confidence as an athlete enters competition. Further, Reuben values competition apparel that is lightweight and breathable. "I definitely like the mesh under the armpits, it definitely lets you breathe better" (Reuben transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011).

### *Chris*

Chris is a twenty-year-old Caucasian male who currently participates in the sport of Men's Soccer. Chris, currently a junior at his school, chose to pursue soccer at the collegiate level over the sports of baseball, basketball, and football. Chris says that competition apparel did not play a role in his selection of a college but he did note that his current schools colors stood out to him during the recruitment process. Chris feels that a uniform must fit properly during competition to avoid distraction. "I mean it has to fit right. If it is too big or too small you just look funny and then you think about it" (Chris transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011).

## **Research Method**

A research method rooted in qualitative inquiry was chosen for this study. A two-stage approach of a semi-structured interview process based on grounded theory was utilized. Stage one of the study consisted of a pilot study to determine the validity of the interview questions. The second stage consisted of a data-gathering interview employing open ended research questions. The open-ended structure of the interviews allowed the researcher to construct theory that is grounded in data. The grounded theory approach allowed “continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.273). This type of method is also known as a data driven design (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Whole text analysis containing transcript excerpts and coding was used to understand the data collected.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection took place in March, 2011. This timing insured adequate coverage of all sport competition schedules. Data was collected in a two-stage approach. A short structuring interview took place to provide the participant with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Consent form (Appendix C). During the structuring interview, participants were allowed to ask the researcher to answer any questions they had concerning the interview process. After any questions or concerns were addressed, the participants signed the IRB consent form and agreed to participate in the study.

Data gathering interviews employed a semi-structured approach. Interviews took place in a neutral location so as to reduce the effects of power that the participants might feel from the researcher. The room selection was also made carefully to help insure

participant confidentiality. The researcher discussed the informed consent form and reassured the participants that the information they provided would be confidential.

All interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed into a paper transcript. The participant was asked to select a pseudonym to insure confidentiality. If the participant did not want to select a pseudonym, one was selected by the researcher. Interviews consisted of ten to twelve open-ended questions (Appendix A) designed to foster data emergence in congruency with a grounded theory approach. The interview process took twenty to thirty to minutes to complete. After the interview, all data collected was stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in accordance with IRB regulations.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis utilized the Strauss and Corbin (1990) open-ended coding method of a whole text. The researcher transcribed and read each interview transcript thoroughly and critically the day following the interview to gain a feel for the data. One day was allowed to pass, then the transcript was read a second time. The transcript was then read line by line and broken down or “fractured” into excerpts that were relevant to the study. Excerpts were written as notes in the margin of the transcript. Each excerpt was then re-read and assigned a code. A code is a label used to assign explicit and implicit meaning to the data that it represents. The researcher repeatedly asked: What category of meaning does this code fit? Categories then emerged through similarities in the codes. Categories were then labeled based on the codes that they represented. The process of analyzing and coding each transcript in a one-by-one format allows for the comparison and emergence of new discoveries about the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Further, verbatim

quotations are included in the results section to support the researcher's conclusions. An audit trail is also included to further increase the credibility of the findings (Appendix B).

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

With the qualitative design of this study, the researcher is the main instrument used to investigate, analyze, understand, and articulate the phenomenon being studied (Hein, 2010). With this in mind it is clear that the researcher must play an active role in the construction of knowledge about the study. Put another way "reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers' social background, assumptions, positioning, and behavior impact the research process" (Finlay & Gough, 2003). Further, it becomes important to recognize the particular discourse that the study is taking place. The power relations within the given discourse play an integral role in the written research. As Finlay and Gough (2003) explain, "...research is co-constituted – a joint product of the participants, researcher, and their relationship"(Finlay & Gough, 2003, p.5). This section will help to position the researcher within the context of the study.

The researcher conducting this study is a 32-year-old Caucasian male. The researcher is also employed by the athletic department of the university in which the research took place. The researcher holds the position of Assistant Equipment Manager and works directly with student-athletes and competition athletic apparel.

The researcher holds several beliefs about the study based on personal experience. First, the researcher believes that competition athletic apparel plays a large role in the experience of athletic competition. As a former athlete, the researcher feels that proper competition athletic apparel based on function, expression, and aesthetics improved his self-perception when preparing for competition. Second, the researcher believes that



student-athletes view their competition athletic apparel as an important part of the competition experience. Based on observation, student-athletes go to great lengths to find and use competition athletic apparel that makes them feel confident in competition. To that end, the third belief the researcher holds is; athletes that dislike or are uncomfortable with their competition athletic apparel will have a negative experience with self-perception.

The researcher's gender and ethnicity play a role in the study. As a Caucasian male, the researcher will always be limited in understating the experience that females and persons of a different ethnicity will have. Therefore, it is important to consider that the research will be presented through the lens of a Caucasian male. Further, the researcher's socio-economic status and cultural background will also play a role in the study. It is important for the reader to understand that the researcher will be conducting the study through the lens of a middle-class North American.

### **Rational for Qualitative Inquiry**

A qualitative based study has been chosen for this research. No two people will ever experience a given phenomenon in the same manner. When researching psychology of the self, it is important to attain rich data that reveals true lived experiences.

Understanding how a student-athlete feels or experiences the wearing of his or her competition athletic apparel is at the heart of this study. A qualitative design with an emphasis on grounded theory affords the opportunity to explore and understand the feelings that student-athletes have when they put on their competition athletic apparel. Grounded theory allows the opportunity for new ideas and insights to emerge as the research is conducted.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

This chapter will review the emergent results from the transcripts created after the interview process. The Grounded Theory approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1994) allowed the constant interplay between data collection and data analysis. Through this process, five major categories and eight subcategories emerged from the data. The major categories include; perceptions affected by competition athletic apparel, emotional experience of wearing competition athletic apparel, functional experiences of wearing competition athletic apparel, aesthetic aspects of competition apparel, and the role of competition apparel in a major decision.

#### **Perceptions Affected by Competition Athletic Apparel**

One of the major points of Self-Perception Theory is the way that appearance affects our judgment of others as well as ourselves (Bem, 1972). According to Stone (1970) clothing is one of the main tools used by a person when they form an impression or perception about another person. In this category, results for three areas of perception will be examined. First, results on how competition apparel affects an athlete's perception of an opponent will be reviewed. Second, results on how competition apparel affects an athlete's own self-perceptions prior to and during competition will be examined. Finally, results pertaining to body image in relation to competition apparel will be reviewed. While these results are presented separately, it is important to understand that they have a direct relationship with each other.

*Perception of an opponent.* All participants were asked what they noticed about their opponent when viewing them for the first time prior to competition. A variety of

answers emerged and all except Tommy mentioned that they noticed the competition apparel being worn by the opponent. When asked what it was about the competition apparel that they noticed, most responded with a variation of color, brand, or style. As Jill explained, color added to the intimidating perception of an opponent. “Well, I remember when Maryland, when we played Maryland here, they were dressed in all black. I thought that was just, they looked intimidating. Well one, they are Maryland and two, they were in all black and I just find that looks really bold” (Jill Transcript, p.2, March 15, 2011). When asked the same question, Laura agreed that color played an important role in the perception of an opponent. “Yeah, I definitely notice it and like, I think certain colors are more intimidating together than other colors so, if they are wearing those then I feel like they look like they are more prepared and better” (Laura Transcript, p.2, March 15, 2011).

Brand and style were other attributes that were noticed about their opponent’s competition apparel. Jen explained the style of competition apparel worn by an opponent altered her perception of them:

Um, I guess some of it, not intimidating but, you can think a player is better how they look. Um, example, we went to a tournament and we played a school and it was a bunch of white girls, not to be judgmental or anything, and they were all wearing low like, running shoes almost and no ankle braces, no anything, they didn’t look like basketball shoes and so our first thought in our mind was that these girls aren’t going to be good. That’s all we saw out of them and they turned out to be really good (Jen Transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011).

Jen admitted that she and her teammates underestimated a team based on how they looked and what they were wearing. Katie made another relevant evaluation about style when she stated, “I think when you see another team and they have really sharp outfits then that is more intimidating than someone who doesn't” (Katie Transcript, p.4, March 15, 2011).

Brand of competition apparel is another attribute that was noted by many of the participants when evaluating their opponent. Eddie, Abby, Liza, Molly, and Reuben all mentioned specific brands by name when referring to an opponent’s competition apparel. Eddie said “I always look at the shoes. What they are sponsored by, Adidas, Reebok, whoever, Nike whoever. I always do that” (Eddie Transcript, p.2, March 7, 2011). Liza noticed brand in a more envious fashion when discussing a program set forth by Nike that rewards success. “That kind of thing just really stands out when you are playing somebody because if they are elite you’re like, dang they actually went somewhere to get elite and you know, they got those extra benefits of like the shoes, colors of shoes, different types of styles” (Liza Transcript, p.5, March 23, 2011). Liza is referring to the “Nike Elite” teams that have achieved a certain levels of success and are allowed access to new and innovative competition apparel choices.

Almost all of the student-athletes interviewed felt that competition athletic apparel affected their perception of an opponent. As the interviews progressed, it was clear that each of them were noticing different attributes of the competition apparel. As discussed, color, style, and brand were the main areas that each athlete focused on. In all, fifteen of the sixteen student athletes interviewed noticed some aspect of their opponent’s competition athletic apparel.

*Self-Perception.* To further understand how each athlete felt about competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception, athletes were asked to consider the question; If you look good, do you think it makes you feel good/play good? This elicited a variety of responses. Fourteen of the sixteen athletes interviewed felt that, if you look good, you do indeed feel good and potentially play better. Only Katie and Ricardo felt that this was not the case. Katie said she was taught to not place an emphasis on how you look from a former coach. She explained that growing up, she wore “just plain t-shirts, plain old Hanes t-shirts and shorts because our coach preached that it’s not how you look, it’s how you play. So to me it doesn’t really rank” (Katie Transcript, p.4, March 15, 2011). Ricardo felt that it didn’t have anything to do with how he felt but how others perceived him. “I definitely think it has something to do as far as other people looking at it” (Ricardo Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011).

Each of the other fourteen athletes felt that what they were wearing entering competition, did impact their self-perception in various ways. Most of the participants wanted competition apparel that they felt looked good. Further, many favored competition apparel that was new in style and expression. Tommy said, “If my uniform wasn’t all that good, I probably wouldn’t feel as good. I probably wouldn’t be as excited to play, so I think my uniform has a lot to do with it” (Tommy Transcript, p.4, March 7, 2011). Jill put it in terms that many people can understand when she stated that for her, it is about professionalism. “I think if you look good you look professional and you have a professional mindset and you can go and do it” (Jill Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011). Amy’s responded similarly when she said, “I feel that if you look good, you are more confident about how you feel” (Amy Transcript, p.4, March 23, 2011). Chris’s response

agreed saying, “Yeah, I think you have more confidence when you look good” (Chris Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011).

Several of the participants felt that their competition apparel affected their self-perception during competition. Jen explained that her competition apparel affected her mentally during a game. “I had the wrong color socks on and that had me thinking about that the whole game. I wasn’t focused on the game, I was just thinking about my socks and thinking God this doesn’t match so, it definitely has an effect on it” (Jen Transcript, p.5, March 23, 2011). Matt’s response agreed when he said “Definitely, because when you are out there and you just know, you are just confident when you know you look good so, it like changes your whole game around” (Matt Transcript p.4, March 31, 2011). Reuben also felt that competition apparel could potentially affect his self-perception during competition. “If you’re looking or your jersey is just kind of uh, stupid looking I guess, you could be thinking about it during a game and you don’t want to be thinking about it during a game” (Reuben Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011).

*Body Image.* Body image refers to how satisfied a person or athlete is with their body. Clothing, or in this case competition apparel, has the ability to positively or negatively impact body image. Eight of the sixteen participants touched on different aspects of body image in relation to competition apparel. Molly explained that she needed reaffirmation of how she looked in uniform from one of her teammates. She explained that after putting on her uniform, she asked her teammate “I look good don’t I?” Her teammate reaffirmed her and told her she thought they both looked good (Molly Transcript p.3, March 23, 2011). Liza reported issues with her height causing problems with the fit of her competition apparel. She stated that because she was taller, shorts

didn't fit her correctly and caused her to show too much of her legs. To combat this problem, she "sagged" her shorts which caused her to feel "not really feminine." Further, she stated that wearing a specific color made her look more "tan," which was preferable to her. (Liza Transcript, p.4, March 23, 2011). Matt explained that he liked when he was wearing his competition apparel simply stating, "Yeah it makes me look good" (Matt Transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011). Chris's comments agreed when he said, "I feel like it makes me look good." He did continue with some concerns about fit, "I mean it has to fit right. If it is too big or too small, you just look funny and then you think about it" (Chris Transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011).

### **Emotional Experience of Wearing Competition Athletic Apparel**

The emotional experience of wearing competition athletic apparel proved to be meaningful to all of the participants. All sixteen of the participants mentioned a positive feeling or emotion when asked what it felt like to don their competition apparel for a game day. Many of the athletes felt it was a validation of all the hard work they put in to get to this point in their careers. Some had positive feelings about being part of a team or something bigger than themselves. Others had feelings of reflection as they remembered all those that helped get them to this point in their athletic careers. School spirit also emerged as an emotion felt when donning competition apparel. This category includes one subcategory titled superstitions with competition apparel.

When asked what it feels like to don competition apparel on a game day, many of the participants discussed a feeling of success and validation. As Eddie explained, "It just feels good putting on the jersey and just everything you work for" (Eddie Transcript, p.3, March 7, 2011). Reuben described a good feeling that made him remember where he

came from. “It feels good, especially with my current school because of where I came from was like kind of a big deal going here to a big name school, well known. So, it is a big responsibility and pride” (Reuben Transcript, p.3, 2011).

Other participants felt a sense of pride and team unity when putting on their competition apparel. Jill explained that it changes her mind-set:

Yeah, I think it does, it just gets you in that mind-set at another level on top of everything else and a sense of pride when you put it on so that just gets us all, like when we’re all in our uniforms as a team, we feel like we are all representing the same thing and it is special (Jill Transcript, p.2, March 17, 2011)

Jen explained that she feels great excitement and pride when putting on her competition apparel. “Uh, it’s so exciting. You just want to get out on the court right when you put it on. You feel like the sense of you are representing your school when you put that name on you chest. Uh, it’s just a very cool feeling” (Jen Transcript p.3, March 23, 2011).

Matt’s remarks agreed when he said, “It’s just like representing the whole school basically and you want to go out there and show them why you are on the team” (Matt Transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011). Tommy might have summed up his excitement the best when he stated, “I feel like when I have the jersey on, I feel like I walk around with my chest stuck out, SO YEAH! (Tommy Transcript, p.3, March 7, 2011). Almost all of the participants exhibited increased excitement when discussing this category.

*Superstitions with Competition Apparel.* Nine of the sixteen participants revealed some form of superstition that they exercise concerning their competition apparel. Many of them were small things like, Jen having to wear a certain piece of flair or Eddie



needing to wear two pair of socks. Despite being mainly miniscule, each athlete was quite steadfast in the need to engage the superstitions routinely.

Some of the superstitious behavior was quite unusual. For example, Tommy said that he would put lip balm in his socks. Jill said that she always puts her competition apparel on in the same order. During the game she always has to make sure her jersey stays tucked in at all times. Katie wears a piece of flair that reminds her of a tragic event in her life. Laura feels that she must tape her wrists the same way for every game. Molly explained a superstition with her socks, “Well, we have to wear a certain pair of colored socks anyway, but I always wear another sock under them and they have to be black. I don’t know why but they are always black” (Molly Transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011). Matt stated that his superstition with his competition apparel can affect the way that he plays. He explained that his cleats and socks have to be worn a certain way:

If they are not perfect I hate it when they are not perfect like you know, when they have the lines on the socks, if it’s not perfect then I can’t like, play. Then my cleats, always have to be tightened in the same way, one can’t be looser than that other, so. (Matt Transcript, p.1, March, 31, 2011).

Most of the athletes that subscribed to superstitious behavior felt it was something small however, each of them felt it was an important part of their pre-competition preparation.

### **Functional Experiences with Wearing Competition Athletic Apparel**

The function of an athlete’s competition apparel refers to attributes such as comfort, fit, and ease of movement. Each athlete was asked about the functional aspects of his or her competition apparel. What do they like/dislike or what they prefer to wear versus what they are required to wear. A variety of answers emerged from this line of

questions. This category includes one subcategory called distractions during competition. This will cover experiences athletes had with competition apparel distracting/hindering them during competition.

Fit, breathe-ability/moisture management, and ease of movement were the main concerns athlete's had about the function of their competition apparel. Eddie, Michael, Abby, and Liza all mentioned that they were concerned with the fit of their competition apparel. Eddie said, "When I am out on the court, I don't want to be messing with my jersey if it is too baggy or too loose and I just want to make sure everything fits right on me and I am loose and ready to play" (Eddie Transcript, p.4, March 7, 2011). Michael stated that he wanted competition apparel that fit snugly because a loose fit affected his ease of movement. Abby illustrated a situation in which she was issued a different size uniform for home games based on availability. In this situation she had two jerseys in different sizes:

Well, at first, I only liked to wear maroon. Now I only like to wear white because my white jersey was a small, and so it was really tight, and then my shorts for my white were a large, so I didn't like wearing it. Then, one day I got a large jersey and it felt so more like, I don't know, it just felt different and I was more like, ready to play and for some reason, that game I played really well. So then, I kept getting the large jersey and then like, a couple games later, cause we bring our jerseys out to the field, I put it on and it was tight and I had gotten the small and so like mentally, I was freaking out that I got the small, and I actually played bad that game (Abby Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011).

Liza exhibited concern over fit because she had lost weight over the summer. She explained that she didn't want her jersey "hanging off" of her because her body had changed (Liza Transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011).

Breathe-ability and moisture management also emerged as a concern for some of the athletes. Tommy, Amy, Matt, and Reuben all expressed concern about the breathe-ability and moisture management abilities of their competition apparel. Tommy explained that his competition apparel would retain sweat causing it to get "kind of heavy" during a game (Tommy Transcript, p.3, March 7, 2011). Reuben felt that a jersey that included mesh would be helpful to increase breathe-ability. Amy's comments agreed that breathe-ability and moisture management are positive attributes, "I am able to breathe and it catches my sweat and I sweat a lot so that's good" (Amy Transcript, p.3, March 23, 2011).

*Distraction during competition.* Many of the athletes reported instances where their competition apparel caused them problems during a game. Ease of movement was one of the main issues reported. Some of the ease of movement issues were due to poor moisture management. Other problems were created by poor fit and weight of the actual apparel. Jill reported feeling disadvantaged because of the weight of her competition apparel, "I had this heavy uniform for when it was cold. I never liked to wear it because I felt like I was being held back and I just feel faster when I am wearing lighter stuff. I think it is all mental, but I feel faster, I feel like I can move quicker" (Jill Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011). Matt explained a similar problem where poor breathe-ability led to issues during competition:

...we had one jersey, our white jersey, and it was thick and you would pour water on yourself and it just soak your whole jersey – That’s the most annoying thing cause it just like slows you down and it doesn’t feel good because it is always sticking to you...Yeah, like I mentioned that one white jersey, it wouldn’t be like holding me back but it was a mental thing. I would just like get pissed off and then move slower, yeah. (Matt Transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011).

Both Jill and Matt mentioned the distractions affected them mentally during competition.

Improper fit of competition apparel also contributed to distractions during competition. Katie explained that her team wears a uniform that is specifically designed for women. She said that the fashion cut of the women’s design caused problems for her and her teammates. “Well, our maroon jerseys are like, the women's cut and so they are like really tight through the midsection and then the arms stay all suction cupped to our arms because our arms are a little too big for them. So when we wear our maroon uniforms we are all pulling at them and stuff” (Katie Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011).

Laura reported a similar problem when wearing a jersey designed for men. She explained that the sleeves were too long causing her to have to roll them during competition. “Yeah, I don't like the jerseys that are too big that I am having to roll up the sleeves because then the whole time I am focusing on that. My mom used to always yell at me and tell me to stop playing with my sleeves, stop playing with your sleeves, just play the game” (Laura Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011). Abby commented that when she wore a jersey that was sized too large for her, it was tugged and grab more during competition. Most of the athletes wanted a uniform that was tight to the body but as Abby put it, “it kind of flows with you” (Abby Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011). Further,

they didn't want their uniform to cause a distraction or disadvantage during competition.

### **Aesthetic Aspects of Competition Athletic Apparel**

Aesthetic aspects of competition apparel refer to the overall look of a uniform. Considerations include line or design, color, pattern, and texture of a specific garment. Athletes were asked questions relating to all of these aspects of aesthetics. Questions ranged from color preferences and lettering styles to gender specific design and overall design styles. This category will review the emergent responses to these questions.

Each athlete was asked what they liked/disliked most about the aesthetics of their competition apparel. Color was the most popular response with thirteen of the sixteen participants mentioning it during the interview process. Most had a particular color that they liked over another color. Some mentioned specific color combinations that they would like to wear in competition. Competition apparel that was colored differently for a special game or a commemorative game created excitement for Jim, Molly, Jen, and Amy. Jen explained that her team was allowed to wear pink uniforms to raise awareness and support breast cancer research:

Well, we got these pink uniforms this year and those were the coolest things. I mean, everyone loved them. It's unfortunate that you can only wear them in February because of the occasion, but yeah those were really cool uniforms. (Jen Transcript, p.4, March 23, 2011)

Amy's had a similar response saying "...the white and pink uniforms we had for a month were nice" (Amy Transcript, p.4, March 23, 2011).

Colors that stood out were also favored by the athletes. Ricardo felt bright color, or as he put it, "venomous color" was an important part of his competition apparel.

(Ricardo Transcript p.4, March 31, 2011) Laura explained that she has “always liked the white on white” color scheme. She went so far as to say that she that it made her feel “very intimidating” when wearing this color combination. (Laura Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011).

Design features were also noticed by many of the athletes. Different aspects of cut, style, and design of competition apparel were popular responses. Laura mentioned that she liked a uniform that is “more straight down the leg” and included a mesh material that is “stretchy or more giving” (Laura Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011). Abby’s response agreed when she said she liked her white uniform because it included “more mesh” than her others. (Abby Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011) Matt stated that he liked a design that followed the “pro soccer teams with stripes down the side” (Matt Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011). Both Matt and Reuben mentioned that they did not like jerseys that included a collar because it could cause a distraction. Most of the athletes had a specific aesthetic area that they liked, but overall they wanted competition apparel that looked good to them. Jill summed it up when she said, “Looks is important for me. I just love when our uniforms look good. I think that is a big part of it...” (Jill Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011).

### **Role of Competition Athletic Apparel in a Major Decision**

The final category includes responses to questions that asked about the role of competition apparel in a major decision. In this case, the major decision was an athlete’s school attendance decision. Athletes were asked what were factors led them to select their current school and team. They were then asked if competition athletic apparel in so far as brand, colors, style etc. played a role in their decision. This line of questioning was

used in conjunction with Markus' (1977) Dynamic Self System. This allowed the researcher to understand how important competition athletic apparel was to the athlete (schematic, aschematic, or nonschematic). This category is broken up into three subcategories: Major Role in College Selection (schematic), Minor Role in College Selection (aschematic), and No Role in College Selection (nonschematic).

*Major Role in College Selection.* Of the sixteen athletes interviewed, two felt that competition athletic apparel played a major role in the attendance decision. When asked if competition apparel was a factor in his decision, Michael responded, "Um, it was, you know, Tommy told me that they was getting a lot of gear and you know, I knew my year coming in we was going to be a big Nike elite team. So, that made a big effect" (Michael Transcript, p.1, March 7, 2011). Eddie felt that brand of competition apparel was one of the big factors in his attendance choice. He said, "Ah, yeah, Nike, I was a Nike fan. So, when I came on my visit I saw everybody wearing Nike so that was a big part too" (Eddie Transcript, p.1, March 7, 2011). Both of these athletes played Men's Basketball.

*Minor Role in College Selection.* Many of the athletes in this subcategory knew about the competition apparel worn by their school during the selection process. Four of the five athletes mentioned a specific brand of competition apparel by name. Most of them said that competition apparel was not one of the main reasons for choosing their school but did admit that it was, as Amy put it, "a plus" (Amy Transcript, p.1, March 23, 2011). Abby explained that she knew the brand of competition apparel that her school used but "it wasn't a main decision but I do prefer Nike over Adidas" (Abby Transcript, p.1, March 17, 2011). Jen said that she was down to her final two schools and the brand of competition apparel used by her current school was one of the factors that made up her

mind. She stated, “Yeah, I was actually between an Adidas school and a Nike school and my current school was Nike so, I had to go there” (Jen Transcript, p.2, March 23, 2011).

Brand of competition apparel was the most mentioned attribute.

*No Role in College Selection.* The remaining nine athletes indicated that competition apparel played no role in their school selection process. Some mentioned that they knew the brand or colors but that was not a factor in their decision. Jill explained that she was excited about the brand of competition apparel that her school used but it was not part of her decision. (Jill Transcript, p.1, March 17, 2011). Laura mentioned that she had seen the competition apparel that her school used during recruitment but, “that didn’t really play a part in my decision” (Laura Transcript, p.1, March 17, 2011). Most of the athletes in this subcategory quickly and easily responded with a simple “no” when asked if competition apparel played a role in their school selection decision.

While each of these categories was presented separately, it is important to understand that they are not independent of one another. The categories were created using constant interplay between data collection and data analysis in accordance with Strauss & Corbin’s (1994) Grounded Theory approach.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine student-athlete experiences with competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception. Did apparel worn by student-athletes affect them mentally before and during competition? Attributes of competition apparel were examined based on the Functional, Expressive, Aesthetic Consumer Needs Model (FEA) proposed by Lamb & Kallal (1992). Athletes were asked to answer open ended questions designed to foster the emergence of data in the area of self-perception in relation to competition athletic apparel. Further, in accordance with Strauss and Corbin, (1994) grounded theory allowed for the construction of new data as the study progressed. As illustrated by the results, the data driven design allowed participants to speak freely and openly about anything they felt was important to the study. Through this process, the five major categories presented in Chapter 4 emerged. This chapter will provide discussion and conclusions about the study as well as make recommendations for future research.

Perceptions Affected by Competition Apparel was the first category that provided insights into the relationship between self-perception and competition athletic apparel. This category examined two major points; the affect of competition apparel on self-perception and an athlete's perception of an opponent. Was apparel worn for competition having any affect on athlete's self-perception? Further, was the competition apparel worn by opponents affecting how an athlete perceived them and thus affecting their own self-perception? This line of questioning aimed to examine Bem's (1972) Self-

Perception Theory in relation to this study. Self-perception theory states that any variable, such as appearance, that affects our views of others can also have an affect on the impressions we have of ourselves (Kellerman & Laird, 1982).

First, athletes were asked to explain what they thought of their opponent's competition apparel at first glance. This question aimed to determine if the participant's perception of an opponent was being affected by the competition apparel they were wearing. If the perception of the opponent was affected, was the participant's self-perception also affected in accordance with Self-Perception Theory? In this case, fifteen of the sixteen athletes who participated in the study did indeed notice their opponent's competition apparel. As Liza pointed out, an opponent that wears a higher level of competition apparel is viewed as having achieved a high level of success. She discussed an instance where her team played an opponent that had a certain type of colored shoes not available to her team. "You know all we wore was black and white. Duke had colored shoes and we were like can we get some of those?" (Liza Transcript, p.5, March 23, 2011). This supports Self-Perception Theory in that Liza was envious of her opponent and aware that they had achieved past success. She judged herself and her competition apparel based on what her opponent had. Ricardo also continually referred to the "big teams" that are "wearing all the apparel" throughout his interview (Ricardo Interview, p.2, March 31, 2011). He felt that the big teams and players "that everyone is looking at" made him take notice and think they "have something going on" (Ricardo Interview, p.2, March 31, 2011). In both cases, competition apparel was affecting these athlete's perception of an opponent and their own self-perception in accordance with

Self-Perception Theory. This also supports Stone's (1970) findings in which he explains that clothing sends a message to others about the person who is wearing them.

Next, athletes were asked to consider the question: If you look good, do you think it makes you feel good/play good? Fourteen of the sixteen athletes who participated in the study did indeed feel that this was the case. Each of them touched on a different attribute of competition apparel that they felt made them look good or feel good. For Jill, a professional look and feel of her competition apparel helped put her in the proper mindset to be successful (Jill Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011). Matt stated that he plays with more confidence when he feels good about how he looks (Matt Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011). Eddie said that his competition apparel played a big role in his excitement level as he prepared for competition. "If my uniform wasn't all that good, I probably wouldn't feel as good, I probably wouldn't be as excited to play so, I think my uniform has a lot to do with it" (Eddie Transcript, p.4, March 2011).

So what particular attribute of competition apparel creates the "good look" that the participants feel improves self-perception? To answer this, open-ended questions were asked relating to each category of the FEA. From these questions, three of the major categories in Chapter 4 emerged. These categories include, Emotional Experience of Wearing Competition Athletic Apparel (Expressive), Functional Experiences of Wearing Competition Athletic Apparel (Functional), and Aesthetic Aspects of Competition Athletic Apparel (Aesthetic). Each participant expressed varying degrees of importance towards each category.

All sixteen participants expressed positive emotions when donning their competition athletic apparel. Emotions ranged from self-pride to school spirit, to

accomplishment. As Jill stated, “It just gets you in that mind-set at another level on top of everything else...” (Jill Transcript, p.2, March 17, 2011). Michael mentioned pride as one of his emotions saying “...when I put my school jersey on I always have pride about myself” (Michael Transcript, p.2, March 7, 2011). Interestingly, each of the participants showed increased excitement when discussing this category. Most explained that putting on competition apparel on a game day is a special moment that positively influenced their self-perception. Tommy might have said it best when he said, “I always tell myself that I’m changing into my Superman outfit you know, when I put my jersey on...” (Tommy Transcript p.3, March 7, 2011). These findings are consistent with Stone (1962) in which he asserts that wearing a particular uniform causes an individual to assume a particular identity and subscribe to certain patterns of behavior. In this case, each participant exhibited positive excitement when donning their competition apparel on a game day.

Aesthetic aspects of competition apparel also played a major role on self-perception. Thirteen of the sixteen participants mentioned color as their most important aesthetic attribute. Perception of the self and of the opponent appeared to have been influenced by color. As Laura explained, wearing a certain color combination made her feel “very intimidating” (Laura Transcript, p.4, March 17, 2011). Ricardo also said he liked wearing certain colors that he felt created a “venomous” look (Ricardo Transcript, p.4, March 31, 2011). This supports the findings of Frank & Gilovich (1998) in which they found that wearing a particular color uniform (in their case, black) can indeed, cause a person to adjust their self-perception. Further, colors worn by an opponent also seemed to have an effect on perception. Jill and Laura both mentioned an intimidation factor of an opponent donning the color black in competition.

Functional aspects of competition apparel also played an important role for many of the participants. Comfort, fit, and ease of movement were the major areas that the participants discussed. As Eddie stated, he just wants everything to fit correctly so he is “loose and ready to play” (Eddie Transcript, p.4, March 7, 2011). As Abby explained in Chapter 4, she had problems with the size of her uniform. This caused her to become distracted before and during competition. As she put it, “...mentally I was freaking out” (Abby Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011). Jill reported a similar instance where she wore a uniform that felt heavy to her. She explained that she felt “held back” and not as fast when wearing this uniform. Laura explained a similar instance where the sleeves of her uniform were too long causing her to say, “the whole time I am focusing on that” (Laura Transcript, p.3, March 17, 2011). In each of these examples, the participant’s self-perception was being affected by the functional aspects of their competition apparel. These distractions were causing them to become frustrated and affected their focus. Matt illustrated this very clearly when he explained that his uniform retained perspiration causing it to feel heavier. When this happened he said, “I would just get pissed off and move slower” (Matt Transcript, p.3, March 31, 2011). Clearly, competition apparel that functions correctly can remove distractions and allow athletes to focus more clearly on the task at hand. Each participant wanted competition apparel that they felt looked good, felt good, and fit correctly.

Finally, athletes were asked if competition apparel had any affect on their selection of a college during the recruitment process. This question aimed to determine the importance of competition apparel to each participant in accordance with Markus’ (1977) Dynamic Self System. Nine out of the sixteen participants said that competition

apparel did not play a role in their attendance decision. Five explained that it played a secondary role in their decision. For example, Amy said it wasn't one of the major reasons why she chose her school but it was "a plus" (Amy Transcript, p.1, March 23, 2011). Two of the participants, Michael and Eddie, explained that competition apparel was one of the major reasons why they chose to attend their current school. So, in accordance with Markus's (1977) Dynamic Self System, two participants were schematic, five were aschematic, and nine were nonschematic. Interestingly, brand and color of competition apparel was the most mentioned attribute in this category. So, for nearly half of the participants, competition apparel had enough importance to consider it when making a major decision.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly competition athletic apparel is on the minds of all the participants as they enter and engage in competition. Each participant had a specific attribute of his or her competition apparel that they valued and felt it was an important part of the game day experience. Overall, every participant felt or expressed that in some way, competition apparel was affecting their self-perception prior to and during competition. Whether it was something small like Eddie's superstitions about socks or something larger like, Chris and Amy's feelings that looking good improves confidence, competition apparel played a role on self-perception. Understanding this role allows athletes and coaches to take competition athletic apparel into consideration when preparing for a game or event.

So, if you look good, do you actually play good? Well, more appropriately if an athlete is comfortable with all areas of their competition apparel then, they have the potential to feel better about themselves. Feeling better improves self-perception and

thus, improves the chances that they are able to perform to the best of their ability. In this day and age of competitive athletics, performing at the highest level is the ultimate goal.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

Further research on competition athletic apparel and self-perception should take place in one particular sport at various levels (adolescent to professional). Looking at one particular sport individually would allow more detailed results about the exact ways that an athlete's competition apparel affects their self-perception. Further, does this change as an athlete advances in skill level of their particular sport? A field study based design would allow a researcher to follow a group of athletes for a season or longer to gain further information on the subject. Participant observation used in conjunction with face to face interviews would allow for detailed data collection..

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

Note: Bullet points are potential probes that the researcher will refer to during the interview process. Theories that the question aims to understand in relation to the study are in parenthesis highlighted in red. All questions aim to be open ended to foster the emergence of data.

#### A. Sport Involvement/Background Information

**I would like to start out with some basic questions about your current sport. This would include, the sport you currently play, how you got involved in that sport, and what led you to play that sport at your current school.**

1. Please tell me the sport you currently play for the University.
2. Please tell me how many years you have played this sport.
3. Please tell me what class level you currently are (Freshman, Soph., etc).
4. Please tell me how you got involved with your current sport.
  - Childhood
  - Other sports you have played
5. Please tell me what led you to play your sport at this University. (Dynamic Self System)
  - Was equipment a factor? (Colors, Brand used,)
  - Other reasons (Parents, siblings attended etc.)

#### B. Sport Psychology

**I would now like to shift our focus to the mental aspect of your sport. This will include your thoughts on the importance of mental preparation for competition, your thoughts about your opponent and self perception.**

1. Please tell me about your mental preparation for game day or competition day.

- Importance of mental preparation
- Factors involved in mental preparation
- Superstitions (Something you do or wear for each game/competition)

2. Please describe what you think about your opponents the first time you see them prior to competition. **(Self-Perception Theory)**

- Initial thought
- Do you notice their equipment
- Is any attention given to them at all

3. Please tell me about self-perception or what you feel about yourself prior to entering competition. **(Self-Perception Theory)**

- Nerves
- Factors playing a role in self-perception (specifically competition apparel)
- Define self-perception if necessary

### **C. Competition Athletic Apparel**

**I would now like to focus on your competition athletic apparel. This would include any apparel/equipment that you use in competition.**

1. Please tell me what competition apparel you wear to participate in your sport.

- Uniforms
- Protective Equipment
- Flair (Headbands, Wristbands, etc.)

2. Please tell me how it makes you feel to put on your competition uniform/apparel.

**(Self- Presentation Theory)**

- School Spirit
- Pride
- Emotions
- Self Perception
- Body Image

3. Please explain how you feel about the functional aspects of your competition athletic apparel. (FEA Model)

- Light or Heavy Material?
- Moisture wicking/Breathes well
- Ease of movement
- Gender Specific
- Aesthetic Aspects (Does it look good, Aesthetics hampering function)

4. Please explain how you feel about the expressive aspects of your competition athletic apparel. (FEA Model)

- The “ME” factor
- Flair used for expression
- Gender Specific and Role Conflict/impact on self perception

5. Please explain how you feel about the aesthetic aspects of your competition athletic apparel. (FEA Model)

- The “look” factor
- Colors
- Design Features
- Special one game uniforms (Throwbacks, Prototypes, etc.)

6. With these factors in mind, please tell me about your competition apparel and its relationship with self-perception prior to competition. (Dynamic Self System)

- Level of importance
- Carry over to live competition
- Relevance

## Appendix B

### Codes in Categories

#### 1. Perceptions affected by Competition Athletic Apparel

##### A. Perception of Opponent:

1. Recognition of opponent's competition apparel.
11. Opponent's footwear and brand noticed in first impression.
21. Opponents competition apparel not noticed prior to competition.
33. "Big name" opponent's competition apparel noticed prior to competition.
47. Opponent's competition apparel color adds to pre-game intimidation factor.
69. Well dressed opponents perceived as more intimidating.
73. Opponent's competition apparel plays key role in pre-game perception.
84. Opponent's competition apparel brand and color noticed during pre-game.
96. Competition apparel first thing noticed when viewing an opponent pre-game.
97. Opponents competition apparel color/style noticed during pre-game.
109. Opponents("elite schools") competition apparel causes feelings of inferiority/envy.
114. Opponent's competition apparel noticed in a secondary capacity.
125. Competition apparel/physical attributes first thing notices about opponent.
133. Opponent's competition apparel (shoes) noticed second when viewing opponent.
139. Competition apparel or elite players noticed when viewing an opponent.
140. Color/look of competition apparel important to athlete during pre-game preparation.
148. Competition apparel aesthetics ("look") creates initial perception of opponent.
151. Opponents competition apparel noticed but not important factor in perception.
161. Opponents competition apparel brand noticed in a secondary fashion.
167. Competition apparel color first thing noticed when viewing opponents.

##### B. Self Perception:

5. New, different look important adds to positive pre-game attitude.
18. Looking good in uniform makes athlete feel good.
23. Donning competition apparel changes mood and self-perception.
30. Color of competition apparel adds feelings of flair/standing out.
39. Correct fit of competition apparel creates feelings of comfort and readiness.
42. Donning competition apparel invokes feelings of readiness for competition.
52. Heavy competition apparel creates feelings of disadvantage during competition.
53. Lightweight competition apparel creates feelings of improved ability.
54. Competition apparel aesthetics important to athlete entering competition.
57. Good looking, properly fitted competition apparel invokes feelings of professionalism prior to entering competition.
58. Professional look/feel of competition apparel improves self perception and confidence prior to entering competition.
78. Donning the color white creates feelings of intimidation.
85. Competition apparel fit creates feelings of security during competition.

- 86. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of excitement and professionalism.
- 94. Uncomfortable/negative aesthetics of competition apparel cause subconscious doubt.
- 105. Gender specific competition apparel important for self-perception.
- 110. Competition apparel fit/function/fashion play role in athlete self perception.
- 115. Competition apparel flair (headband) used to create a “look good” feel.
- 122. Self conscious athlete finds aesthetics of competition apparel important.
- 130. Special uniforms (pink) add to pre-game excitement and positive feelings.
- 137. Looking good in competition apparel creates feelings of increased confidence.
- 141. Color/look of competition apparel important to athlete during pre-game preparation.
- 147. Competition apparel color creates feelings of self-confidence.
- 159. Perceived good “look” of competition apparel creates feelings of confidence when entering competition.
- 162. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of self pride.
- 166. Looking/Feeling good in uniform/competition apparel increases self-confidence.
- 171. Perceived good look of uniform/competition apparel improves self-confidence.

### C. Body Image

- 25. Competition apparel creates feelings of positive body image.
- 56. Competition apparel color creates positive feelings about looks.
- 99. Competition apparel color improves body image.
- 104. Improper fit causes body image concerns
- 108. Gender specific competition apparel causes feelings of discomfort/ negative body image.
- 118. Competition apparel helps create positive body image.
- 127. Competition apparel plays role in feelings of positive body image.
- 154. Donning competition apparel improves body image.
- 163. Body image improved in certain style competition apparel.
- 169. Properly fitted competition apparel helps create positive body image.
- 171. Perceived good look of uniform/competition apparel improves self-confidence.

## 2. Emotional experience of wearing Competition Athletic Apparel

- 2. Wearing competition apparel is meaningful.
- 3. Wearing competition apparel provides feelings of school spirit.
- 5. New, different look important adds to positive pre-game attitude.
- 13. Wearing competition apparel causes feelings of pride and school spirit.
- 14. Wearing uniform competition apparel creates feelings of team unity.
- 28. Expression of competition apparel creates positive feelings of team/family/friends.
- 31. Uniformity of competition apparel created positive feelings about team.
- 35. Extra protective equipment worn/used for function and flair/look.
- 36. Expression of competition apparel creates feelings of pride and reflection.
- 37. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of belonging.
- 42. Donning competition apparel invokes feelings of readiness for competition.

- 48. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of readiness/pride/team unity.
- 49. Flair/wristbands used for symbolism/remembrance.
- 50. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of pride and excitement.
- 62. Seeing and wearing competition apparel create feelings of excitement and game day realization.
- 74. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of excitement and team unity.
- 80. Expressive aspect of uniform adds meaning to competition apparel.
- 81. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of team unity.
- 101. Competition apparel color (socks) cause unrest/insecurity about the look of the team.
- 102. Athlete feels uniforms/competition apparel changed the landscape of college basketball.
- 103. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of excitement and added emotion.
- 117. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of pride and emotion.
- 126. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of pride/excitement.
- 130. Special uniforms (pink) add to pre-game excitement and positive feelings.
- 136. Special occasion uniforms favored by athlete.
- 153. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of school spirit.
- 162. Donning competition apparel creates feelings of self pride.
- 168. Donning competition apparel creates positive feelings different from normal everyday apparel.
- 171. Aesthetics/Function of competition apparel add to feelings of excitement prior to competition

A. Superstitions associated with competition athletic apparel.

- 9. Two pair of socks worn in competition to satisfy superstition.
- 20. Competition apparel plays role in pre-game superstition.
- 46. Competition apparel plays part in pre-game superstition.
- 61. Flair used to satisfy superstitious feelings.
- 72. Competition apparel ritual used for pre-game preparation.
- 83. Competition apparel “flair” used to satisfy superstitions.
- 113. Competition apparel (colored socks) used to satisfy superstitions.
- 124. Competition apparel flair important part of game day superstitions.
- 150. Neatness of competition apparel used to satisfy pre-game superstitions.

**3. Functional Experiences of Wearing Competition Athletic Apparel**

- 17. Fit and function of competition apparel a concern prior to and during competition.
- 24. Proper fit an important factor in competition apparel.
- 26. Change in competition apparel weight from perspiration noticed.
- 35. Extra protective equipment worn/used for function and flair/look.
- 38. Lightweight, tight fit important attributes of competition apparel.
- 39. Correct fit of competition apparel creates feelings of comfort and readiness.
- 41. Logos and proper fit championed over other attributes of competition apparel.
- 55. Competition apparel fit more important than gender specific design.



- 65. Comfort and non-restrictive competition apparel preferred.
- 66. Improper fit of competition apparel noticed during pre-game.
- 85. Competition apparel fit creates feelings of security during competition.
- 89. Competition apparel ease of movement important during competition.
- 90. Gender specific competition apparel preferred due to fitting issues.
- 93. Breathable competition apparel preferred for comfort.
- 94. Uncomfortable/negative aesthetics of competition apparel cause subconscious doubt.
- 104. Improper fit causes body image concerns.
- 107. Sport played dictates the style of competition apparel worn.
- 116. Headband needed to keep hair from face during competition (function).
- 128. Gender specific competition apparel not considered prior to competition.
- 134. Lightweight competition apparel breathes well and manages moisture.
- 135. Breathable, lightweight competition apparel important to athlete.
- 155. Lightweight competition apparel important to athlete.
- 165. Lightweight, breathable competition apparel favored by athlete.
- 170. Light color competition apparel preferred for temperature management.
- 171. Aesthetics/Function of competition apparel add to feelings of excitement prior to competition

A. Distraction During Competition:

- 27. Change in competition apparel weight and location noticed during competition.
- 51. Old competition apparel weight caused distraction during competition.
- 52. Heavy competition apparel creates feelings of disadvantage during competition.
- 53. Lightweight competition apparel creates feelings of improved ability.
- 63. Improperly fitted competition apparel distracting during competition.
- 75. Properly fitted competition apparel important to prevent distractions in competition.
- 76. Improper cut of competition apparel (sleeves) creates distraction during competition.
- 77. Parents/fans notice and point out improperly fitted/styled competition apparel.
- 79. Uncomfortable “grabby” competition apparel causes feelings of discomfort.
- 87. Improperly fitted competition apparel causes distraction in competition.
- 88. Poor on field performance partially blamed on improperly fitted competition apparel.
- 91. Improperly fitted competition apparel causes distraction/opponent advantage during competition.
- 98. Poor fit/function of competition apparel cause distraction during competition.
- 100. Protective equipment for injury causes restricted movement that hampers play.
- 106. Uniform style causes distraction/opponent advantage during competition.
- 111. Improperly fitted competition apparel causes distraction during competition.
- 131. Mismatched competition apparel from team creates distraction during competition.
- 146. Properly fitted competition apparel important to not hinder athlete during competition.

- 156. Poor moisture management of competition apparel causes distraction during competition.
- 157. Poor function of competition apparel causes mental frustration during competition.
- 158. Competition apparel design features (collar) causes annoyance during competition.

#### **4. Aesthetic Aspects of Competition Athletic Apparel**

- 4. Uniformity creates positive image of competition apparel.
- 15. Bright, noticeable competition apparel color favored over other colors.
- 16. Bright numbers/lettering favored by athlete.
- 29. Athlete happy with aesthetic attributes of competition apparel.
- 30. Color of competition apparel adds feelings of flair/standing out.
- 40. Orange colored competition apparel disliked by athlete.
- 41. Logos and proper fit championed over other attributes of competition apparel.
- 47. Opponent's competition apparel color adds to pre-game intimidation factor.
- 54. Competition apparel aesthetics important to athlete entering competition.
- 55. Competition apparel fit more important than gender specific design.
- 64. Clean, non-sloppy competition apparel preferred over other styles.
- 67. Color not an important factor for athlete prior to/during competition.
- 68. Good looking competition apparel not important to athlete.
- 92. Mismatched colors preferred for competition apparel.
- 94. Uncomfortable/negative aesthetics of competition apparel cause subconscious doubt.
- 107. Sport played dictates the style of competition apparel worn.
- 120. "Special" colored competition apparel favored over traditional colors.
- 121. Look of competition apparel deemed important but not a factor in competition.
- 129. Look of competition apparel is classy and clean.
- 131. Mismatched competition apparel from team creates distraction during competition.
- 141. Color/look of competition apparel important to athlete during pre-game preparation.
- 142. Flair used to enhance the look of competition apparel.
- 143. Overall look of competition apparel important to athlete entering competition.
- 152. Bright color competition apparel preferred by athlete entering competition.
- 159. Perceived good "look" of competition apparel creates feelings of confidence when entering competition.
- 164. Rare colored competition apparel preferred over base colors.
- 167. Competition apparel color first thing noticed when viewing opponents.

#### **Role of Competition Athletic Apparel in Major Decision (Dynamic Self System)**

##### **A. Major Role in College Selection:**

- 32. Brand and quantity of competition apparel play a role in school selection.

45. Competition apparel brand adds excitement for school chosen.

B. Minor Role in College Selection:

43. Athlete aware of competition apparel brand worn by school during recruitment.

59. Athlete aware of competition apparel brand worn by school prior to attending.

70. Athlete aware of competition apparel brand worn by school prior to attending.

82. Competition apparel brand plays small role in school attendance decision.

95. Pride/competition apparel brand play secondary role in school selection.

123. Competition apparel brand plays secondary role in school attendance selection.

132. Competition apparel plays secondary role in school attendance selection.

160. Competition apparel brand plays secondary role in school attendance decision.

C. No Role in College Selection:

19. Competition apparel not a factor in school selection.

44. Competition apparel not a factor in school selection decision.

60. Competition apparel not a factor in school selection.

68. Good looking competition apparel not important to athlete.

71. Competition apparel not a factor in school attendance decision.

112. Competition apparel does not play a role in school selection.

138. Competition apparel not a factor in school attendance decision.

149. Competition apparel does not play a role in school selection.

## Appendix C

### IRB Research Protocol Approval & Informed Consent



VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
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Blacksburg, Virginia 24060  
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#### MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 11, 2011

TO: Richard K. Stratton, Eric Cross

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 26, 2013)

PROTOCOL TITLE: The Uniform Effect

IRB NUMBER: 11-130

Effective February 11, 2011, the Virginia Tech IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore, approved the new protocol for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm> (please review before the commencement of your research).

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved as: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6, 7

Protocol Approval Date: 2/11/2011

Protocol Expiration Date: 2/10/2012

Continuing Review Due Date\*: 1/27/2012

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals / work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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## **Informed Consent**

### **The Uniform Effect: Collegiate Student Athletes Experiences with Competition Athletic Apparel and Self Perception**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine student athlete experiences with competition athletic apparel in relation to self-perception. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a one-on-one interview about your experiences with competition athletic apparel.

#### **II. Procedures**

You will be asked to complete a one-on-one interview with the researcher. Interviews will take thirty to forty-five minutes to complete. The interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.

#### **III. Risks**

There is minimal risk involved with participation in this study.

#### **IV. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Your identity will be kept confidential at all times. Pseudonyms or false names will be used for your name and any names mentioned in the interview process. The audio recording used to collect data during the interview will be stored securely by the researcher. At the completion of the project, all audio recordings will be erased or destroyed.

#### **V. Compensation**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this project.

#### **VI. Freedom to Withdraw**

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected from you will be destroyed. Should you feel uncomfortable about a particular question or questions during the interview process, you are free to pass or not answer the question.

## VII. Participant Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and the conditions of the study. Any questions about the study have been answered and I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Should I have any questions about this study, its conduct, or my rights, please contact Eric Cross at 231-6203, or by email at [ecross@vt.edu](mailto:ecross@vt.edu)  
Richard Stratton at 231-5617 or by email at [rstratto@vt.edu](mailto:rstratto@vt.edu)

Further, you may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, David Moore at 231-4991 or email at [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu).