

An Overview of Women's Athletics at Four Year Institutions in Alabama and Georgia

JOANNA DAVENPORT

State University of New York at Plattsburg

A short questionnaire was sent to all four year institutions of higher education, (public and private), in the states of Alabama and Georgia. There are 31 such universities and colleges in Georgia and 19 in Alabama. The information requested were questions concerning sports offered and who coaches these sports and directs the program. In addition, there were questions about scholarship aid, budget totals and miscellaneous questions about the university or college. The results were obtained through returned questionnaires, information from the current 1986-1987 *National Directory of College Athletics – Women's Edition*, and various studies from newspapers and magazines.

It is important to realize the size of the colleges and universities in Alabama and Georgia so that the full athletic picture can be understood. First, of the 19 four year institutions of higher education in Alabama only 3 have a student body of over 10,000 students (The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and The University of Alabama in Birmingham both have 15,000 and Auburn University, the land grant school, has 19,000 students). Eight colleges range from 350-3000 enrollment and the remaining 8 are between 3000 and 10,000 with the majority nearer the 3000 mark. Thus, compared to many states there is a preponderance of small colleges. It is not surprising, then, that 6 of the 19 four year institutions belong to the NAIA, instead of the NCAA.

Although the state of Georgia has many more colleges, it presents a similar picture. Only three institutions have over 10,000 students, (there are 11,000 at Georgia Tech, 21,000 at Georgia State, and 23,000 at the land grant school, the University of Georgia). The majority of the schools have enrollments of 170 to 300 students while 7 have student bodies between 3000-8000. Again, there is a preponderance of small colleges. Fifteen of the schools in Georgia belong to the NAIA, while 12 belong to NCAA and 3 are independent.

The numbers of women administrators in women's intercollegiate athletics are dismal. In

Alabama only one woman is in charge of women's athletics, at The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. In Georgia the picture is not much better as only 5 of 31 schools have woman athletic directors in charge of women's sports. These facts for the two states confirm the figures for the decline of women administrators across the country released by Acosta and Carpenter who have studied women's athletics in relation to leadership positions for ten years. In contrast to 90-100 percent of women serving as women athletic directors in 1972, the year of Title IX, in 1986 only 15 percent served in that position. In other words, these roles are held 85 percent of the time by men. The situation is similar when the sports offered and who coaches these sports is examined.

Only 7 females coach collegiate women's basketball in Alabama in contrast to 11 men. In Georgia there are 8 female and 15 male coaches for the 23 institutions that offer women's intercollegiate basketball. The only sport in Alabama where there are more female coaches than male is in volleyball, (an 8 to 5 ratio). In Georgia, every sport has a preponderance of male coaches. Furthermore, in Alabama 5 of the 19 colleges have only males coaching their women's intercollegiate teams. In Georgia the 9 of the 31 colleges have only male coaches.

We are left with some crucial questions. How did this situation occur? Not only in Alabama and Georgia but across the country, men have steadily gained control of women's sports, and have also slowly replaced former women coaches. The answers are many and range from success of the old boys' network to lack of qualified women administrators and coaches.

What is the future for women as athletic administrators and women coaches? An optimistic yet also gloomy prediction is ahead for women athletic administrators and coaches according to a recent issue of *Athletic Business*. In an article entitled "Women's Athletics-A Clouded Forecast," the forecast is "mostly sunny, but with a strong chance that the dark storm clouds on the horizon will move in later on."