THE WOMEN'S DISTANCE RUNNING INDUSTRY AND THE PARADOX OF WOMEN'S SPORTS: CLASS, CONSUMPTION, IDENTITY, AND THE SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN SPORTS CULTURE

by

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(Under the Direction of Bethany E. Moreton)

ABSTRACT

This research explores the persistent paradox of women in American sports culture. Through an examination of the women's distance running industry of the late 1970s and early 1980s, this project highlights the function of class not only in determining a woman's access to the sport, but also in defining the popular identity of women runners around a specific set of characteristics. The women's distance running industry achieved great successes by providing opportunities and resources that ostensibly invited more women to participate in the sport, epitomized by the establishment of a women's Olympic Marathon at the 1984 Olympic Games. However, such successes masked the complexity of factors that ultimately contained the cultural conception of the sport. The sport's class foundations combined with stringent consumptive, bodily, and gender requirements to perpetuate the subordinate status of women's sports in the media- and commercial-driven hierarchy of sports culture in late-twentieth century America.

INDEX WORDS: Women's sports, distance running, women's Olympic Marathon, 1984 Olympics, Boston Marathon, Kathrine Switzer, Joan Benoit, fitness, middle-class, yuppies, media, consumption, identity, femininity, liberation, heterosexuality, health

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B.A., The University of the South, 2009

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree

MASTERS OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2013

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May 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

On April 19, 1967, Kathrine Switzer toed the starting line at the Boston Marathon. For the twenty year-old Switzer, the opportunity to compete in the nation's oldest road race culminated a personal, athletic journey. Although, she knew she represented an oddity, both as a woman and as a runner. As her coach's initial opposition made evident, society discouraged a woman from fulfilling her athletic potential, especially in a strenuous 26.2 mile road race. Yet, Switzer's aspiration trumped her concerns about transgressing these socially constructed barriers. She began the race with little fanfare, only receiving positive encouragement from her fellow male competitors. A few miles into the race, however, she heard aggressive footsteps approaching from behind. Suddenly, a seemingly enraged man, screaming, "Get the hell out of my race and give me those numbers!," was pursuing her. The man, race director Jock Semple, attempted to rip her number from her sweatshirt and force her off the race course. Her boyfriend Tom Miller, a collegiate shot putter, quickly reacted to this affront, unleashing a powerful body blow that knocked Semple off his feet, allowing Switzer to escape this bewildering assault. Twenty plus miles and more than four hours later, Switzer, in spite of Semple's efforts, finished the race, staggering across the nearly abandoned finish line.[1]

In 1967, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), the ruling body for amateur sports, prohibited women from running more than two miles in sanctioned road races. As a subsidiary organization of the AAU, the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) adhered to these regulations, which partly explains Semple's hostility to Switzer. Semple insisted, "The amateur rules say that no woman can run for more than two miles and a half and that's pretty clear. I'm not against makin' their races longer. But they don't belong

[1] Kathrine Switzer, *Marathon Woman: Running the Race to Revolutionize Women's Sports* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2007), 48-9, 87-92, 103-4, 107.

where the men are."[2] Ironically, the AAU, specifically its Women's Committee, was supposed to be the chief advocate for women's athletic opportunities. However, the female physical education leaders that composed the AAU Women's Committee continued to uphold the athletic standards established in the 1930s. These physical educators believed that women and girls' athletic participation should be controlled, limited, and temporary, all while emphasizing traditional femininity.[3] Marathon running represented the antithesis of these ideals.

For Switzer, the incident with Semple altered the meaning of the marathon. Because this man apparently believed she did not belong in the race, completing the marathon became more than a personal endeavor; her performance would stand as a referendum on the athletic potential of all women. She later proclaimed, "...I knew if I quit, nobody would ever believe that women had the capability to run the marathon distance. If I quit, everybody would say it was a publicity stunt. If I quit, it would set women's sports back, way back, instead of forward."[4] Importantly, Switzer's encounter with Semple also received a measure of national publicity. Semple, coincidentally, accosted her in front of the race's press trucks. The resulting photographs, appearing in multiple national newspapers, ensured that many Americans bore witness to an apparent male chauvinist attacking an independent female athlete.[5] While the AAU's

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[2] Jock Semple quoted in Phil Elderkin, "Change of pace: No women allowed," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 20, 1970, 10.

[3] Dusty Rhodes, "History of Women's Running," in *The Complete Woman Runner*, eds. *Runner's World* Magazine (Mountain View, CA: World Publications, 1978), 244-6. Laura J. Huelster, "The Role of Sports in the Culture of Girls," in *Second National Institute on Girls Sports Proceedings*, ed. *American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1966), 119-23. Katherine Ley, "Widening the Scope of Women's Sport Activities," in *Second National Institute on Girls Sports Proceedings*, ed. *American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1966), 128-33. *Standards in Sports for Girls and Women: Guiding Principles in the Organization and Administration of Sports Programs*, ed. Division for Girls and Women's Sports of the *American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1958).

[4] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 93. Bill Reynolds, "25 years ago, Switzer gave 'girls' a running start," *Providence Journal*, April 21, 1992, C-01.

[5] Coverage of Switzer's feat in national newspapers: "2 Girls in Marathon Don't Have Lovely Leg to Stand On," *New York Times*, April 20, 1967, 55. "N. Zealander Wins Boston Marathon," *The Washington Post*, April 20, 1967, C2. "Lady With Desire to Run Crashed Marathon," *New York Times*, April 23, 1967, 199. William Gildea, "K. Switzer, Girl, Can Run Forever," *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1967, D4.

official restrictions and society's dominant gender attitudes suggest Switzer's marathon romp should have represented a lone episode of individual athletic ambition, her transgression, aided by the publication of arresting photos, eventually sparked a women's distance running movement.

Nevertheless, Switzer was not the only, or even the first, woman to run a marathon.[6] In fact, another woman also ran from Hopkinton Square to the Prudential Center in Boston in 1967. Unacknowledged and unmolested, twenty-four year-old Roberta Gibb completed the marathon in less than three and a half hours. At the starting line, she hid in the bushes until surreptitiously joining the cadre of male runners after the race began, a practice she had perfected at the 1966 Boston Marathon. Prior to the 1966 race, she submitted an official application that the AAU and BAA summarily rejected due to her sex. Explicitly ignoring their dictates, Gibb successfully, but "unofficially", completed the race.[7] She received a degree of attention for her accomplishment, including a profile in *Sports Illustrated* that declared that the sight of the "tidy-looking...blonde" running had a "jarring" impact on "countless male egos."[8] Two years later, two more women ran Boston. Running with her husband Larry, Sara Mae Berman of Cambridge, Massachusetts "won" the women's race, the first of her three

[6] Karl Lennartz, "Two Women Ran in the Marathon in 1896," *Citius, Altius, Fortius* 2.1 (Winter 1994): 19-20. Jacqueline Hansen, "The Women's Marathon Movement," *Marathon and Beyond* (Jan/Feb 2012): 60-1. Research has suggested that two women ran the marathon distance in Greece in 1896, just before and after the first Olympic race. According to Karl Lennartz, a young woman named Melopeme desired to compete in the Olympic race. Denied of this opportunity, she completed the Olympic marathon course approximately one month prior to the race. The day after the Olympic Marathon, another woman, Stamata Revithi, ran the complete course. In the United States, Lyn Carman and Merry Lepper competed in the 1963 Western Hemisphere Marathon in Culver City, California, with Carman completing twenty miles and Lepper finishing the race.

[7] John Powers, "Giant strides – women marathon runners have come a long way since gaining official status in '72," *Boston Globe*, April 13, 2007, F2. John Powers, "Four decades later, Gibb's stealth mission a distance memory," *Boston Globe*, April 16, 2010, D6. The Associated Press, "Gibb, Others, Ran Down Barriers in Marathons," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 7, 1996, 01F.

[8] Gwilym S. Brown, "A Girl in a Man's Game," *Sports Illustrated*, May 2, 1966, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1078491/index.htm.

consecutive "unofficial" victories.[9] Nina Kuscsik, a mother of three, also ran the 1969 marathon with her husband Dick, even though she knew of the AAU and BAA's restriction against women's participation. Her unofficial status did not bother her until she finished the race and realized that, although she had strived just as hard as her fellow male runners, no record of her accomplishment would exist. Kuscsik remembers thinking, "It was like, *Women aren't allowed to run?!* I thought, *This is bad. Who did this?* As a woman, this didn't make sense, that there were all these restrictions. Something had to be done."[10]

Over the next three years, Switzer, Berman, and Kuscsik would undertake a variety of separate efforts to prove that women deserved distance running equality, defined as the right to run in marathon distance races. Their efforts would result in unofficial but increasingly effective women's distance running movement. A journalism and public relations major at Syracuse University, Switzer recognized the potential of using media coverage to expose the false assumptions and biased regulations that barred women from long distance races. In the summer of 1967, she travelled across the United States and Canada to compete in as many races as possible, running in marathons not sanctioned by the AAU.[11] She accepted that she received attention primarily as a curiosity, but believed that such sensationalized coverage was better than none.[12] She also hoped her example would motivate other women to take up the sport and discover their own athletic ability.

Along with competing in races in the New York area, Nina Kuscsik partnered with the Road Runners Club of America, aggressively lobbying the AAU to change their

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[9] Larry Eldridge, "Game plan: 'Nobody doesn't like Sara Mae'," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 1973, 13. Barbara Huebner, "Sara Mae Berman in marathons, she was ahead of her time," *Boston Globe*, April 12, 1996, 106.

[10] Nina Kuscsik quoted in Charles Butler, "Sole Sisters of '72," *Runner's World*, November 2012, 100-1. Italics from original.

[11] Glidea, "K. Switzer, Girl, Can Run Forever." Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 120.

[12] Kathrine Switzer, "Breakers of Barriers," in *The Complete Woman Runner*, eds. *Runner's World* Magazine (Mountain View, CA: World Publications, 1978), 283.

policies.[13] Like Kuscsik, Sara Mae Berman combined racing with advocacy, as she and her husband Larry founded the Cambridge Sports Union, a co-ed athletic club that provided running opportunities for women.[14] While other women also began participating in the sport, the cohort of women runners remained a small, selective group. Nevertheless, their efforts forced the AAU to begin to recognize the running abilities of the women, with the organization incrementally relaxing their restrictions. At the 1971 convention, the AAU chairman proposed to allow all women to race ten miles and "select" women to compete in marathons. These "select" women would need prior approval from the national chairman, with approval granted to any woman who had proven capable of running a marathon, a somewhat convoluted rule that rewarded women who previously had ignored AAU policies. The AAU also asserted new restrictions, declaring that women could only run in men's races if a "separate" distinction between the sexes was established.[15]

1972 would serve as a pivotal year for the nascent women's distance running movement. First, women finally received "official" status at the Boston Marathon.[16] Throughout their quest for running equality, these pioneering women realized the necessity of strong performances, knowing that impressive times would prove their legitimacy. Kathrine Switzer asserted that "among women marathoners there was still a sense of uneasiness. Every time we ran we faced considerable pressure...Thus, our first obligation seemed to be to perform well on behalf of our sex..."[17] Now considered equals at Boston, extra pressure weighed on their performances in 1972. Unfortunately, injury prevented Sara Mae Berman from participating, leaving the race to Nina Kuscsik, who

[13] Butler, 129. John Powers, "Kuscsik officially a symbol of change," *Boston Globe*, April 13, 2007, F7.
[14] Huebner.
[15] "A.A.U. Changes Due in '72," *Runner's World*, November 1971, 14.
[16] William Gildea, "Old Jock Gives Way to Pioneer K.," *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1972, D1. "Down with Boston's Barriers," *Runner's World*, May 1972, 14-5.
[17] Switzer, "Breakers of Barriers," 283-4.

persevered to victory in spite of digestive issues.[18] The fact that a woman proved more concerned about winning a race than potentially embarrassing herself in front of thousands verified the seriousness and dedication of women marathoners. When asked to comment on her race experience, Kuscsik simply said, "It proved to me that I had guts."[19]

In anticipation of the 1972 New York Marathon, the AAU further clarified its stance on "separate" races for men and women, declaring that "separate" meant women must start ten minutes before the men.[20] New York Marathon director Fred Lebow, an anti-Jock Semple figure, collaborated with Kuscsik to use the AAU's latest power play to the women's advantage. When the women's starting gun sounded on race morning, the six female competitors simply sat down, holding signs that attacked the AAU for this discriminatory rule. The signs proclaimed, "Hey AAU. This is 1972. Wake Up!," "The AAU is Unfair," "The AAU is Archaic," and "The AAU is Midevil."[21] Because of the importance of putting up competitive times, the fact that Kuscsik willingly sacrificed ten minutes off her time highlights her commitment to achieving distance running equality. When asked, "...so why do you do it?," Kuscsik shot back, "Just the way you phrase the question shows your attitude. Who says it is not the most feminine thing a woman can do...Running is neither masculine or [*sic*] feminine. It's just healthy..."[22] This brusque retort captures the fiery determination propelling the women's distance running movement. Furthermore, as with the Switzer-Semple episode, a stunning photograph, featured on the front page of *The New York Times*, allowed the country to again witness discrimination against women runners.[23] Thus, at the 1972 AAU convention, the Women's Committee finally relented; they announced that all women could run in

[18] "Down with Boston's Barriers," *Runner's World*, May 1972, 14-5.
[19] Nina Kuscsik quoted in John Powers, "Kuscsik Officially a Symbol of Change."
[20] Rhodes, 250. Butler, 103.
[21] Gerald Eskenazi, "In New York's Marathon, They Also Run Who Only Sit and Wait," *The New York Times*, October 2, 1972, 39. Butler, 103. It is not known if the spelling error was intentional.
[22] Nina Kuscsik quoted in Butler, 100.
[23] Eskenazi, "In New York's Marathon."

marathons, only mandating that women be scored separately.[24] After a five year quest, the women's distance running movement had achieved equality.

Yet this victory did not satisfy women runners, as they immediately set their sights on bigger goals. The recent conclusion of the 1972 Olympic Games inspired Switzer and her fellow pioneers to seek a women's Olympic marathon.[25] A recent women's running event offered a valuable model for achieving this goal. Prior to the 1972 New York Marathon, Fred Lebow partnered with Johnson's Crazylegs Wax to host a women-only ten kilometer road race, or Mini-Marathon, in Central Park. However, a gross sideshow ensued, revealing that impending equality did not guarantee full respect. A large banner and Playboy bunnies dotted the starting line, creating a tableau never seen in distance running. Additionally, all participants were required to wear the Crazylegs t-shirt they received when registering because, in a savvy promotional move, race numbers were stenciled on the shirts.[26] Charlotte Lettis, an experienced runner who participated in the race, stingingly critiqued the event, asserting, "I was excited and apprehensive...I thought women were finally being allowed to run distance. We were finally accepted as something more than freaks. I was proud....Then the perversion started."[27] She further bemoaned, "But as usual it was a freak show – a money-making, newspaper-selling, shaving cream-pushing freak show...Instead of advancing women's distance running, the 'Crazy Legs Marathon' set women's athletics back to the P.T. Barnum era of stunts and exploitations."[28]

Nevertheless, beyond this pathetic sensationalism, the Crazylegs race evinced the progress of the sport. Seventy-eight women competed in the race, an exceedingly large

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[24] "News and Views: Women as Equals," *Runner's World*, January 1973, 4. Pat Tarnawsky, "How Women Won." Rhodes, *Runner's World*, February 1973, 251.
[25] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 187, 193-6.
[26] Ibid., 175-77. Charlotte Lettis, "Promoting Women's Running?," *Runner's World*, September 1972, 44. Scott Cacciola, "When a Race for Women Was 'Crazy'," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 2012, accessed November 19, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303665904577450791744417670.html.
[27] Lettis.
[28] Ibid.

number considering most races included less than ten.[29] This fact suggested that, given an inclusive, female friendly race, more women would participate in the sport. Additionally, Jackie Dixon, a 17 year-old from California, won the race in an impressive thirty-seven minutes, a performance that indicated that a talented population of women was ready to participate in the sport; they just needed more opportunities.[30] And, while Crazylegs relied on despicable commercialism, the fact that Johnson Wax sponsored a successful race suggested the potential of establishing partnerships with more sympathetic sponsors. Between its positives and negatives, the 1972 Crazylegs Mini-Marathon encapsulated the achievements of the women's distance running movement and foretold the sport's future course.

During the next five years, women's distance running would steadily grow and improve, with more women running in more races, which, in turn, produced ever-lower times.[31] In particular, the Mini Marathon would soon become a women's running institution.[32] Likewise, other prominent, women-only races were established, with 1974 serving as the inaugural year for the women's AAU National Marathon Championship and Women's International Marathon, held in Waldneil, West Germany.[33] In 1975, Jacki Hansen not only established a new world record but ostensibly proved the legitimacy of

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[29] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 177.
[30] Cacciola.
[31] Evidence of women's greater involvement and concurrent improvement in the sport during the mid-1970s: Tom Stuark, "Marvelous Miki Gorman," *Runner's World*, June 1974, 18-9. Jon Sutherland, "R.W. Interview: Jacki Hansen," Runner's World, April 1975, 10-3. Steve Cady, "Women Marathoners Are Racing to Equality with Men," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1975, 33. Janet Heinonen, "What's Happening to Women?," *Runner's World*, October 1975, 20-3. Hugh Bowen, "United States Marathoning: Sub-4:00 Women for 1975," *Runner's World*, February 1976, 62-3. Dennis McBride, "Kim Merritt: No Place to be Alone," *Runner's World*, June 1976, 42-3. Frances Knowles, "Women Who Run For Themselves," *Runner's World*, July 1976, 54-5.
[32] Coverage of the Mini Marathon in the mid-1970s: Steve Cady, "Girl Shows Women How to Run," *New York Times*, May 13 1973 211. Kathy Switzer, "Leaving the Side-Show Era," *Runner's World*, August 1973, 24. Kathrine Switzer, "The 'Mini' Marathon and How it Grew," *Runner's World*, July 1975, 24-5. Nina Kuscsik and Lynn Blackstone, "The Women's 'Mini' Gets BIG," *Runner's World*, July 1976, 52-3.
[33] Coverage of the first few editions of these respective races: Joe Henderson, "A Hot Race for the Women," *Runner's World*, April 1974, 24-5. Marilyn Paul, "Readers' Comments: Women's AAU," *Runner's World*, April 1974, 47. Joan Ullyot, "Women's National Marathon, The Second Time Around," *Runner's World*, December 1975, 24-6. Joan Ullyot, "A Championship Just for WOMEN," *Runner's World*, December 1976, 44-6. Joan Ullyot, "International First for Women," *Runner's World*, November 1974, 20-23. Sharon Barbano, "Dreaming of Waldniel," *Women's Sports*, January 1980, 89.

women distance runners, becoming the first woman to run under 2:40 in the marathon with a time of 2:38:19 at the Nike-OTC Marathon in Oregon.[34] These developments, among numerous others, exhibited the real progress of the sport and, important to its continued advancement, the existence of a potentially viable market of feamle runners. In the late 1970s, an astute recognition of this market would result in the women's distance running movement transforming into a women's distance running industry. Endowed with corporate support and resources, the women's distance running industry would eventually achieve their ultimate goal – a women's Olympic Marathon at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. Thus, the history of the women's distance running seemingly follows the slow and steady, but positive and triumphant, trajectory characteristic to the popular narrative of women's sports; after a series of inspirational trials and tribulations, women eventually attained equality. However, the perpetually subordinate status of female athletes in contemporary American sport culture exposes the facileness and obtuseness of this estimation.

Many scholars from a diversity of disciplines have interrogated the enduring cultural inequality of women's sports.[35] Michael Messner, a sociologist of gender and

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[34] Tom Stuark and Leal Reinhart, "Women's Marathon," *Runner's World*, January 1976, 6. Jacqueline Hansen, "See How They Run: Jacki Hansen – 2:38:19," *Runner's World*, February 1976, 26-7. Hansen, "The Women's Marathon Movement," 65.

[35] A sample of this scholarship: Leslie Heywood and Shari L. Dworkin, *Built to Win: The Female Athlete as a Cultural Icon* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Eileen McDonagh and Laura Pappano, *Playing With The Boys: Why Separate Is Not Equal in Sports* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Michael Messner, *Out of Play: Critical Essays on Gender and Sport* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007). Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Cahn, *Women and Sports in the United States: A Documentary Reader* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007). Catriona M. Parratt, "About Turns: Reflecting on Sport History in the 1990s," *Sport History Review* 29.1 (1998): 14-17. Nancy Struna, "Beyond Mapping Experience: The Need for Understanding in the History of American Sporting Women," *Journal of Sport History* 11.1 (1984): 120-133. Patricia Vertinsky, "Gender Relations, Women's History and Sport History: A Decade of Changing Enquiry, 1983-1993," *Journal of Sport* 21.1 (1994): 1-24. Catriona M. Parratt, "From History of Women in Sport to Women's Sport History: A Research Agenda," in *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie, eds. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994), 5-12. D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie, "Feminist Perspectives: Intersections With Women and Sport," in Costa and Guthrie, 235-51. Diane L. Gill, "Psychological Perspectives on Women in Sport and Exercise," in Costa and Guthrie, 253-78. Mary E. Duquin, "She Flies Through the Air With the Greatest of Ease: The Contributions of Feminist Psychology," in Costa and Guthrie, 285-302. Sharon R. Guthrie and Shirley Castelnuovo, "The Significance of Body Image in Psychosocial Development and in Embodying Feminist Perspectives," in Costa and Guthrie, 307-21. Nancy Theberge and Susan Birrell, "The Sociological Study of Women and Sport," in Costa and Guthrie, 323-8. Nancy Theberge

sport, has produced some of the most insightful scholarship on this subject. In his 2003 book, *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports*, Messner asks, "To what extent is talk of gender equity...a symbolic façade that may serve to obscure stubbornly persistent inequities in people's day-to-day practices?"[36] Attempting to answer this question, Messner critically addresses the various manifestations of some of these "persistent inequities," adding a new dynamism to previously static critiques. In particular, Messner discusses what he labels the "just do it" model of women's sport, a model that captures the state of women's sports in the post-Title IX environment of the late twentieth century. Borrowing this name from Nike's famous motto, Messner argues, "The just do it model approaches sex equity as though the institutional center is the place to be...," but it "operates from a naively optimistic liberalism that assumes that if we simply open doors...everything will be okay."[37]

Corporations occupy a central place in this sporting model, especially since the American sports world now functions as a "sport-media-commercial" complex.[38] According to Messner, "Examining what we call the sport-media-commercial complex helps us begin to understand sport not as a separate and autonomous 'sports world' but as part of a larger, increasingly global economic nexus that utilizes sports to advertise a huge range of consumer products."[39] Elaborating on the implications of the "sport-

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and Susan Birrell, "Structural Constraints Facing Women in Sport," in Costa and Guthrie, 331-9. Susan Birrell and Nancy Theberge, "Ideological Control of Women in Sport," in Costa and Guthrie, 341-57. Susan Birrell and Nancy Theberge, "Feminist Resistance and Transformation in Sport," in Costa and Guthrie, 361-74. K.F. Dyer, *Challenging the Men: The Social Biology of Female Sporting Achievement* (New York: University of Queensland Press, 1982). Carole A. Oglesby, *Women and Sport: From Myth to Reality* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1978). Stephanie L. Twin, *Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979). Ellen W. Gerber, Jan Felshin, Pearl Berlin, and Waneen Wyrick, *The American Woman in Sport* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1974). Mary A. Boutilier and Lucinda SanGiovanni, *The Sporting Woman* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1983).

[36] Michael Messner, *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xi-xii.

[37] Ibid., 148.

[38] Ibid., 77. Messner and his colleagues adopted and expanded on Sut Jhally's conception of a "sport-media complex" in developing this term in order to better "capture the complex institutional dynamics at the nexus of sport, media, and corporate promoters and advertisers."

[39] Ibid.

media-commercial" complex for female athletes, Messner suggests that companies like Nike became a "celebrity feminist," commodifying the rhetoric of liberal feminism to sell sport to women.[40] Messner posits,

> [T]he corporate individualist appropriation of feminist empowerment as synonymous with the development of one's athletic body tends to deflect awareness of institutional arrangements. Instead, women's 'feminist' agency, especially among women privileged by class and race, is diverted toward mass consumption aimed at individual development and away from collective organizing to change institutions that disadvantage all women...[41]

Continuing, he recognizes the integrality of individual consumption to the "just do it" model, highlighting how an emphasis on consumption results in "some women manag[ing] to 'just do it' in ways that enable them to share men's institutional power and privileges" so that "they may simply become more effective agents in re-creating similarly oppressive social relations..."[42] While critical of how the "sport-media-commercial" complex and "just do it" model have disadvantaged women, he also recognizes the futility of alternative sporting models. Messner suggests,

> [I]deas from the margins hold the potential to demonstrate alternatives to the sport-media-commercial complex's dominant structures, practices, and symbols of gender, race, sexuality, and commercialization. But they may also simultaneously doom themselves to all the limitations of marginal status...If women's sports remain on the margins, any new ideas or practices generated there would be unlikely to challenge the center of sport; as such, women's sports would become a comfortable ghetto that relieves pressure from, rather challenging and changing, the center.[43]

Messner's analysis introduces a theoretical discourse that captures the complicated and paradoxical nature of women's engagement with sport in late twentieth century. However, as a sociologist, he fails to offer adequate historical context for his theorizing. This lack of historical background prevents a more nuanced analysis of the manifestation of these processes and arrangements. While several strong histories of women in sports have provided useful chronological narratives, namely those of Susan

[40] Messner borrows this term from C.L. Cole and Amy Hribar, "Celebrity Feminism: Nike Style, Post-Fordism, Transcendence, and Consumer Power," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12 (1995): 365.
[41] Ibid., 89.
[42] Ibid., 152.
[43] Ibid.

Cahn and Mary Jo Festle, these histories and other twentieth century accounts primarily focus on a few sports, athletes and developments, with the impact of Title IX and women's professional tennis receiving the majority of the attention.[44] They also include only surface-level analysis of the historical developments recounted. Thus, research on women's sports that combines these scholarship models can provide a useful contribution to the field. Most importantly, this approach produces a multi-faceted portrait of women's experience in sport, grounding critical analysis that seeks to understand the significance of women's sporting experience in a historical reality that demonstrably impacted the lives of female athletes.

The women's distance running industry represents a historical era ripe for such analysis. As suggested by the "sport-media-commercial" complex, modern sport cannot be understood without due attention to its manifestation in the media and commercial spheres. Because women largely have achieved "equality" at the individual level, an analysis of how women's sports is understood in the media and market is crucial to a thorough deconstruction of the factors contributing to women's perpetually subordinate status at the cultural level of American sport. The women's distance running industry concerns the development and perpetuation of the sport's popular perception, positioning it as useful historical and analytical vehicle for exploring the intertwined relationship between women's sport, the media, the market, and cultural valuation. While this perspective prevents a truly comprehensive analysis of the sport and its participants, such an approach best produces an understanding of how women's engagement with running, as well as other sports, is constructed, interpreted, and valued in American sports culture.

[44] Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: The Free Press, 1994). Mary Jo Festle, *Playing Nice: Politics and Apologies in Women's Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Foremost, running's structure and culture offers the opportunity for a unique, dynamic perspective of women's experience in sport. Unlike most sports, distance running permits every day, recreational participants to "compete" against the sport's professional elite. While a fan and practitioner of tennis could only dream of competing against Billie King Jean or Chris Evert, a runner could participate in the same race as Grete Waitz or Joan Benoit. This distinctive circumstance allows for the concurrent examination of the sport's recreational and elite levels. Running also blurs the line between sport and fitness, with the sport serving both functions for its participants. This proves especially relevant for women within the individualistic impulse of the "sport-media-commercial" complex, which primarily privileges the popular narrative of women's fitness over the athletic narrative of women's competition.[45] Since the women's distance running industry's engagement with the commercial sphere resulted in real, sporting gains, while also producing a consumer market premised on fitness rather than sport, it offers an especially useful perspective for considering the "just do it" model of women's sports in a specific historical context.

Most importantly, a historical examination of the women's distance running industry will expose the function of class in preserving the second-class status of all female athletes. Messner frequently references the impact of class in determining women's station in the hierarchy of American sport. Most scholars, however, have focused on the disadvantages of sportswomen due to gender and/or sexuality, giving only brief attention to or simply accepting the class background of female athletes. For instance, in *Playing Nice*, historian Mary Jo Festle notes, "Socioeconomic class connotations are also crucial...gender combines with socioeconomic class as well as with race and sexuality to help determine not only who participates and how but also which

[45] Jennifer Smith Maguire, *Fit for Consumption: Sociology and the Business of Fitness* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Shari Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs, *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

sports become socially acceptable for women."[46] Yet, Festle concentrates on gender throughout her research, devoting little analysis to class. The historical experience of women's distance running, particularly during the height of the women's distance running industry, provides evidence of how class privilege, particularly its invisibility, produces the paradoxical situation of women's sports. For the women's distance running industry, class plays an integral role in attaining meaningful progress worthy of celebration. Conservely, it also contributes to the unrecognized limitations that ultimately have perpetuated women's subordination.

After unofficially launching the women's distance running movement, Kathrine Switzer remained at the forefront of the sport. With a discernible population of women runners soon following in her stead, the women's distance running movement would transform into a women's distance running industry. Switzer spearheaded this transition, using her public relations acumen to engage corporate sponsors. While Sara Mae Berman would drift away from the sport, instead becoming involved with the more niche activity of orienteering, Nina Kuscsik would sustain her behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts, working to ensure that the gains of women runners were maintained and that opportunities were improved and expanded.[47] However, after running Boston for a third and final time in 1968, Roberta Gibb had to abandon the sport. She gave birth to a son later that year and, left by her husband, soon became a single-mother on food stamps. Rationalizing her situation years later, Gibb asked, "With an infant, you can work for a couple of hours a day, but you can't work for a couple of hours a morning and pay your rent. What are you going to do?"[48] Her inability to continue to participate in the sport highlights the often taken-for-granted but essentially important privileges enjoyed by Switzer, as well as Kuscisik, Berman, and the other women who would

[46] Festle, xxii.
[47] Butler, 129. Since attending her first AAU convention in 1971, Kuscsik has yet to miss one.
[48] Roberta Gibb quoted in Clea Simon, "Marathon Woman: Race's 'first girl' in 1966 is still setting the pace," *Boston Globe*, April 17, 1994, 1.

become heavily involved with the sport. As the women's distance running industry emerged, efforts to popularize and grow the sport would reproduce this socioeconomic foundation, with its associated traits of whiteness and heterosexuality.

During the early years of the women's distance running industry, Switzer and the sport's other promoters, motivated by how running had impacted their lives, wanted other women to experience and enjoy similar awakenings. Realizing that the persistence of traditional gender ideas may discourage potential women runners, they partnered with corporate sponsors, such as cosmetic companies, to produce a narrative of "liberated athletic femininity," combining the liberationist rhetoric of feminism with a reinforcement of feminine values. The goal of achieving a women's Olympic marathon drove this popularization effort, as attracting more women to the sport would prove to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that women desired and deserved to compete at the highest level of international sport. This rallying point combined the interests of recreational and elite runners, with these groups forming a symbiotic relationship. This connection illustrates how the class foundations of the sport and its engagement with the commercial sphere provided real benefits to women of all ability levels, as a wide variety of opportunities, products, and services developed to meet the needs of all women runners. The use of corporate sponsorship successfully augmented the quantity and quality of the sport, a strategy validated in 1981 when the IOC and Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) announced that the 1984 Games would host the inaugural women's Olympic Marathon.

The marathon announcement did not curb the ambition of the women's distance running industry, as the leaders of the sport and its corporate sponsors aimed to further popularize women's running in order to ensure the success of the historic race. With this collective goal achieved, however, the impulse of the sport began to shift. Namely, the success of the industry and the exponentially growing market of women runners resulted

in a deeper relationship with the market. In turn, the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity" transformed into a narrative of the "ideal female runner." The industry's wares aimed to help women achieve this identity, placing a primacy on the appearance of a fit, healthy, heterosexual body. These traits combined with the class, and race, foundations of the sport to produce a more restrictive definition of a female runner, suggesting that the popularization of the sport actually made it more exclusive. Furthermore, the imagery and messages of the "ideal female runner" identity resulted in the popular perception of the sport diverging from the athletic reality, contributing to the belief that women were not serious about running. Instead, they merely consumed the sport in order to achieve this identity. Nevertheless, the women's distance running industry did succeed in producing ever-more products, services, and opportunities that legitimately benefitted the sport. And, at the 1984 Games, the women's Olympic Marathon represented one of the Olympiad's iconic events.

The popular manifestation of the "ideal female runner" identity also exposes the sport's connection with American society at large, which not only proves that women's distance running had become a mainstream activity but also confirms the industry's real success. The emergence of the "ideal female runner" identity coincided with the American fitness craze, which illustrates how the dominant narrative of women's distance running both influenced and adapted to a broader fitness culture that emphasized similar themes. Additionally, the emergence of yuppie culture begins to reveal the larger import of the women's distance running industry and its "ideal female runner" identity. Yuppies, a term that entered the popular lexicon in 1983, were young urban professionals soon stereotyped for their individualistic ambition and acquisitive consumer behavior.[49] Likewise, an aggressive engagement with fitness activities, including running, characterized the yuppie ethic, with the national fitness craze

[49] "The Year of the Yuppie," *Newsweek*, December 31, 1984, 14. *Newsweek*, and many others, credited columnist Bob Greene for popularizing the term "yuppie" in a 1983 newspaper article on Jerry Rubin.

particularly associated with this group of Americans. These traits, among others, begin to demonstrate the confluence between the values of yuppyism and running culture, which, for women, produced a more exclusive, limited "ideal female runner" identity.

While a historical examination of the women's distance running industry cannot offer a comprehensive analysis of or answer to the paradox of women's sport and, in turn, its impact on the perpetual subordination of female athletes, it does provide a real, historical perspective of the complexity of factors that have contributed to women's status in sports culture.[50] Foremost, framing the historical trajectory of the women's distance running industry in a body of theoretical scholarship on sport, fitness, and gender results in an improved understanding of the function of class in women's sports. These class foundations then permitted an effective utilization of the "sport-media-commercial" complex to achieve ostensible progress for female distance runners. Such partnerships, however, produced a limited, popular narrative of women's sports that has failed not only to recognize a diverse spectrum of female athletic interests and identities, but also has prevented women from achieving equal respect in American sports culture. Due to the intensified entrenchment of the "sport-media-commercial" complex in the twenty-first century, no easy solution to this paradoxical subordination exists. Nevertheless, recognizing its multi-faceted manifestation can encourage the beginnings of a more constructive interrogation of and conversation about this circumstance. In

[50] The "sport-media-commercial" complex also has significant implications for male athletes, especially minority, poor, and homosexual men. In context of male distance runners, the fact that distance running does not occupy the "center" of sport means that these males do not enjoy the privileges of other male athletes in the "biggest, wealthiest, and most visible sports," (Messner, *Taking the Field*, xviii). Additionally, male runners who do not conform to the sport's dominant class or racial background also face limitations in accessing the sport. However, the historical legacy of women's exclusion from running, like all sports, means that experiences of women runners within the "sport-media-commercial" complex is unique and cannot justifiably be compared to males, even though male runners are not immune to the disadvantageous hierarchy of modern sport. In particular, in the early 1980s, the fitness craze and yuppie culture would have demanded specific identities for male runners that were also difficult to attain.

turn, these efforts can eventually led to more effective strategies that equitably provide for and respectfully recognize the experiences of women in American sports culture.

CHAPTER ONE

"Liberated Athletic Femininity":

The Development of the Women's Distance Running Industry, 1977-1980

Introduction

In the summer of 1977, *People* magazine announced the "running boom" to the American masses. The magazine's cover featured a jogging Farrah Fawcett, joined by then-husband Lee Majors, with the headline, "Farrah and Lee and Everybody's Doing It: Stars Join the Jogging Craze."[51] The accompanying article began,

> Jogging once was humbly billed as the common man's most salutary of cheap thrills, standard equipment being a pair of sneakers and the inclination to run oneself silly in the cause of fitness. Kiss those days goodbye. Acting from a variety of more complicated motives – vanity, sanity, even higher consciousness – media stars of every stripe are now falling for the jogging craze....[52]

The article quoted Farrah, Lee, and a variety of other celebrities on their running experiences. For instance, readers learn that, although Fawcett planned her runs around her very busy schedule, she insisted, "It's part of my life – like brushing my teeth."[53] *People*'s coverage of the "jogging craze" not only indicates the national popularity of running, but also validates the sport's unquestionable appropriateness for women. Ten years after Jock Semple accosted Kathrine Switzer at the Boston Marathon and only five years after the AAU permitted women to compete in road races of all distances, Farrah Fawcett, the American ideal of female beauty, seemingly proved that women could, and should, run. As 1978 Boston Marathon winner Gayle Barron would later suggest,

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[51] "Jogging for Joy," *People*, July 4, 1977, http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20068221,00.html.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

Fawcett's *People* cover "made running both glamorous and fashionable, and that's just about all it needed to gain widespread popular acceptance."[54]

Following the successful performances of women's distance runners in the mid-1970s, the sport's leaders, namely Kathrine Switzer, Nina Kuscsik, and Jacqueline Hansen, became intent upon securing a women's Olympic Marathon. Yet, the IOC proved resistant to this idea, continually insisting that an inadequate number of women ran marathons. The IOC board, which included no women, relied upon a legitimate, but often ignored, rule – that at least twenty-five countries practice a sport - to oppose the addition of a women's marathon to the Olympic roster. They believed women's distance running would remain a temporary American phenomenon. [55] Additionally, the LAOOC, in charge of executing the first privately funded Games in 1984, contended that adding a women's marathon would incur too great of a cost.[56]

Undeterred by these various forces of intransigence, the leaders of women's distance running aimed to demonstrably increase the quantity and quality of the sport. Kuscsik, joined by Hansen, lobbied the IOC and International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF). Yet, this behind-the-scenes political advocacy proved less important than popular publicity efforts.[57] In attaining the right to run in marathons, media coverage had benefited women runners, epitomized the photos of the Switzer-Semple

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[54] Gayle Barron, *The Beauty of Running* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 32.

[55] Coverage of the IOC's resistance to a women's Olympic Marathon: Neil Amdur, "Issue and Debate: Are Women Geared for Distance Running?," *New York Times*, April 25, 1978, 33. Marlene Cimons, "How Women Got to Run the Distance," *Ms.*, July 1981, 49. Jacqueline Hansen, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, September 1978, 35. William Proxmire, "In Support of an Olympic Marathon for Women," *Women's Sports*, March 1979, 7. Kathrine Switzer, "Why Women in Sports Will Emerge Worldwide," *Women's Sports*, April 1979, 7. Sue Stricklin, "Women's Olympic Marathon: One Step at a Time," *Women's Sports*, December 1979, 7. Joe Henderson, "A Women's Olympic Marathon May Be Added in the Long Run," *Women's Sports*, October 1980, 6.

[56]Barbara Kevles, "Olympic Marathon is More Than a Physical Struggle for Women," *New York Times*, May 18, 1980, S2. "Sidelines: L.A. Roadblock," *Women's Sports*, June 1980, 8. Hansen, "The Women's Marathon Movement," 76.

[57] Evidence of the advocacy of Nina Kuscsik and Jacqueline Hansen: Lillian Perinciolo, "'Togetherness' of the Long-Distance Runners," *Ms.*, October 1974, 21. "Looking at People: Nina Kuscsik," *Runner's World*, March 1975, 42. Ross Atkin, "Women Hit Their Stride," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 3, 1981, 12. Jackie Hansen, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, June 1978, 38. Jacqueline Hansen, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, September 1978, 35. Cimons, "How Women Got to Run the Distance," 49-50. Jacqueline Hansen, "End Zone: Runners' Day in Court," *Women's Sports*, February 1984, 108. Joe Henderson, "Joe Henderson's Inside Report," *Runner's World*, August 1984, 10.

episode and the protest at the 1972 New York Marathon. However, achieving a women's Olympic Marathon would require more than the occasional, inspiring media story. After covering the 1972 Munich Olympic Games as a journalist, Switzer recognized the potential of utilizing corporate support. In her autobiography, she recalls coming to this realization, exclaiming,

> Then, I swear to God, the penny dropped. It was another pivotal moment in my life, and this time it hit me right between the eyes. This is what makes sports happen!...If we are going to make women's running really happen, at least in my lifetime, it is going to take major commercial sponsorship. With big money we can *create* the events, develop the stars, put the events in the public eye...Then the Olympic Committee would not only notice, they would want a piece of the action.[58]

Despite running under three hours in the 1975 Boston Marathon, Switzer soon abandoned her burgeoning running career in favor of entrepreneurship.[59] In the late 1970s, a concerted engagement with the commercial realm, in addition to the media, would result in the development of a discernible women's distance running industry, validating Switzer's vision and ultimately leading to the establishment of the women's Olympic Marathon at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

The 1977 Mini and the Development of the "Liberated Athletic Femininity" Narrative

The 1977 Mini Marathon best encapsulates the strategies and ideologies of the emerging women's distance running industry. Since the inaugural race in 1972, the Mini, as it became popularly referred to, not only represented one of the most popular races for women, but it also frequently breached uncharted territory in women's running. The 1977 edition proved no exception. Due to the generous sponsorship of the cosmetic company Bonne Bell, the nation's best women runners competed in the race, with Bonne Bell founder Jess Bell, a noted advocate of women's athleticism, offering travel funds for American marathon record holder Jacqueline Hansen, 1977 Boston

[58] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 187. Italics from original.
[59] Ibid., 287.

Marathon winner Miki Gorman, and other top runners.[60] According to *Runner's World*, "Never before had so many women – and so many *fast* women – been in the same race."[61] Along with attracting a high-quality field, the Mini experimented with computer-based timing technology, something not yet utilized in national, mixed-sex races.[62] The talent in and the sophistication of the race exhibited the progress attainable for women's running with corporate support.

The 1977 Mini also illustrates the sport's increased popularity. Thanks to an aggressive marketing campaign, the race attracted more than 2,000 participants. As described by *Runner's World*,

> We can attribute this Mini-Marathon's success to a bit of marketing genius. Cosmetics are products or procedures that make a person look more beautiful. The cruel fact is that fat, unhealthy people can never look truly beautiful solely through the use of cosmetic products, so they are likely to become disappointed with the products. Too bad for Bonne Bell. But if a woman was healthy and fit, perhaps then she would look more like women in the advertisement.[63]

Such publicity reveals that the women's distance running industry utilized feminine messages to invite more women to the sport, conveying a vision of women's distance running that largely corresponded to the image of Farrah Fawcett's *People* magazine cover. The fact that three women's magazines, *Seventeen*, *Glamour*, and *Vogue*, entered teams in the race further demonstrates the believed compatibility between running and femininity. *Runner's World* also noted that eight fashion models, eleven stewardesses, six dancers, and fourteen actresses competed in the race. The race's success led to the belief that, "It would not be surprising to see running – now the fastest-growing women's sport – become the new national sport of the American woman."[64]

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[60] On Jess Bell's advocacy of women's running: "Looking at People: Jess A. Bell," *Runner's World*, July 1976, 60. Elizabeth Wheeler, "The Men Behind the Women," *Women's Sports*, December 1980, 23. "Looking at People: Jess A. Bell," *Runner's World*, February 1981, 107. On the elite runners at the 1977 Mini Marathon: Tom Derderian, "Women's Day in Central Park," *Runner's World*, August 1977, 48.
[61] Derderian, 48. Italics from original.
[62] Paul Milvy, "How the Mini was Scored," *Runner's World*, August 1977, 52.
[63] Derderian, 49.
[64] Ibid., 50.

Thus, the 1977 Mini confirms the existence of a blossoming women's distance running industry. With corporate support combining with media publicity, the women's distance running industry not only drew more women to the sport, but also measurably improved the running experience for all women. On this development, Switzer noted, "In 1977, business began sponsoring women's only competitions, initiating the total emergence of this sport as an entity for women..."[65] Now an "entity," or industry, a certain narrative would begin to define women's distance running and its participants, a narrative achieved through the combination of feminine and feminist themes. As evidenced by the Mini, the women's distance running industry promoted a vision of "liberated athletic femininity," affirming the sport as appropriately feminine while also adopting the rhetoric of women's liberation. The twin emphases of femininity and feminism effectively popularized the sport, ultimately contributing to the establishment of a women's Olympic Marathon, along with a variety of other opportunities for women runners. But, somewhat paradoxically, the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative also constricted the cultural conception of the sport. This narrative relied upon, and then perpetuated, the standard background of early female distance runners – middle-class, white, and heterosexual. Therefore, the emergence of the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative, in concert with these demographic foundations, begins to reveal the paradox of women's sports, with successful popularization accompanied by unnoticed exclusivity.

Furthermore, the 1977 Mini, along with other developments, suggests that the women's distance running industry represents an early example of the informal institutionalization of the "sport-media-commercial" complex. In regards to media, women's participation in the sport would continue to receive increased coverage in running, sports, and other national magazines. Additionally, a women's distance running literature emerged, promoting a vision of the sport that portrayed it as

[65] Kathrine Switzer, "Breakers of Barriers," in *The Complete Woman Runner*, ed. *Runner's World* (Mountain View, CA: World Publications, 1978), 284.

appropriate for a broader range of women. In the commercial sphere, cosmetic corporations began sponsoring a wide variety of women-only races. The sporting goods industry also recognized the growing population of women runners, producing an array of products and services. Both media and commercial efforts simultaneously validated running as suitably feminine through inspiring rhetoric adopted from mainstream, liberal feminism.

However, it is incorrect to simply assume that these media and corporate forces co-opted women's distance running, exploiting the gains of liberal feminism and a cultural insistence of femininity to profit from a new market, while also containing female athleticism. These initiatives were female runner-directed. In all their ventures, female runners actively sought media coverage and partnerships with cosmetic and other female-centric companies. As demonstrated by Switzer's moment of realization, she desired the authority to control the sport's growth. In turn, she and others naturally promoted a brand of women's distance running that targeted women of similar demographic backgrounds, as they believed women like themselves should experience the joys of running. A combination of shared class status, feminine imagery, feminist rhetoric, and corporate support thus led to the development of a successful women's distance running industry. Nevertheless, the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative constructed by the industry subtly contributed to the subordinate status of female athletes in American sports culture. Within the "sport-media-commercial" complex, the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity" determined who had access to the sport and, in turn, the experiences, opportunities, and identities such access conferred, a situation that begins to reveal the broader implications of the class foundations of women's engagement with running and other sports.

The Role of Elite Runners in the Women's Distance Running Industry

Importantly, the actual athletic successes of elite runners undergirded the development of the women's distance running industry. In the early days of the women's distance running movement, strong performances helped women earn the right to "officially" compete in marathons. The performances of elite runners during the early years of the women's distance running industry served a comparable function, with their abilities making an Olympic Marathon a relevant aim. Although the achievement of the Marathon acted as an effective rallying point for the women's distance running industry, only these elites would benefit from its establishment.

In particular, two elite women runners who emerged in the late 1970s proved crucial in legitimating the sport. At the 1978 New York Marathon, Norway's Grete Waitz shocked the running world, besting the women's marathon world record by more than two minutes in her debut at the distance.[66] Waitz would repeat this feat in 1979 when she won by eleven minutes, again lowered the world record, and established herself as the dominant force in women's distance running.[67] At the beginning of the decade, the women's marathoning world record stood at just over three hours. By the decade's end, Waitz had lowered the mark to 2:27:33.[68] Waitz epitomized a new breed of female runner. In addition to her record breaking marathons, her training regimen, which relied upon frequent speedwork sessions and running twice daily, pushed the sport into new territory.[69] In the spring of 1979, Mainer Joan Benoit entered the upper echelon of

[66] The Editors of *Runner's World*, "New York City: The World's Largest Marathon; Emerging from the Field of Over 11,000 Runners, Was Grete Waitz Setting a New Women's World Record," *Runner's World*, December 1978, 74. Doug Latimer, "Grete Waitz: Marathon Woman," *Women's Sports*, January 1979, 34.
[67] Sarah Pileggi, "Rush Hour in the Big Apple," *Sports Illustrated*, October 29, 1979, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1095539/index.htm. "Grete! Grete! Grete!," *Runner's World*, December 1979, 13. Amby Burfoot, "New York Hosts the Ultimate Mega-Marathon," *Runner's World*, January 1980.
[68] "2:27:33 – and Waiting," *New York Times*, October 23, 1979, A22. "Right on Time," *Women's Sports*, January 1980, 19.
[69] Articles discussing Grete Waitz's training regimen: Amby Burfoot, "Ambling Along," *Runner's World*, January 1979, 144. Amby Burfoot, "Grete: Fame as a Road Racer Has Not Dampened Her Success in Track and Cross-Country," *Runner's World*, July 1979, 56-9.

women's running by winning the Boston Marathon.[70] While Waitz often ran consistent and methodical races, Benoit approached races with an aggressive mindset, going out fast from the gun.[71] The performances of both these women confirmed that elite women's running had become a real, competitive sport.

The Importance of Women-Only Races

Thus, elite women's distance running had a symbiotic relationship with the emerging women's distance running industry. The success of elites legitimated the industry, which, in turn, produced more high-quality opportunities and events. Following the success of the 1977 Mini Marathon, sophisticated women's races began to proliferate, not only serving as important proving grounds for these elite runners but also as the foundation of the emergent women's distance running industry. In late 1976, after learning that Bonne Bell would sponsor the 1977 Mini, Kathrine Switzer entered discussions with Jess Bell about partnering with his company to sponsor a national series of women-only road races. At this time, Bell remained hesitant about heavily investing in the sport. Soon after, Switzer engaged in similar conversations with the executive vice president of Avon. The company had asked her to review and rewrite a proposal for a women-only marathon in Atlanta that they were considering sponsoring. Excited by this prospect, Switzer decided to take a chance and propose a full-scale women's running circuit. The company accepted her proposal, positioning both Switzer and Avon at the forefront of the effort to inspire publicity for a women's Olympic Marathon. Asserting the compatibility between Avon and athleticism, Switzer purported, "The Avon fit was excellent, and it was unique because it was a beauty

[70] Malcolm Moran, "Joan Benoit Takes Her Victory in Stride," *New York Times*, April 18, 1979, A17. Amby Burfoot, "1979 Boston Marathon," *Runner's World*, June 1979, 90. Gail Shister, "Pounding the Pavement: Joan Benoit Triumphs in Boston," *Women's Sports*, July 1979, 25.
[71] Articles on Grete Waitz and Joan Benoit racing styles: Latimer. Shister. Burfoot, "Grete." Tom Derderian, "Joan Benoit: America's New Queen of the Roads," *Runner's World*, July 1979, 78.

company sponsoring sports. I always felt beautiful when I ran...so that meant other women did, too."[72]

Two Avon-sponsored women-only marathons, the inaugural 1978 Avon International Marathon in Atlanta and 1980 Avon London Marathon, best evince how women-only races proved crucial in demonstrating the quality of the sport, which legitimated the quest for a women's Olympic Marathon. Kathrine Switzer explained that "the IOC...assumed women couldn't do arduous things without male help...It was also important to train women to take responsibility for pace and strategy; it's quite different when you commit to the lead of a race...than it is if there is a group of guys around you."[73] The 1978 Avon International Marathon, only the second women-only marathon held in the United States, formalized Avon's involvement with the sport.[74] Recalling this event in her autobiography, Switzer enthused, "We secured fourteen of the world's top twenty-five women, an amazing show of solidarity. In all, there were 152 women from 26 states and 8 countries." Continuing, she exclaimed, "The atmosphere projected both strength and celebration. And the media totally got it – women wanted a marathon in the Olympic Games and here was a marathon to prove they deserve it."[75] The fact that a then-unknown runner, Marty Cooksey of California, won the race exhibited the talent and commitment present in women's distance running. After winning this historic race, Cooksey proclaimed, "I am motivated from inside...I just came to do my best. And to show that it is good enough for the Olympics."[76]

Two years later, the 1980 Avon London Marathon built on the successes of this inaugural event to certify that women deserved an Olympic Marathon. Held on the same

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[72] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 316.
[73] Ibid., 320.
[74] "Miss Cooksey Foils Marathon Favorites," *New York Times*, March 20, 1978, C6. Kenny Moore, "Ready to Run A Long Way," *Sports Illustrated*, March 27, 1978, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1093476/index.htm. Chis Hosford, "Lillies of the Field: The International Meet in Atlanta's Heat Proved the Good Marathoners Don't Wilt," *Runner's World*, June 1978, 80-3.
[75] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 334.
[76] Marty Cooksey quoted in Moore, "Ready to Run A Long Way".

day as the final day of competition at the Moscow Games and televised on NBC, the event highlighted women's continued exclusion from Olympic distance races.[77] Describing the sophisticated spectacle, *Runner's World* noted, "helicopters whirred overhead; a steel band played in Battersea Park before the race and a Scottish bagpipe corps welcomed the finishers to Guildhall Square; thousands of spectators lined the historic course; a huge international press corps converged on London for the race and live television coverage was beamed to many parts of the world."[78] In the words of Kathrine Switzer,

> Obviously, we think it's time a women's marathon was made part of the Olympics. We're trying to prove to people that women are just as suited, or even more suitable, for marathoning as men. We're also trying to disprove the old argument that women's marathoning is largely an American phenomenon. The fact that we have women from 27 countries participating completely destroys that myth.[79]

With her victory, New Zealand's Lorraine Moller not only triumphed over a talented field, but, in front of an international audience, legitimated the women's distance running industry's Olympic cause. Commenting on the successful event, *Women's Sports* magazine proclaimed, "women's marathoning may have been changed forever by the international exposure given the race."[80]

Following the 1977 Mini, Bonne Bell would establish its own race network, a nation-wide 10K series with an annual national championship. Thus, by the end of the decade, Avon, sponsoring half-marathons and marathons, and Bonne Bell, sponsoring 10Ks, collaborated to produce a variety of women-only running events accessible to women of all ability levels. While these races, especially Avon's marathons, proved crucial in eventually gaining an Olympic Marathon, they would not have been successful without the other productions of the women's distance running industry disseminating

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[77] Paul Thaler, "A Jolly Good Show," *Women's Sports*, November 1980, 16. Bob Wischnia, "A New Wave of Women Runners," *Runner's World*, October 1980, 94-6.
[78] Wischnia, 95.
[79] Kathrine Switzer quoted in Ibid., 94.
[80] Thaler, 17.

the images and messages of "liberated athletic femininity." Most especially, women's running books, shoes, and clothing, all advertised in magazines that supported the women's distance running movement, not only increased the population of women runners, but also ensured that these new women runners understood and appreciated the sport's supposed role in their lives.

The Emergence of a Women's Distance Running Literature

In a 2009 essay, scholar Annemaire Jutel highlights the prevalence of feminine assurance and feminist sentiments in the literature of women's distance running, with her research sample spanning from 1976 to 2002. She argues that, "The women's running book as a genre combines both an appeal to liberation and reinforcements of women's traditional role, addressing an implied audience of women seeking independence and success."[81] Furthermore, she asserts that female-runner authors, "tout their content as contributing to social and physical transformation, relying on the rhetoric of alternative lifestyle and liberation (but never meaning it)..." [82] A closer analysis of women's running books from the early years of the women's distance running industry, contextualized with real-life developments, supports, as well as expands, Jutel's contentions by illustrating the widespread manifestation of the genre's ideologies. The early era of women's running books also perceptively reveal the assumed socioeconomic foundation of the sport and its emerging industry.

In 1976, Dr. Joan Ullyot, an exercise physiologist, published *Women's Running*, the first full-length book specifically devoted to female runners. As the genre's publishing pioneer, Ullyot helped establish a standardized women runner trope. She first constructed her own story, describing her transformation from a flabby "hedonist"

[81] Annemarie Jutel, "Running Like a Girl: Women's Running Books and the Paradox of Tradition," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 42.6 (2009): 1007.
[82] Ibid., 1006.

who "hate[d] exercise" into a successful and confident runner.[83] Demonstrating one of the thematic conventions highlighted by Jutel, the book emphasized the positive changes a woman gains through running; Ullyot insisted, "This is not 'exercise.' This is living to one's fullest capacity."[84] By following her detailed advice, her readers can complete a similarly successful transformation, gaining the supposed "independence and self-sufficiency" inherent to converted women runners.[85] However, Ullyot's continual assertion that running is not natural for women and should be approached with caution weakens her more empowering contentions. [86] Thus, *Women's Running* introduces the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative. Running represents an activity for a woman that, as Jutel describes, "announced both her liberation and her containment in traditional femininity."[87] Ullyot's second publication, *Running Free: A Book for Women Runners and their Friends*, highlighted these same ideas, but with an increased emphasis on feminine affirmation.[88]

Running, Beauty, and "Liberated Athletic Femininity"

The publications that followed Ullyot's continued to rely on this formula, while also exacerbating the focus on uniquely female concerns, as exemplified by Kathryn Lance's *Running for Health and Beauty* and Gayle Barron's *The Beauty of Running*.[89] For instance, Barron claimed,

> The trend over the past couple of decades has been to associate good looks...with outdoor, physical activities of the sort that gives your skin that healthy, rosy-cheeked look. The woman who is proud of her body and does everything she

[83] Joan Ullyot, *Women's Running* (Mountain View, CA: World Publications, 1976), 10, 3.
[84] Ibid., 4.
[85] Ibid., 19.
[86] Ibid., 10-24.
[87] Jutel, 1006.
[88] Joan Ullyot, *Running Free: A Book for Women Runners and Their Friends* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1980), 42. In *Running Free*, Ullyot again shares her story with readers, describing, "For a woman in her 30s, who has lived her whole life as a bookworm and a non-athlete, it is tremendously exciting to realize the change that has occurred...Every woman runner has a similar story. Cream puffs are being transformed daily."
[89] Kathryn Lance, *Running for Health and Beauty: A Complete Guide for Women* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1977).

> reasonably can to keep it well toned through exercise has it all over those who succumb to the sedentary life.[90]

As an attractive elite runner who had achieved significant success, Barron legitimated the connection between running and beauty. She seemed to recognize her status, even suggesting to *Runner's World* that, "I think because I was attractive, other girls started running. They never would have done it if I'd been ugly."[91] In her autobiography, where she curtailed such bluntness, Barron situated beauty within the meta-running experience. For both her and Lance, getting in touch with one's physicality, losing a few pounds, and gaining self-confidence would make a woman feel more beautiful. Portraying running as a holistic, active beauty process made the attention to traditional femininity compatible with a sense of empowerment. Barron suggested, "Running is a great confidence builder, especially for women....I have found that more and more women use running as a way to assert their independence, and I think it's great."[92]

But, Barron stringently warned, "I'm fine for a woman to use running as means to achieve independence, but not at the expense of her marriage and family."[93] Similarly, Lance de-emphasized running as a competitive sport, instead suggesting, "Most women who take up running for health are not particularly interested in running races...most of us just want to improve our fitness and appearance, running is the ideal exercise."[94] Barron and Lance's books illustrate the dual impulses of the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative; they inspire while establishing limits. These boundaries ultimately reinforce the middle-class, white, and heterosexual image of the sport and its participants.

Marriage and Motherhood in the Literature of Women's Distance Running

[90] Barron, 179.
[91] Joanne Marshall Mauldin, "Lady on the Go," *Runner's World*, February 1978, 64.
[92] Barron, 40.
[93] Ibid., 42.
[94] Lance, 19.

As Barron's contentions about marriage and family suggested, anticipating any concerns about women running represented one the functions of this literature. In a decade characterized by rising divorce rates, a strong suspicion emerged that running, especially women running, resulted in marital problems. In particular, a 1979 *Running Times* survey revealed that the runner divorce rate far exceeded the national average, while a survey of New York Marathon participants suggested that the runner divorce rate was three-hundred forty percent higher than that of non-runners.[95] Lending credence to this crude data, three of women's distance running's most prominent personalities – Kathrine Switzer, Nina Kuscsik, and Joan Ullyot - divorced their first husbands. While Kuscsik insisted that her involvement with the sport did not produce her marital discord, Switzer suggested that, "The fame that I received probably had something to do with my getting a divorce...Maybe that set up a competition with my husband, with me getting the attention."[96]

Naturally, the literature of the women's distance running industry, desiring to make the sport amenable to a broader sector of the population, aimed to reassure potential female runners that the independence fostered through the sport did not make divorce inevitable. For instance, Ullyot adopted liberationist rhetoric to provide an appealing framework for understanding the apparent connection between women running and divorce. In her second publication, *Running Free*, she contended, "I think it would be incorrect, should a divorce occur after a woman starts running, to claim that running caused the marital breakup. It seems more accurate to say that running helped to facilitate new insights about the basic premises on which the relationship was founded."[97] According to Ullyot, running empowered women to exercise their newfound

[95] Gloria Averbuch, *The Woman Runner: Free to Be the Complete Athlete* (New York: Cornerstone Library, 1984), 33. Unfortunately, Averbuch does not provide references for this data.
[96] Gerald Eskenazi, "2 Women Marathoners Abandon Marital Route," *New York Times*, March 19, 1973, 52.
[97] Ullyot, *Running Free*, 60.

feeling of independence, which, in some relationships, might result in matrimonial turbulence.[98]

But Ullyot supposedly described exceptional cases. As exemplified by Lee Majors and Farrah Fawcett happily running together on the cover of *People* magazine, supportive husbands and boyfriends served an important role for female runners. Most notably, Gayle Barron unabashedly credited her husband for her running successes. A 1978 *Runner's World* profile of the Barrons suggested, "Ben Barron, unpresuming and straight-forward, had had much to do with his wife's success...Although a better than average runner himself, her appears to be delighted to see Gayle in the limelight, himself in the background."[99] Likewise, Linda Schreiber, author of *Marathon Mom*, described running with her husband, asserting, "Little has to be said during the run. The luxury of the private hour together sufficies, and in the run I've had with Jim the sense of companionship was more eloquent than any verbal exchange."[100] In the *Runner's World's The Complete Woman Runner*, runner Ellen Clark shared a similar story, noting, "running has given me a communication tool between Bill and myself. In many ways it has drawn us closer...my running has made me more knowledgeable about the sport and therefore I can more readily identify with Bill and his running experiences."[101]

Other elite runners attributed their successes to spousal support, with both Grete Waitz and Jacqueline Hansen sharing the spotlight with their husbands.[102] In her autobiography, Waitz insisted, "If you expect to share stress and pressure with a partner, you'd better have a stable, supportive relationship...In fact, I would have never made it as

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[98] Ibid., 64.
[99] Mauldin,64.
[100] Linda Schreiber with JoAnne Stang, *Marathon Mom: The Wife and Mother Running Book* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 161.
[101] Ellen Clark, "Dealing with the Family," in *The Complete Woman Runner*, 75.
[102] "Looking at People: Tom Stuark and Jacqueline Hansen," *Runner's World*, September 1977, 83. Truman Clark, "Enjoying the Long-Distance Marriage: Jacqueline Hansen & Tom Stuark Base It All on Individuality," *Runner's World*, December 1978, 62-5. Burfoot, "Grete," 59. Lesley Visser, "Born to Run: Premier Runner Grete Waitz is in a Class by Herself," *Women's Sports*, January 1981, 38. Amby Burfoot, "Oslo Provides the Setting for the Ultimate Story of the World's Greatest Female Distance Runner," *Runner's World*, March 1981, 39-51.

a runner without Jack. For those who want to get to the top, I can tell you that without the support of your spouse I don't think you're going to make it."[103] While leaving an unsupportive husband proved necessary in some circumstances, finding a supportive husband helped women achieve more than possible alone. Thus, the role of relationships in the narrative of women's distance running served to ultimately exalt heternomativity. The ideal running couple may demonstrate progressive attitudes, but such attitudes remained safely contained in a traditional marriage, as illustrated by the Barrons, Waitzes, and Hansens.[104]

The impact of women running on motherhood represented another emerging concern that the literature of "liberated athletic femininity" sought to address. Schreiber's *Marathon Mom* epitomized this aspect of the genre. When she began running, Schreiber had a four year-old daughter and eighteen-month old quadruplets, a brood that confirmed her status as overburdened mother with endless responsibilities. Yet, Schreiber made time to begin running, an activity that would contribute to her becoming a better mother. Schreiber noted that, "When I began to run I found I constantly felt guilty."[105] However, she soon realized that, "I was exercising the right to be me, as well as the mother of five....Running released me and fulfilled me at the same time, so that I could resume the rest of my routine with equanimity."[106] Schreiber utilized liberationist rhetoric to quell women's fears about the compatibility between running and mothering, but, because running supposedly helped one become a better mother, this narrative ultimately reinforced a traditional female lifestyle.

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[103] Grete Waitz with Gloria Averbuch, *World Class* (New York: Warner Books, 1986), 150.
[104] Further revealing the prominence of this theme, the broader running media frequently published stories of running couples, celebrating how the sport could enhance a relationship. Jane Johnson, "Friday Night Date," *Runner's World*, October 1978, 8. "The Together Race," *Runner's World*, October 1978, 205. Barry McDermott, "They're A Long-running Hit," *Sports Illustrated*, November 19, 1979, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1126321/index.htm. Wendy Bittner, "Run-Away Romance," *Runner's World*, September 1980, 14. "Looking at People: Sandy and Larry Dow," *Runner's World*, December 1980, 107. Karen Scott, "Running a Marriage," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 13. John Lowry, "The Odd Couple (One runs; the other doesn't)," *Women's Sports*, November 1981, 32-4.
[105] Schreiber, 11.
[106] Ibid, 7.

Similarly, Ellen Clark asserted, "I have learned how to be a selfish...The running I do is mine...Yet this self-directed activity cannot be done at the expense of my family."[107] Echoing both Barron and Clark, Schreiber also established limits for women runners, warning against mothers taking their running too far by suggesting, "The woman who doubles or triples her usual daily run and chooses to work out in 'prime family time' may be using her running as a 'distancing device.'"[108] More than any other theme, the running mother captures the necessary middle-classness of women runners; women not only had the luxury of not working, if they so chose, but also the time and resources to run.

The Narrative of "Liberated Athletic Femininity" and Women's Biology

Along with women's running impact on the cultural institutions of marriage and motherhood, questions also arose about the implications for women's bodies, specifically in regard to contraception, menstruation, and pregnancy. Because of the lack of substantial research on the effect of athletic participation on female biology, the authors of women's running texts emphasized the importance of considering one's individual experiences and circumstances in regard to each of these issues. By assuring women that they represented their own best authority, these authors empowered women to make their own athletic decisions. In both women's running books and the broader running media, "authorities" and "experts" advised women to experiment with the birth control method that best met their needs.[109] In regard to menstruation, the cessation of menstrual cycles dominated this discussion. At this time, Joan Ullyot and others considered "runner's amenorrhea" a natural, biological, but temporary, response to

[107] Clark, 65.
[108] Schreiber, 135.
[109] Articles on birth control in the running media: George Sheehan, "Medical Advice: Birth Control," *Runner's World*, October 1977, 20. Joan Ullyot, "Periodic Disturbances," *Women's Sports*, March 1981, 36. George Sheehan, "Medical Advice: Contraceptives," *Runner's World*, April 1981, 97. Susan Stern, "Side Effects: Birth Control and Athletic Performance," *Women's Sports*, May 1981, 19-25. Dr. Mona Shangold, "The Woman Runner: Her Body, Her Mind, Her Spirit," *Runner's World*, July 1981, 38.

training.[110] Ullyot even developed her own theory for this phenomenon. In *Running Free*, she suggested,

> Since amenorrhea is so common in fit, healthy young runners, whereas clockwork-like menstrual cycles are more frequent in the sedentary, plump population, I have developed what I call my 'anthropological theory of the origin of monthly cycles'...Perhaps menstruation...is a degenerative manifestation of a sedentary life-style![111]

However, in later years, many would dispute Ullyot's radical theory, with concern and fear characterizing discussions of menstrual irregularity.

Ullyot also discussed pregnant running in *Running Free*, critiquing the medical establishment for conservative opinions. On the social and medical disapproval encountered by some pregnant runners, she posited, "their disapproval, which ignores the known facts, rests on certain traditional myths about pregnancy, and misconceptions about the nature of running."[112] Ullyot then asserted that, "observation and some scientific studies tend to be reassuring to the pregnant athlete. Not only will she have (generally) an easier labor and faster recovery than inactive women, but maternity will probably enhance her athletic capacity in future years."[113] Other authors, as well as magazines, would emphasize these themes, highlighting the benefits of running before, during, and after pregnancy through accounts of individual women's experiences.[114]

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[110] Articles in the running media with similar menstrual advice: Dorothy Harris, "Update: Women's Sports Medicine," *Women's Sports*, February 1979, 44. George Sheehan, "Medical Advice: Menstrual Problems," *Runner's World*, May 1979, 26. Elaine Pinkerton, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, August 1979, 36. Margie Shuer, "Does Menstrual Pain Cramp Your Style? It Doesn't Have To!," *Women's Sports*, Feburary 1980, 10-1. Dr. Dave Martin with Marty Post, "The American Marathon/Part 2," *Runner's World*, March 1980, 73-4. Ullyot, "Periodic Disturbances." Dr. Mona Shangold, "The Woman Runner," 34-6.

[111] Ullyot, *Running Free*, 216.

[112] Ibid., 222.

[113] Ibid., 227-8.

[114] The coverage of pregnancy in running publications included: Sam Cook, "A Long Way, Baby," *Runner's World*, October 1977, 11-4. George Sheehan, "Medical Advice: Pregnancy," *Runner's World*, October 1978, 20. Victoria Wirth and Daniel Larson, "Running After Pregnancy," *Runner's World*, December 1978, 45-7. Harris, "Update: Women's Sports Medicine,"45. Joan Ullyot, "Point To Point: Pregnancy and Peaking," *Runner's World*, September 1979, 40-1. Ingun Schneider, "Pregnant Pause?," *Women's Sports*, July 1980, 17-9. Dr. Mona Shangold, "The Woman Runner," 38. Carla Knickerbocker, "Start 'Em While They're Young," *Runner's World*, July 1981, 127. Pamela Mendelsohn, "Pregnant? Try Jogging for Two," *Women's Sports*, August 1981, 6-7. "Running For Two," *Women's Sports*, November 1981, 56.

Encapsulating the compatibility between running and the female biology, Linda Schreiber claimed,

> I've often thought that women are particularly attuned to the rhythms of running because the steady beat of the physical workout prompts instinctive references to the female cycle...The woman runner may find herself in particular rapport with these biological rhythms. She is functioning in a body made healthy by exercise and so is better able to cope with her menstrual periods and the hard work of bearing a child.[115]

Discussions of contraception, menstruation, and pregnancy suggest that running endowed a woman with a greater awareness of her unique biology, a process that fostered independence while reaffirming femininity.

In sum, the women's distance running literature promoted the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity," using ideologies of traditional femininity and rhetoric of liberal feminism to codify an understanding women's participation in the sport. The presumptive middle-class, white, and heterosexual audience served as the foundation for this literature, producing a specific popular perception of the sport. After analyzing some of the themes prevalent in women's running books, Jutel concludes by asserting that, "Both positioning running as a site for the reproduction of traditional femininity and as a tool for her liberating fulfillment are problematic in the absence of critical reflection."[116] Yet, she does not analyze these texts outside of their own, narrow cultural sphere. Situating the messages of women's distance running books in context of the other media and commercial productions of the women's distance running industry will begin to provide a more complete perspective of the influence and import of the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative for the sport of women's running, as well as women's sports at large.

[115] Schreiber, 113.
[116] Jutel, "Running Like a Girl," 1020.

The Periodicals of the Women's Distance Running Industry and the Promotion of "Liberated Athletic Femininity"

Foremost, as women's distance running literature proliferated, *Runner's World* increased its coverage of women's running. In January 1978, the magazine debuted its new and improved monthly "Women's Running" column, authored by a rotating group of contributors, including Jacqueline Hansen and Joan Ullyot.[117] The magazine also more frequently incorporated women runners in their regular features, instead of exclusively portraying men as the norm and women as a special exception.[118] Since *Runner's World* reached a larger market than individual women's running books, its content played an important role in further disseminating the narrative "liberated athletic femininity." Notably, the May 1978 issue featured the attractive Penny DeMoss on the cover. In the accompanying editor's letter, *Runner's World* editor Bob Anderson proclaimed,

> Despite the gains women have made in running, many women still think running is not feminine. We don't agree. And to help illustrate out point, we've done something we have never done before. This month's cover features Penny DeMoss. A woman running more than 100 miles a week, a women who has recorded the 22nd fastest woman's marathon time in America...and a woman who has no doubts about her femininity. Running and beauty, can and do, go together. And Penny is not an isolated example of a serious female runner who is more attractive because of her involvement in a very active sport.[119]

As Anderson's letter reveals, coverage that increasingly portrayed women as serious runners was balanced by content that highlighted their femininity. Interestingly, magazine content that most overtly emphasized femininity often received the greatest number of responses from readers. The DeMoss cover, and its companion article,

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[117] "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, January 1978.
[118] Evidence of the coverage of female runners in *Runner's World*: Johnathan J. Brower, "Making Miki A Marathoner," *Runner's World*, February 1977, 41-3. Joan Ullyot, "The 140 Women With Miki Gorman," *Runner's World*, June 1977, 76-7. Len Wallach, "A Record 100 Women Share," *Runner's World*, July 1977, 59. Gail Campbell, "The Women of Marathoning," *Runner's World*, September 1977, 40-3. Lee Green, "The New Girl in Town," *Runner's World*, June 1978, 84-6. Amby Burfoot, "Lynn Jennings," *Runner's World*, August 1978, 70-4. Dr. Gerald Besson, "Inner Workings of the Woman Runner," *Runner's World*, January 1979, 62-3. Lee Green, "Julie Brown," *Runner's World*, February 1979, 74-7. Richard Benyo, "Sue Stricklin," *Runner's World*, March 1979, 68-71.
[119] Bob Anderson, "From the Editor," *Runner's World*, May 1978, 6.

elicited a range of praise and criticism from both women and men.[120] The following letter from reader Linda Dahlberg best captures the various critiques:

> I was delighted to see the picture of Penny DeMoss on the cover of the May issue. However, I was disappointed with the subsequent article and opening remarks made by the editor. Penny's beauty and/or attractiveness is irrelevant. It is her running readers want to learn about. The article itself concentrated minimally on running. Instead, we have a photo lay-out of Penny in her daily activities. If it were not for her clothes, this easily could have been a Playboy bunny photo lay-out.[121]

This response and others begin to illustrate the increasing divergence between the popular perception of the sport, which downplayed women's athletic achievement, and its reality, where women of all ability levels wanted to improve their performance. Yet, the favorable responses to the profile of DeMoss, as well as other articles on women runners, illustrate the successful institutionalization of the "liberated athletic femininity" in *Runner's World*.[122]

Another periodical for aspiring female runners appeared on the market in 1979, *Women's Sports* magazine. Originally debuting in 1974, *womenSports* was established as the organ for the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), the non-profit organization founded by Billie Jean King "to advance[e] the lives and girls and women through sports and physical activity."[123] After experiencing some financial difficulties, the magazine restarted as *Women's Sports* in January of 1979. Still under the guise of the WSF,

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[120] It should be noted that DeMoss visibly was not wearing a bra under her top in the cover photo.
[121] Linda Dahlberg, "Dear *Runner's World*: Centerfold Next?," *Runner's World*, May 1978, 127. The magazine published five total letters, two critiques and three praises.
[122] Examples of letters praising the magazine's coverage of women runners: Tom Mann, "Readers' Comments: Women in 1980," *Runner's World*, February 1978, 134. Lana Le Chabrier, "Readers' Comments: A Case for E.R.A.," *Runner's World*, March 1978, 107-8. Betty Wurn, "Dear *Runner's World*: Penny's Postures," *Runner's World*, September 1978, 128. John J. Hodgins, "Dear *Runner's World*: Penny's Postures," *Runner's World*, September 1978, 128. Kathrine V. Switzer, "Dear *Runner's World*: Well-Done," *Runner's World*, September 1978, 128. Gil Karmer, "Dear *Runner's World*: Mini-Marathons?," *Runner's World*, October 1978, 207. Judith Appleton, "Dear *Runner's World*: Praises on Pregnancy," *Runner's World*, January 1979, 142. John and Ann Ramirez, "Dear *Runner's World*: Praises on Pregnancy," *Runner's World*, January 1979, 142. Harriette Tax, "Dear *Runner's World*: Praises on Pregnancy," *Runner's World*, January 1979, 142. Bonnie Brereton, "Dear *Runner's World*: Pregnant Words," *Runner's World*, February 1979, 142. Jacqueline B. Dahlen, "Dear *Runner's World*: Boston Pros & Cons," *Runner's World*, June 1979, 142. Patti Firth-Trotter, "Dear *Runner's World*: Weighty Words," *Runner's World*, July 1979, 142. Thomas Poole, "Dear *Runner's World*: Women Runners," *Runner's World*, June 1980, 112.
[123] "About the Women's Sports Foundation," Women's Sports Foundation, accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/en/home/about-us.

Women's Sports advanced a more progressive vision of women's sports than women's running books and *Runner's World*. Nevertheless, it still adhered to the standard female runner trope, balancing liberationist appeals with feminine imagery. In the magazine's inaugural reissue, publisher Doug Latimer announced, "it is our hope that *Women's Sports* can encourage more and more women to discover for themselves the added dimensions that participation in active sports can bring to their lives."[124] Epitomizing the chief goal of the women's distance running industry, the magazine included content that exhibited the increasing quality of women's distance running, while encouraging a greater number of women to pursue the sport.[125] The magazine also published numerous editorials and articles about the future course of action for women's sports, including the effort to secure a women's Olympic Marathon.[126]

However, the prevalence of imagery that celebrated heteronormative femininity undercut content that articulated a vision of an independently confident female athlete.[127] As with *Runner's World*, a particular cover and article highlights the

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[124] Doug Latimer, "From the Publisher," *Women's Sports*, January 1979, 9.
[125] Examples of profiles of elite runners and articles on training in *Women's Sports*: Lynda Huey, "The Unsinkable Julie Brown," *Women's Sports*, February 1979,32-3, 64-6. Lee Green, "The Agony Behind the Ecstasy," *Women's Sports*, August 1979, 40-4. Dr. Bonnie Parkhouse, "Do Winners Always Finish First? Not Necessarily," *Women's Sports*, November 1979, 6. Barbano, "Dreaming of Waldniel." Lynda Huey, "Grete on Grete," *Women's Sports*, March 1980, 14-7. Ray Hosler, "The Time of Her Life," *Women's Sports*, March 1980, 34-8. Joe Henderson, "Motivation: Takin' It to the Streets," *Women's Sports*, April 1980, 13-7. Visser, "Born to Run." Joe Henderson, "The Perfect 10K," *Women's Sports*, March 1981, 29-31. Meg Gerken, "Battle of the Sexes," *Women Sports*, June 1981, 55-6.
[126] Articles in *Women's Sports* advocating for an Olympic Marathon: Ted Kennedy, "The Need for Full Equality," *Women's Sports*, January 1979, 13-4. Swtizer, "Why Women in Sports Will Emerge Worldwide." Sue Stricklin, "Women's Olympic Marathon: One Step at a Time," *Women's Sports*, December 1979, 7. Dianne Feinstein, "Sports and Leadership," *Women's Sports*, May 1980, 7. Margaret Sieck, "The media should realize that reporting on women isn't taking a risk," *Women's Sports*, July 1980, 7. Christine Haycock, "Study considers women's Olympic participation, past and present," *Women's Sports*, September 1980, 58-61. Henderson, "A women's Olympic marathon may be added in the long run." Kathrine Switzer, "Adding the Olympic Marathon," *Women's Sports*, May 1981, 44-5.
[127] George Haddad-Garcia, "Hey, Cheryl Ladd, How's Your Sports Life?: 14 Celebrities Tell How (and Why) They Fit Sports into Their Already Over-Booked Days," *Women's Sports*, February 1980, 22-6. "Swimsational! Splashin' Fashions for the 80's," *Women's Sports*, March 1980, 28-33. Greg Hoffman, "The Play's the Thing!," *Women's Sports*, March 1980, 40-3, 57-8. "Smashing!," *Women's Sports*, May 1980, 28-32. Susan Becker, "Here Comes the Sun: Summer Skin Care," *Women's Sports*, May 1980, 46-7. Joanne Wallenstein, "Hello, Mudder: The Dirt on Health Spas," *Women's Sports*, May 1980, 48-9. Trudye Connolly, "Desk Jockeys: It's Your Job to Stay in Shape!," *Women's Sports*, June 1980, 46-7. Sue Hoover, "Audio Aerobics: The Shape-Up Things To Come," *Women's Sports*, June 1980, 50. Sue Hoover, "Looking Alive! June Posen Knows Whereof She Speaks," *Women's Sports*, June 1980, 51. "Warm Up Your Wardrobe! Have a Sweatsuit Summer!," *Women's Sports*, July 1980, 34-7. Linda Johnson, "Slim Pickings," *Women's Sports*,

magazine's endorsement of the femininity of sportswomen. In December 1979, *Women's Sports* featured a glamorous cover shot of skier Suzy Chaffee. The accompanying article described how Chaffee took advantage of her attractiveness to promote her career, positioning her as an exemplar of a trend that would become more common with the entrenchment of the "sport-media–commercial" complex of the early 1980s.[128] Addressing the Chaffee profile and other redirections in the magazine's content, editor Margaret Roach announced,

> The cover format is new to us of course, but it is only the most immediately visible change being introduced...We are also debuting the multi-page 'Active Woman's Almanac,' a monthly feature intended to provide you with useful, practical information about health, fitness, nutrition, beauty, and many other topics that concern today's active women.[129]

This conscious change in content not only encapsulates some of the values of "liberated athletic femininity," but also anticipates how these ideologies would be altered and exacerbated as the industry matured in the early 1980s.

In her analysis of issues of *Women's Sports* from the turn of the twenty-first century, scholar Mary G. McDonald argues that the publication "represents a hybrid media form that combines the content and conventions of glamor and women's magazines with the content and conventions of traditional male-dominated sport and fitness magazines."[130] McDonald asserts that the magazine connects "concepts such as freedom, autonomy and liberation to the promotion of particular active lifestyles and life style products..."[131] While McDonald situates this trend in the late 1990s, an analysis of the early trajectory of the magazine's content suggests that the hybridity of *Women's Sports* originated with its reestablishment in 1979. Importantly, McDonald recognizes

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August 1980, 26-9. Stephen K. Smuin, "Both Side Now: Chrystie Jenner Reflects on Life without Bruce," *Women's Sports*, November 1980, 18-22. Heidi Henkel, "Ranch Style Dressing," *Women's Sports*, November 1980, 34-7.

[128] Greg Hoffman, "Alias: Suzy Chaffee," *Women's Sports*, December 1979, 22-6.

[129] Margaret Roach, "From the Editor: Hey! What's Going on Here?," *Women's Sports*, December 1979, 4.

[130] Mary G. McDonald, "Model behavior? Sporting Feminism and Consumer Culture," in *Sport, Culture, and Advertising: Identities, Commodities and Politics of Representation,* eds. Steven J. Jackson and David L. Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2005): 25.

[131] Ibid.

the stratified socioeconomic hierarchy that underlies participation in and promotion of sports for women. She purports, "Yet beneath this aura of bodily transcendence are historical conditions and circumstances that continue to impact upon the life chances of women from diverse backgrounds."[1] Her analysis reveals how the images, messages, and ideologies of "liberated athletic femininity" presumed and perpetuated engagement with sports and fitness as an opportunity accessible to a certain type of woman, with other women simply remaining invisible. Such a circumstance illustrates the effective popularization of this specific conception of the sport by the women's distance running industry, as well as its legacy for all women's sports.

The Consumption of "Liberated Athletic Femininity"

As McDonald alludes to, consumption has been crucial to this process. The early issues of *Women's Sports* featured a plethora of ads for cosmetic products, fashionable clothing brands, household supplies, and feminine hygiene products, with this imagery serving as another means through which the magazine affirmed the stereotypical, meaning affluent and white, femininity of runners and other female athletes.[132] In their review of twenty-first century women's fitness magazines, Shari Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs highlight, "the tendency for magazines to blur the boundaries between the purpose of the text, images, expert advice, and ads..."[133] Continuing, they argue, "In fact, the difference between advertising and content imagery can become largely irrelevant, and indeed, one cannot meaningfully separate magazine content from ads in many

[132] Stayfree, "My First Day With Stayfree Maxi-Pads," advertisement, January 1979, *Women's Sports*, 29. Piz Buin, "Protective Tanning Lotion. It Makes Beautiful Bodies and It Makes Sense," advertisement, April 1979, *Women's Sports*, 60, advertisement. Dicaps, "Lose Weight Faster Than You Ever Dreamed Possible. Then Keep It Off For Good!," advertisement, May 1979, *Women's Sports*, 62. Clariol Shampoo, "Got Flabby Hair? Get Into Condition," advertisement, July 1979, *Women's Sports*, 34-5. Bobbie Brooks, "What Do You Wear When You're Not Competing?," advertisement, March 1980,*Women's Sports*, 10. L'eggs, "'The fit I need for the look I love...with L'eggs Regular!," advertisement, March 1980, *Women's Sports*, back cover. Maybelline Nail Colors, "On-the-Ball Colors!," advertisement, July 1980, *Women's Sports*, 10. Scott, "You're Competitive; So Are We," advertisement, August 1980, *Women's Sports*, 63. Maybelline, "Double-Barreled Color!," advertisement, August 1980, *Women's Sports*, back cover. Vidal Sasson Hair Care, "Every day you have a new opportunity for beautiful hair in just three simple steps," advertisement, November 1980, *Women's Sports*, 10.

[133] Dworkin and Wachs, 36.

places."[134] For example, early issues of *Women's Sports* featured cosmetic ads from Bonne Bell and Avon along with ads for the various races sponsored by the corporations. In particular, Bonne Bell used this advertising convention to not only dissolve the distinction between its productions and the magazine's, but also promote the seemingly natural compatibility between running and beauty, and the company's commitment to both. One ad claimed to offer, "Help for the beauty problems of an athlete," and included a pitch for the company's 10K Sport Shampoo and 10K Sport Lotion, as well as the 10K Running Shoe. Furthermore, the opposite page featured a graphic listing the 1980 race schedule for Bonne's Bell 10K series.[135]

Similar to this Bonne Bell ad, the emergent women's running shoe and clothing industries disseminated the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity" through ads in *Women's Sports* and *Runner's World*. These markets soon would become an integral aspect of the women's distance running industry, increasing both the quantity and quality of the sport. In 1977, two women "who loved to run but hated the strange-fitting men's shorts they had to run in" founded Moving Comfort, the first women-only running wear company.[136] Likewise, Jogbra, the first sports bra, was invented in 1977.[137] In 1978, Nike debuted its first women's model running shoes, the Nike Lady Waffle Trainer and Nike Lady Cortez, with other companies, such as New Balance and Brooks, soon following.[138] While developed to meet the functional needs of the burgeoning number of women runners, these female-specific running products also contributed to a version of women's distance running founded upon a reassurance of femininity through feminist

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[134] Ibid.
[135] Bonne Bell, "Bonne Bell Introduces 10K," advertisement, December 1979, *Women's Sports*, 8-9.
[136] "About Us," *Moving Comfort*, accessed January 3, 2013, http://www.movingcomfort.com/Our-Story/about-us,default,pg.html?fid=company-info.
[137] Kelly Bastone, "The History of the Sports Bra," *Ladies Only Sports*, accessed December 29, 2012, http://www.ladiesonlysports.com/sports-bra-history/.
[138] Karl Harter, "The First Appearance of Women-Specific Running Shoes," *Movin' Shoes*, accessed December 29, 2012, http://www.movinshoesmadison.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=406:the-first-appearance-of-women-specific-running-shoes&catid=26:karls-corner&Itemid=312.

rhetoric. For example, an early Jogbra ad featured founders Lisa Lindahl and Hinda Schreiber running with their Jogbras exposed. The ad claimed, "Jogbra: No man-made sporting bra can touch it." It also included a brief summary of the company's backstory, emphasizing how the founders, as runners, intimately knew of the physiological challenges faced by female runners and thus created a bra that adequately met their needs.[139]

Over the course of its history, Nike would become known for innovative ad campaigns that emphasized female independence. Michael Messner later discussed the strategies used by Nike to endorse women's participation in sports, noting, "Nike began to seize upon the individualist impulse of female empowerment that underlies liberal feminism, [and] they sold it back to women as an ideology and bodily practice...'"[140] While Messner situates the genesis of this development in the late 1990s, the content of Nike's original women's running shoe ads contain a similar ideology, thus epitomizing the usage of liberal feminist rhetoric in the women's distance running industry. For example, an ad that appeared in the December 1978 issue of *Runner's World* featured the headline, "We think it's time the IOC stopped running away from women runners." The text continued,

> For some archaic reasons, the International Olympic Committee refuses to allow women runners to compete at any distance longer than 1500 meters. They say that running a marathon isn't feminine. Women aren't strong enough. Or that not enough countries are interested. Right. The IOC recognizes things like roque and team epee as Olympic events. We say the members of the IOC have their heads in the sand. We'd like to take a stand here for women runners. We've joined the crusade to convince the IOC to allow women to run the distance races just like men do.[141]

The message and tone of this ad expertly captures how Nike appropriated liberationist values to carve its niche in an emergent market. For prospective women

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[139] Jogbra, "Jogbra. No man-made sporting bra can touch it," advertisement, October 1979, *Runner's World*, 140.
[140] Messner, *Taking the Field*, 88.
[141] Nike, "We think it's time the IOC stopped running away from women runners," advertisement, December 1978, *Runner's World*, back cover.

runners, wearing Nike ostensibly identified one as a confident female runner who believed in her own athletic potential, as well as that of her fellow runners. The company even introduced a shoe called the Liberator.[142] Likewise, Nike's ad for its Lady Waffle Trainer announced, "There's nothing more powerful than a shoe whose time has come."[143] The image for the ad featured the shoes on a woman's feet, with just the lower part of her legs showing, allowing her gold Nike anklet to prominently stand out. This obvious feminine touch illustrates how, despite their reliance on progressive ideologies, Nike also balanced their ads with displays of femininity. The advertisements for other running shoes imitated this model. For instance, New Balance's ad for their W320 shoe featured an image of the shoe with a daisy inside of it, while the text emphasized how the company constructed the shoe to specifically meet the needs of the female runner.[144]

By 1980, these companies helped turn running into a $500-to $700 million-dollar industry.[145] A variety of other women-only clothing companies contributed to this growth, along with women's running clothing from mixed-sex retailers. Along with Jogbra, Formfit Sports and Lily of France also produced sports bras. Competing with Moving Comfort, Women on the Run believed "that a woman can still look fashionable even if she is going to sweat."[146] Along with an attention to fashion, the company endorsed the ethic of the sport purported by women's running literature. In the words of founder Mary Healy, "Running is very important to me. I've experienced the tremendous changes it can bring about in a woman both physically and psychologically. It's very exciting to have a business that reinforces that in other women. I'm thrilled to be able to give women an opportunity to believe in themselves."[147] Companies like

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[142] Nike, "The Liberator will fit only one woman," advertisement, September 1979, *Women's Sports*, 5.
[143] Nike,"There's nothing more powerful than a shoe whose time has come," advertisement, March 1979, *Women's Sports*, 27.
[144] New Balance, "New Width Sizing for Women," advertisement, January 1979, *Women's Sports*, 7.
[145] Jayanne Pistill, "Today's Running Clothes," *Runner's World*, July 1980, 70.
[146] Ibid., 80.
[147] Jackie Lapin, "Known By The Companies They Keep: Businesswomen Tackle the Sports Market," *Women's Sports*, September 1979, 41.

Jogbra and Moving Comfort also confirm that the women's distance running industry, with its attendant messages and images, was a female-runner directed effort. According to *Women's Sports*, "Sports is a business, a big business, and women are beginning to cash in on it. Women's sports shops are opening all over the country, and many of them are owned and managed by women."[148]

The Significance of the Burgeoning Women's Distance Running Industry

By the dawn of the 1980s, a discernible women's distance running industry, composed of women-only races, a women's running literature, running and sports magazines, female-specific clothing and shoes, and even a made-for-television movie, had become an established part of the worlds of American running and women's sports.[149] Data from various sources supports the industry's existence. In an end of decade review of the sport as a whole, *Runner's World* editor Bob Anderson highlighted its exponential growth, claiming, "In 1970 pollsters were talking about two million runners; this year they are throwing around numbers like 30 million." Anderson also celebrated the vibrant running literature, as well as the more than forty shoe manufacturers, providing evidence for the larger running market, within which women's running products both established and followed trends.[150] In 1978, Perrier commissioned a study of *Fitness in America*, interviewing over 1500 persons about Americans' fitness attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge. According to the study, "Women are getting involved in sports and athletics at a distinctly more rapid rate than

[148] Women's Sports Foundation, "Strides: Women's Sports is a Women's Business," *Women's Sports*, March 1980, 62.
[149] Marvin A. Gluck, *She How She Runs*, directed by Richard T. Heffron (Los Angeles: Columbia Broadcasting System, 1978), videocassette. *See How She Runs*, a made for television movie starring Joanne Woodward, encapsulates the majority of the themes that compose the ideal female runner trope. The movie also introduced the popular female runner identity to a broader segment of the American population. Woodward portrays Betty Quinn, a recently-divorced middle-age woman overburdened by her high-school teaching job and petulant teenage daughters. Disillusioned and discouraged, Quinn rejuvenates her life after she discover running and begins training for the Boston Marathon. The movie concludes with Quinn's marathon experience, chronicling her immense struggle but eventual triumph. Long after the other competitors had finished, her ex-husband, daughters, and co-workers greet her at the finish line, suggesting that her running helped bring her family together.
[150] Bob Anderson, "From the Editor," *Runner's World*, December 1979, 7.

men...The number of women taking up running in the last two years, for example, has grown by 73 percent, compared to 53 percent growth by men."[151] Furthermore, the evidence collected suggested that, "the public, particularly current activists, are likely to spend as much or more on sport and athletics as they did this year."[152]

Of course, the establishment and success of the industry was made possible by the sport's socioeconomic foundations. No matter how often or how much a woman ran, she now could purchase an identity that projected "liberated athletic femininity." Not only did the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity" intend to attract middle-class, white, heterosexual women to the sport, but the increasing importance of consumption required a woman possess the means to purchase an array of products and services, as well as travel to and participate in the increasing number of women-only races. This reality illustrates how the popularization of women's distance running actually constrained the sport's accessibility. In a 1979 submission to *Runner's World* magazine, runner Carol Tracy provides one of the few examples of a runner readily recognizing the prevalence of class privilege and consumption in the sport. Tracy, after witnessing young boys sharing a pair of running shoes, wrote to *Runner's World*, "we runners are a pretty affluent group. We routinely spring for trendy warmup suits, rush to replace our $35 shoes the moment they shoe the slightest wear, and gladly lay out $7 or $8 to race with a lot of similarly-clad, middle-class, white-collar suburbanites."[153]

Likewise, a guest editorial in *Women's Sports* perceptively noted that, "the growth in women's sports (and certainly in the pages of this magazine) has been limited to economically comfortable white women."[154] Additionally, *Runner's World's* comprehensive survey of the American running population, conducted in 1978 and

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[151] Great Waters of France, Inc., *Fitness in America – The Perrier Study: A National Research Report of Behavior, Knowledge and Opinions Concerning the Taking Up of Sports and Exercise*, Lou Harris and Associates, Inc.., 1978, 8.
[152] Ibid., 55.
[153] Carol Tracy, "A Shoe-In," *Runner's World*, December 1979, 15.
[154] Lee Ballinger, "Nibbling away at the athletic pie," *Women's Sports*, December 1981, 8.

published in 1980, exposed the sport's strong class identification. The survey revealed that, "White-collar people – professionals, executives, store owners and business people – make up 74.6 percent of the running population."[155] In conjunction, this data and analysis suggests that the women's distance running industry effectively balanced feminine and feminist themes to promote the sport to a greater number of middle-class, white, and heterosexual women.

Conclusion

The achievement of the women's Olympic Marathon epitomized the industry's success. On February 23, 1981, the IOC and LAOOC announced that the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics would host the inaugural women's Olympic Marathon. Describing her reaction to the announcement to *Ms.*, Kathrine Switzer enthused,

> The second they announced it, I had all sorts of flashbacks from the last fourteen years. Running in the cold. Running all those workouts alone. Marathons that were five hours long. The first Boston marathon – when I actually finished, and was freezing cold and tired. Moments of great joy during races...Hundreds of happy women. And, thinking: Now, finally, they really have a place to go.[156]

Switzer's words encapsulate the athletic significance of this event. The establishment of this race seemed to confer ultimate legitimacy on women distance runners, with the popularization of the "liberated athletic femininity narrative" improving both the quality and quantity of the sport. However, this triumph concurred with the manifestation of an increasingly exclusive female runner narrative. Access to the sport and the identity it conferred had become increasingly determined the ability to purchase and embody "liberated athletic femininity," a trend that would be exacerbated during the industry's next stage.

But, knowing its successes, why does it matter that the women's distance running industry ultimately excluded certain women? This development does not make women's running unique, as many institutions also operate on a similarly exclusionary hierarchy.

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[155] "Who Is The American Runner?," *Runner's World*, December 1980, 37.
[156] Cimons, "How Women Got to Run the Distance."

In context of the "sport-media-commercial" complex that increasingly characterized American sports culture, however, the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative of the women's distance running industry helped ensure women's continued sporting subordination. As the women's distance running industry reveals, the masculinist hierarchy of sports does not deserve all the blame for this reality. Likewise, corporate forces did not simply co-opt women's sports in order to exploit and confine them.

Rather, the situation proves much more complicated. Although the dominant gender order has certainly contributed to women's sporting subordination, the leaders of women's sports were also complicit in restricting the sport's popular perception and, in turn, its cultural status. Their assumption and perpetuation of a class-specific women runner identity contributed to this prevailing reality. In combination, class identity, the narrative of "liberated athletic femininity," and the increasingly consumptive requirements of women's distance running offer an example of how the effort to popularize women's sports actually limited them. Women's running, like women's sports at large, seemed ensnared in an unavoidable paradox – with success guaranteeing containment, with popularity guaranteeing subordination. In the years preceding the 1984 Olympic Games, the trajectory of the women's distance running industry would result in a more intensely stratified female runner identity, which will offer additional insights and perspectives of the cultural status of women's sports.

CHAPTER TWO

Consuming the "Ideal Female Runner" Identity:

The Ideologies of Second Stage of the Women's Distance Running Industry, 1981-1984

Introduction

In 1983, *Runner's World* made a decision that captures the intensifying commercialism of the American running industry. The magazine sought to respond to and benefit from the fitness craze, an era of increased interest in running and fitness among Americans. Aiming to appeal to these casual, fitness enthusiasts, the magazine's covers frequently featured attractive young people participating in a running-related activity. However, the magazine began to receive a number of complaints from subscribers for using these models, instead of "real" runners. "These covers...each have a young man and women involved in some exercise (obviously having fun); I'm sure this is to attract the new coed running generation," wrote reader Captain Vincent Leone, Jr.[157] Within the next year, the magazine attempted to resolve this apparent conundrum by publishing dual covers. Introducing this decision, editor Bob Anderson explained,

> Beginning with this issue, *Runner's World* will be printed each month with two different covers: one for the more serious runner who subscribes and another for the runner who purchases the magazine at the newsstand...We have found that the more serious runner subscribes and wants his running to be hard-core and unadorned. On the other hand, the runner who pursues the sport for health and fun prefers a lighter, more lively approach to our covers.[158]

The pair of inaugural covers illustrates the perceived difference between "hard-core" and "lighter, more lively" runners, with the subscriber cover featuring an action photo of a pack of runners on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge during the New York City Marathon while the commercial cover starred Donna Mills, a Farrah Fawcett look-a-like,

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[157] Captain Vincent Leone Jr. quoted in Bob Anderson, "From the Editor," *Runner's World*, March 1982, 9.
[158] Bob Anderson, "Subscriber Letter," *Runner's World*, January 1983, protective cover.

massaging her calf. The cover "controversy" not only illuminates how the running industry navigated the accelerating commercial focus and function of the sport, but also women's place within this larger process. As evidenced by Captain Leone's letter and the Donna Mills cover, the commentary and imagery of the running industry in the early 1980s suggested that women exemplified the mass market, less serious runner. To a large extent, the developments of the second stage of the women's distance running industry support this estimation. Additionally, the preoccupation with *Runner's World's* cover content begins to reveal how increased commercialism exalted the importance of one's runner identity. For women, the supposed desire to achieve this popular identity resulted in the introduction of new themes to the discourse of the women's distance running industry – appearance, individualism, health, and heteronormativity.

The Emergence of the "Ideal Female Runner" Identity

The core developments of the second stage of the women's distance running industry, which extended and intensified those of the first stage, support the arguments of Jennifer Smith Maguire in *Fit for Consumption*. Smith Maguire asserts, "Weaving individualization together with consumption, the problem of the self has, over the course of the twentieth century, become the problem of the consuming self; with the body as its project."[159] As a scholar of sociology and mass communications, Smith Maguire only focuses on this reality during the mid-to-late 1990s in Great Britain and the United States. Therefore, an examination of the consumptive character of the women's distance running industry's in the early 1980s United States will not only extend the periodization of her assertions, but also diversify the application of these theories, permitting a critical consideration of how this discourse impacted women's place in the American "sport-media-commercial" complex.

[159] Smith Maguire, 20.

The continued expansion of the sportswear industry, a greater attention to diet and nutrition, the emergence of weight-loss advice and services, and a reification of heteronormativity formed the popular core of the second stage of the women's distance running industry. These themes and others resulted in the emergence of the "ideal female runner" identity, which both merged with and supplanted the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative. Along with producing a more exclusive vision of the sport, these developments reveal how runner appearance and identity superseded athletic participation and performance. As this altered focus implies, the "ideal female runner" identity situated the female running body at the center of its narrative. Yet, while this imagery and messaging contributed to the increased popularity of the sport, concerns emerged, with these fears further defining and restricting women's engagement with running. In particular, fears about amenorrhea and assault infiltrated the sport's popular narrative. As in the first stage, the women's distance running industry's various themes sometimes appeared contradictory; nevertheless, a discernible "ideal female runner" identity – white, affluent, well-educated, well-employed, heterosexual, and femininely attractive – gained increasing ubiquity within the "sport-media-commercial" complex. However, an apparently unavoidable and often unnoticed paradox became more entrenched. With successful popularization came stratified participation, which seemingly locked women into their subordinate status in American sports culture.

A Population of "Ideal Female Runners"

By the 1980s, the popularity of women's distance running had resulted in a significant number of thorough surveys, which provide an insightful portrait of the cohort of female runners. An estimated 17 million women ran, confirming the existence of a viable population of female runners.[160] In the words of *Runner's World*, "Within the

[160] Averbuch, ix.

last decade, the women's running movement...has blossomed into a remarkable force."[161] By 1982, approximately forty percent of the magazine's readers were women, an increase from only twelve percent five years prior. Additionally, the magazine conjectured that, across the nation, at least one women-only race was held every weekend.[162] A comprehensive survey conducted by the magazine, profiling those that ran at least once a month, resulted in the following assessment of the "typical female runner":

> Of the 12, 178, 000 adult runners in the United States, 4, 839,000 are women...The typical female runner is in her late 20s or early 30s, with an impressive 34 percent holding college degrees. The majority of female runners are married and an impressive 22.6 percent of them work in the professions or in managerial positions. A solid 72 percent of the female runners live in households in which the annual income is higher than $25,000.[163]

This data reveals the persistence, and even strengthening, of the class foundations of women's distance running. *Women's Sports* collected similar data. The magazine's readers averaged 27.7 years, with over ninety percent participating in running. Summarizing the findings of a 1984 survey, *Women's Sports* noted, "Over half of [our readers] are employed outside the home....Your mean household income is well above the national average at $32, 380 per annum. You are also well educated; over 80 percent of you have attended college."[164]

Furthermore, the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), the parent organization of *Women's Sports*, conducted a comprehensive survey of sportswomen in partnership with Miller Lite. Even though this survey relied on a self-selective group, dues paying members of the WSF, its findings corroborate with the others. In the report, the WSF noted that athletic women represented "a special segment of the population" that was

[161] Bob Anderson, "From the Editor," *Runner's World,* July 1982, 9.
[162] Elaine Shatenstein, "Women's Running," *Runner's World,* July 1982, 37.
[163] "Who is the American Runner?," *Runner's World*, August 1984, 47.
[164] "Who reads *Women's Sports*?," *Women's Sports,* May 1984, 16.

"atypical of women generally," but "resemble[d] other America in the sports/fitness activities..."[165] The report explained that,

> Answers to demographic questions reveal that, compared to the national population, the sample is rather special: relatively young (median age about 30), financially comfortable (37% report household incomes of $31,000 or more), employed (70% full time, 13% part time), and generally single (32% are married). The sample is extremely well educated; two thirds (67%) are college graduates, with four in ten (38%) having completed some graduate work. Eight in ten have no children living at home. About nine in ten (91%) in the sample consider themselves "white."[166]

Although "atypical" compared to the general population of women, these ardent female athletes held ideas about sports that conformed to those advocated by the women's distance running industry. Many of these women were committed runners, with 55% reportedly running at least two times per week.[167] Despite their ostensibly greater investment in the sport, they still possessed "a concern with personal fitness rather than with competition."[168] The report also revealed that "consistent with health as a reason for participation are the attitudes respondents manifest about their bodies," with 75% of respondents feeling equally good or better about their body image compared to five years previously.[169] Endorsing the dominant ideology of the women's distance running industry, 82% of respondents assertively disagreed that "participation in sports diminishes femininity."[170] In terms of their support network, "most respondents credit romantic companions and women friends with the highest levels of support."[171] Finally, along with running, walking and aerobics were the most popular fitness activities; the same activities most popular among the general population.[172]

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[165] Lite Beer from Miller in cooperation with The Women's Sports Foundation, *The Miller Lite Report on Women in Sports*, New World Decisions Ltd., 1985, 1.
[166] Ibid., 32-3.
[167] Ibid., Table 1.12.
[168] Ibid., 4.
[169] Ibid., 18.
[170] Ibid., 9.
[171] Ibid., 16.
[172] Ibid., 3.

A survey conducted at the 1983 L'Eggs Mini Marathon provides a more detailed perspective of the competitive side of women's running in the early 1980s. Of the race's nearly 6,000 participants, a sample of 930 completed the survey. The survey revealed that women runners were an average 31.4 years old, reflecting the general age range suggested by other data sources. The race represented the first competitive venture for forty percent of the survey respondents, with the majority of the women running for an average of just under four years. The survey established three commitment categories for respondents – "Less Serious," "Serious," and "Elite." Eight-hundred and fifty-four of the respondents fell into the "Less Serious" category, meaning they raced less than ten times per year and/or ran less than forty miles per week.[173] In conjunction, this survey data suggests a female runner population reflective of and receptive to the commercial and consumptive impulse that drove the second stage of the women's distance running industry.

The Lost Promise of the Women's Distance Running Movement

The establishment of the Olympic Marathon represented the transitional crux for the women's distance running industry. As discussed, this cause served as the original rallying point for the industry, uniting everyday female runners with elites and, in turn, augmenting both the quantity and quality of the sport. Now, the larger goal of the sport became more generalized. In anticipation of the Olympic race, the women's distance running industry primarily desired to further popularize the sport. Due to the success that industry had with its corporate partners, they continued to use the commercial arena to attract more women to the sport. Once again, Avon spearheaded this effort through the sponsorship of more major marathons, along with a greater variety of

[173] "Results of the 1983 L'eggs Mini Marathon Survey" in Averbuch, 179-86.

shorter distance races.[174] For instance, the company's ad for the 1981 Avon International Marathon in Ottawa proclaimed,

> Even though you cannot run as fast as Lorraine Moller, Joyce Smith, Marty Cooksey, or Joan Benoit, you can still participate in the world championship marathon for women runners. Your presence in Ottawa for the Avon Marathon is important because the International Olympic Committee's decision to add a women's marathon to the Games in 1984 [was] based on widespread interest in the sport – not only elite performances.[175]

This strategy again proved fruitful, as the marathon would represent the one of the crowning events of the 1984 Games. The absence of a new, specific goal, however, would have consequences. Instead of securing a marathon, the ultimate goal became selling the sport.

After the establishment of the marathon, some elite runners, including Grete Waitz and Mary Decker, sued the IAAF, IOC, and LAOOC to demand that a 5K and 10K also be added to the Olympic roster for the 1984 Games. Yet, this effort did not become a universal cause.[176] The failure of this suit, despite the passionate advocacy of Jacqueline Hansen, validates the importance of media and corporate support to bolster the cause of women's sports.[177] The fact that most everyday women runners had not run a marathon but likely had participated in 5K or 10K races further highlights the importance of commercial popularization, as this circumstance would suggest that a cause for a 5K and 10K would be more relatable to the majority of women runners. Rather than whole-

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[174] Avon International Running Circuit, "Run With Avon: Fun. Fitness. Competition," advertisement, July 1982, *Women's Sports*, 11. Women Sports Foundation, "Women Athletes Have Their Day," *Women's Sports*, October 1982, 56. Avon International Marathon, "Avon International Marathon. All Women Runners Welcome," advertisement, February 1983, *Women's Sports*, 25. Avon International Running Circuit, "Run Around the World with Avon," advertisement, June 1983, *Women's Sports*, 17. Avon International Marathon, "Avon," advertisement, January 1984, *Women's Sport*, 16.

[175] Avon International Marathon, "Avon Running: Join Us and Vote!," advertisement, May 1981, *Women's Sports*, 51.

[176] "Fast Breaks," *Women's Sports*, October 1983, 16. Joe Henderson, "Joe Henderson's Inside Report," *Runner's World*, November 1983, 8. "Olympic Update," *Women's Sports*, December 1983, 13. Brian Caufield, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, January 1984, 83. "Women Runners Seek Injunction," *New York Times*, March 7, 1984, B10. David Prokop, "Reporting from Los Angeles," *Runner's World*, June 1984, 9. Joe Henderson, "Joe Henderson's Inside Report," *Runner's World*, August 1984, 10. Dan Ferrara, "Women's Running," *Runner's World*, September 1984, 129.

[177] Hansen, "End Zone: Runner's Day in Court." Susan D. McGreivy, "Guest Spot," *Runner's World*, December 1984, 110.

heartedly championing the addition of these races, an invigorated emphasis on consumption intertwined with the industry's existing values not only to popularize a certain vision of the sport, but also contribute to the paradox of women's sports and the resulting subordination of female athletes.

The Development of a Consumable "Ideal Female Runner" Identity

As asserted by Jennifer Smith Maguire, "The fitness lifestyle is not just about the inclusion of physical activity, but about the ways in which each of those activities is affiliated with a chain of consumption options and choices..."[178] The intensified commercial focus of the second stage of the women's distance running industry resulted in a variety of products and services that illuminate the industry's new themes - appearance, individualism, health, heterosexuality. This "chain of consumption" began with the latest, fashionable active wear styles. By 1984, in a fitness market of an estimated seventy-five million, approximately 60% of consumers were women.[179] Within this broad growth, the clothing companies of the women's distance running had established themselves as a more visibly entrenched market. Regarding the growth of the sporting goods market, Smith Maguire raises a valid point, asserting, "the scale of the sporting goods industry is a poor measure of a populations interest and participation in fitness...Because of their diffuse popularity, fitness goods such as athletic shoes and apparel are relatively weak symbols of membership in the fitness field."[180] Yet, in terms of the women's distance running industry, the expansion of clothing and shoe markets serves as a positive indicator, revealing how the attainment of the "ideal female runner" identity assumed precedence over committed involvement in the sport.[181]

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[178] Maguire Smith, 119.
[179] Averbuch, 161.
[180] Smith Maguire, 15.
[181] Ibid. As noted by Jennifer Smith Maguire, "Athletic shoes and exercise gear – and the more generic 'sporty' clothing popularized in the 1970s – are not only suitable to the social space of the health club; they also carry the connotations of physical self-improvement from the health club out to the street."

First appearing in May 1981, *Runner's World's* "Active Sportswear" review evinced a growing emphasis on identity. The magazine noted, "the once-fledging running clothing business has become a separate – but distinct – arm of the huge active sportswear industry...Perhaps the concession to running's growth and acceptance is the number of obvious non-runners who are seen daily wearing running apparel, as if they are getting ready to tackle a 20-miler."[182] This guide and its subsequent editions revealed that women's running wear had become just as prevalent as men's, with the magazine providing both fashionable and functional options for the consumer of feminine running apparel.[183] Almost concurrently, more women models also began appearing in advertisements for co-ed running clothing brands. For instance, the May 1982 issue of *Runner's World*, which included that year's sportswear guide, featured almost ten clothing advertisements starring women.[184] Likewise, since its second year of republication, *Women's Sports* had featured a monthly "Active Woman's Almanac" that often previewed sportswear styles.[185]

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[182] "A *Runner's World* Special Report: Active Sportswear for the 1981 Runner," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 51.

[183] "1982 is Highlighted by Advanced Materials and Better Fit: The Fine-Tuning of Active Sportswear Continues," *Runner's World*, May 1982, 43-46, 78.

[184] Sub-4, "Look as Good You Feel," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 4. Dolfin Activewear, "Dolfin Activewear...run with the winner!," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 19. Lily of France, "The Sport Bra: Perhaps the Most Important Piece of Equipment for Women in Sports," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 23. Descente, "Descente. It's Technology You Can Wear," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 61. Asics Tiger, "Tigerwear...FUNctional Fashion," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 73. Moving Comfort, "Women, Winter, and Moving Comfort, a Fitting Combination," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 75. New Balance, "New Balance's Approach to Clothing Has Suddenly Gone Off-Track," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 81. Bill Rodgers and Company, "That's me in my first mesh running outfit," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 82. Leading Edge, "Speaks of Quality. Shouts of Savings," advertisement, May 1982, *Runner's World*, 111.

[185] Karen Kotoske, "Closet Fit For a Jock," *Women's Sports*, April 1981, 46. Karen Kotoske, "Sporty Pants," *Women's Sports*, June 1981, 51. Karen Kotoske, "Women's Sports Shop," *Women's Sports*, December 1981, 56. Karen Kotoske, "Hot Jeans are Cool," *Women's Sports*, December 1982, 55. Karen Kotoske, "Running a Clothes Biz," *Women's Sports*, March 1983, 46. Karen Kotoske, "A Brief Message," *Women's Sports*, October 1983, 60. Karen Kotoske, "A Bra That Works Out," *Women's Sports*, November 1983, 60. Jeffrey Newberry, "For Gifted Athletes," *Women's Sports*, December 1983, 64-5. Cheryl Mosher, "Winter Wear Buyer's Guide," *Women's Sports*, December 1983, 54-9. "Wait Until Dark," *Women's Sports*, January 1984, 50. Mary Witherell, "Concerning the Sock Market," *Women's Sports*, March 1984, 43. Cheryl Mosher, "Hot Stuff for Winter Running," *Women's Sports*, October 1984, 47-58. Women's Sports and Fitness T-Shirt, "It's Here! It's Hot!," advertisement, December 1984, *Women's Sports*, 47.

The "Ideal Female Runner" Fashion

This increase in women's running clothing permitted the emergence of an identifiable female runner style. A satiric submission to *Runner's World* captures the attention to and popularity of female runner fashion. Author Helen Rumph bemoaned,

> These days, when lilac-colored running shoes and drab gray sweat suits are fashionable and modeled in the J.C. Penney catalog, how is a real, honest-to-goodness, five-mile-plus runner supposed to be taken seriously? All our traditional garb has taken its place among the Izod shirts and Top Sider shoes. What is a 'real' runner to wear to show her athletic prowess?[186]

Like *Runner's World's* dual covers and the L'Eggs Mini survey results, Rumph's essay highlights the continued divergence between so-called "real" runners and the increasingly popular "ideal female runner" identity. The commercial growth of the sport made more high-quality products, such as winterized and weather-proof gear, available to dedicated female runners.[187] Yet, the promotion of these products portrayed and perpetuated a sport composed of casual, even frivolous, fitness enthusiasts. For instance, commentating on the sweatsuits in their winter wear guide, *Women's Sports* described how, "designers have streamlined the bulky look with crew or boat necks..." and asserted that, "[c]olor is queen in the new sweatsuit market...Magenta, purple, lime, royal blue, red and other hues are making names for themselves solo and in flashy combinations as well."[188]

As Shari Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs purport in *Body Panic*, "Despite sport as a realm of action, researchers frequently note that women's performances are 'offset' by depictions of feminine aesthetics and beauty standards."[189] Quotations from two company executives support their point, further revealing how a focus on running fashion was assumed as a feminine concern. According to Scott Blessing of Dolfin, "We

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[186] Helen Rumph, "Out of Style," *Runner's World*, January 1983, 88.
[187] "*Runner's World* Guide to Winter Running Clothing," *Runner's World*, November 1983, 75-84. Mosher, "Winter Wear Buyer's Guide," 54-59.
[188] Mosher, "Winter Wear Buyer's Guide," 58.
[189] Dworkin and Wachs, 31.

feel that colors, especially among women runners, are the utmost importance."[190] Likewise, Ellen Wessel of Moving Comfort asserted, "As more and more women have come into running, the attention to the more visual aspects of the clothing have become stronger and stronger."[191] She also suggested, "Women are now taking their running very seriously and they also take their appearance very seriously."[192] Relatedly, only a few months after publishing Rumph's essay, *Runner's World* marketed its annual active wear guide, which advanced ideas similar to those Rumph had light-heartedly ridiculed. The 1983 active wear guide declared, "what you wear while out on the run makes a very real statement about you. If you feel flamboyant and flashy, wear flamboyant, flashy running clothes...Your running clothes say as much about your running identity as anything this side of your stride length."[193]

This focus on flattering colors and fashionable fits is not inherently problematic, as many women likely appreciated this attention to detail. However, when considering the impact of the women's distance running industry on the status of female athletes in American sports culture, placing a primacy on a runner identity achieved through color combinations and attractive fits proves demeaning; again suggesting women, as a whole, do not take their participation in sport seriously. As asserted by women's sports advocate Helen Lenskyj, there exists "the assumption that men are serious about recreational sporting activities, while women are easily duped by passing fads and self-proclaimed experts, as long as the promise of heterosexual glamour is sufficiently seductive."[194] While making the "ideal female runner" identity available to more women, only those with the financial means and a feminine fashion-sense had complete access. Exemplifying the paradox of women's sports, the success of the women's running

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[190] Scott Blessing quoted in Bob Wischnia and the Editors, "Dress for Success," *Runner's World,* May 1983, 64.
[191] Ellen Wessel quoted in Ibid., 66,68.
[192] Ellen Wessel quoted in Ibid., 72.
[193] Ibid., 58.
[194] Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, and Sexuality* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1986), 131.

clothing market would ultimately contribute to the further subordination of women's athletic status. Although concerns about status and respect in the culture of American sports would not have been on the minds of women runners, regardless of their opinions on sportswear style, the prevailing belief that women consume, rather than play, sports has significant implications.

The "Ideal Female Runner" Body

The intensified emphasis on diet, nutrition, and weight loss further highlights the women's distance running industry's endorsement of a specific appearance, as well as a new focus on individualism and health. Over the course of the early 1980s, *Runner's World* and *Women's Sports* published more content on diet plans, nutrition advice, and the various food products and services related to these two concepts.[195] As asserted by Dworkin and Wachs, "The ways in which signifiers of 'health' and 'fitness' come together to mark moralities, privilege certain lifestyles, and exclude others...are even more meaningful given that the messages attached to images and ideals are often conflated with a state of health in the name of science."[196] In women's running, "being healthy" and "appearing healthy," which increasingly meant being thin, were merged, demonstrating how attention to diet and nutrition produced an ideology that diverged

[195] Articles on diets and nutrition in *Women's Sports* and *Runner's World*: Judy Scheuch, "Sprouting Off About Health Food Stores," *Women's Sports*, August 1980, 46-7. Linda Johnson, "The Right Stuff," *Women's Sports*, September 1980, 25-7. Janice Fillip, "Veg Heads," *Women's Sports*, January 1981, 30-1. David Prokop, "A Super Diet for Athletes," *Runner's World*, July 1981, 59-63. Jane Brody, "The New Nutrition – You Are What You Eat," *Runner's World*, September 1981, 81-94. William Gottlieb, "The Beverly Hills Hustle," *Women's Sports*, January 1982, 43. Lawrence Galtan, "The Truth About High-Fiber Diets," *Runner's World*, June 1982, 31-5. Nancy Clark with Amby Burfoot, "Yogurt – Yes!," *Runner's World*, December 1982, 41-3, 80. Kim H. Kapin, "Fast-food Fitness," *Women's Sports*, January 1983, 50-1. Virginia DeMoss, "Organic Produce," *Runner's World*, March 1983, 41-3, 65. Bob Wischnia, "Diet and Performance: What and When to Eat Before and After Running," *Runner's World*, September 1983, 56-7, 72-5. Nancy Clark with Amby Burfoot, "Frozen & Canned Foods: The Package Deal," *Runner's World*, December 1983, 50-3. Nancy Clark, "Clark on Diet and Nutrition," *Runner's World*, October 1983-December 1984. Frank G. Addleman with Caryn Landau, "Do You Really Need a Balanced Diet?," *Runner's World*, July 1984, 42-7. Mary Jo Feeney, "Eat To Be a Winner," *Women's Sports*, August 1984, 44-5. Candy Cumming, "More Sugar Blues," *Women's Sports*, August 1984, 68. Linden Berry, "Are You a Fan of Bran?," *Women's Sports*, October 1984, 64-5. Carol Morton, "Medical and Nutrition News Highlights," *Runner's World*, August 1984, 21-2. Elaine Hermann, "The Importance of Breakfast," *Runner's World*, October 1984, 53. Irving Dardik and Denis Waitley, "Our Bodies, Our Selves," *Women's Sports*, November 1984, 31-3. Prokop, "A Diet for Life," *Runner's World*, December 1984, 60-5.

[196] Dworkin and Wachs, 21.

from real health. Furthermore, Dworkin and Wachs also purport that, "Since health and fitness discourses are perceived as operating within the realm of science, or as being unquestionably 'healthy,' such discourses are frequently overlooked as a site in which to critically examine how ideologies of masculinity, femininity, gender, and the body are constructed within such spheres."[197] Information on nutrition, diet, and weight loss from the second stage of the women's distance running industry supports their argument, with this implicit genderizing revealing how this element of the second stage of the women's distance running industry would further contribute to women's subordinate status in American sports culture.

Exemplifying this situation, Joan Ullyot began writing a monthly medical advice column for *Women's Sports*. Advertised as "Sportsmedicine for the Active Woman," Ullyot's column frequently addressed reader concerns and questions about weight loss, positioning these concerns under the supposedly authoritative rubric of "sportsmedicine." Her responses often mentioned the importance of one's ideal weight for a particular athletic activity.[198] According to Ullyot,

> No less than other women, female athletes seem almost obsessed with the need to have not just a healthy, well-functioning body but one that conforms to some nebulous ideal of weight or beauty. I have mentioned frequently that weight, as measured by scales, varies tremendously with body type...each individual must consider her personal interests and needs when deciding what weight and fat content is best for her. No tables, formulas, or scales should tyrannize her.[199]

A seemingly more "progressive" viewpoint than simply focusing on conforming to media imagery, the notion of an "ideal weight" still constructed and reinforced a specific

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[197] Ibid., 22.
[198] Joan Ullyot's articles on weight from the early 1980s: Joan Ullyot, "A Weighty Question," *Women's Sports*, January 1981, 50-1. Joan Ullyot, "All the Questions Fit to Print," *Women's Sports*, August 1981, 46-7. Joan Ullyot, "Support Systems for Athletes," *Women's Sports*, October 1981, 54-5. Joan Ullyot, "Formula for Weight Loss," *Women's Sports*, November 1981, 44-5. Joan Ullyot, "Move It and Lose It," *Women's Sports*, June 1982, 42-3. Joan Ullyot, "Looking for the Right Explanations," *Women's Sports*, January 1983, 45. Joan Ullyot, "Computing Your 'Ideal' Weight," *Women's Sports*, May 1983, 45-6. Joan Ullyot, "Breathe Easy," *Women's Sports*, July 1983, 49-50. Joan Ullyot, "Food for Thought," *Women's Sports*, December 1983, 19-20. Joan Ullyot, "Never Say Diet," *Women's Sports*, March 1984, 52-3. Joan Ullyot, "Competing with Asthma," *Women's Sports*, April 1984, 74-6.
[199] Joan Ullyot, "More Weighty Thoughts," *Women's Sports*, August 1983, 49.

standard for women runners, as well as other athletes, to attain. Accompanied by content that directly addressed fatness and weight loss, this concept cannot be considered liberatory.[200]

Likewise, Gloria Averbuch, an official with the New York Road Runners, also aimed to portray achieving an idealized body as a liberatory process. In her 1984 book, *The Woman Runner: Free to Be the Complete Athlete*, Averbuch exhorted, "I do believe there is that 'thin' voice within us, and that it cries out against accepting an inferior state of physical conditioning...a woman should accept her body when she has given her best effort to get in shape and feel good, when by her own power and ability she has made that body the best one it can be."[201] She then asserted that, "we did not create this emphasis on physical appearance; we are merely responding to the world in which we live." According to Averbuch, by "responding" to this "emphasis," "a woman becomes body-defined, she comes into her own sexually. In her personal relationships, she is more likely to act than to be acted upon – and her new physical assertiveness gives her confidence in all other areas of life."[202] Using such rhetoric, she construed attaining a thin, fit body as an example of empowerment; now aware of her physicality, a woman can fully control her own body, actions, and decisions. Instead, this belief only exalted the achievement of an appropriately feminine and herteronormative female body. In the early years of the women's distance running industry, many women began running to lose a few pounds. Now, losing a few pounds had transformed into attaining and maintaining an ideal weight, a more difficult process that defined the "ideal female runner" identity as more elusive.

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[200] Examples of articles that directly addressed weight-loss: Sandra Rosenzweig, "Waving Good-Bye to Fat City," *Women's Sports*, June 1982, 28-33. Dr. Peter Wood with Bob Wischnia, "One the Run, Off the Weight," *Runner's World*, December 1982, 39-40,78-9. Dr. Peter Wood with Kevin Baxter, "Advice for the Overweight Runner," *Runner's World*, September 1983, 54-5, 68. Virginia Aronson, "Effective Weight Control," *Runner's World*, March 1984, 58-65.
[201] Averbuch, 17.
[202] Ibid., 16, 18.

Additionally, the well-known fact that a lower body weight could improve one's running performance implied the need to be thinner; a reality illustrated by elite runner Patti Catalano.[203] Before eventually challenging Grete Waitz's running dominance in the early 1980s, Catalano experienced a stark transformation, abandoning a slothful and unproductive lifestyle to blossom into an overwhelmingly successful marathoner. Losing weight, and then maintaining an appropriate racing weight, represented the linchpin of her newfound success. Catalano exhibited frankness about her weight, with her story not only featured in *Runner's World* and *Women's Sports*, but also *Sports Illustrated* and *People*.[204] According to *People*, "Once she was a nurse's aide and an inveterate barfly, dropping $20 a night on beer, junk food and cigarettes. But beneath her Twinkies-fed chubbiness lurked the body – and soul – of a runner. In just five years Patti Catalano, 28, has transformed herself from a 5'4", 148-pound basket case into America's best woman marathoner..."[205] The appearance of Catalano's story in *People* illustrates the prominent position attaining a specific weight occupied in the "ideal female runner" narrative. This article also demonstrates how a concept that began under the guise of medicinal health became part of the popular, cultural conception of the sport, highlighting how consumption, appearance, and individualism easily intertwined to produce a contradictory definition of a "healthy" and athletic female body.

The Limits of the "Ideal Female Runner" Identity

Nevertheless, the risk of forsaking one's femininity by losing too much weight or becoming too thin emerged as a concern. While eating disorders had yet to become a

[203] Articles on lower body weight/fat and faster running times: Robert Bahr, "Taking Off the Fat of the Land," *Runner's World*, January 1976, 18. Tom Miller, "Everybody is Right," *Runner's World*, July 1976, no page #. Dr. Norbert Sander, "Light at the End of the Run," *Runner's World*, May 1979, 96-9.
[204] Sarah Pileggi, "No. 1 is No. 2...and Closing," *Sports Illustrated*, October 27, 1980, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1123898/index.htm. "Runner's World Exclusive: Newfound Confidence Has Thrust Patti Catalano to the Top of American Marathoning," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 24-30. Ruth Laney, "Make Room for Patti," *Women's Sports*, July 1981, 19-22.
[205] Gail Jennes, "In the Long Run, Patti Catalano Aims to Be the Best in the World," *People*, April 20, 1981, http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20079078,00.html

prominent topic, fears about amenorrhea were heightened.[206] A few years earlier, Joan Ullyot had quickly dismissed the need for alarm about the cessation of menstrual cycles, asserting that a lack of menses represented the body's natural reaction to hard training.[207] She continued to maintain this position, but other medical authorities began to question her theory. The periodicals of the women's distance running industry published this dialogue. While some physicians worried about amenorrhea's impact on bone density, others raised concerns about its implication for fertility.[208] However, just like Ullyot, these doctors lacked substantial medical evidence to support their proposals.

Dr. Mona Shangold aptly noted, "One of the hottest topics of the moment is the subject of menstrual irregularity in athletes. While many non-authorities have spoken up loudly on both sides, most informed gynecologists have pointed out how little we really know and how badly we need good scientific studies in order to settle the controversy."[209] Despite women's distance running's commercial progress, medical research on female runners, as well as other female athletes, remained lacking. Thus, the prevalence with which amenorrhea was discussed in popular running media suggests that this concern functioned to reinforce the boundaries of the female runner identity. While a woman runner should achieve fitness and thinness, she must not lose so much of her feminine fat stores or train so hard that she ceased menstruating, potentially

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[206] Margaret Ray Combs, "By Food Possessed," *Women's Sports*, February 1982, 12-18. Candy Cumming, "By Food Possessed," *Women's Sports*, November 1984, 60. Only these two articles addressed eating disorders and anorexia at length. Yet, even they exalted thinness, exemplified by Cummings suggesting, "My advice to women who think with fat heads is: think thin and act thin to be thin. By focusing on a thin image of yourself rather than on the foods you should or shouldn't be eating, you can avoid this self-defeating obsession."

[207] Evidence of Ullyot sharing her theory in *Runner's World* and *Women's Sports*: Nancy Ziegler, "Joan Ullyot," *Runner's World*, June 1976, 34-6. Joan Ullyot, "Periodic Disturbances," *Women's Sports*, March 1981, 36. Ullyot, "All the Questions Fit to Print," 47. Joan Ullyot, "Amenorrhea: A Sensitive Subject," *Women's Sports*, December 1981, 46-7. Joan Ullyot, "Looking for the Right Explanations," *Women's Sports*, January 1983, 45. Amby Burfoot, "Is Fat a Help in the Long Run?," *Runner's World*, April 1983, 42-3, 72-3. Joan Ullyot, "Sports Medicine: The 3,000-Mile Run," *Women's Sports*, November 1984, 14.

[208] Articles refuting or expressing skepticism about Ullyot's theory: Anne Loucks, "Cessation of Periods: Cause for Concern," *Women's Sports*, September 1981, 6-7. Anne Loucks, "Mailbox: The Debate Continues," *Women's Sports*, March 1982, 58. Karen Kotoske, "Amenorrhea Update," *Women's Sports*, May 1982, 50. "Subject: Amenorrhea," *Women's Sports*, March 1983, 44. Michael Parrish, "Exercising to the Bone," *Women's Sports*, April 1983, 25-9. Nancy Clark, "Clark on Diet and Nutrition," *Runner's World*, September 1984, 138. Nancy Clark, "Clark on Diet and Nutrition," *Runner's World*, November 1984, 114.

[209] Shangold, "The Woman Runner: Her Body, Her Mind, Her Spirit,"34-36.

threatening her ability to bear children. Concerns about amenorrhea also highlight how the female runner body now occupied a central place in the sport's narrative. The majority of attention to the body related to one's external appearance, but the more intimate, internal workings of the female body were discussed as well.

In contrast to concerns about forsaking one's female biology through running, warnings also emerged about the danger of acquiring too desirable of an "ideal female runner" body. As the number of female runners rapidly proliferated, fears about sexual harassment and assault became a legitimate concern. In dialogue about this issue, women runners often received blame for attacks. In turn, they were considered responsible for preventing future assaults. As national-class runner and women's running consultant Sharon Barbano told the *New York Times*, "Women often cause their own problems. Even in the daytime, incidents can happen to them if they go alone to desolate areas, if they wear tight, see-through clothes."[210] Apparently, the fit bodies and short shorts necessary to achieving the "ideal female runner" identity proved too enticing to some lonely and disturbed males. In other words, a woman should not look too sexy while running.

Additionally, the empowerment women purportedly experienced while running became a limited luxury. According to the *Times*, "Ironically, it is those qualities that make running appealing to so many people – the introspection it promotes, the sense of freedom to travel at will on unchartered paths, the liberation from binding clothing – that also present hazards."[211] Within the media of the women's distance running industry, *Runner's World* most often addressed this issue. The magazine, like Barbano, primarily instructed women not to provoke such aggressive reactions or take for granted their right to run. Even when *Runner's World* asked a psychiatrist to theorize about the mindsets of assaulting males, his conclusions led to the proclamation that, "The woman

[210] Nadine Brozan, "Female Runners: Staying Out of Harm's Way," *New York Times*, June 1, 1980, 54.
[211] Ibid.

runner's problem, perhaps, is simply that she thinks like a woman and not enough like prey."[212]

Each time the *Runner's World* published information on verbal, physical, or sexual assaults, they received impassioned feedback from readers.[213] Responding to an earlier woman's complaint about verbal abuse, reader Joseph Castillo wrote,

> It seems to me there is a direct, measurable relationship between the number of hoots, whistles and comments (including leers) and the display – intentional or not – of sexuality. I approve of and encourage female runners, but greatly disapprove of some of the revealing outfits worn at inappropriate times...As an older runner with many years of observing female runners and the reactions thereto, it is obvious to me that this 'problem' is more controllable to females...[214]

Unsurprisingly, Castillo provoked responses from an overwhelming number of female runners, an amount so large that the magazine decided to publish an additional in-depth article on verbal and sexual threats. Reader Mary Levine's response to Castillo exemplifies the tone of the multiple letters published. She wrote,

> As a female runner with a relatively good body, I really resent your remarks of 'minimizing the display' of the female physique...Why should I bow down a man's opinion because he can't control his own thoughts? I need all the encouragement I can get. Would you suggest that Grete Waitz and Mary Decker wear baggy sweat shirts and pants? Don't be ridiculous![215]

Foremost, Levine's response demonstrates that individual women refused to believe that they deserved the blame for any type of abuse. Her attitude suggests that women runners had expectations about their right to run freely, ideas that conformed to the individualist, liberationist ethos of the women's distance running industry. Levine also endorsed the primary ideology of the second stage of the women's distance running industry, achieving a "good body" through the sport. She used her achievement of a "good body" to legitimate her right to run, with the other letters published in *Runner's*

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[212] Dick Pietschmann, "Harassment on the Run," *Runner's World*, February 1983, 26-30, 64-8.
[213] *Runner's World* articles on assault: Michael Pickering, "Women on the Defense: Basic Self-Defense for Women Runners," *Runner's World*, October 1979, 108-12. William Dunnett, "First Line of Defense," *Runner's World*, June 1980, 67-9. William Dunnett, "The Rape Threat," *Runner's World*, June 1981, 52-5. Name Withheld, "A Runner's World Invaded," *Runner's World*, May 1982, 14.
[214] Joesph R. Castillo, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, March 1981, 112.
[215] Mary Levine, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112.

World evincing that most women also held this belief.[216] Thus, an empowered, individual mindset allowed women to best achieve the "ideal female runner" identity, a scenario that demonstrates how concerns such as amenorrhea or rape did not disrupt the dominant narrative of the industry.

However, these threats would seem to discourage unconverted women from running; nevertheless, more women continued to join the sport. This circumstance suggests that the power of the "ideal female runner" identity prevailed over such fears. The fact that the cultivation of a runner identity trumped the cultivation of one's running ability minimized these concerns. While more women described themselves as "runners," many new women runners did not run regularly or for long distances, two factors contributing to these issues. Even though fears about amenorrhea and rape entered the popular discourse of the women's distance running industry, they did not directly affect the experiences of the majority of "less serious" women runners.

The Relationship between the Conceptions of Recreational and Elite Runners

More subtlety, Mary Levine's letter exposes another important element of the "ideal female runner" narrative - the assumption that average female runners, striving for a "good body," distinctly differed from elites like Waitz or Decker. After the establishment of an Olympic Marathon, this larger goal no longer vicariously united these two groups. Despite the fact that a women's 5K or 10K race had not been added to the Olympic roster, along with other circumstances that demonstrated the limits of women's running equality, the narrative of the second stage of the women's distance running industry privileged individual concerns. [217] Commentating on the magazine's

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[216] Letters echoing the sentiments expressed by Levine: Linda Smith, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112. Sharon Dantzig, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112. Carol Gerard, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112. Susan Skinner, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112. Jean Myers Ryan, "Dear *Runner's World*: Verbal Abuse (Cont.)," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 112. Suzi Stone, "Dear *Runner's World*: Rape Alert," *Runner's World*, August 1981, 112.

[217] An example of the women's running equality: Joan Benoit's 1983 world record later attracted a great deal of scrutiny, since male marathoner turned TV reporter Kevin Ryan ran with Benoit, intending to report on

readership, *Runner's World* editor Bob Anderson noted, "Questionnaires have revealed that our subscribers are interested in improving their running. They want to know what the world-class athletes are doing, but are more interested in their own running."[218]

While the divergence between elites and everyday runners occurred in the running industry at large, this development would have a greater cost for women runners. Since sport has been constructed as masculine realm, the male athlete, regardless of ability or other extenuating factors, inherently can claim legitimacy and respect.[219] For the female athlete, these concepts represent luxuries that sometimes seem impossible to attain. Exceptional, individual elites, above the popular requirements of the sport, were deemed serious athletes. Yet, because the popular conception of the sport, characterized by consumption, appearance, and health, subsumed the competitive reality, the athletic legitimacy of female athletes as a group is limited, thus contributing to subordination of women's sports within the "sport-media-commercial" complex.

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the experience. Officials, however, accused him of pacing her and threatened to invalidate her record. Ryan denied pacing Benoit, noting that he only shared splits with her since she was not wearing a watch. The debate about Benoit's record eventually subsided, but was never fully resolved. As such, the issue of women running with males and receiving unintentional pacing assistance persists to this day. For the majority of major races, women start before men to avoid confronting this issue. In 2011, the IAFF briefly rescinded Paula Radcliffe's 2:15:25 record from the 2003 London Marathon since she ran concurrently with men. The resulting uproar caused the IAFF to decide to let the record stand; yet, the organization declared that all future women's world records must be set in races when women and men are not running concurrently. Lisa Twyman, "TVs Fast-paced Coverage May Have Invalidated Joan Benoit's Record," *Sports Illustrated*, June 27, 1983, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1120975/index.htm. Marlene Cimons, "The Leaders of the Pack," *Runner's World*, February 1984, 56-9. Jere Longman and Juliet Macur, "For Women's Road Records, No Men Allowed," *New York Times*, September 21, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/22/sports/for-womens-road-records-only-women-only-races-will-count.html?_r=0. Vikki Orvice, "Paula Radcliffe bids to keep marathon record," *The Sun*, October 10, 2011, http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/sport/olympics/3864177/Paula-Radcliffe-bids-to-keep-marathon-world-record.html. Associated Press, "Paula Radcliffe keeps her marathon world record in IAAF about-turn," *The Guardian*, November 10, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2011/nov/10/paula-radcliffe-world-marathon-record.

[218] Anderson, "From the Editor," March 1982, 9.

[219] Messner, *Taking the Field*, 66. According to Messner, "Modern sport has clearly been among the most masculine institutions. Extreme sexual divisions of labor have characterized sport's gender regime. From young children's sports organizations through the pros, sport remains one of the most sex-segregated institutions today. Sport's gender regime is also characterized by vastly unequal distributions of power, authority, prestige, and resources between women and men...Because of their historical persistence, the masculine institutional patterns of sport have appeared to many to be natural and immutable."

The Heteronormative Femininity of the "Ideal Female Runner"

Elite runners did occupy an important place in the women's distance running narrative; just not for their running ability. Rather, their personal stories reinforced the industry's messages. Common to the coverage of female athletes, distance runners' gained increased notoriety for their non-running experiences. As noted, elite runner Patti Catalano struggled with her weight, a situation that made her relatable to the many female runners attempting to attain the "ideal female runner" identity. Additionally, Catalano profusely credited her husband Joe with inspiring her transformation. Only after meeting him did Catalano reach her potential as runner. And, as a series of unlucky injuries threatened to jettison her career, Joe helped her regain her peak running form. After interviewing Catalano, *Runner's World* summarized their relationship, suggesting,

> marriage played a major role in Catalano's improvement last year. Her husband Joe she says, should get a lot of credit for her progress. If her words sound a little sentimental in these days of cynicism about the great old institution – well, there's plenty of evidence to back them up. The day after their wedding last May 17, Patti set a new American record for five miles...[220]

Most ostensibly, the emphasis on Catalano's marriage exalts the continued function of heteronormative relationships in the narrative of the women's distance running industry. However, in addition to divorce, the specter of homosexual female athletes seemingly threatened the sport's popularity as well. The women's distance running industry, unsurprisingly, portrayed an increasingly heteronormative image of female runners.[221] While the "ideal female runner" identity implied heterosexuality, the stories of elite runners provided evidence of the femininess of women runners. The

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[220] "*Runner's World* Exclusive: Newfound Confidence Has Thrust Patti Catalano to the Top of American Marathoning," *Runner's World*, May 1981, 24.

[221] Former athlete and coach turned scholar, Pat Griffin discusses the persistence of the lesbian stereotype in women's sports in *Strong Women, Deep Closets*. In her preface, she asserts, "For the most part, women's sports organizations and women athletes and coaches choose to avoid public discussion of lesbians in sport. When they do address these issues, it is with reluctance and great concern for how focusing attention on what they perceive to be a highly controversial topic will affect public relations, corporate sponsorship...and the image of women's sport...The lingering association of women's sports and lesbianism makes many women in sport defensive about their athleticism and insistent on being perceived as heterosexual." Pat Griffin, *Strong Women, Deep Closets – Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport (*Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1998), 3, 54-63, 68-78.

importance of a relationship, as well as an appropriately feminine appearance, illustrates how sexuality and gender became explicitly enshrined in the narrative of the women's distance running industry, a situation best illustrated by middle-distance runner Mary Decker.

Arguably one of the most popular female athletes of the era, Mary Decker symbolized the dominant perception of elite female runners. While Kathrine Switzer, Grete Waitz, and Joan Benoit gained a measure of national notoriety, Decker became a legitimate star. In 1983, she was named *Sports Illustrated's* Sportswoman of the Year.[222] According to *Sports Illustrated's* Kenny Moore, "We [honor her]...for her dramatic double victory in the 1,500 and 3,000 meters in the first World Championships of track and field, in Helsinki; for coming to hold all seven American records from 800 through 10,000 meters; for breaking, over the past two years, seven world records...and for being undefeated in 20 finals..."[223] Yet, as the majority of the content on Decker in both *Sports Illustrated* and the publications associated with the women's distance running industry reveals, her heteronormative image and lifestyle contributed to her receiving such coverage. For example, Moore concluded his justification of Decker's honor by noting, "But we are drawn to her, ultimately, for the jubilant response her running has evoked in us, for being ineffably but indelibly charismatic."[224] Continuing, Moore wrote, "Her

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[222] Decker was only the third women to receive this honor and one of nine female athletes or teams to receive it in the magazine's history. *Sports Illustrated* Sportswomen of the Year: Billie Jean King (1972), Chris Evert (1976), Mary Decker (1983), Mary Lou Reton (1984), Judi Brown and Patti Sheehan (1987; awarded for charity work, six males were also honored), Bonnie Blair (1994), U.S. Women's Soccer Team (1999), Pat Summitt (2011). "Sportsman of the Year," *SI.com*, accessed February 20, 2013, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/magazine/specials/sportsman/archive/index.html. Additionally, Decker was on the magazine's cover on two other occasions, tying her for most appearances by a female athlete. Elenor Barkhorn, "9 Ways Women Get on the Cover of Sports Illustrated," *The Atlantic*, July 20, 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/07/9-ways-women-get-on-the-cover-of-sports-illustrated/242251/. Chuck Modiano, "Beyond Bikinis: Sports Illustrated's Nine New Rules to Land a Cover," *POPSspot: Power, Oppression, and Privilege in Sport*, February 13, 2013, http://www.popsspot.com/2013/02/beyond-bikinis-sports-illustrateds-nine-new-rules-to-land-a-cover/.

[222] Kenny Moore, She Runs and We Are Lifted," *Sports Illustrated*, December 26, 1983, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1121599/index.htm.

[223] Kenny Moore, She Runs and We Are Lifted," *Sports Illustrated*, December 26, 1983, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1121599/index.htm.

[224] Ibid.

hillside house....speaks of a love of order, a congenial domesticity. A visitor is likely to find her sewing pillowcases or mending one of Slaney's [her husband] shirts. There is a warm fire, cushiony furniture and friendly animals."[225]

Moore's description establishes a demonstrably heteronormative scene. The included images bolstered this text. The photo spread in *Sports Illustrated*, as well as those accompanying articles in *Runner's World* and *Women's Sports*, featured posed photographs, such as shots of Decker playing with her cats or admiring her white BMW. Additionally, Decker, like Catalano, profusely credited her support system for aiding her successes. While she had three notable relationships with male athletes and changed high-profile coaches multiple times, her tendency to defer to these male figures remained constant. Speaking of her first husband Ron Tabb, Decker told *Women's Sports*, "I'm a vulnerable person, and he's very supportive. He's somebody I've needed for a long time. Because of him and Dick Brown [her coach], I'm running better and consistently getting stronger, instead of constantly getting hurt."[226] As Moore noted, "Decker, more than any other runner, blooms in partnership with others, with coaches, with close friends, with lovers," a description that verifies the importance of heteronormative desirability for female runners. [227]

However, the words of Zola Budd, who would later receive blame for Decker's tragedy at the 1984 Olympic Games, best captures how Decker represented the epitome of female runner desirability. Referring to Budd, a *Sports Illustrated* article noted, "She admired Decker enormously. Above her bed, back in the Afrikaans town of Bloemfontein, she had kept a picture of her...before the Olympics, she had spoken of Decker, saying, 'It would be wonderful to be so pretty.'"[228] The fact that a world-class

[225] Moore, "She Runs and We Are Lifted."
[226] Tim Wendel, "Fragile: Handle with Care," *Women's Sports*, October 1982, 47.
[227] Moore, "She Runs and We Are Lifted."
[228] Kenny Moore, "Triumph and Tragedy in Los Angeles," *Sports Illustrated*, August 20, 1984, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MinAG1122429/1/index.htm.

runner idolized Decker not for her talent, but from her beauty, reveals the prominence of the "ideal female runner" identity. Countless scholars have analyzed the tendency of the media to privilege attractive, heterosexual appearance in the wider world of women's sports.[229] For example, Dworkin and Wachs have noted, "Popular culture offers women limited access to power by becoming the right kind of object; however, some women are advantaged in developing beauty as capital. In this way, relations of privilege that center around race, class, and sexuality are obfuscated behind 'natural beauty.'"[230] Now, in women's distance running, even if a woman had the socioeconomic means to participate, an inability to fulfill this ideal could limited her engagement. Her exclusion would not occur because she chose not to run, but, even though she ran, her divergence from the popular identity would result in her becoming an unrecognized non-person within the "sport-media-commercial" complex. This privileging contributed to the paradoxical subordination produced by the women's distance running industry. While involvement in the sports still was premised on class, the second stage established more stringent boundaries around gender and sexuality.

The fact that women's distance running did not face accusations of lesbianism highlights the overwhelming success of the heteronomativity of the "ideal female runner" identity, as exemplified by the film *Personal Best*. With *Personal Best*, writer-producer-director Robert Towne aimed to "tell a real story" of women athletes.[231] The movie chronicles the experiences of Chris Cahil, portrayed by Mariel Hemingway, as she strives to make the 1980 Olympic team in the heptathlon. While the movie shows the competitive side of women's track, this narrative proves secondary to the speculation about the Cahil's off-track relationships. As *Women's Sports* notes, "But the centerpiece

[229] Mary Jo Kane and Susan Greendorfer, "The Media's Role in Accomodating and Resisting Stereotyped Images of Women in Sport," in *Women, Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values*, ed. Pamela J. Creedon, 28-44 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994). Cahn. Festle. Heywood and Dworkin. Messner, *Taking the Field*.
[230] Dworkin and Wachs, 175.
[231] Michele Kort, "Acting Athletic," *Women's Sports*, March 1982, 26.

of the story is her relationship over the four years with teammate Tory Skinner...They are variously friends, lovers, bitter competitors and friends again, all within the context of their struggle to gain Olympic berths."[232]

Foremost, the fact that a movie intending to "tell a real story" about female athletes focused on their relationships illustrates how, despite the ambiguous portrayal of Cahil and Skinner's sexuality, *Personal Best* conformed to the narrative of the women's distance running industry. Additionally, at the end of the movie, Cahil's heterosexual relationship with water polo player Denny Stiles appears to represent her future, not a renewed relationship with Skinner. The commentary about the movie further situates it within the confines of the popular conception of women's distance running. Patrice Donnelly, the former Olympic hurdler who portrayed Skinner, asserted her heterosexuality to *Women's Sports*, professing, "Don't get me wrong. I love women, but I'm in love with men...When times are really rough, you're thrown together with this group of women and you have to support each other, and you do love each other – and that doesn't mean you're lesbians."[233] Like the talents of elite women runners, the feelings between Cahil and Skinner represent a temporary, exceptional circumstance made acceptable because of the rigors of world-class competition.

Writing in 1986, Helen Lenskyj's *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, and Sexuality* offers a rare, contemporary critique of the function of femininity in the popular conception of women's sports, which, in turn, permits a more penetrating understanding of the implications of women's distance running's "ideal female runner" identity. Lenskyj asserts, "Femininity is...more than simply an aesthetic; it is the concrete manifestation of women's subordinate status."[234] She argues, "femininity in sport militates against authentic expressions of physical and mental strength; it requires artifice, a deliberate

[232] Ibid.
[233] Susan Brenneman, "In Pursuit of Patrice," *Women's Sports,* July 1982, 30.
[234] Lenskyj, 13.

effort to convey ease, grace and charm."[235] Although a valid point of analysis, unquestionably endorsing this viewpoint is just as problematic as insisting upon femininity. The assumption that all female athletes emphasize their heterosexuality and femininity to meet media and commercial standards has contributed to women not attaining respect in sports culture. Lenskyj may shirk at the feminine displays of Mary Decker and other female athletes, but this reaction serves to further limit the athletic personalities available to women.

Instead of reactively criticizing Decker, it is necessary to question whether her popular image is a byproduct of an obligatory feeling, an effort to attract media attention, or her genuine personality. As Dworkin and Wachs note, an "almost complete absence of any acknowledgement of a range of sexualities" characterizes sport media.[236] Recognizing this range requires that sports media accept women who do not meet the heteronormative ideal; conversely, scholars must realize that some women desire to act feminine, and these women should not have to rationalize their behavior in order to avoid criticism. Both of these situations reveal how the popular emphasis on traditional femininity in women's distance running, as well as other sports, contributes to the perpetuation of women's subordinate status.

Conclusion

In sum, the second stage of the women's distance running industry produced an exclusive and consumable "ideal female runner" identity founded upon a certain appearance, an individualistic focus, an attention to health, and an emphasis on heteronormativity. Again, it proves useful to realize that many women probably appreciated the feminization of the sport, as it endowed them with the confidence to freely practice a physical activity for the first time. For instance, at the beginning of 1983, *Women's Sports* noted that, "housewives, grandmothers, teenagers and career

[235] Ibid., 143.
[236] Dworkin and Wachs, 61.

women took up sports and fitness in record numbers. For many who'd previously felt they could do nothing physical, starting that jogging program...literally changed their lives."[237] By carving a safe, welcoming space, the women's distance running industry offered a new, valuable experience for women that should not be dismissively trivialized. Along with the expansion of women's running gear, Avon and Bonne Bell continued to extend their running networks, while Nine West, L'Eggs, and Colgate also established races.[238]

Nevertheless, these meaningful gains were accompanied by subtle subordination. The promotion of the "ideal female runner" identity and a female-specific space in distance running ultimately portrayed all women runners as consumers of the sport motivated by different, and thus inferior, goals. This circumstance seemingly served as a legitimate excuse for women's secondary status in the "sport-media-commercial" complex, where popular perception now preceded athletic reality. Furthermore, presuming and exacerbating the sport's socioeconomic foundations, the consumptive impulse of the second stage of the women's distance running industry added barriers premised on strict fashion, body, gender, and sexuality requirements to the sport's initial, yet still unrecognized, class barrier, a process that helped to strengthen the paradox of women's sports.

Thus, situating the "ideal female runner" identity in context of larger developments in sport and society will provide a more complete perspective of the significance of the women's distance running industry. For instance, in the fall of 1982, *Runner's World* featured an ad for a special issue of *Fit* magazine, its sister publication, titled *She*. The advertisement noted, "*She* is a single special issue of the most compelling articles for the woman making an investment in her future...She speaks to women on subjects like fitness and health, fashion and chic...and introduces features on...the power

[237] Lisa Schmidt, "The 2nd Annual Year-End Wrap-Up," *Women's Sports*, January 1983, 12.
[238] Averbuch, 198.

of women's roles in today's fast-paced society."[239] Narrated like a soap opera, the remainder of the ad described the triumphs and trials of the fictional Jackson Sloane as she aimed to succeed in the high-stakes society of the early 1980s. Although exaggerative, the content of the *She* advertisement begins to reveal how the "ideal female runner" identity of the second stage of the women's distance running industry connected to larger developments. In this era, the desire to project a fit, attractive body pervaded broader American culture, epitomized by the so-called "fitness craze." Additionally, this emphasis particularly became associated with a certain class of Americans that resembled *She's* Jackson Sloane – young, urban professionals. As such, a broader consideration of the "ideal female runner" identity, with its privileging of appearance, individualism, health, and heteronormativity, will provide an improved understanding of the subordinate status of all female athletes in the "sport-media-commercial" complex.

[239] *Fit* magazine, "*Fit* Magazine Presents: *She*," advertisement, September 1982, *Runner's World*, 60.

CHAPTER THREE

"You can never be too thin or too rich.":

The Confluence of the Yuppie and "Ideal Female Runner" Identities

Introduction

To celebrate her role in the achievement of a women's Olympic Marathon, *Women's Sports* featured Kathrine Switzer on the cover of the April 1981 issue, accompanied by an in-depth profile. A detailed account of the trials and triumphs she experienced throughout the long but steady effort to establish the historic race composed the bulk of the article, but author Lesley Visser also discussed Switzer's new lifestyle. As mentioned, by the late 1970s Switzer had abandoned her budding running career to devote herself fully to Avon's promotional efforts for women's running. By the early 1980s, Switzer had climbed the ladder at the company, becoming an executive within their women's sports division. In this piece, Visser began by describing Switzer's typical day:

> Katherine Switzer sits on the edge of a couch drinking the first of too many coffees. It is nine a.m. in New York City, and she is at her first appointment of the day...Switzer has about five such meetings every day – unless she is out of town on business, which is 50 to 60 percent of the time – plus 35 phone calls, six cab rides, two speeches and an occasional luncheon. Through it all, her gold jewelry and string of pearls hang perfectly and the designer jacket does not go limp.[240]

Visser continued to lavish praise on Switzer, describing her as "the dream combination – a sophisticated, astute businesswoman with an internationally acclaimed athletic background."[241] Attempting to explain Switzer's success, she noted that "Switzer is a master at squeezing each second's worth of time from a minute," and that she "rarely

[240] Lesley Visser, "Kathrine the Great," *Women's Sports*, April 1981, 22.
[241] Ibid.

takes more than half the weekend off and considers sleep 'a tremendous waste of time.'"[242]

Nonetheless, Switzer still made time for running, often using cancelled lunch appointments to squeeze in an extra five miler so that she could maintain her "excellent shape."[243] According to Visser, running remained a regular part of Switzer's life because she believed in the motto, "You can never be too thin or too rich."[244] This motto captures how her relationship to the sport had changed since that fateful day in Boston in 1967 when, then a twenty year-old aspiring journalist, she unintentionally ignited the women's distance running movement. While her work with Avon concerned expanding and enhancing women's opportunities in sports, she no longer spent her weeks training for and running in marathons. Instead, running had become a means to a different, more personal end, a desirable figure. Switzer suggested, "I can't really call myself a runner anymore, but I manage to jog about 30 miles each week. Sometimes I'll jog before work, sometimes in the afternoon. It all depends on when I find the time."[245] Now, a corporate life characterized by frenetic busyness, boundless ambition, and economic prestige best described the life of Kathrine Switzer. A description that closely mirrors the stereotypical yuppie identity.

The Yuppie Identity

At the close of 1984, *Newsweek* labeled the past year, "The Year of the Yuppie." While the term had begun to enter the popular American lexicon over the course of the early 1980s, *Newsweek's* proclamation seemingly validated the existence of this often vaguely defined class of Americans.[246] The partially satiric *The Yuppie Handbook*, published earlier in 1984, described a yuppie with the following designations,

[242] Ibid., 25.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] "The Year of the Yuppie," *Newsweek*, December 31, 1984, 16.

> [a] person of either sex who meets the following criteria: 1) resides in or near one of the major cities; 2) claimed to be between the ages of 25 and 45; 3) lives on aspirations of glory, prestige, recognition, fame, social status, power, money, or any and all combinations of the above; 4) anyone who brunches on the weekend or works out after work.[247]

Newsweek also outlined the traits and habits the stereotypical exemplified – self-absorption, ambition, constant busyness, residence in an urban area, a primacy on climbing the professional ladder, the desire to make a lot of money, the tendency to spend a lot of money, a penchant for gourmet cuisine, vacationing in exotic locales, coupling with those of a like mindset, and political indifference, among an amalgamation of other attitudes.[248] However, scholars of the era remained skeptical about the reality of a discernible yuppie population.[249] As Russell W. Belk has suggested in regard to the yuppie phenomenon, "it is possible that popular press coverage of a lifestyle legitimates it, makes it a concrete symbolic pattern to emulate, and hastens its adoption."[250] Accordingly, *Newsweek* declared, "if Yuppies change the world, it will be through the force of example, not weight of numbers."[251]

An inclination toward physical fitness also represented a foundational yuppie characteristic. As *The Yuppie Handbook* declared, "Not since the ancient Greeks has there been a culture so preoccupied with physical fitness."[252] *Newsweek* highlighted a survey that suggested that sixty-six percent of yuppies, defined as twenty-five to thirty-nine year-olds making at least $40,000 a year in professional or managerial positions, were "involved in physical fitness," compared to thirty-one percent for the population at

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[247] Marissa Piesman and Marilee Hartley, *The Yuppie Handbook: The State-of-the Art Manual for Young Urban Professionals* (New York: Long Shadow Books, 1984), 12.
[248] Ibid., 14-31.
[249] For example, scholar John Hammond suggested Yuppies were a complete media figment, while Jerry Savells predicts Yuppies will become a powerful force over the next half century. Additionally, marketing researchers John Burnett and Alan Bush completed an analytical study of professed Yuppies that both confirmed and refuted the popular stereotypes. John L. Hammond, "Yuppies," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50 (1986): 487-501. Jerry Savells, "Who are the 'Yuppies'? A Popular View," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 27 (1986): 234-41. John Burnett and Alan Bush, "Profiling the Yuppies," *Journal of Advertising Research* (April/May 1986): 27-35.
[250] Russell W. Belk, "Yuppies as Arbiters of the Emerging Consumption Style," *Advances in Consumer Research* (1986): 515.
[251] "The Year of the Yuppie," 17.
[252] Piesman and Hartley, 16.

large.[253] In particular, yuppies became associated with running. *The Yuppie Handbook* proclaimed, "Orthodox Yuppies are up bright and early Sunday morning for even more intense than usual exercise. 'The extra mile' to a Yuppie means at least five more than weekdays."[254] Other references to running pervade the satirical text. For instance, a pseudo-guide to urban events listed a Mini Marathon, while the description of the most desirable yuppie housing complex included "running machines on every floor."[255] On why an Akita represented the perfect pet for a yuppie, the authors insisted that the breed made "the perfect jogging companion."[256] The authors noted that yuppies should expect to spend one percent of their income on "running shoe maintenance."[257] They also proposed that Adida deserved consideration as a unique name for future children, asking, "Who says your child can't remind you of your favorite sport?"[258] While *The Yuppie Handbook* intended to mock the superficiality of yuppies, it insightfully highlights the popular perception of the values and habits associated with this group of Americans, including their engagement with fitness.

The increasing prevalence of fit yuppies coincided with the national fitness boom, with those that conformed to the yuppie identity driving this focus on physical fitness. In late 1981, *Time* magazine announced the dawning of the "Fitness Craze," devoting an entire issue to this supposedly new preoccupation. The desire to "purchase" a better body spurred the American engagement with physical fitness, thus reflecting the consumptive impulse of the second stage of the women's distance running industry. *Time* estimated that the entire fitness industry, which now included diet and nutrition products, training equipment, and membership to health clubs, approximated thirty

[253] "The Year of the Yuppie," 16.
[254] Piesman and Hartley, 69.
[255] Ibid., 28-9.
[256] Ibid., 48.
[257] Ibid., 87
[258] Ibid., 99.

billion.[259] According to the magazine, "On jogging tracks, in diet clinics and health restaurants...a wholesale attempt to transform the body is avidly purchased with VISA and MasterCard."[260] While *Time* did not probe the class foundations of the fitness movement, introducing the article with a profile of an executive working out at Xerox's $700,000 Corporate Fitness Center made its socioeconomic stratification evident.[261] An additional *Time* feature on fitness, published in 1983, further elucidated the connection between physical fitness and affluence. Claiming "Make Way for the New Spartans," the article described the East Bank Club in Chicago, with its "clientele of well-to-do, professionals whose Jaguars, Mercedes, and BMWs crowd the underground garage."[262] In *Time's* estimation, running, as well as other forms of aerobic exercise, had become a necessary obligation for ambitious women and men, with the article claiming, "In the fitness game, appearances are deceivingly important. Looking good, whether for love or money, is the national aim."[263] Together, *Time's* content revealed that, "improving the body has become an enduring, and perhaps, historically significant national obsession."[264]

While Switzer would likely shirk at the yuppie label, her lifestyle and attitudes certainly suggest that she embodied many aspects of this identity. As illustrated by an examination of the "ideal female runner" identity, the popular image of women runners also conformed to the yuppie stereotype. This apparent convergence does not mean that all female runners were yuppies; however, a real and potentially significant parallel existed between the popular perceptions of these identities. Analyzing the "ideal female runner" identity in concert with some of the most prominent traits of yuppyism will provide an improved understanding of the paradox of women's sport by extending an

[259] J.D. Reed, "America Shapes Up," *Time*, November 2, 1981, 95.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid., 94.
[262] Michael Walsh, "Make Way for the New Spartans," *Time*, September 19, 1983, 90.
[263] Reed, 97.
[264] Ibid., 95.

understanding of this identity outside of the realm of sport. Much of the existing scholarship on women's sports only cursorily references larger society and culture. In turn, such scholarship has remained ghettoized, separated from the larger historical narrative. Therefore, contextualizing the women's distance running industry with the yuppie phenomenon represents a small but needed effort to offer an expanded perspective of the factors behind women's seemingly perpetual subordination in sports, despite significant progress and promise.

The Importance of Identity in Late Twentieth Century America

An emphasis on cultivating and projecting a specific identity characterized the cultures of women's distance running and yuppism. For both, consumption served as the primary means for attaining and displaying these specific identities, suggesting an increased valuation of consumptive identities in contemporary American society. In her influential tome, *A Consumer's Republic*, historian Lizabeth Cohen argues that consumption represents the defining feature of postwar America. Among the other developments she chronicles, Cohen describes the emergence of market segmentation in postwar America, a development crucial to the later manifestation of the popular female runner and yuppie identities. She begins by referencing ideas advanced by Pierre Martineau in the mid-1950s, who argued that market segmentation conferred "symbolic value" on one's purchases.[265] Cohen then contends that, "As lifestyle usurped the more traditional class markers of income, and even education and occupation, what consumers bought...became indicators of their class identity. Consumer choices, moreover, reconfirmed individuals' membership in a class community."[266] Continuing, she notes that "modern-day marketers" began "identify[ing] clusters of customers with

[265] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 294.
[266] Ibid., 310.

distinctive ways of life and then set[ting] out to sell them idealized lifestyles constructed around commodities."[267]

Cohen recognizes this development as an "interactive process," asserting, "What it meant for members of subcultures to be subjected to appeals from mainstream marketers is complicated. In some ways, their attractiveness as markets granted them legitimacy, even authority...Segmenting the mass market thus helped democratize it, allowing subcultures to shape markets around their own priorities."[268] Yet, she counters this remark with the realization that, "when the marketplace geared itself to the unique cultures of segments, groups...who often had defined themselves in reaction to the mainstream were now drawn further into the commercial market, and could at times be co-opted by it, even when they brought their own meanings to the exchange."[269] This "interactive process" of market segmentation and the "symbolic value" of consumption describes the situation of the women's distance running industry. Women's distance running began as a radical challenge to the sport's norms. But, the sports' promoters soon sought commercial visibility in order to establish firmly the legitimacy of the sport, with the products marketed by the sport's corporate partners conferring a specific, idealized identity to consumers. This process, however, resulted in the popular image of the sport becoming increasingly divorced from the athletic reality, thus aligning with Cohen's caveat.

Finally, Cohen suggests that, with the dawn of the Reagan administration, the "Consumer's Republic" began to transform into the "Consumerization of the Republic," where relations in political, social, and cultural arenas reflected marketplace relations, a trend also evident through the "sport-media-commercial" complex.[270] Cohen's "Consumerization of the Republic" provides evidence of an American social context

[267] Ibid., 299.
[268] Ibid., 309.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid., 396.

receptive to an emphasis on a consumable identity. In regards to the emergence of the yuppie identity, Barbara Ehrenreich offers a thorough examination in *Fear of Falling*, an analysis of the middle-class in postwar America. She argues that the yuppie "stereotype plays an important role in our chronicle of emerging class awareness."[271] She then asserts, "With the image of the yuppie, the normally invisible, normally 'normal' middle class finally emerged in the mass media as a distinct group with its own ambitions, habitats, and tastes in food and running gear."[272] Ehrenreich also affirms the use of "consumption to establish status," noting that yuppies, as well as other middle-class individuals, used their purchasing power to "provide...class cues."[273] In particular, an invigorated attention to a range of upscale products, "reflected the growing middle-class zeal to distinguish itself from the less fortunate, and at the same time it made such distinctions almost mandatory for anyone hoping to inhabit the social and occupational world of the successful and 'upscale.'"[274]

Ehrenreich also recognizes the function of fitness in the yuppie ethic, asserting that "in the middle class there is another anxiety: a fear of inner weakness, of growing soft, of failing to strive, of losing discipline and will."[275] The "appearance of work, even in leisure" combatted this fear.[276] Likewise, sociologist Benita Eisler notes that social mobility and maintenance "lies in rigorous self-improvement."[277] In *Class Act*, she proclaims, "You are your best asset...The one whose value, with effort, can always be enhanced."[278] Furthermore, Ehrenreich contends that "fitness was exuberantly proto-capitalist," noting that fitness "was consumption made strenuous and morally

[271] Barabara Ehrenreich. *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 199.
[272]Ibid.
[273] Ibid., 14.
[274] Ibid., 228.
[275]Ehrenreich, 15.
[276] Ibid., 231.
[277] Benita Eisler, *Class Act: America's Last Dirty Secret* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), 294.
[278] Ibid.

renewing...in which the hedonism of consumption could be confronted head-on and vanquished with the slow burn of pyruvic acid in the muscles."[279]

Ehrenreich's, as well as Eisler's, contentions about the consumptive, middle-class character of fitness support those advanced by scholars of sport and fitness. In *Body Panic*, Shari Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs ask, "Why is fitness more appealing to consumer culture than sports? How is continued consumption facilitated by the shift in focus from sports to fitness?"[280] The scholars answer their questions by asserting that, "Fitness needs to be understood as a product of the commodified construction of the self..."[281] Continuing, they argue that "the appearance of the fit body, rather than the reality of fitness, has become a critical determinant of social status and a factor that is self-policed by individuals as they negotiate social positions."[282] Relatedly, applying the theories of Bourdieu, Jennifer Smith Maguire posits that "the middle-class is assumed to be disposed towards investing in the body-as-symbol, or what Bourdieu calls the 'body-for-others,' making them natural consumers for dieting, cosmetic and exercise fads, health foods, and self-help manuals."[283] She concludes that "health (a vital appearance) and beauty (an attractive appearance) are valuable bodily resources to be managed and developed."[284] These assertions not only recall the emphases of the "ideal female runner" identity, but also describe the function of fitness in yuppie culture.

In conjunction, this array of scholarship provides a historical, sociological, and theoretical foundation for analyzing the intertwined relationship between the women's distance running industry and yuppyism, specifically the yuppie fascination with fitness. As suggested by the broad scholarship of Cohen, and then supported by the works of Ehrenreich, Eisler, Dworkin and Wachs, and Smith Maguire, the cultivation of a desired

[279] Ehrenreich, 234.
[280] Dworkin and Wachs, 155.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid., 12.
[283] Smith Maguire, 53.
[284] Ibid.

identity defines the middle-class experience in the late twentieth century United States. Yet, how does the relationship between the "ideal female runner" and yuppie identities impact women's place in the "sport-media-commercial" complex of America sports culture? As noted, Kathrine Switzer epitomized both of these identities. First, she possessed the "ideal female runner" identity, maintaining a regular running regimen so that she could enjoy a thin and fit figure. She also exemplified many of the harbingers of yuppyism. Due to an impressive and ambitious work ethic, she swiftly advanced through Avon's corporate ranks. Now at the top, she relentlessly devoted herself to her job, accepting the hectic busyness as part of her daily life. Of course, Switzer was not typical. The majority of women runners and yuppies did not embody so perfectly these popular identities. Yet, in an era where popular perception possessed ever-increasing importance, the exceptional image projected by Switzer serves as an ideal anchor for an examination of these interconnected identities and their implication for women's place in sports culture.

Runners and "Transcendental Acquisition"

However, it first proves useful to further demonstrate the confluence between the runner and yuppie identities of early 1980s America. In late 1981, *Runner's World* editor Bob Anderson celebrated the magazine's increasingly affluent readership. He reported an average income of $29,512, with over 43% of readers possessing a college degree. In regard to careers, Anderson noted that "23 percent of our readers are professional/technical...21.5 percent are managers/administrators...and 44.5 percent are professionals/managers."[285] This running population profile vastly differs from the original cohort of distance runners. Describing the character of the sport before the running boom, running's unofficial godfather George Sheehan noted, "The typical runner 10 years ago was someone who had never stopped running and who was,

[285] Bob Anderson, "From the Editor," *Runner's World,* November 1981, 9.

therefore, usually someone who had been in a club, had not gotten into a professional career...and was loner...The people that I ran with worked mainly blue-collar jobs. I remember my first Boston...It was an ethnic activity..."[286] Comparing the sport's origins to its current manifestation, he continued,

> The runners were almost 180 degrees from what they are now....Back in those days, too, most of the runners were quite good. In the current age of running we have people of all abilities...We still have the loners, but they are joined by many people who...view the marathon, for instance, as a challenge. Then we also have people entering running because the races are such 'happenings'...We never had that before, either. We'd show up, run our race, and disappear back into the woods.[287]

Sheehan's comments prefaced *Runner's World* comprehensive effort to capture the "American Runner" in 1984. The data collected particularly focused on runners' consumption habits. This survey only included those considered serious runners, meaning those that ran at least once a week. At this date, the population of runners numbered an estimated 30 million. According to *Runner's World's* criteria, however, only 4.3 million Americans were serious runners. This divergence again reveals the supposed importance of projecting a specific identity in contemporary American society. *Runner's World* strict definition of a "real" runner represents an effort to reclaim the exclusivity of this designation, with little regard for the sport's history. While all persons were welcome to participate in the sport, only the truly dedicated could confidently claim the label. This circumstance aligns with Anderson's exclamation from the close of 1981, when he suggested, "Running has always been a sport that appeals to active, ambitious, involved people. We've always known our readers are well-educated and intelligent, that many are upwardly mobile, and that they have jobs among the various professions."[288]

As evidenced by *Runner's World* 1983 cover debates, the assumption prevailed that the less serious, and often female, runner composed the consumptive strand of the

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[286] George Sheehan quoted in "Who is the American Runner?," *Runner's World*, August 1984, 49.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Anderson, "From the Editor," November 1981, 9.

running population. Yet, these serious runners practiced a high degree of conspicuous consumption. Using an index of one hundred to track how the consumption patterns of the "American Runner" diverged from the national norm, the survey highlighted the great variety of high-quality products frequently purchased by runners.[289] For instance, the magazine inquired, "How many of you bought an attaché/briefcase in the last year? A goodly number, no doubt, since you are probably in the professional/managerial group. The index is 159."[290]

A plethora of other questions demonstrate that the consumption patterns of runners not only confirmed their class identity, but also further highlight their confluence with the yuppie stereotype. Reflective of the yuppie tendency to purchase "affordable luxuries," runners likely had purchased answering machines, automatic dishwashers, barbeque equipment, separate freezers, and slow cookers within the past year.[291] Similarly, the survey asked, "Where do runners rank as far as home entertainment equipment and software goes? Very high in almost every category checked."[292] Runners also consumed a finer variety of spirits and libations, with ales, imported beer, sherry, vermouth, and tequila all indexing at over 200.[293] These results, among others, led *Runner's World* to conclude, "The American runner is upscale in virtually every way: education, income, career, purchasing power. The more 'serious' the runner, the higher the numbers become for all these upscale categories."[294] In their "The Year of the Yuppie" issue, Newsweek suggested that yuppies occupied "a state of

[289] "Who is the American Runner?," 49. The magazine offered a brief description of the index method used for data analysis: "Indexes are useful for showing how different a group is in its characteristics or behavior from the population as a whole. A national average is assigned an index of 100. Deviations up or down from 100 mean relatively greater or lesser concentrations of the characteristic or behavior in the group compared."
[290] Ibid., 160.
[291] Ibid., 168. In an article for *The New Republic*, Michael Kinsley, contextualizing the upscale, materialism of yuppies with the downward mobility of the American middle-class as a whole, suggested that yuppies excessively spent on affordable luxuries, rather than investments that were unaffordable luxuries, such as a home. Michael Kinsley, "Arise, Ye Yuppies!," *The New Republic*, July 9, 1984, 41.
[292] "Who is the American Runner?," 168.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.

Transcendental Acquisition."[295] As this data reveals, runners also drifted toward a similar state.

The Yuppification of the Runner Population

However, the markers of Yuppie culture were not just consumed by runners. Upscale companies also aggressively marketed their products to this subset of the population. The relationship between runner consumption habits and the marketing of such products relates to the previously referenced postulation of Lizabeth Cohen, who considers the emergence of market subcultures an "interactive process, with potential customers exerting decisive influences on the marketing field, helping to convince marketers that groups with increasingly independent identities offered new opportunities for cultivation as segments."[296] As demonstrated by the efforts of Kathrine Switzer during the early years of the women's distance running industry, women runners sought partnerships with corporations and these corporations responded, producing an array of products to meet the desires of these sportswomen while also benefitting their coffers. Adopting and altering the example of the women's distance running industry, the running culture at large would establish a symbiotic relationship with a variety of upscale brands in the early 1980s.

In 1984, *Runner's World*'s comprehensive survey noted,

> The Running Boom hit in 1977-78 with an impact seldom seen on the American scene...Within a few years, however, it became obvious that the American mania for running ran deeper than a fad. This realization was followed by curiosity. Major American companies saw the runner as a new a very specific consumer group...a very upscale, desirable consumer group.[297]

Women's Sports highlighted a similar development. Editor Amy Rennert attested, "Five years ago most corporations ignored women's sports. The Women's Sports Foundation's budget for programming exceeds $600,000. Five years ago it operated on less than

[295] "The Year of the Yuppie," 19.
[296] Cohen, 308.
[297] "Who is the American Runner?," 51.

$70,000."[298] She added, "Five years ago it was difficult to convince even athletic-gear companies to buy ads, today fans of Women's Sports includes such national nonathletic advertisers as Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly Clark, and Ocean Spray."[299]

Rennert's final point proves especially perceptive. The stark change in advertising content evident in both *Women's Sports* and *Runner's World* validates the mutual commercial interaction that occurred between runners and the companies associated with yuppie culture. Instead of a smattering of ads for running shoes, sporting goods stores, and obscure fitness products, both *Women's Sports* and *Runner's World* featured a plethora of ads from upscale, national brands. In particular, 1981 seemed to mark the year of transition. From this date forward, *Runner's World* frequently featured ads for American Express, tech companies such as Atari and Sony, imported beers like Heineken, Molson, and Dos Equis, top-shelf alcohol such as Kahlua and fine wines, gourmet foods, automobiles from Mitsubishi, Renault, and Jeep, clothier Banana Republic, and more.[300] Additionally, these companies often incorporated fitness themes or images in their ads, further highlighting their effort to target this market. As *Time* noted, "Madison Avenue, too, has been working out. Bodies in gym shorts and leotards now decorate ads for everything from soft drinks to cigarettes."[301] Destinations, such as the Houstonian Hotel and Palm Springs, also aimed to specifically

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[298] Amy Rennert, "From the Editor," *Women's Sports*, January 1984, 4.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Examples of advertisements for high-end products in *Runner's World*: American Express, "Do You Know These People?," advertisement, September 1982, *Runner's World*, 80-1. Atari, "Atari Brings the Computer Age Home," advertisement, November 1981,*Runner's World*, 21-2. Sony Walkman, "They're built on the same principle, but one sounds a lot better," advertisement, July 1983, *Runner's World*, 73. Heineken, "Come to think of it. I'll have a Heineken," advertisement, September 1982, *Runner's World*, 67. Molson, "Thirsting for the best of Canada? Make sure it's Molson," advertisement, September 1981, *Runner's World*, 121. Dos Equis, "Your kind of taste," advertisement, June 1983, *Runner's World*, 26. Kahlua, "mmmm," advertisement, December 1981, *Runner's World*, 11. Bolla Wines, "You Can Always Trust the Taste of A Bolla," advertisement, August 1982, *Runner's World*, 3. Gourmet Adventures, "Gourmet Adventures," advertisement, March 1984, *Runner's World*, 39. Mitsubishi, "Challenger. From Mitsubishi, Master Car Builders of Japan," advertisement, January 1982, *Runner's World*, 3. Renault American Motors, "When There is a Car from a Country that Just Built the World's Fastest Train...," advertisement, November 1981, *Runner's World*, back cover. Jeep, "Introducing Thoroughly Luxurious 4-Wheel Drive," advertisement, February 1984, *Runner's World*, 58-9. Banana Republic, "Banana Republic," advertisement, April 1984, *Runner's World*, 101.
[301] Walsh, 92.

attract the supposedly over-stressed, affluent runner crowd, with the Houstonian claiming, "We'll dazzle you with footwork," while the Palm Springs ad proclaimed, "Run away from it all."[302]

In particular, Perrier epitomized marketing success in the running and fitness industry, with the French mineral water company preceding the influx of upscale, lifestyle brands into this market. In 1977, the company became a sponsor of the New York Marathon. [303] In the fall of 1981, after occasionally advertising in *Runner's World* over the previous few years, the company became a monthly advertiser.[304] According to *Runner's World*,

> Perrier, the mineral-water concern, entered the American market late, but introduced itself early to sports and road running. According to one industry source, Perrier's sales in the first year of its involvement with sponsoring road races was $15.2 million. After three years of local sports promotion – of which running was by far the largest component – sales rose to $112 million.[305]

Thus, one of the supposed paragons of yuppyism asserted its foothold in the American market through the sponsorship of running events. This development not only highlights the relationship between these movements, but also the real, consumer impact of running culture. In the early 1980s, a growing number of companies imitated Perrier's strategy. Many companies, such as Natural Light, Dannon, and Pepsi, saw race sponsorship as an intriguing marketing venture due to the belief that "people tend to respond more favorably to an active, participatory campaign than to a passive one."[306]

As Avon, Bonne Bell, and the other leading companies of the women's distance running industry had discovered in the late 1970s, race sponsorship not only allowed participants to interact more tangibly with a brand, but also resulted in additional publicity, with media photos of the event often containing the company's logo. In the

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[302] Houstonian Hotel, "We'll dazzle you with our footwork," advertisement, February 1983, *Runner's World*, 32. Palm Springs, "Run away from it all," advertisement, November 1983, *Runner's World*, 112.
[303] Pamela Cooper, *The American Marathon* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 151.
[304] Perrier, "It's Only Natural," advertisement, September 1981, *Runner's World*, 3.
[305] Bill Dunnett, "Advertisers Keep Pace," *Runner's World*, February 1982, 50.
[306] Ibid.

words of Kathrine Switzer, "Race promotion is extremely cost effective. Avon is invariably mentioned in our sponsored races in print and TV. This exposure far outweighs what comparable time would cost in paid advertising."[307] For instance, Pepsi, following the blueprint of Avon and Bonne Bell, would establish the nation's largest race series, with 150 races in thirty-nine states that included more than 300,000 runners.[308]

Therefore, embodying the function of media in the triumvirate of the "sport-media-commercial" complex, both *Runner's World* and *Women's Sports* became purveyors of a fitness identity founded upon the consumptive tastes of the upper middle-class, an identity epitomized by yuppies. In *Fit for Consumption*, Jennifer Smith Maguire examines the seemingly inherent, but often invisible, white affluence of the commercial fitness media.[309] She asserts that, "Fitness magazines are a middle-class commodity in a triple sense: produced by the middle class, for the middle class, and of the middle class."[310] While women's distance running originated on a middle-class foundation, the sport as a whole now possessed this identity, largely due to an intensified focus on consumption, a development that suggests that the women's distance running industry not only spearheaded corporate involvement with the sport, but also the concept of commodifying the sport around a rather specific class and its set of identity traits.

Running for Yuppies

Yuppie culture did not just infect running culture; the reverse also occurred. A Nike advertising manager remarked, "Yuppies are definitely trend setters. All that media attention...caused more people in the marketplaces to gravitate toward the Yuppie

[307] Kathrine Switzer quoted in *Ibid*., 51.
[308] Amby Burfoot, "Bobbing for Bucks in the Big Apple," *Runner's World*, November 1982, 77.
[309] Smith Maguire, 106-47.
[310] Ibid., 106.

identity, [brining] them into target market."[311] Along with the spending practices of runners and the upscale ads in running media, the fact that marketers of sporting goods incorporated ideas associated with the yuppie fitness ethic in their advertisements again demonstrates the parallelism of running and yuppie cultures. For instance, adidas, capturing the emphasis on the body that prevailed in women's running, the fitness boom, and yuppyism, issued an ad that proclaimed, "love your body; flash adidas," thus suggesting that those confident about their physical appearance should wear the brand's shoes and clothing.[312]

Both New Balance and Brooks aimed to capitalize on the trendiness of active wear, debuting clothing lines acceptable for athletic and casual environments. The Broooks' ad suggested, "Unmistakably, our new activewear has that high fashion look...Only Brooks could have created such a perfect marriage of fashion and function."[313] Likewise, a Moving Comfort ad with three women running in track suits claimed "This is Women's Work," text that recognized the fact that the majority of the company's clientele would have been fully-employed women. Finally, a Nike ad from 1982 best captures how athletic brands incorporated larger cultural themes into their marketing content. Advertising the company's Elite Classic model shoe, the ad's text boldly declared, "This Country Should Be Run By the Elite."[314]

As discussed, Nike proved most effective at including liberationist themes into their early women's running ads. Now, in context of the political, social, and cultural climate of the 1980s, Nike successfully alluded to ideologies that the majority of their desired consumers would have supported. This ad seems designed to appeal to ambitious yuppies; the subtext described the successes experienced by runners who wore

[311] Cindy Hale quoted in Eric Gelman and Penelope Wang, "They Live to Buy," *Newsweek*, December 31, 1984, 28.
[312] adidas, "love your body; flash adidas," advertisement, April 1982, *Runner's World*, 77.
[313] Brooks, "Technically speaking, it's still athletic equipment," advertisement, December 1983, *Runner's World*, back cover. New Balance, "New Balance's Approach to Clothing Has Suddenly Gone Off-Track," advertisement, March 1982, *Women's Sports*, 61.
[314] Nike, "This Country Should Be Run by the Elite," advertisement, December 1982, *Women's Sports*, 7.

the brand's older model Elite shoe. It then asserted, "...now there's the Elite Classic. And, frankly, it puts the old Elite to shame." This proclamation suggests that yuppies, aspiring to become the nation's new elite, will surpass the older elite class, just as Nike's new model running shoe has improved upon its predecessor. The Nike ad and others demonstrate that not only were yuppies interested in fitness, but the running and fitness industry was interested in yuppies. In its comprehensive profile of the yuppie stereotype, *Newsweek* proclaimed, "If there's anyone who should find the advent of Yuppies an inspirational development, it's advertisers, marketing executives and all other people who live to sell. After all, what could be more opportune than millions of young people with lots of money to spend who define themselves by what they own?"[315]

The Corporate Fitness Craze

In addition to the growing commercialization of running culture, the growth of corporate fitness initiatives further demonstrates its convergence with yuppie culture. By the early 1980s, the majority of Fortune 500 companies offered some type of fitness resource for their employees. Bonne Bell, a forerunner in the women's distance running industry, also represented one of the first companies that encouraged employees to improve their fitness. According to *Time*, "Jess Bell...is a born-again runner who takes his employees' health personally. Bell has built a two-mile track at his company's Westlake factory; every Wednesday morning about 30 staffers gather at 6:45 for an eight-mile run. Bell also offers financial incentives for physical self-improvement..."[316] Similarly, *Women's Sports* reported on The Fitness Room, an exercise facility installed in the offices of IBM, Lockheed, Sylvania, Boeing, and a variety of other corporations.[317] The article quoted several women whose companies provided access to this resource. According to management trainee Amanda, who used the facility during her afternoon

[315] Gelman and Wang, 128.
[316] Walsh, 92.
[317] Karen Kotoske, "Workers' Workouts," *Women's Sports*, September 1982, 48.

coffee break, "I'm involved in an intense learning experience. Stretching and exercising relaxes me and helps me release tension. I can work longer hours without burning out."[318] Likewise, Dara and Paula, two account executives used their company's Fitness Room for half an hour each day, a routine that left them "feeling like a million dollars each" when they returned to their desks.[319]

The proclamations of these women echo those of Kathrine Switzer. Like Switzer, they place a premium on remaining fit, but not at the expense of their careers. Furthermore, these facilities and their users illuminate the class connotations of fitness, as white-collar workers occupying desk jobs represented the majority of those who utilized such resources. Commenting on the growth of such facilities, Charles Althafer, assistant director for health promotion at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, purported that, "It's mainly for the white-collar worker. We call it the 'carpeted floor syndrome' because everybody who uses health promotion works on carpeted floors."[320] The analysis of Ehrenreich supports his observation, as she notes that, "Being fit in the fullest sense was a proof of having money and, beyond that, almost certain proof that one had not earned that money through manual labor or muscular exertion."[321]

Within this corporate focus on fitness, *Runner's World* debuted, "A unique form of competition between American companies that will not immediately be felt on the stock exchange has been instituted by World Publications. Called the *Runner's World* Corporate Cup, the series will pit teams from corporations against each other in a schedule of regional competitions leading to a national championship."[322] Corporate challenges expanded swiftly over the next few years. In anticipation of the 1983 events,

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[318] Amanda quoted in Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Kerry Pechter, "Employee Fitness: Why Blue-Collar Workers Aren't Going to the Gym," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1986, 3.
[321] Ehrenreich, 235.
[322] "The *Runner's World* Corporate Cup," *Runner's World*, August 1978, 15.

Runner's World celebrated the growth of this enterprise, exhorting that, "Meets in San Francisco, Houston, Miami, Washington D.C., Anchorage, Alaska, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Boston, Kansas City, Mo., Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, New York City, Denver, New Orleans and Honolulu have already been scheduled." Additionally, the magazine noted that, "Corporate Cup Association officials expect 550 companies to take part in nearly two dozen regional meets this year, more than double the number of teams that entered last year."[323] As a later *Runner's World* article on the relationship between corporate and sport cultures proclaimed, "Competiveness comes naturally to business, which is being drawn deeper and deeper into the world of sport."[324]

The Yuppie-Runner Attitude

The running media also discussed this competitive ethic, which highlights how the attitudes of runners also began to align with another stereotypically yuppie trait. *Runner's World* published a lengthy article on "Compulsive Running" in late 1983.[325] At this time, there arose a fascination with the possibility of an "obligatory runner," someone who "treated running as more than a pleasant and healthy recreation; it became the focus of their lives."[326] The *Today Show* interviewed one such runner after several prominent studies of this mentality were published in medical and psychological journals.[327] The article drew no definitive conclusions, simply summarizing the issues and debates. Although, author Amby Burfoot concluded the piece by noting that these stories contained a larger lesson – "that running is a valueless activity."[328] Such a comment proves somewhat puzzling in context of a larger society preoccupied by fitness;

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[323] Marty Post, "The Corporate Cup Runneth Over with Talent," *Runner's World*, May 1983, 53.
[324] "Winning Big Among American Business," *Runner's World*, May 1984, 109.
[325] Other articles from *Women's Sports* and *Runner's World* on the sometimes overzealous attitudes of runners: Linda Lewis Griffith, "A Winning Personality," *Women's Sports*, January 1983, 47. Brenda Breeden and Richard Underwood, "Type A Behavior and the Runner: Stop Sabotaging Your Fitness," *Runner's World*, July 1984, 146.
[326] Amby Burfoot, "Compulsive Running," *Runner's World*, October 1983, 97.
[327] According to Burfoot, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published research of Drs. Alayne Yates and Kevin Leehy, "Running – An Analogue of Anorexia" in February 1983. In the same month, *Psychosomatics* published Dr. Kenneth Callen's research on mental and emotional experiences of runners. Ibid., 168.
[328] Ibid.

a fixation most strongly associated with driven, determined yuppies. A reader response perceptively captures this connection. Robert M. Close Jr. wrote,

> Runners are successful people who excel, achieve, create and attain. It is not unusual for such people to have a sense of 'obligation' for the actualization of their gifts and talents and a sense of responsibility for their own health and wholeness. I am more concerned with the rising tide of mediocrity and dependency within our culture than with runners who are actively committed to excellence.[329]

These contentions sound like the claims of an ambitious yuppie. Although *Runners World* did not intend for such content to speak to larger, more complex issues, it does. Due to the popularity of running, the concerns of the sport reflect those of American culture at large, illustrating how the "sport-media-commercial" complex exceeded the boundaries of sport. Foremost, devoted, or overly-devoted, runners embody the descriptions *Newsweek* used to typify yuppies. The mindset of these athletes compares to that of Rob Lewis, a self-described yuppie who attended therapy not for a specific affliction but because he intensely desired "to be better, to excel."[330] Dedicated and successful runners seemed to abide by the supposed Yuppie Golden Rule – "If it ain't broke improve it."[331] Similarly, as Kathrine Switzer told Lesley Visser, "I can't help it. I don't know if it's bad or god but don't relax." [332] Visser described Switzer's visits to the local country club, noting that while "[o]ther members are sitting around the pool reading *The New York Times* or sunbathing, Switzer is surrounded by books and memos conducting business as usual."[333]

And, as both *Newsweek* and Ehrenreich noted, running and fitness was not valueless for yuppies. Ehrenreich refers to "the appearance of work, even in leisure" as an important status marker for yuppies.[334] *Newsweek* quoted Joseph Barron, a twenty-

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[329] Robert M. Close Jr., "Dear *Runner's World*: Compelled to Excel," *Runner's World*, December 1983, 118.
[330] "Year of the Yuppie," 18.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Katherine Switzer quoted in Visser, 25.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ehrenreich, 231.

four year-old banker and gym president, who exhorted, "Fitness is another way of signaling to people that you are serious."[335] Similarly, describing "New Rich" runners, Benita Eisler proclaimed, "This already well-off professional... is running – to get ahead. He is training for the fast track, the real one. Getting and staying lean and mean today, in order to pull out ahead tomorrow. In a competitive market economy, running in place means falling behind."[336]

Additionally, articles on compulsive running ignored the importance of appearance in American society, a priority that explains why many adopted a rigorous running or fitness regimen. The appearance of fit body represented an integral aspect of the "ideal female runner" identity. Yuppies also aspired for a perfect figure or, according to Ehrenreich, "definition." She purports, "To achieve definition was to present a hard outline to the world, a projection of that self that was...tough and contained."[337] *Time* even suggested that a fit body could enhance one's employment prospects. According to the magazine, "Fitness addicts agree that exercise makes them better able to compete not only on the playing fields but in the business arena as well."[338] A quoted attorney claimed, "All other things being equal, the job applicant who is in top physical condition will be chosen by a corporation over the other applicants."[339] Although *Runner's World* did not address the socioeconomic advantages of a fit body, many of the magazine's readers likely were aware of the ways that society increasingly privileged a fit appearance. To ambitious yuppies, always striving for better jobs and higher paychecks, fears about running addiction would have been weighed against the potential benefits conferred by a dedication to fitness.

[335] Joseph Barron quoted in "The Year of the Yuppie," 19.
[336] Eisler, 286.
[337] Ehrenreich, 236.
[338] Walsh, 92.
[339] Ibid.

The Impact of Yuppyism on the Women's Distance Running Industry

For women's distance running, however, this impetus, as well as the other traits of yuppyism, would hold significant implications. Obviously, not all women had access to the privileges enjoyed by Kathrine Switzer, who seemed to easily embody the female yuppie and runner ideals, possessing the requisite body, attitude, and lifestyle. Nevertheless, the intertwining of these identities produced a more specific narrative of women distance running that would have consequences for the state of sport and its participants, as well as women's sports and female athletes at large. The controversy over the location of the women's Olympic Marathon trials begins to illustrate the impact of the blurred line between corporatist, yuppie attitudes and the aims of the women's distance running industry, revealing how corporate interests had begun to assume precedence over benefits for female runners.

In December 1982, The Athletics Congress (TAC) selected Olympia, Washington as the host city for the women's Olympic Marathon trials. Impressed by the city's proposal, which included "a hospitality suite filled with 40 cases of Olympia beer, fresh salmon and oysters, and five cases of Washington apples" and their proposed budget of $1 million, the TAC chose the city over more prominent locations, namely Los Angeles and New York.[340] Rumors of financial troubles soon beset the host city, as organizers struggled to procure sponsors. Olympia's rather remote location was blamed for these struggles, as delegates from the cities passed over began to suspect that the city lacked the marketing appeal needed to stage a successful event.[341] Interestingly enough, Kathrine Switzer represented Olympia's most stringent critic.

Specifically, Avon wanted to sponsor the trials but insisted on exclusive rights. Olympia, however, desired a diversity of sponsors, a common practice for most major marathons. On this decision, Switzer remarked, "I think having more than one sponsor

[340] Marlene Cimons, "Olympia: The Trials on Trial," *Runner's World*, October 1983, 71.
[341] Ibid., 140.

contributes to a circus like atmosphere and corporate clutter. The runners would look like something from the Daytona 500. We have clarity and taste and have demonstrated that."[342] Switzer then decided to take action, writing the executive director of the TAC to suggest that Avon would like to sponsor the trials, contingent on relocation to Los Angeles. Next, Switzer wrote a semi-apologetic letter to the head of Olympia's sponsorship committee that exhorted, "Quite frankly, there appears to be nothing at all we can do now that would not result in some resentment. It is bewildering because our record in support and advancement of women's running is unblemished."[343]

Since the TAC did not have the authority to make such a relocation decision, Avon's offer and Switzer's protestations were moot.[344] Nevertheless, Switzer's actions are significant, as she seemingly had become blind to the larger interests of the sport, instead favoring the advancement of her company's interests. Switzer's comments suggest that Avon's impact on and influence within the sport had endowed the company with a special authority. This air of exclusivity and superiority resembles the popular portrayal of the yuppie attitude. In contrast, the achievement of a women's Olympic marathon had required a collective effort, with rival corporations cooperating in order to rally all female runners behind the cause. Now, without the apparent need for such collective motivation, the individual concerns of corporations prevailed over the interests of the sport as a whole. The women's distance running industry no longer represented a special subculture, as the "sport-media-commercial" complex had fully incorporated the sport into its dominant value system.

These altered attitudes did not prove detrimental at Olympia. Instead, Joan Benoit stole the show, asserting the continued function of athletic performances within an increasingly commoditized women's distance running industry. Suffering a fluke

[342] Switzer quoted in Ibid.
[343] Switzer quoted in Ibid., 141.
[344] Ibid., 140-1.

knee injury in March, Benoit underwent surgery on April 17, a mere twenty-five days before the race. After an up-and-down rehabilitation period, she not only competed at Olympia but won the historic trials.[345] *Runner's World's* Amby Burfoot called Benoit's race "the greatest individual marathon effort of all time."[346] Within the "sport-media-commercial" complex, the women's distance running industry may have become further divorced from the athletic reality, yet the sport's reality, as exemplified by Benoit, still proved crucial to sustaining and legitimating the sport and its industry. Although Joan Benoit's performance would define the trials, the pre-race, behind-the-scene machinations prove insightful for how they demonstrate the evolving state of the women's distance running industry.

The Implications of the Convergence of the Yuppie and "Ideal Female Runner" Identities

In addition to the increasingly corporatist orientation of the women's distance running industry, another aspect of yuppie culture influenced the popular conception of female runners - the assumed heteronormativity of yuppies. While not often recognized as a canonical yuppie trait, heterosexuality proves relevant to an examination of the impact of yuppyism on women's sport. As with the "ideal female runner" identity, the class foundations of the yuppie identity combined with a specific gender profile to produce a strictly defined identity. In particular, a closer examination of *The Yuppie Handbook* illuminates the presumptive heterosexuality of yuppies. While the book obviously chronicles the lifestyle of a heterosexual couple as they navigate the supposed challenges of yuppyism, the satirical commentary on the broader yuppie culture perceptively reveals the emphasis on heterosexuality, especially through descriptions of puppies (pregnant yuppies) and guppies (gay yuppies).[347]

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[345] Kenny Moore, "A Joyous Journey for Joan," *Sports Illustrated*, May 21, 1984, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1122094/1/index.htm. "Two by land and two by sea," *Women's Sports*, July 1984, 20.
[346] Amby Burfoot, "Olympia," *Runner's World*, July 1984, 90.
[347] Piesman and Hartley, 19-20.

In regard to puppies, *The Yuppie Handbook* offered advice about yuppie procreation, which included a list of necessary financial and consumptive considerations. In popular media, however, concerns about professional, yuppyish women choosing not to have children represented a growing concern. For instance, Kathrine Switzer openly expressed her indecision about the prospect of motherhood. She told *Women's Sports*, "I'm trying to decide whether to have children. It's a dilemma many women face at my age, but it's especially distressing for me. My whole life has been centered on physical experiences and my strongest accomplishments have been as an athlete and corporate woman..."[348] Elaborating on her conundrum, Switzer asserted that "All my life I've never really regretted anything I've done...If I don't have children, how do I know I won't someday wake up and be terribly sad and sorry?"[349] Although, Switzer confidently exhorted that, if she became pregnant, "I'll be at my desk to the very last second and back in the office two weeks later."[350] Switzer's attitudes align with those discussed by Eisler and Ehrenreich. Eisler even labels her middle-class group that most closely conforms to yuppies as "childless couples."[351] Ehrenreich focuses on the portrayal of women like Switzer in popular media, noting that condescending terms like "biological clock" and "birth dearth" emerged to describe this supposed tragedy.[352] Thus, despite their noted ambition, female yuppies, like female runners seeking the "ideal female runner identity," were expected to harbor traditional maternal desires.

The guppie identity further illuminates the assumed heterosexuality of female yuppies. According to *The Yuppie Handbook*, guppies represent "really super Yuppies

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[348] Visser, 25.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Eisler, 181. According to Eisler's categorization, "However else they are defined – consumers, careerists, narcissists or non-committed – the childless couples are invariably described as 'upwardly mobile.' And based on the high correlation between education and childlessness, their mobility assumes a 'starting line' of middle class."
[352] Ehrenreich, 221-2. Ehrenreich suggests, "To individual professional woman, the problem was experienced as the inexorable ticking of the 'biological clock': How would she find a husband before her fertile years ended, and find time from her career for childbearing? To conservative intellectuals, it was the problem of the 'birth dearth.'"

because they were the pioneers of Yuppie culture."[353] Yet, no alternative yuppie identity existed for lesbians. In her discussion of upwardly mobile classes, Eisler notes, "gay women are, in every sense, marching to a different drummer."[354] In contrast to the increasing visibility and affluence of gay men, Eisler notes that "gay women at every socioeconomic level remain, for varied reasons, a 'hidden population.'"[355] Although many lacked the economic means necessary to yuppyism, Eisler suggests that lesbian yuppies existed. She asserts, "The most hidden of all are the most successful – and worldly. The most 'closeted' are those gay women likely to be out every night – the well-known fashion editor, banker, and politician."[356] Whether or not such a lifestyle and system of values was desired, lesbians' outright exclusion highlights the very specific identity available to young, urban professional females. Furthermore, while unacknowledged lesbian yuppies would have possessed the requisite socioeconomic means to participate fully in running, an inability to conform to the popular gender and sexuality type would have made them invisible female runners, a non-identity that assumes importance within the "sport-media-commercial" complex.

Although Ehrenreich describes the image of the female yuppie as an example of "new androgyny," female yuppies' androgyny only extended to certain aspects of this identity.[357] This term belies how the female yuppie identity included a specific set of traits, namely maternal desire and heterosexism, which resulted in an ignorance of a spectrum of genders and sexuality. So, while facets of the female yuppie image did not epitomize traditional femininity, with her "odd uniform of skirted suit and sneakers" and unabashed career ambition, other aspects of yuppyism preserved traditional gender roles

[353] Piesman and Hartley, 19.
[354] Eisler, 218.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Ibid.
[357] Ehrenreich, 220.

and values.[358] Like female runners, female yuppies simultaneously transgressed and reinforced femininity in specifically defined ways. Thus, the confluence of these stereotypical identities highlights the increased exclusivity of the popular image of women's distance running, as an amalgamation of characteristics combined with and intensified the sport's original class foundations to produce a narrative of women's athleticism that privileged those who embodied the sport's popular identity. This privileging not only symbolically excluded some women from the sport, but also contributed to a conception of the sport that justified women's subordinate cultural position in the "sport-media-commercial" complex.

Conclusion

According to Shari Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs, "The commodified image of the female athlete simultaneously reflects some women's growing market power while undermining the political salience of sport, masking the ways the market system disenfranchises other women."[359] This scenario aligns with the popular narrative of liberal feminism. But, while influenced by and reflective of gender equality and inequality in other realms of society, women's continued subordination in sport remains the most pervasive and accepted. The women's distance running industry highlights the importance of recognizing class, not just gender or sexuality, when interrogating the historical experience and cultural status of female athletes and women's sports. As demonstrated by the transition from "liberated athletic femininity" to the "ideal female runner," the class foundations of women's distance running were heightened and intensified by consumer culture's further realization of female athleticism. The function of class was made more significant in context of the "Consumerization of the Republic," where the middle class, epitomized by yuppies in the early 1980s, increasingly has relied on the market to establish an identity.

[358] Ibid., 237.
[359] Wachs and Dworkin, 157.

In sum, full participation and recognition in distance running, as well as other sports, represents a luxury enjoyed by an ever-increasing number of women at the individual level, contingent on their ability to exemplify the requisite identity attained through consumption of products that connote a specific set of values. Ostensibly unlimited individual access, however, masks the fact that the institution of women's sports and the diverse population of female athletes lack full valuation at the meta-level of American sports. Women's sport has failed to gain unquestioned legitimacy, respect, and status, somewhat ironically, due the requirement that sportswomen engage with the market, which produces a popular perception of sportswomen that minimizes their athleticism. Thus, as demonstrated by the women's distance running industry, a paradoxical, self-perpetuating, circuitous process has ensnared women athletes in a seemingly inescapable subordinate status within the American "sport-media-commercial" complex.

EPILOUGE

On August 5, 1984, Joan Benoit won the inaugural women's Olympic Marathon. That day, Benoit proved that women belonged – in the marathon, in the Olympics, and in sport. Recounting this triumph, *Women's Sports* proclaimed, "When Joan Benoit charged into the Los Angeles Coliseum last August she carried something with her. It wasn't the Olympic torch or an American flag. It was something much bigger: a new definition of woman."[360] Elaborating on this prophesy, editor Amy Rennert celebrated that, "The first-ever women's marathon symbolized the total acceptance of women as athletes. Benoit's triumph was personal, but at the same time it affirmed the once-denied abilities of all women."[361] According to ABC's estimates, approximately 2.5 billion people worldwide witnessed Benoit demonstrate that women possessed the motivation, the ability, and, thus, the right to compete at the highest-level of international sport.[362] Recalling the moment Benoit entered the L.A. Coliseum tunnel, Kathrine Switzer mused, "She is the perfect symbol now for much of women's history, as once more we see her enter the darkness, obscured for a few seconds, then stride out of the darkness to run powerfully and beautifully into a shimmering stadium, to a welcome that reverberates to the ocean."[363]

Joan Benoit's victory seems to represent the perfect culmination to the women's distance running movement, a hopeful, triumphant conclusion to long, uneven journey. Yet, the paradoxical history of women's distance running cannot be captured so simplistically. An overly positive women's sports history only further trivializes this history, as well as the experiences of female athletes, both past and present. While a

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[360] Amy Rennert, "Los Angeles '84," *Women's Sports*, October 1984, 31.
[361] Ibid.
[362] "Coverage of the XXIII Olympic Games," *Runner's World*, September 1984, 71.
[363] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*, 393.

genuinely inspiring moment, it did not significantly change the course of women's sports history. Nevertheless, this moment aptly exposes the complexity of women's distance running as a sport and industry. Although her achievement epitomizes the progress made possible by the women's distance running industry, Benoit represented the anti-thesis of the sport's popular perception. A unique personality, she largely diverges from the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative and the "ideal female runner" identity, while also countering the sport's association with yuppie culture. Thus, Benoit appropriately encapsulates the paradoxical historical reality of women's distance running.

A seemingly precocious talent, Benoit vaulted onto the American running scene with her victory at the 1979 Boston Marathon, where the twenty-one year old native of Cape Elizabeth, Maine won the hearts of the Boston faithful not only due to her performance but also for the Red Sox cap she donned, backwards, for the final miles. Naturally, the women's distance running, as well as the sport at large, wished to promote Benoit as the future of American distance running. Benoit shirked at this idea. After her victory, she exasperated, "I'm uncomfortable with publicity...enough is enough, you know? Running the race was easier than putting up with all the publicity after it."[364] She soon became known for her public reluctance, with *Runner's World* later calling her "the Greta Garbo of running." Likewise, *Women's Sports* ran an article titled, "The Elusive Joan Benoit: She Outruns Everyone – Including the Press."[365] On this reputation, Benoit noted, "I consider myself a perfectly normal Maine person...People get the impression I'm a hermit up here. I'm not. I'm surrounded by friends who accept me for who I am and not what I've accomplished in running."[366] She resolutely maintained this

[364] Shister, 26.
[365] Hal Higdon, "The Elusive Joan Benoit," *Women's Sports*, March 1984, 39.
[366] Joan Benoit quoted in Jane Leavy, "Marathoner Benoit: The Reign in Maine," *The Washington Post*, March 14, 1984, D1.

attitude, developing a reputation for her array of hobbies, namely picking blueberries, chopping wood, and restoring an old farmhouse she purchased in Freeport, Maine.[367]

Benoit, however, could not totally disassociate from the women's distance running industry, as she took advantage of some of the benefits conferred by the progress of the women's distance running industry. Although she initially promised never to hire an agent or sign an endorsement contract, the prospect of the financial security resulted in a, slight, change of mind.[368] She signed endorsements with Nike, the brand of shoes she wore, and Dole pineapple because, in her words, "When we were young, my mother always packed Dole pineapple juice for our ski trips. I still use it."[369] According to her agent Ken Whittemore, "With Joan, the roads come first, then business. She has turned down five or six offers that would net her large amounts from companies because they would take too much time, or she doesn't use the product, or she can't even endorse the use of the product."[370] Benoit's discerning attitude towards the commercial realm of the sport contradicts with the supposed yuppyism that began to characterize the sport at large.

A few months after her Olympic victory, *Sports Illustrated*'s Kenny Moore penned an in-depth profile of Benoit, in which he forth-rightfully declared, "Benoit is not a young urban professional."[371] Somewhat ironically, Benoit lived a mere five miles from L.L. Bean's headquarters, a brand enthusiastically consumed by yuppies.[372] Elaborating on Benoit's lack of yuppie-ness, Moore noted,

> She's a Mainer...At 27, she's young but has never found joy in urban settings, and though her running is both her living and her exaltation, one somehow balks at calling her a professional. Running is seldom discussed in the Samuelson

[367] Amby Burfoot, "Simple Values Keep Joan Benoit's Life Under Control," *Runner's World*, March 1984, 82-7, 110.
[368] Leavy.
[369] Burfoot, "Simple Values," 84.
[370] Ken Whittemore quoted in Kenny Moore, "Her Life Is In Apple Pie Order," *Sports Illustrated*, March 4, 1985, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1119199/index.htm.
[371] Moore, "Apple Pie Order."
[372] Ibid. In fact, according to Moore, the Benoit family business, "A.H. Benoit Company, a neat, four-story apparel store in Portland, once felt itself to be in competition with Bean."

> household. Rather, the vital concerns are reconstruction of the barn, canning, skiing, sewing, film criticism, the quality of firewood, wallpapering, local politics and how it's wasteful to eat only the claws and tail of the lobster.[373]

Furthermore, she did not attempt to claim some larger value or importance for her running, noting, "It's funny. I'm attracted to things that don't have any impact on life. People say I've done a great thing for women. I don't think I have. People say I've given people courage. That makes me feel good, but I don't see how I do that."[374] While many others would likely disagree with Benoit, her disarming modesty contradicts with the supposed self-absorption not only characteristic to yuppies, but also to many runners of both sexes. However, she did not represent some great renegade. Along with her few endorsements, she participated in several of Avon's major races and later published two books that largely conformed to the standardized model.[375] But, in the context of the "sport-media-commercial" complex, which seemingly required and inspired engagement with the media and commercial spheres to establish legitimacy and status, Benoit's predominant distaste for and dismissal of popular demands proves unique.

According to running writer Hal Higdon, Benoit's "shy, reclusive image that masks the fiercely aggressive nature she shows in competition."[376] The competitiveness noted by Higdon also positions her as an exception the popular narrative. Over the course of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the women's distance running industry promoted a variety of reasons for women to begin running, from joining the effort to secure a women's Olympic Marathon to losing weight in order to achieve a more desirable figure. Competitiveness, while recognized as a possibility, was not emphasized. Even as women runners continued to secure a stronger foothold in the sport, the media

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[373] Ibid.
[374] Joan Benoit quoted in Leavy.
[375] Evidence of Benoit's participation in the prominent productions of the women's distance running industry: Thaler,16. Joan Benoit, "What It Takes to Be a Winner" in *Women in Motion: Avon's Guide to Running* in *Women's Sports*, February 1982. Joan Benoit with Sally Baker, *Running Tide*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987. Joan Benoit Samuelson with Gloria Averbuch, *Joan Samuelson's Running for Women*, Eammus, PA: Rodale Press, Inc., 1995.
[376] Higdon.

of the women's distance running industry furthered downplayed the athletic performances of female runners of all ability levels. Likewise, while female yuppies that ran possessed great ambition, they supposedly directed this intensity to achieving the "ideal female runner" identity. Conversely, Benoit embraced competition, which she exemplified when she took the lead in the women's Olympic Marathon at mile four.[377]

Higdon's statement also highlights Benoit's modest comportment outside of a competition. Similarly, Amby Burfoot noted that, "People applaud the balance she is trying to maintain in her life; they appreciate her adherence to simple virtues and simple values. It appears that millions of Americans experienced a personal, emotional reaction to Benoit's Olympic victory, as if she were the girl door."[378] After the 1984 Olympic Marathon, *Runner's World's* readers echoed Burfoot. Reader Bob McCutcheon articulated, "I really wonder who I should thank for people like Joan Benoit. I shall never forget her tremendous effort in winning the first Olympic marathon for women...Her courage, determination and ultimate victory should rank as one of the most outstanding athletic accomplishments of our time. She is a prime example of quality – built in."[379] Reader Bienvenido Tabios wrote,

> If I may add my two cents' worth about the lady who was hailed as a lioness, Joan Benoit, for her victory in the Olympic marathon, deserves the best superlatives in the English dictionary. To see her saintly face and Mona Lisa smile after she has run 26 miles and 385 yards, one cannot help but wonder what physical or mental quality Benoit is really made of.[380]

As both letters suggest, Benoit apparently possessed some other worldly quality, endowing her with the dominating intensity required to win the women's Olympic marathon while still exhibiting grace, class, and humility. In other words, she was exceptional. These statements of praise perceptively highlight the pervasiveness of the

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[377] Amby Burfoot, "*Runner's World* Exclusive: Having stood marathoning on its ear for the third time, Joan Benoit turns to ordering her post-Olympic life," *Runner's World*, November 1984, 24.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Bob McCutcheon, "Dear *Runner's World*: An Inspiration for Many," *Runner's World*, December 1984, 118.
[380] Bienvenido Tabios, "Dear *Runner's World*: An Inspiration for Many," *Runner's World*, December 1984, 118.

"ideal female runner" identity. Because Benoit did not conform to the popularized image of female runners, her performance and personality shocked these men. In turn, they adopt a reverential yet somewhat paternalistic tone to talk about her. Like proud fathers, they view their daughter as different from, and thus better than, all other women. Because she was considered such an exception, Benoit's marathon victory and the admiration she received for it did not contribute to a new recognition of a spectrum of female athletes, instead it primarily reinforced the more limited stereotype available to the majority of female athletes.

After the close of the 1984 Games, *Runner's World* Joe Henderson predicted that Joan Benoit's victory would ignite a women's running boom, suggesting that "women's running will experience a boom much like the one [Frank] Shorter [winner of the 1972 Olympic Marathon] touched off among men in the '70s."[381] While seemingly ignoring the fact that a women's running boom, or at least a visible interest in running among women, had already occurred, the sport did not experience an additional growth explosion. Data suggests that popular interest in women's running peaked in 1984, before declining to pre-1980 levels by the end of the decade.[382] Although interest in women's distance running has experienced surges since the early 1990s, namely a mid-to-late 1990s boost and a current wave of interest that began in 2008, these subsequent growth periods have not altered the sport's dominant structure or narrative.

The contemporary narrative of women's running, ostensibly more expansive than its manifestation as the "ideal female runner" identity of the early 1980s, has further typified women as less serious, less competitive. For example, the popular Couch-to-5K program encourages overweight women (and men) to run and emphasizes moderate

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[381] Joe Henderson, "Joe Henderson's Inside Report," *Runner's World*, September 1984, 9.
[382] Search for "women's running," *Google books Ngram Viewer*, http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=women%27s+running&year_start=1972&year_end=1989&corpus=15&smoothing=1&share=.

weight-loss expectations.[383] Nevertheless, this program still reinforces a focus on the body, implying that any appearance improvement should be sought and running serves as the most appropriate means to this end. Additionally, running increasingly represents a leisure activity, instead of a sport in the popular imagination. Along with weight loss, the concept of "sweat sisters," a group of women that runs together on a regular basis, has emerged as a popular, feminized friendship activity.[384] This impulse has led to the proliferation of vibrant online communities of women runners who use social media to share their experiences and support those of others.[385]

While both of these functions are meaningful for many women, such emphases prove detrimental because they perpetuate a limited vision of women's athleticism. In particular, online communities, which allow women to establish their own narratives, primarily adhere to the popular narrative. The women that best exemplify the sport's popular values possess status and influence within these communities, producing an exclusive hierarchy based on the same class privilege model of the original women's distance running industry. Within the broader social context of the twenty-first century, women's running has been de-yuppified, but the current ideology of the sport has largely returned to the "liberated athletic femininity" narrative, with some modern

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[383] Josh Clark, "The Couch-to-5K Running Plan," *Cool Running*, http://www.coolrunning.com/engine/2/2_3/181.shtml.

[384] In particular, Kristin Armstrong, a *Runner's World* contributor and, more notably, the ex-wife of Lance Armstrong (a fact that gives her credibility), popularized this concept in her blog for *Runner's World*, "Mile Markers," and her book of the same title. Kristin Armstrong, "Mile Markers," *Runner's World*, http://milemarkers.runnersworld.com. Kristin Armstrong, *Mile Markers: The 26.2 Most Important Reasons Why Women Run* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2011).

[385] A sample of women's running blogs: Heather, *Run Faster, Mommy!* (blog), www.runfastermommy.com. Susan Tirch, *Mom Swim Bike Run* (blog), http://momswimbikerun.blogspot.com/. XLMIC, *Taking It On* (blog), http://didyougetanyofthat.blogspot.com. Demi, *Her Name is Rio and She Runs* (blog), http://hernameisrioandsheruns.blogspot.com/. Marcia Kadens, *The Studly Runner* (blog), http://www.teamarcia-runningmouth.blogspot.com. Emily Toia, *If I Can't Convince You I'll At Least Confuse You* (blog), http://royalpitatoias.blogspot.com. Carly, *Chubby Chick Run Too (*blog*)*, http://fatrunnergirl.blogspot.com/. Melanie, *Tall Mom on the Run (*blog), http://www.tallmomontherun.com. AJ, *5 Miles Past Empty* (blog), http://5MilesPastEmpty.com. Kristin Neudorfer, *ActiveWoMOM* (blog), http://activewomom.com. Felice, *The Happy Runner* (blog), http://thehappyrunner.blogspot.com. Candice, *I Have Run* (blog), http://ihaverun.blogspot.com. Carrie Skoll, *Family Fitness Food* (blog), http://familyfitnessfood.com. Lesley Jones, *Racing It Off* (blog), http://racingitoff.blogspot.com/. Andrea McLarty, *Two Motivate* (blog), http://www.twomotivate.com. Hope Eton, *SportyMomme* (blog), http://SportyMom.me.

modifications.[386] Notably, conservative, evangelical values have infiltrated this narrative, most especially in the southern United States, a region that only had peripheral involvement in the original era of women's distance running. While embraced by both male and female runners, evangelical values carry a more significant implication for the popular narrative of women's running. These themes not only implicitly buttress the traditionally feminine values of marriage and motherhood, but also require heterosexuality.[387]

Thus, Joan Benoit's Olympic Marathon story exhibits both the real progress and ultimate limitation of women's distance running industry. This situation leaves the question - is there a viable solution to this paradox of visible, individual-level acess and success and invisible, cultural-level limitation and subordination? Within the "sport-

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[386] In her examination of women's running books, Annemarie Jutel included books written up to 2002. Books written since this date have continued to follow this basic model and emphasize the same core of themes. Notable titles include: Dagny Scott Barrios, *Runner's World's Complete Book of Women's Running* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2007). Jennifer Lin and Susan Warner, *Sole Sisters: Stories of Women and Running* (Kansas City, MO: Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2006). Kara Goucher with Adam Bean, *Kara Goucher's Running for Women: First Steps to Marathons* (New York: Touchstone, 2011). Mina Samuels, *Run Like a Girl: How Strong Women Make Happy Lives* (Berkeley, CA: Sea Press, Inc., 2011). Jason Karp and Carolyn Smith, *Running for Women* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2012). Dimity McDowell and Sarah Bowen Shea, *Run Like a Mother: How to Get Across Any Finish Line – and Not Lose Your Family, Job, or Sanity* (Kansas City, MO: Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2010). Laurie Kocanda and Kara Thom, *Hot (Sweaty) Mamas: Secrets to Life as a Fit Mom* (Kansas City, MO: Andrew McMeel, 2011).

[387] Ryan Hall, the American male record holder at the half-marathon distance, symbolizes the Christianization of running, leading many recreational runners to similarly use the sport to advertise their religious beliefs. Most notably, Hall attracted attention when he insisted that God was his coach after the 2011 U.S. half-marathon championship. During his preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games, he claimed to use the Bible as his training guide. According to the *New York Times*, "Hall said that God spoke to him regularly, giving him training plans, even a race strategy for the London Olympics. He does not hear a voice; rather, he will pray or scroll through workouts in his head and a heightened thought will give him a sense of peace, grace, empowerment. Or a passage from the Bible will seem particularly relevant and urgent...Hall has also found biblical reinforcement for his training. He takes one day off a week, just as God rested on the seventh day...In spacing three days between his most arduous workouts, Hall refers to the Holy Trinity and the time that Jesus spent in the tomb; for him, this period represents resurrection, completeness, new life." Additionally, at the local, recreational level, many churches or Christian groups hold races that emphasize religious themes, using the events as a fundraiser for youth retreats or mission trips. The following races, from the racing database Running in the USA, represent a sampling of such races held in 2012 and 2013: Footsteps for Jesus 5K , Satsuma, AL; Run with Jesus 5K, Groveport, OH; Jogging for Jesus 5K, Sandy Hook, KY; Jog for Jesus 5K, Trinity, AL; Jingle4Jesus 5K, Waynesville, MO; Fit 4 God 5K Walk/Run, Plant City, FL; Run for God 5K, Sanford, FL; God Chasers 5K, Texarkana, TX; Run for God – JFest5K, Chattanooga, TN; Run for God 5K, Weatherford, OK; Boca Christian Torch Run, Boca Raton, FL; Edgewood Christian Church 5K, Edgewood, IL; Temple Christian 5K, Lima, OH; Grandview Christian 5K, Fallston, MD; Prayer Child Run 5K, Gilbert, AZ; Power of Prayer 5K, St. Paul, MN; PrayerRace, Anderson, SC. "Race Directory," *Running in the USA*, www.runningintheusa.com/races/. Jere Longman, "A Runner's Belief: God is His Coach," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/sports/olympics/faith-is-central-to-marathoner-ryan-halls-approach.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

media-commercial" complex of the twenty-first century, sport is a present and everyday reality in the lives of Americans. In turn, it increasingly influences society's value system.[388] But, while predominantly considered meritocratic, access to and success in sport is premised on a nexus of privilege, governed by one's class, gender, sexuality, and race. Therefore, recognizing and rectifying the barriers of sport can contribute to a more inclusive value system that then permeates to other societal institutions. For female athletes, perpetually second-class citizens in the superstructure of sport and society, the first step to achieving equal valuation in sports culture is confronting women's sports internal structure of privilege. For example, for all her exceptionalness, Joan Benoit also benefited from a stereotypical, middle-class background and its associated characteristics of whiteness and heterosexuality. Critiques of the various ways sport culture disadvantages women often focus on gender and, to a lesser degree, sexuality and race. Effectively addressing women's subordination in sports culture first requires an interrogation of the crucial function of class.

As demonstrated by the women's distance running industry, socioeconomic status represents the first gate to women's participation in sport, yet the class foundations of women sports largely have been assumed as inherent or simply ignored. This largely invisible system of privilege contributes to the belief that women have achieved "equality" in sport because, at the individual level, many women enjoy unfettered access to athletic opportunities. Yet, the institutional and cultural levels reveal

[388] Messner, *Taking the Field*, xix-xx. Messner posits, "Through most of the twentieth century, sport was clearly one of the less contested, core institutions in which heterosexual men's embodied power was enabled and celebrated in ways that supported and naturalized patriarchal beliefs in male superiority and female frailty and dependence. Once generated within sport, these conservative ideas were then liberally transported into other core institutions such as the military and the state and used to support the 'naturalness' of men's rule. As institutions like higher education and certain workplace and professions became more contested by women, the patriarchal ideas generated by sport continued to be used to damper on women's quest for full respect, equality, and power." Messner believes this situation began to change in the late twentieth century with women's entry into sport, however, he notes that, "the terrain of sport, especially its center, is still thoroughly patriarchal and is tightly (and often violently) controlled by heterosexual men (and by the corporations that profit from them). This core of the sport-media-commercial complex that organizes, promotes, and profits from big-time college and pro football, big-time college and men's pro basketball, pro baseball...It's dominant principles and practices tend to filter down, though unevenly, into school-based and children's sports."

a different reality. In women's distance running, the popular understanding of the sport constructed and promoted since the dawn of the women's distance running industry in the late 1970s not only has made the sport's accepted identity available to an increasingly specific type of woman, but also contributed to the belief that women are less serious consumers of sport and fitness, which ultimately condones women's lack of legitimacy and respect in American sports culture.

Confronting and resolving the dominant class structure of women's sports and, in turn, the specific racial, gender, and sexual ideologies it privileges, may seem like a radical and unrealistic effort. But, in 1967, a woman running the Boston Marathon seemed radical to the majority of Americans. Seventeen years later, the nation rose to its collective feet, captivated by the performance of women in the first women's Olympic Marathon. In the twenty-first century, the benefits of the paradox of women's sports that contributed to the triumphs of Kathrine Switzer and Joan Benoit no longer outweigh their prejudicial consequences. The cultural subordination of women's sports has outlived its time.

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