

NCAA COACHES' PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSGENDER ATHLETE SPORT PARTICIPATION

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AGENDA

Study Overview

Study Sample

Quantitative & Qualitative Findings

Implications

Future Directions

Discussion

CONTEXT

- Nationwide policies banning transgender athletes' sport participation.
- NCAA Transgender Student-Athlete Participation Policy.
- Unclear how supportive, welcoming, and safe sport environments are for transgender athletes.
- Coaches' critical role on team and individual levels.

STUDY PURPOSE

- **Attitudes** towards transgender athletes' sport participation
- **Intentions** in coaching transgender athletes.
- **Knowledge, beliefs about, and experiences** with LGBT individuals and athletes.
- **Reasoning** for coaches' beliefs about transgender athlete participation.

STUDY AIM

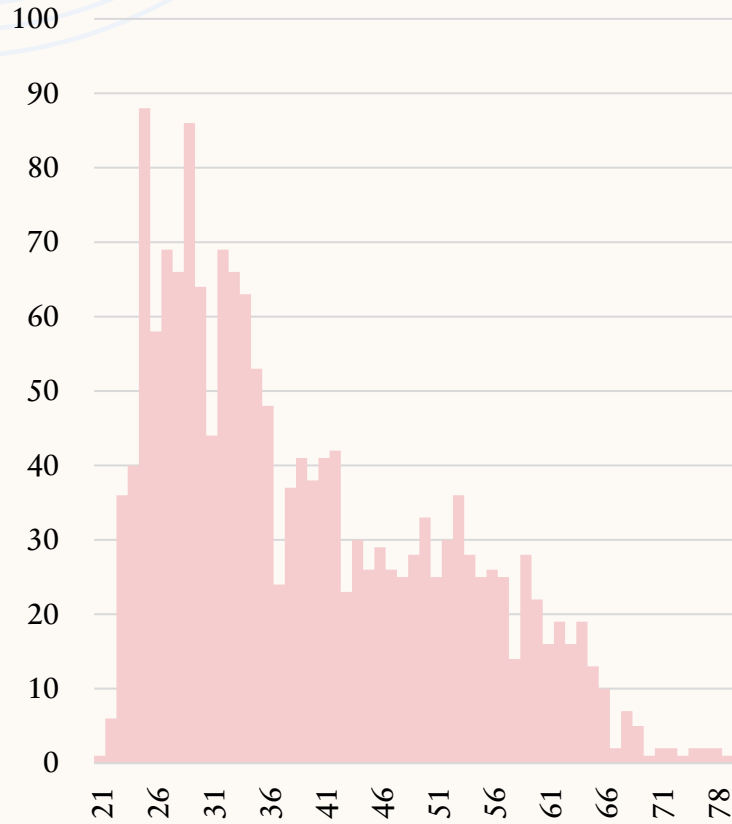
Inform training, education, and policies centered on the inclusion of transgender athletes.



**STUDY METHODS &
SAMPLE**

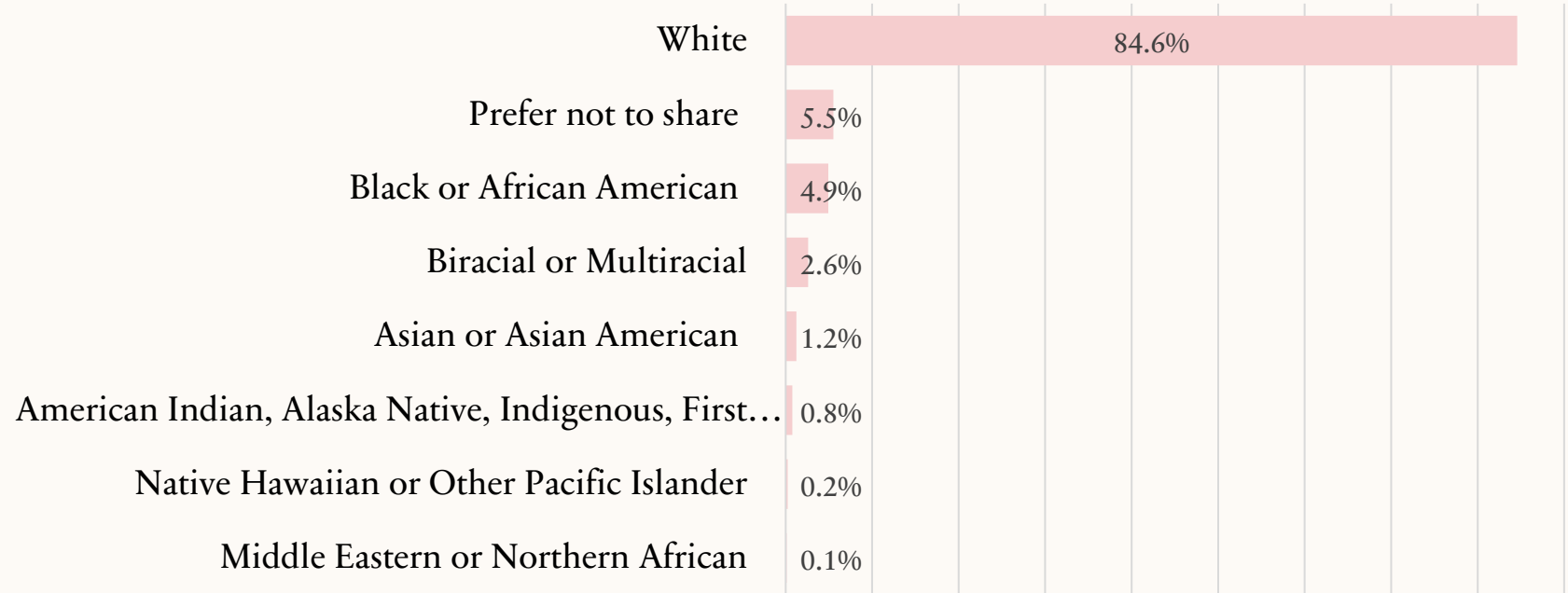
DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

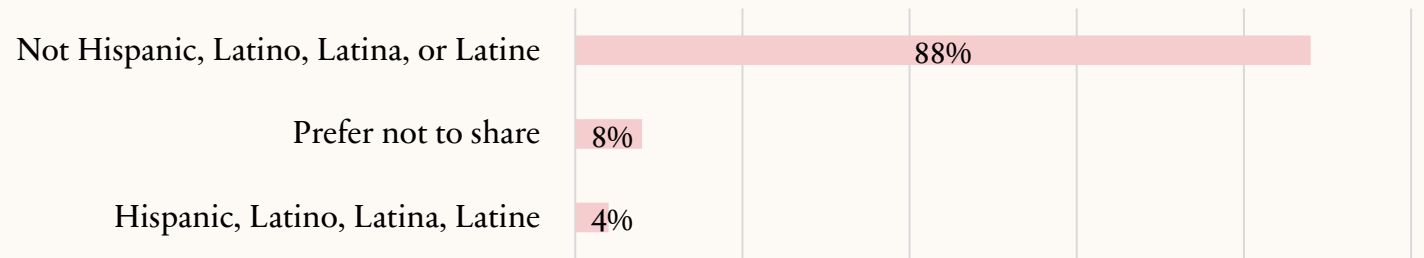


*M = 39.59; SD = 12.4; Median = 36;
Range = 21 to 80 years*

Race

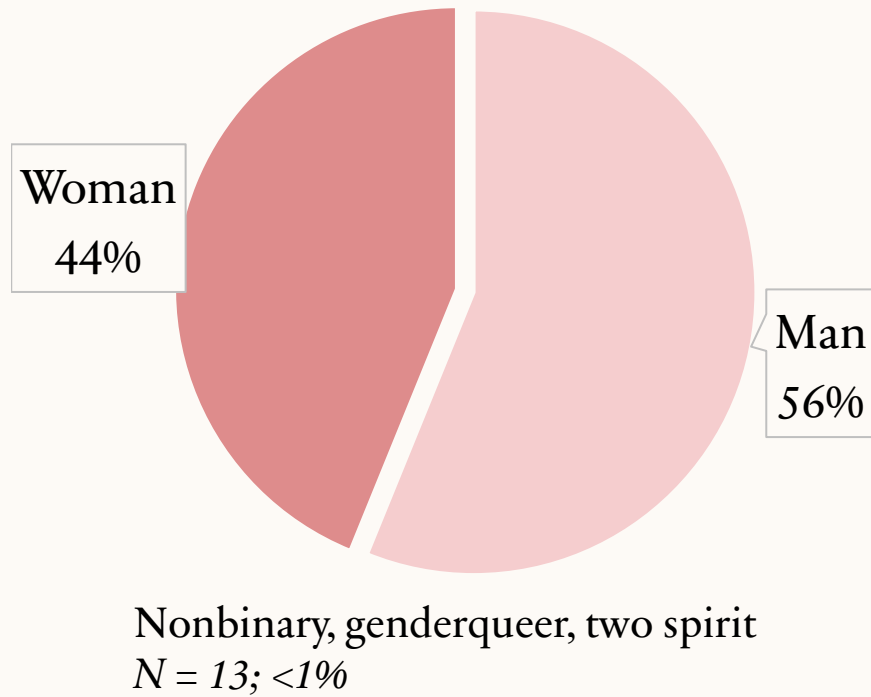


Ethnicity

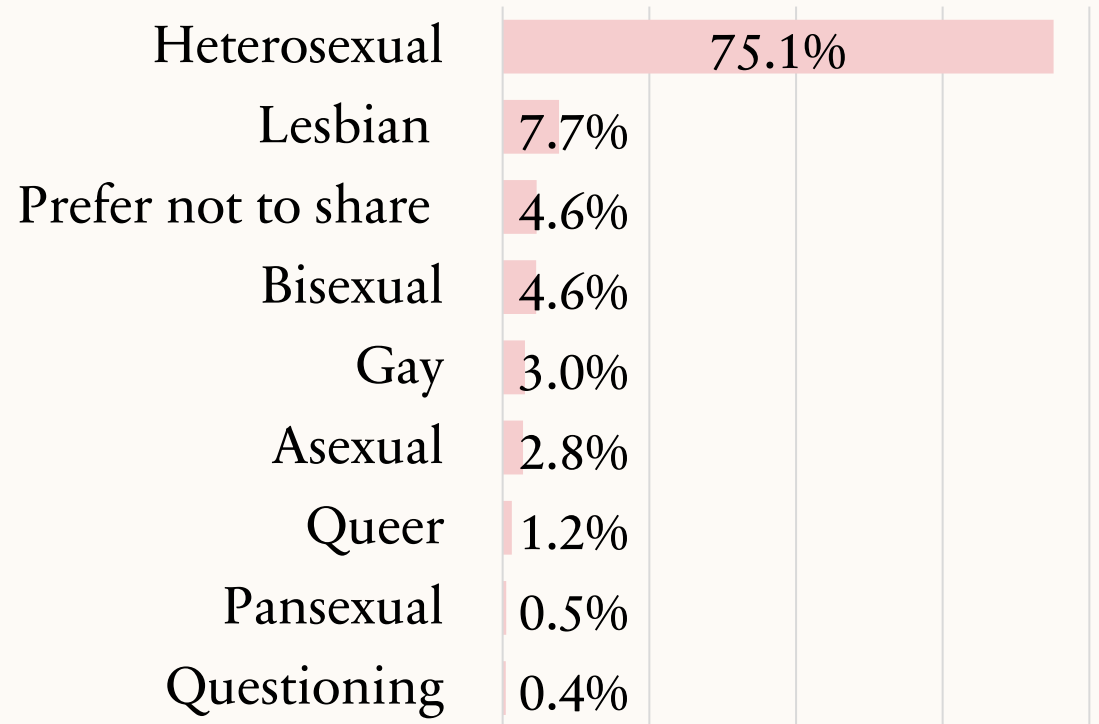


DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

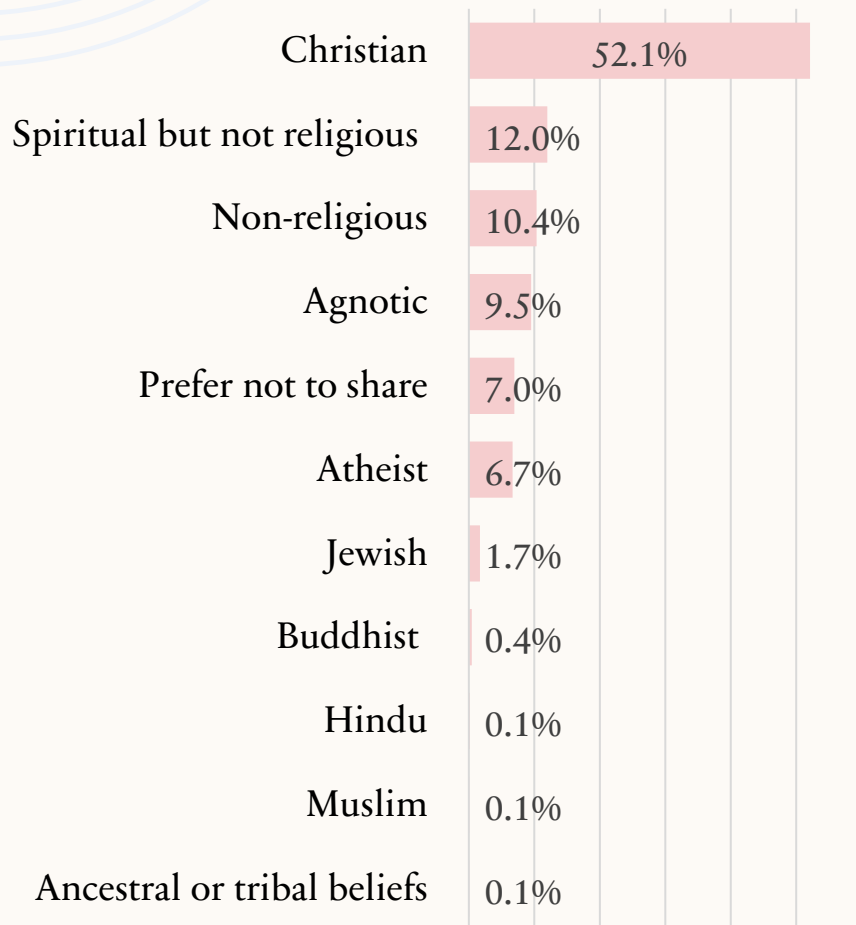


Sexual Orientation

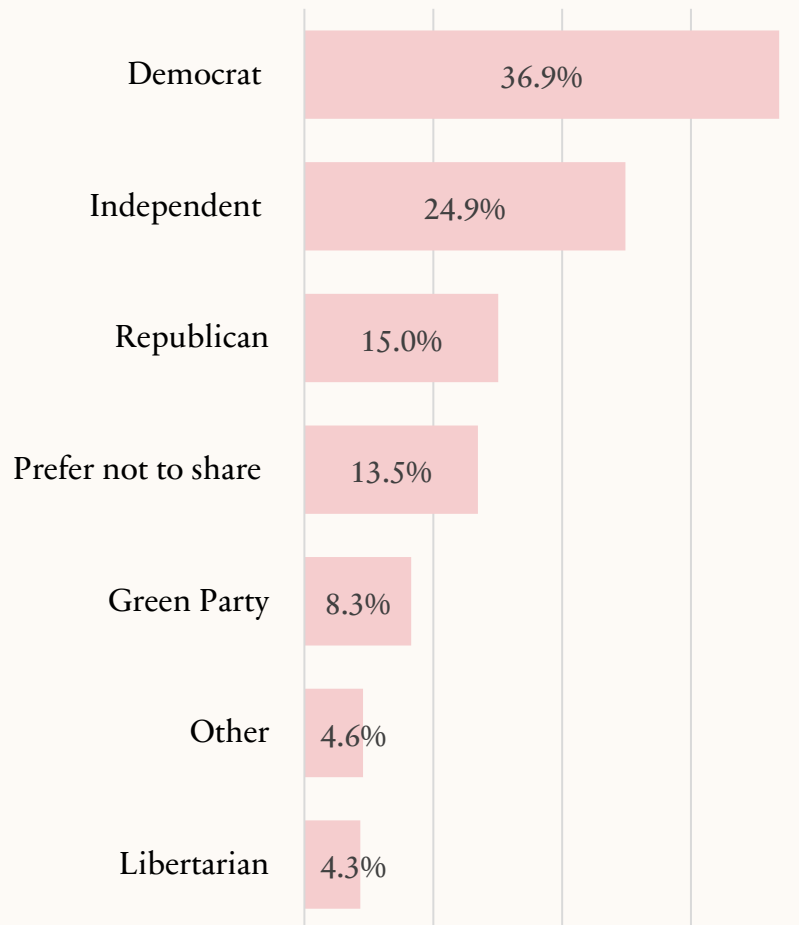


DEMOGRAPHICS

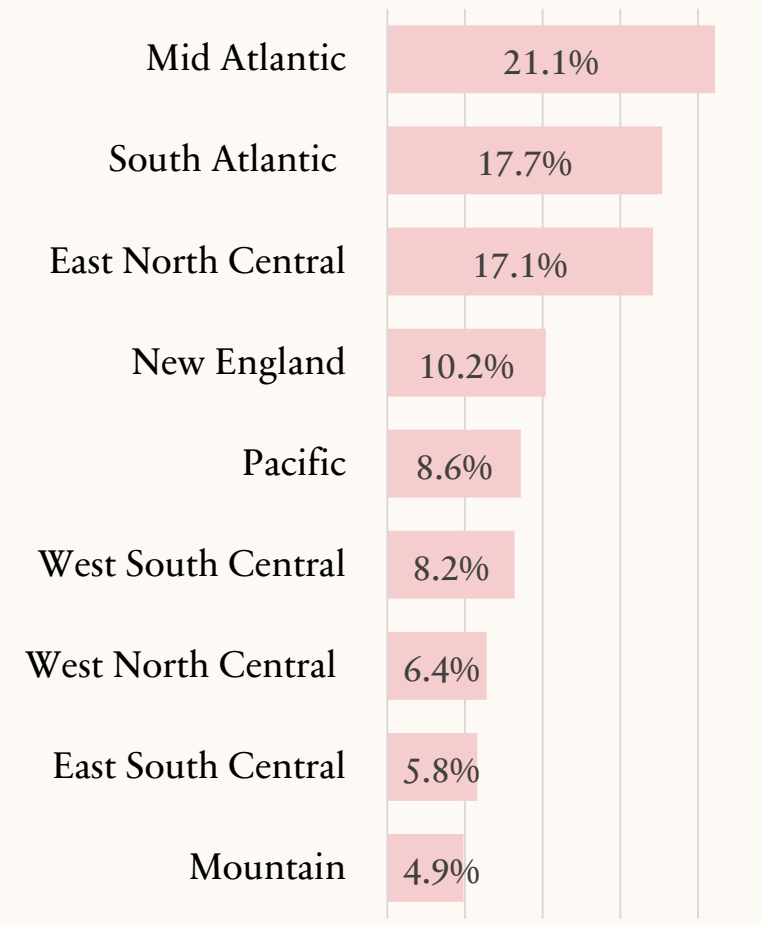
Religious Affiliation



Political Affiliation

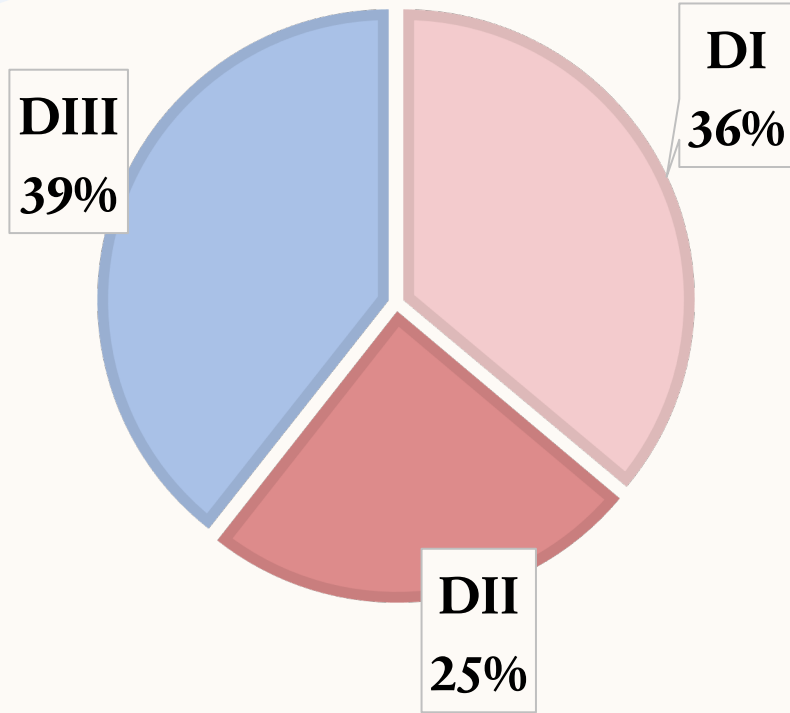


US Region

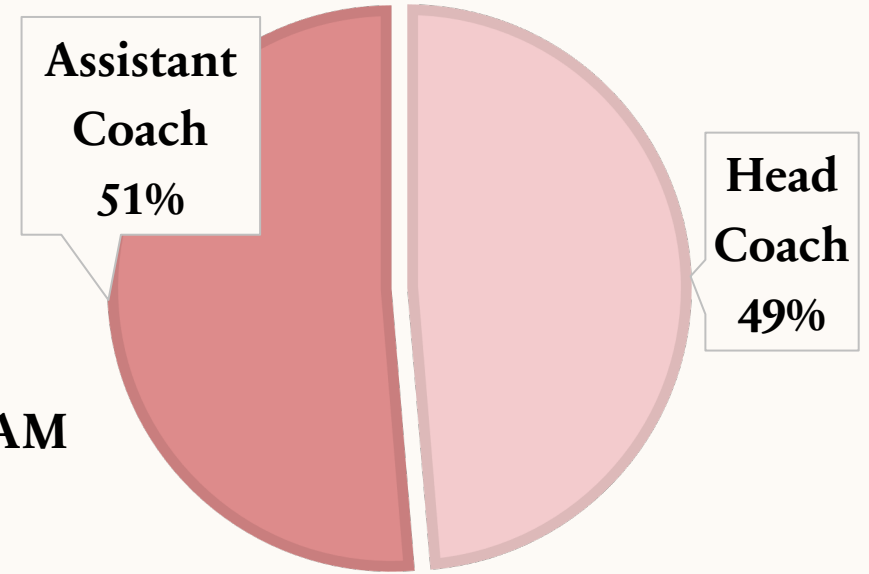


COACH FACTORS

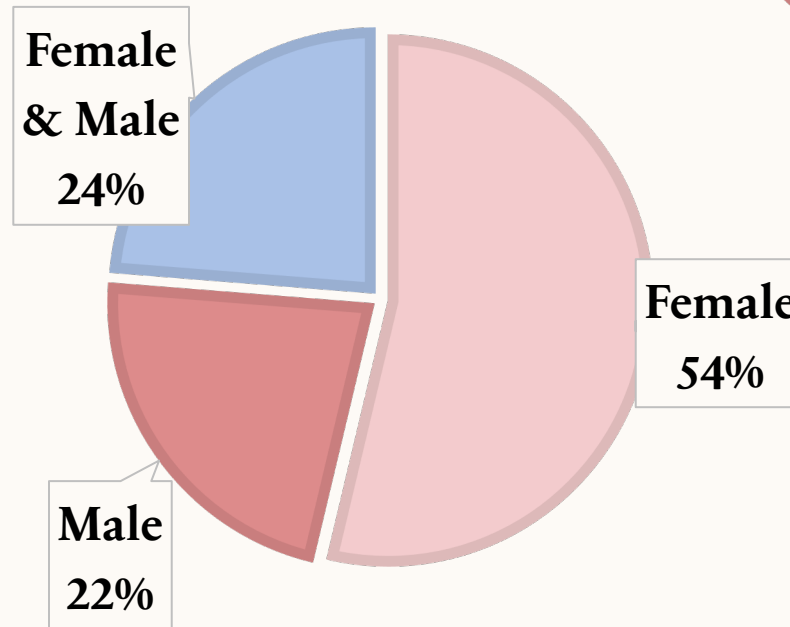
NCAA DIVISION



COACH TITLE

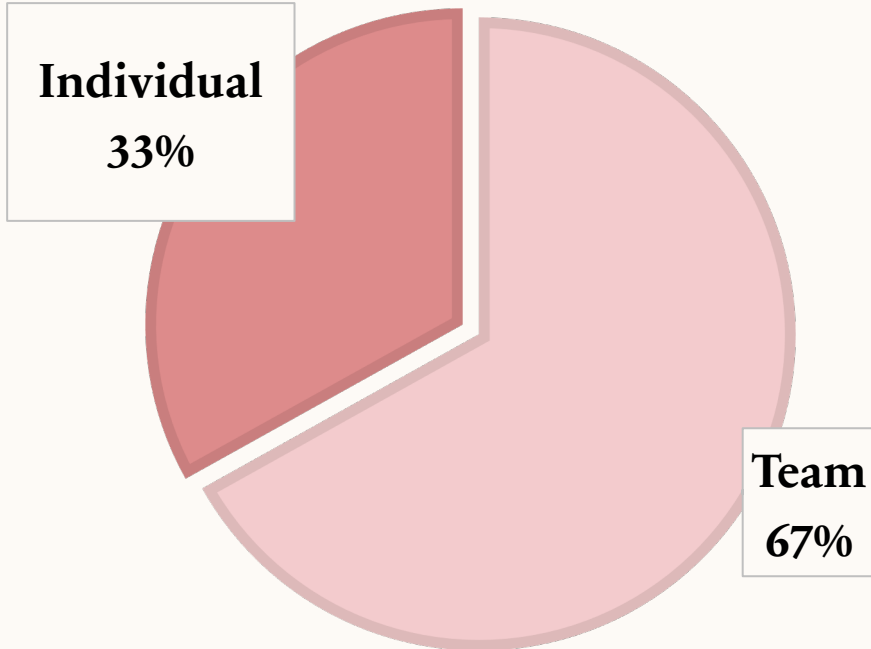


SEX OF SPORT TEAM

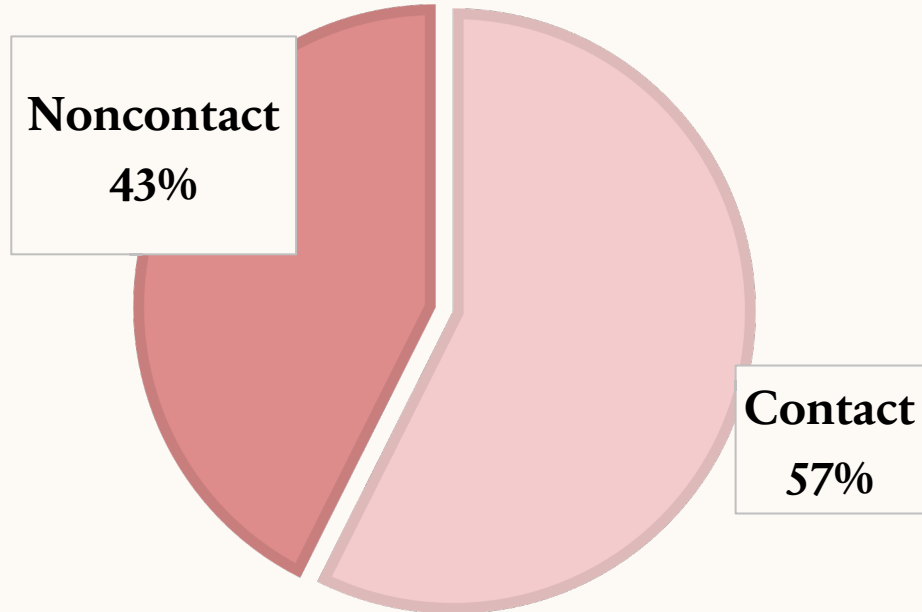


COACH FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL VS. TEAM SPORT



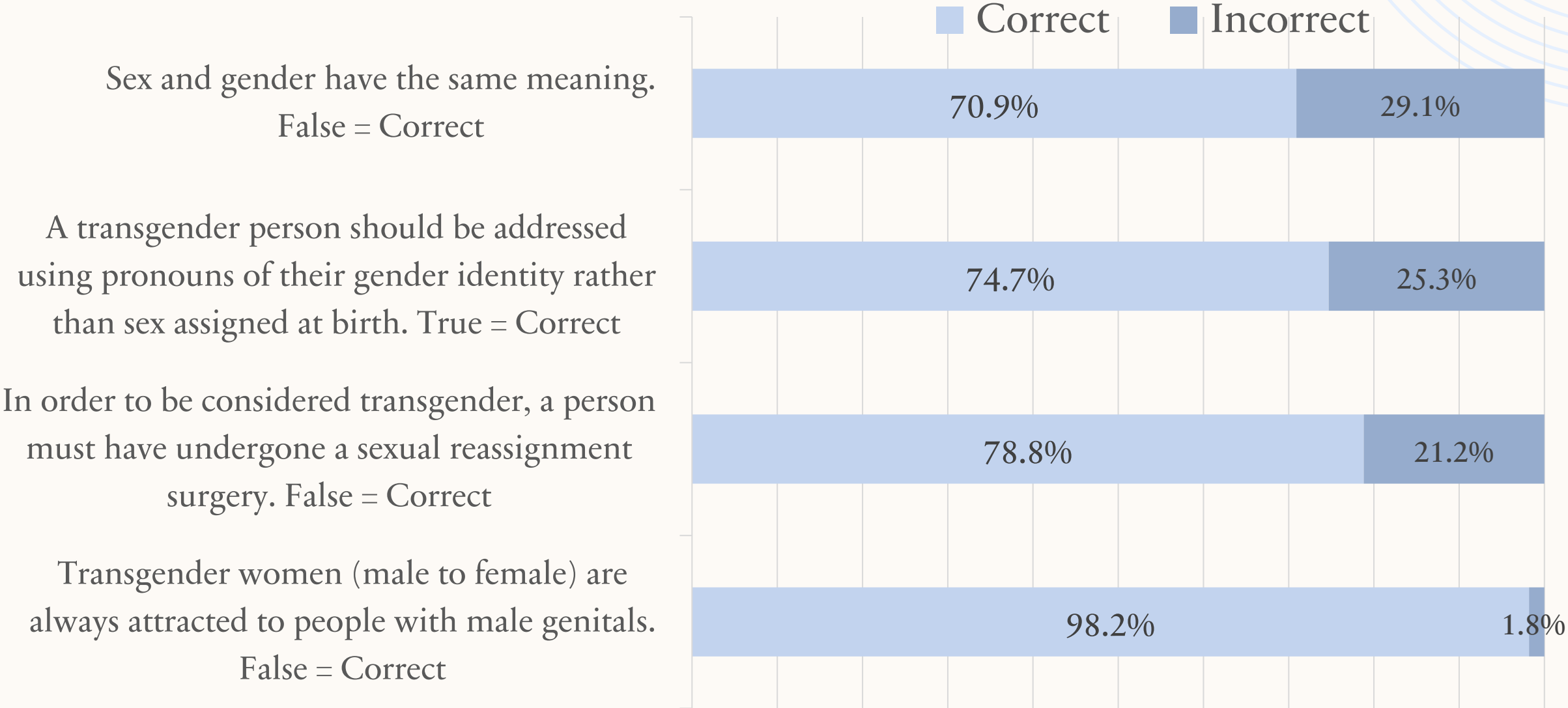
CONTACT VS. NONCONTACT SPORTS





FINDINGS

KNOWLEDGE ON GENDER IDENTITY



EXPOSURE TO LGBT INDIVIDUALS

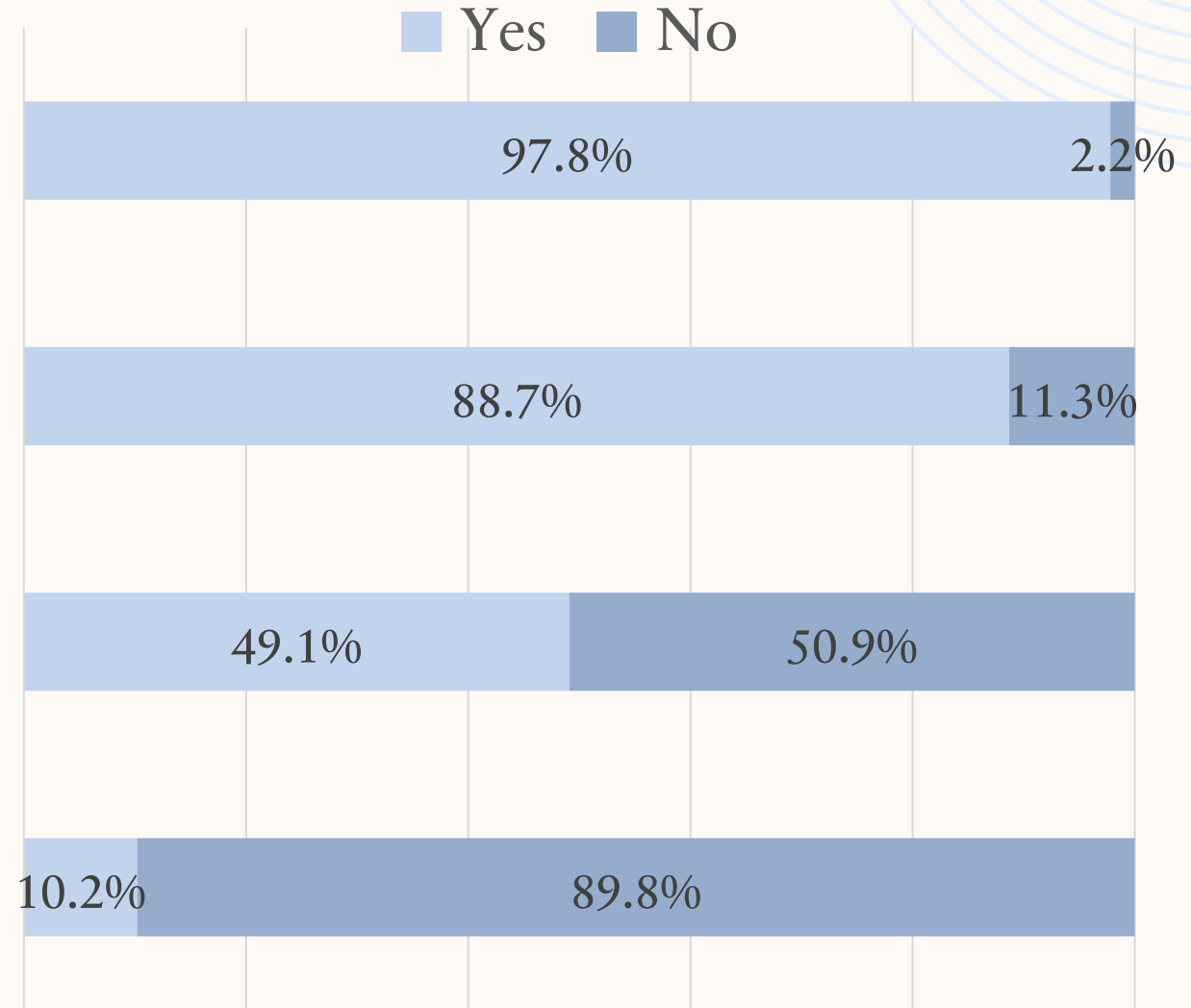
15

Do you have any acquaintances, peers, colleagues, friends, or family members who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual+?

Have you coached any athletes who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual+?

Do you have any acquaintances, peers, colleagues, friends, or family members who are transgender?

Have you coached any athletes who are transgender?



INTENTIONS IN COACHING

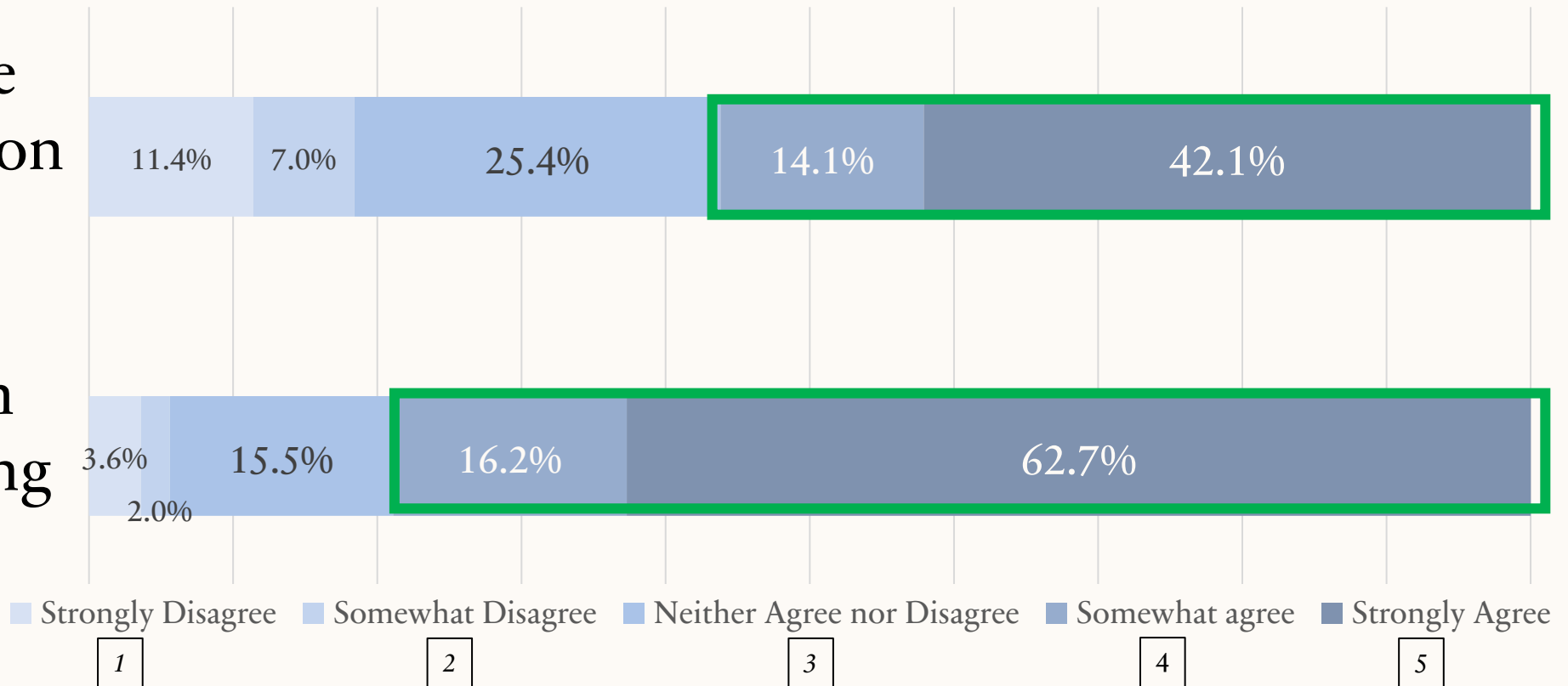
If an athlete I coached told me they were transgender...

...I would welcome their participation on the team.

$M = 3.69$ $SD = 1.37$

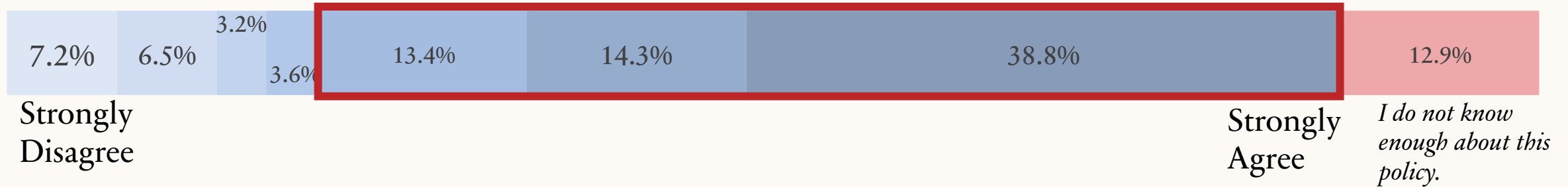
...I would create an inclusive, welcoming environment for them.

$M = 4.33$ $SD = 1.04$

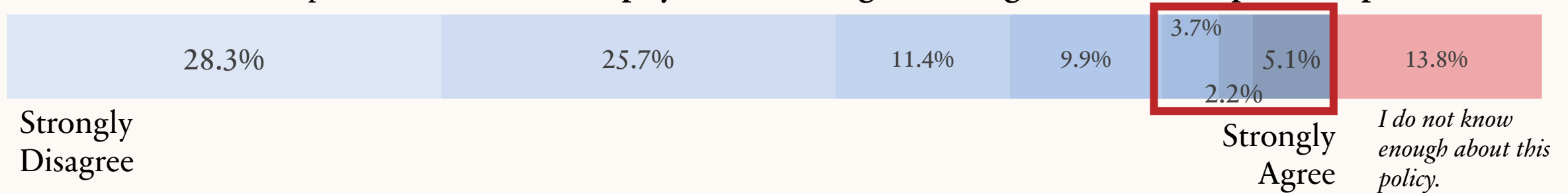


BELIEF ON UNFAIR PHYSICAL ADVANTAGE

Transgender women, who have completed the steps for participation outlined by the NCAA Policy on Transgender Student Athlete Participation, **hold an unfair physical advantage over cisgender women in sport competition.**



Transgender men, who have completed the steps for participation outlined by the NCAA Policy on Transgender Student Athlete Participation, **hold an unfair physical advantage over cisgender men in sport competition.**

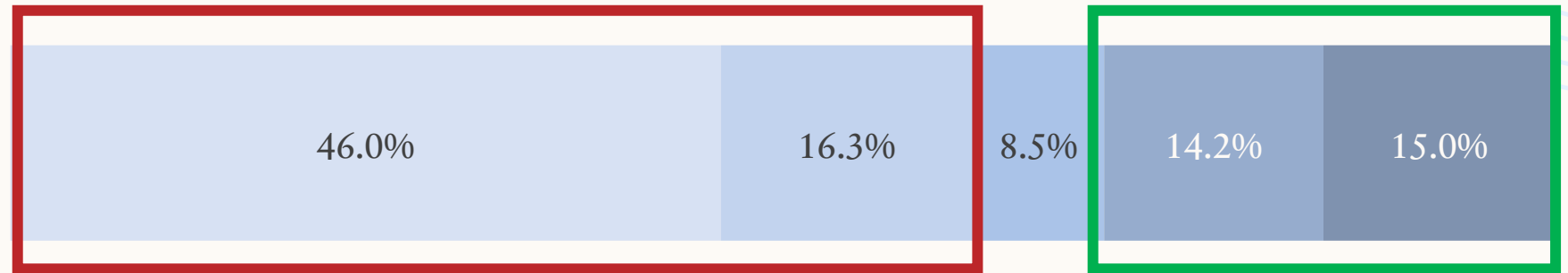


Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 7 Strongly agree. Coaches were provided with a link to a summary of the policy.

BELIEFS ON PARTICIPATION

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports.

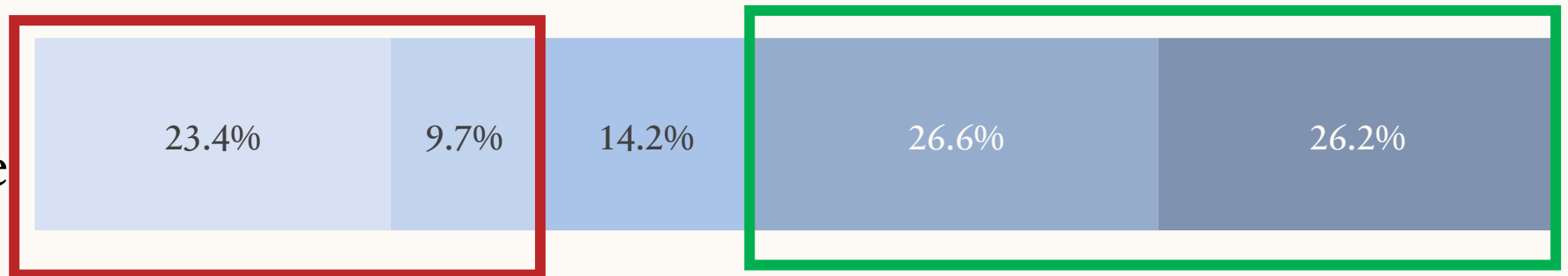
$M = 2.36$ $SD = 1.53$



Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat agree Strongly Agree

Transgender male athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate men's sports.

$M = 3.23$ $SD = 1.52$



Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree.



**COMPARISONS OF
PERCEPTION
ACROSS
VARIABLES**

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on coach and demographic factors.

Coaches who were *Non-Christian, *Queer**, *Women**, and those who coached a team sport and coached a non-contact sport were more likely to endorse more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing.**

Comparison Groups M (SD)		Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d
<u>Christian</u>	<u>Non-Christian</u>	-.93	-11.25	<.001	-.634
2.01(1.39)	2.95(1.56)				
<u>Heterosexual</u>	<u>Queer</u>	-.93	-8.99	<.001	-.621
2.23(1.49)	3.16(1.6)				
<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	-.81	-10.37	<.001	-.549
2.04(1.39)	2.85(1.59)				
<u>Individual Sport</u>	<u>Team Sport</u>	-.29	-3.36	<.001	-.190
2.21(1.49)	2.50(1.56)				
<u>Contact Sport</u>	<u>Non-Contact Sport</u>	-.25	3.09	.001	.166
2.29(1.51)	2.54(1.56)				

Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree; Nonsignificant differences included Head vs. Assistant Coach, White vs. POC

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on foundational knowledge questions.

Coaches who demonstrated knowledge of gender identity were more likely to endorse more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing.

	Comparison Groups M (SD)		Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d
Sex and gender have the same meaning. False = Correct.	<u>Correct</u> 2.76(1.55)	<u>Incorrect</u> 1.38(0.89)	1.39	18.15	<.001	.996
In order to be considered transgender, a person must have undergone a sexual reassignment surgery. False = Correct.	<u>Correct</u> 2.61(1.56)	<u>Incorrect</u> 1.43(0.92)	1.18	17.65	<.001	.812
Transgender women (male to female) are always attracted to people with male genitals. False = Correct.	<u>Correct</u> 2.39(1.53)	<u>Incorrect</u> 1.22(.85)	1.17	6.99	<.001	.769
A transgender person should be addressed using pronouns of their gender identity rather than sex assigned at birth. True = Correct.	<u>Correct</u> 2.63(1.54)	<u>Incorrect</u> 1.58(1.16)	1.05	14.20	<.001	.715

Note: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on exposure to LGBT individuals.

Coaches who reported knowing LGBT individuals were more likely to endorse more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing.

	Comparison Groups M (SD)		Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d
Do you have any acquaintances, peers, colleagues, friends, or family members who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual+?	Yes	No	1.03	3.82	<.001	.673
	2.38(1.535)	1.36(0.93)				
Have you coached any athletes who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual+?	Yes	No	.57	4.55	<.001	.373
	2.42(1.55)	1.86(0.27)				
Do you have any acquaintances, peers, colleagues, friends, or family members who are transgender	Yes	No	.58	7.48	<.001	.388
	2.66(1.6)	2.08(1.41)				
Have you coached any athletes who are transgender?	Yes	No	1.05	5.85	<.001	.501
	3.05(1.64)	2.29(1.49)				

Note: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Correlation with coaching intentions. 23

	Pearson correlation	p	95% Confidence Interval
If an athlete I coach told me they were transgender, I would welcome their participation on the team.	.592	<.001	.558 - .624
If an athlete I coached told me they were transgender, I would work to create an inclusive welcoming environment for them.	.406	<.001	.363 - .448

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on political affiliation.

Coaches who endorsed being Democrats were more likely to endorse more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing.

Comparison Groups M (SD)				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squared	F	p	Eta-squared
Republican	Democrat	Independent	Prefer not to share	571.837	3	190.612	97.81	<.001	.184
1.57(1.16)	3.18(1.54)	2.17(1.40)	1.76(1.21)						

Post Hoc Test Tukey HSD		Mean Difference	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence interval
Democrat	Independent	1.01	.10	<.001	.76 – 1.25
	Republican	1.61	.11	<.001	1.32 – 1.90
	Prefer not to share	1.42	.12	<.001	1.11 – 1.72
Independent	Republican	.61	.12	<.001	.30 -.92

Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree.

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on Sex of Athletes Coached.

Coaches who endorsed coaching female athletes were more likely to neutral/endorse more positive perceptions of transgender women competing.

Comparison Groups M (SD)			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squared	F	p	η^2
<u>Male Athlete</u>	<u>Female Athlete</u>	<u>Male & Female Athlete</u>	113.56	2	56.78	24.89	<.001	.033
1.95(1.34)	2.62(1.58)	2.23(1.50)						

Post Hoc Test Tukey HSD		Mean Difference	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence interval
Female	Female & Male	.39	.098	<.001	.16 - .62
	Male	.67	.099	<.001	.44 - .90

Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree.

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports – Differences in perceptions based on NCAA Division.

Coaches who endorsed being DIII coaches were more likely to endorse more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing.

Comparison Groups M (SD)			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squared	F	p	η^2
<u>D I</u>	<u>D II</u>	<u>D III</u>	130.9	2	65.45	28.84	<.001	.039
2.29 (1.48)	1.97 (1.34)	2.72 (1.62)						

Post Hoc Test Tukey HSD		Mean Difference	Std. Error	p	95% Confidence interval
D III	D I	.43	.09	<.001	.21 - .64
	D II	.76	.10	<.001	.52 - .99

Notes: Likert scale 1 Strongly disagree to 5 Strongly agree.

Summary- Who is endorsing more neutral/positive perceptions of transgender women competing in collegiate sports?

- Coaches who demonstrated knowledge of gender
- Coaches who endorsed knowing LGBTQ+ individuals
- Coaches who intend to welcome transgender athletes to their team
- Women
- DIII coaches
- Coaches of female teams
- Democrats
- Non-Christian coaches
- Queer coaches



**What factors account
for the most variability
in perceptions?**

Transgender female athletes should be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sports

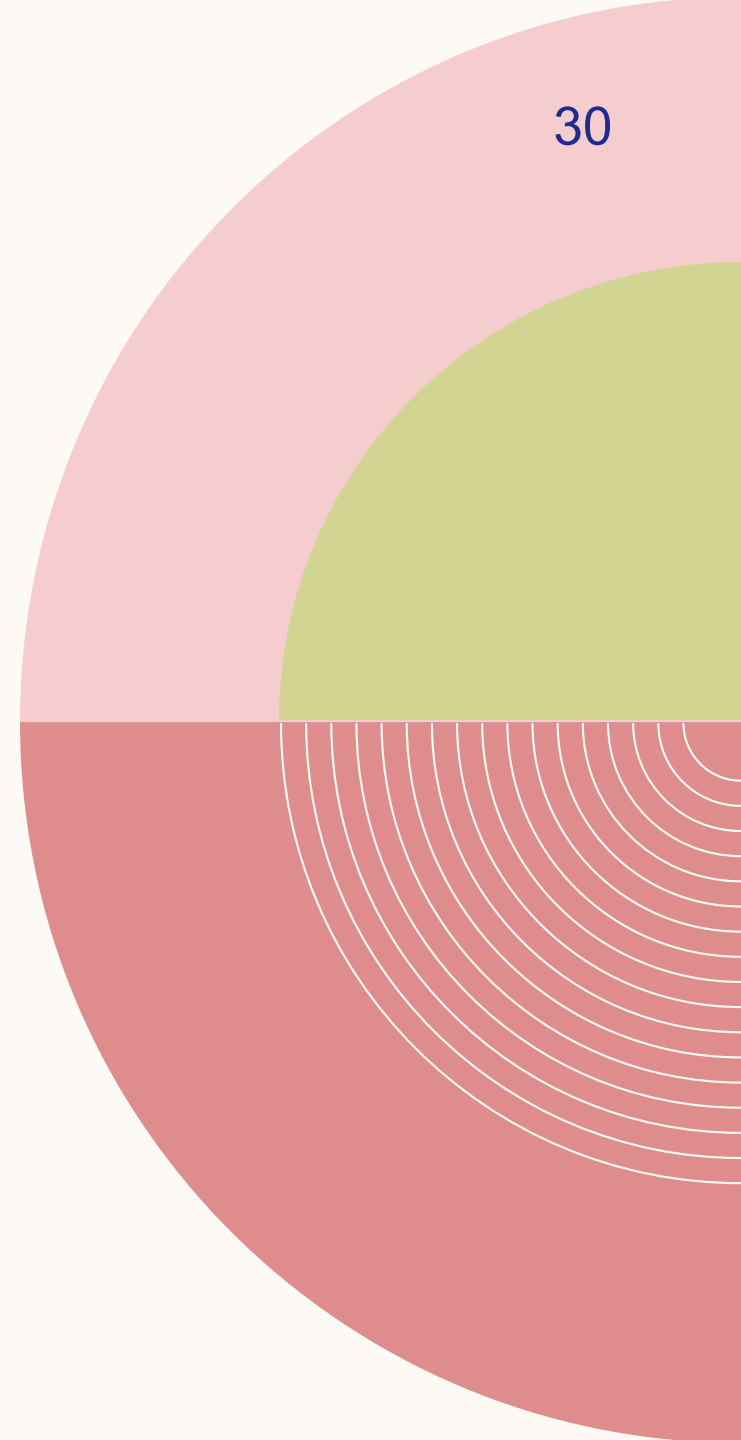
– Stepwise linear regression including knowledge, exposure, coach and demographic factors, and coaching intentions.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Beta	Adjusted R Squared	p
	B	SE			
1. Coach Intention - If an athlete I coached told me they were transgender, I would welcome their participation on the team.	.539	.032	.463	.373	<.001
2. Knowledge- Sex and gender have the same meaning.	.445	.097	.124	.400	<.001
3. Coach gender identity. –Man	-.438	.073	-.140	.419	<.001
4. Religious affiliation- Christian.	-.358	.077	-.114	.433	<.001
5. Political Affiliation – Independent.	-.453	.088	-.131	.439	<.001
6. Political Affiliation – Prefer not to share.	-.611	.129	-.114	.447	<.001
7. Political Affiliation – Republican.	-.326	.115	-.080	.451	.005

QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY

The degree to which **coaches intend to welcome a transgender athlete on their team** accounted for the most variance in their beliefs of whether transgender women should compete in collegiate sports, followed by **knowledge on sex and gender, coach being a man, and coach being Christian.**

The overall sample, on average, did not indicate support for transgender women competing in collegiate women's sport.
 $M = 2.36$ (Somewhat disagree).



QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

We would greatly appreciate you describing **the reasoning for your beliefs** regarding the participation of transgender female and male athletes in sports. In answering this open--ended question, please tell us about the **WHY/HOW** you have the beliefs you do.

1359 responses

Average word count of 58 per response

Two Coders, One Critical Friend

Thematic Analysis (Braun et al., 2016)

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THEMES

**SPORT IS
COMPETITIVE
AND MUST BE
FAIR.**

**A NEED TO
PROTECT
(CIS)
WOMEN'S
SPORTS.**

**SPORT'S
ROLE IN
SOCIETY.**

**OUR ROLE
AS
COACHES.**

**TRANSGENDER
IDENTITY IS
INVALID.**

**TRANSGENDER
RIGHTS ARE
HUMAN RIGHTS**

**I AM NOT
SURE WHAT
I BELIEVE.**

Sport is competitive and must be fair.

Transgender women athletes have an unfair athletic advantage.

"...transgender women still have an genetic advantage over natural born females (AKA longer/stronger bones & muscles, bigger hearts, bigger lung capacity, faster recovery time before transition) which I don't think is fair to the women who can't train to get those advantages."

Rules are essential for competitive fairness.

*"Sports are, in part, about competition. Regarding competition, there **are rules in place to assure an equal playing floor for those participants.** For example: age groups, weight classes, past performance all comes into play when deciding who competes against who."*

Need to create new competitive categories.

*"Trans men and trans women should be given a venue to participate because everyone has the right to live the person they are. **That could be in male sports or in a separate category.**"*

A Need to Protect (Cis)Women's Sports

Inclusion undermines Title IX.

“Allowing males who id as females undermines the very fabric and bases of Title IX. If a genetic female wants to participate against males whether or not they id as male or not is fine if they can compete. Women’s sports are for women period. Not for delusional males seeking fame.”

Inclusion is disruptive for sport environments.

*“I do not support transgender females in female sports. Period. I think it can (not always but at times) give those athletes an unfair advantage and because not all transgender females would have undergone surgery, **I think that can situation in a locker room can also be a lot for female athletes.**”*

Sport's role in society

A vehicle for health and development.

“Sports are an amazing opportunity for us to grow, gain confidence, create community, and develop resilience plus many other life skills. These skills can really only be garnered if we are able to participate as a true expression of who we are.”

A vessel for inclusivity.

*“As a society, we have always chosen exclusion as a knee jerk reaction to those who are different. In baseball and basketball we started with the negro leagues until people could agree that race shouldn't divide us. Sports play a valuable role in teaching us about our differences, and despite our many differences, sports has a way of showing us the things we also have in common. **Sports can be a vessel that changes the mindset of the world, and has the potential to empower members of the LGBTQ+ community across the globe.** So I say let's choose inclusion first!”*

Our purpose as coaches.

Support and advocate for athletes.

“Most importantly it is our job as coaches to support any and all athletes we come into contact with.”

Be allies to transgender athletes.

“I think we as coaches need to go out of our way to make space for them and foster an environment that accepts them and other marginalized/under-represented groups in our sport.”

Transgender identity is invalid.

Being transgender violates biology.

“There are two genders: man and woman and you are born one of those. You cannot change your gender and genetic makeup.”

Being transgender goes against God.

*“God created everyone in His image and He doesn’t make mistakes. Transgender people try to ‘fix’ God’s mistake themselves, but **what they’re actually doing is blatantly rebelling against God** and giving into their sinful nature.”*

Being transgender is a mental illness.

“Transgender people are mentally ill, lost souls.”

Transgender rights are human rights.

Inclusion is the basis of human rights.

“People's human rights are the most important thing and that supersedes any supposed “unfairness” of sport participation.”

Transgender men are men; transgender women are women.

“My reason is that men's sports teams are for men and trans men are men. Trans women are women and should play on women's teams. The arguments against trans participation lack any basis in science/biology and usually are rooted in transphobia and misogyny.”

Transgender athletes have the human right to play sports.

“Nobody goes through that much criticism from society and possibly their loved ones to participate in sports so they have a better chance at winning.. Transgender individuals receive so much backlash for just being who they are, why would we take away possibly their only escape. Athletics gave me so much, a place that I could be myself and work towards something, a sense of purpose. Everyone should get that opportunity.”

I am not sure what I believe.

Insufficiently educated.

"I do not have enough education in the area to formally state my stance."

Need more research.

*"I also feel that there needs to be **more research and discussion** at the governing body level (NCAA, USA Olympic Committee, etc.) about what procedures and policies need to be put in place to not only protect the transitioning athlete, but also represents a fair playing field for cis gender athletes."*

Conflicting values.

*"Transgender women participating in women's sports is a highly complicated issue. **On one hand, I feel that simply being transgender should not prevent you from participating in the sport you love. I fully support inclusivity and believe we should never discriminate based on gender, sexual orientation or race. On the other hand, I do feel that transgender women CAN (not always) have an "unfair" athletic advantage over cisgender women in sport. Again, it is a complicated issue and I am glad that I am not the one making the final decisions on this.**"*

IMPLICATIONS

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Who is believing what? What is their reasoning for their beliefs? What factors might be contributing to these beliefs?

- **Belief:** Transgender women should not be allowed to participate in collegiate women's sport.
- **Who:** More likely to be Men, Christian Individuals, non-Democrat, DI & DII coaches, Coaches of male athletes.
- **Factors Associated:**
 - Less willing to actually coach transgender athletes.
- **Reasoning:**
 - A need to protecting (cis)women's sports; Sport is about competition; Concerns of an unfair physical advantage; Believing that being transgender is invalid; Transgender women belong in sports but not with cisgender women.

IMPLICATIONS

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Who is believing what? What is their reasoning for their beliefs? What factors might be contributing to these beliefs?

- **Belief:** Neutral to supportive of transgender women competing in collegiate women's sport.
- **Who:** More likely to be Women, DIII Coaches, Non-Christian Individuals, Democrat, Coaches of female athletes.
- **Factors Associated:**
 - More knowledgeable about gender identity.
 - Personally knowing LGBT individuals.
 - More willing to actually coach transgender athletes.
- **Reasoning:**
 - Sports benefits society and athletes; Transgender rights are human rights.
 - Conflicting Values; Need for more research; Insufficiently educated; Certain rules are needed for fair competition.

THANK YOU

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