

Nine for IX Film Discussion Guide: *Coach*

Key Concepts:

- Role Model
- Racism
- Sexism
- White Privilege
- Gender
- Intersectionality
- Coaching Philosophy
- Elite Mother-Coaches
- North American Values And Sport
- Restorative Justice
- Hegemony

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the multiple ways in which Stringer is a pioneer, role model, and an agent of social change? What do you think C. Vivian Stringer’s legacy is to women’s sport?
2. C. Vivian Stringer faced a great deal of adversity during her coaching career. What are some examples of those adversities? How did Stringer respond to and cope with those challenges? What are some aspects of Stringer’s coaching philosophy that came through in the film?
3. C. Vivian Stringer is a mother-coach who coaches at the highest level of collegiate sport. Based on what you saw in the film did you see Stringer experience work-family conflict or work-life enrichment in her negotiations of being a mother-coach? How might Stringer’s success as a coach challenged or reinforced gender stereotypes about women and leadership? How do you think Stringer would respond to the idea held by many women that it is impossible to coach and have a family?
4. When radio talk show host Don Imus called her team a bunch of “nappy headed hos” it sparked a two week national media event. Scholars contend it revealed important insights about sport and the role of mass media in constructing hegemonic notions of race, class, gender and sexuality. What are your thoughts about this contention—do you agree or disagree and why?

5. Imus' comments are more revealing when they are placed within the context that scholars have long pointed out—respectful, serious coverage of women's sport in mainstream news media, especially for female athletes of Color, is greatly lacking. In one study, researchers found coverage of the Imus/Rutgers WBB team was between two to three times the coverage of the *entire* 2007 NCAA women's basketball tournament and conclude "That one white man's insult can spur more print news media coverage than one of sport's major competitions illustrates the power of the mainstream media to continually silence women's sport" (See below Cooky et al., 2010). Use social theory to explain this finding.
6. When talking to the press about what Don Imus said about her team, Vivian Stringer said "this not about the Rutgers' basketball team, it is about women." What did she mean by this statement?
7. Scholars have argued that African American female athletes have largely been silenced in sport history by the White and male dominated world of sport and sport media. What role did Stringer take in advocating for and protecting her young female student-athletes, pursuing social and corrective justice on their behalf, and giving the young women on her team a voice? What life lessons might have her athletes learned from this incident?
8. Women of color Division-I Head Coaches in women's basketball are scarce (10.4% in 2011-12), compared to the percent of African American female basketball players (47.9% in 2011-12) (See Additional Readings: Lapchick et al., 2013). Use social theory to explain the scarcity of women of color head coaches.
9. Can you think of examples in other sports where the Key Concepts listed at the beginning of this guide are present?

Additional Readings:

Brand, M. (2007). The Women of Rutgers and Social Change. *NCAA News*, 44(9), 24.

Bruening, J.E., Armstrong, K.L., & Pastore, D.L. (2005). Listening to the voices: The experiences of African American female student athletes. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 76(1), 82–100.

Cooky, C., Wachs, F. L., Messner, M., & Dworkin, S. L. (2010). It's Not About the Game: Don Imus, Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Media. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27(2), 139-159.



Gill, J. L. (2011). The Rutgers Women's Basketball & Don Imus Controversy: White Privilege, New Racism, and the Implications for College Sport Management. *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(2), 118-130.

Lapchick, R., Agusta, R., Kinkopf, N., & McPhee, F. (2013). The 2012 Racial and Gender Report Card: College Sport. Retrieved from http://www.tidesport.org/RGRC/2012/2012_College_RGRC.pdf

LaVoi, N.M., & Dutove, J. K. (2012). Barriers and supports for female coaches: An ecological model. *Sports Coaching Review*, 1 (1), 17-37.

Additional Activities:

1. Use the Web to find out what Don Imus is currently doing. Do you think he should have been permanently banned from the radio? Why or why not?
2. Watch *Venus VS*, another Nine for IX film, and compare and contrast the themes in *Coach* with those in *Venus VS*. Discuss how African American women are “othered” in the media and by those with White privilege.
3. Use the Web to learn about other instances where C. Vivian Stringer has fought for the rights of her athletes. See information about the time in a tournament game when almost every player on the Rutgers team had white tape covering different parts of their body – including their forearms and calves.
4. Watch *Pat XO*, another Nine for IX film, and compare and contrast the legacies and philosophies of two women’s basketball coaching legends—Pat Summitt and C. Vivian Stringer.
5. Go online and read both or either [Acosta and Carpenter’s \(2014\)](#) or [LaVoi’s \(2014\)](#) reports on the status of women in college coaching. When C. Vivian Stringer started her coaching career, over 90% of all college female athletes were coached by women...today that number is around 40%. Why do you think there has been a decline in the percentage of women head coaches in collegiate athletics? Read the LaVoi and Dutove (2012) article from above and learn what researchers say about the decline. What do you think can be done to reverse the decline? Visit [The Alliance of Women Coaches](#) and learn more about the organization.

Join the conversation about *Coach* in our [Nine for IX Knowledge Center Community](#) on Facebook. For our latest Nine for IX film series, visit espnW.com/nine.

