Abstract
This study administered the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ) to 30 female basketball players ranging from middle school to college (ages 12-22), to determine if college athletes would have a higher burnout score than both the high school and middle school athletes and whether or not specialization was a key factor. Results revealed that college athletes did in fact score higher on the ABQ, which showed higher rates of burnout.

Introduction
Burnout is defined as a state of mental or emotional, and physical exhaustion brought on by persistent devotion to a goal, the achievement of which is dramatically opposed to reality. Burnout, in general, is a common expression, but in the recent years, the topic has become studied scientifically in athletics. The amount of pressure put on athletes to perform at the highest level possible is a growing problem. This increase in training is pushing many athletes towards burnout. Athlete burnout is defined as the psychological, emotional and sometimes physical withdrawal from a sporting activity formerly perceived as enjoyable as a consequence of chronic stress. Burnout is causing many athletes to stop participating in their sport. Because this is developing into a larger problem in the area of sports, athletic trainers must become more aware of the possible signs and symptoms and also be able to help prevent burnout or refer an athlete if it does occur.

Methods
Each of the thirty female athletes was given the 15 question ABQ as a Google Form. The 15 questions were divided into three subcategories: emotional and physical exhaustion, accomplishment, and sport devaluation. Emotional and Physical Exhaustion is characterized by feelings of emotional and physical fatigue stemming from the psychical and physical demands associated with training and competing. Reduced Sense of Accomplishment is characterized by feelings of inefficiency and a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively regarding sports performance and accomplishments. Sports Devaluation is defined as a negative, detached attitude toward sport, reflected by lack of concern about sport and performance quality. Scores were totaled from the 3 categories and used for analysis. Along with the 15-question ABQ the athletes were also given an additional five background questions that dealt with sports specialization.

Results
As shown in Figure 1, burnout levels measured with the ABQ tended to increase with grade level. As shown in Table 1, each of the three categories demonstrated statistically significant increases in burnout from middle school to college. The largest change between the groups occurred in the ‘sport devaluation’ category (p = 0.003, d = 1.54).

Discussion
With the given results the specialization of sport and the level of play has a big impact on burnout. Most of the high school players played at least two sports, and the middle school players played up to 5. When athletes begin playing the same sport year-round, they have a lot of room for ups and downs in their game. The ups and downs could have contributed to the sports devaluation; “a negative, detached attitude toward sport, reflected by lack of concern about sport and performance quality” subcategory having such a big effect size vs. the high school and middle school teams. In this study, the hypothesis was supported in that college scored higher than both middle school and high school in the ABQ. Coaches at the college levels should be aware of athlete burnout and modify their coaching in order to lessen its impact on their players.

Table 1. Comparisons between grade level and ABQ subcategories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional &amp; Physical Exhaustion</td>
<td>Middle vs High</td>
<td>0.240</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Accomplishment</td>
<td>High vs College</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>1.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Devaluation</td>
<td>Middle vs College</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgements & References
This research was made possible by the work of Myeisha Arnold. A special thanks goes to faculty advisor Andrew Pistina.

5. Finch S. Comparison of Team and Individuals, Male and Female Athletes’ Potential for Burnout, and Coping Strategies. [Thesis]. Montreal, Quebec: McGill University; 1999.