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## More than education

How Title IX affects women in CU athletics

*By Ana Romano on November 9, 2009*

Although both male and female student athletes undergo the same sexual harassment and discrimination training as prescribed by CU's Title IX Adviser Nancy Hogshead-Makar, the reinforcement of that policy is often a much different scene in the locker room.

Kathy McConnell-Miller, head coach for the women's basketball team, said that going over CU's Title IX policy with her players is different from male teams because there is more ground to cover.

"It is important to educate not necessarily on the policy which is already in place, but if anything were to happen, what steps need to be taken in order to deal with it after the fact," McConnell-Miller said.

In addition, McConnell-Miller said she interprets her duty as coach as not only to reinforce previous training, but also to help student athletes in all aspects of life, including how to balance the pressures of academics and sports. Half of her role, McConnell-Miller said, is making herself available so that players feel more comfortable coming to her with any issues.

"I feel like I've got a great relationship with my players," McConnell-Miller said. "I think they feel safe talking, reporting on anything they might feel uncomfortable with, which is all a part of the open-door policy."

When players can find a role model in their coach, McConnell-Miller said, then they are more willing to come to her when they have an issue, essentially solving the problems surrounding miscommunication and unreported incidents in sexual harassment.

McConnell-Miller said that having been a student athlete herself, she had "been exposed to what players go through every day" and can understand the life of a student athlete.

McConnell-Miller said the objective of the coaches is to first educate the players on how not to get in a sexual harassment and discrimination situation in the first place, and then to provide open doors to players if it does.

