



2013 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES  
ARTS, HUMANITIES, & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup> TO JANUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>  
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# COMING INTO FOOTBALL: EARLY IDENTITY FORMATION ON A WOMEN'S TACKLE FOOTBALL TEAM

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Coming Into Football: Early Identity Formation on a Women's Tackle Football Team

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People commonly think of only men playing football. Football, however, has also been played by women for many years. Using a feminist interactionist framework this research examines the phenomenon of women beginning to play the game or organized tackle football. The research questions that guided this study were what factors influence women's decisions to play football?; and how do women begin to develop their identities as football players? Data was collected using participant observation over a two-year period and ten semi-structured interviews. The participants in this study indicated they often started to play football because of their love of the sport, desire to be a part of history, and/or the physicality. The women's abilities and personal characteristics, significant others and veteran players were crucial in the development of their identities as players.