

The Revolutionary Role of Women in Sports

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ABSTRACT

Since 1938, women have been making trailblazing moves in the world of sports. Babe Zaharias was an Olympic gold medalist who set many world records and founded the Ladies Professional Golf Association. Toni Stone was the first of three women to play full-time professional baseball for the Indianapolis Clowns in the formerly all-male Negro leagues. She was also the first woman to be a regular on an American major-league professional baseball club. Ann Meyers, former basketball player turned sportscaster, excelled in competitions at all levels, including those of high school, college, the Olympics, international competitions, and the professional ranks. Meyers was the first player to represent the United States on the national team while still in high school. Teresa Phillips was one of the rare female sports directors at a school that sponsored football. She was also the head women's basketball coach at TSU and Fisk University, and she coached the Tiger men for one game in 2003, becoming the first woman to lead a Division I men's basketball team. Nicole Lynn is an American sports agent who was the first black woman to represent an NFL draft choice. Wilma Rudolph a sprinter from the United States who, after winning the track and field events at the Olympic Games in 1956 and 1960, set a world record and became a global sports legend. The impact of women in sports appears to be substantial but there is still a need for representation. Did you know that there are 60 executives employed by the NBA as a whole? Did you realize that just thirteen of these CEOs are female? Women have always had to struggle for their position in society throughout history. Over the past century, women have had fewer legal rights and employment possibilities than males. A woman's primary function has traditionally been to be a wife, followed by motherhood. Women's access to and involvement in the workforce had been constrained before the 1960s. Women in today's society are breaking into the male-dominated sports business in addition to excelling in gaining more education. Women have overcome boundaries in both men and women-dominated sports.

Keywords: Athlete; Sports business; Representation

INTRODUCTION

Why is the role of women in sports so important? What impact do women have on athletes' lives? This research paper will examine how women play a role in sports and their impact on the field since there is a lack of representation in this field. There will be a breakdown of articles and publications focusing on the stories and implications that female athletes face. The purpose and backdrop of the impact of women in sports will be demonstrated through a deconstruction of six articles and one book. The paper is divided into five categories and seven

subcategories within those. Part one, The Triumphs and Challenges that Lead to Contribution, focuses on and highlights seeking equitability and the success, problems, and opportunities that come with working in the sports sector. Part one will also highlight gender equality in the sports industry. Part two, Addressing and Assessing Women's Role in the Sports Industry, discusses how to approach women who are interested in sports, workplace harassment of women, and the influence that numbers may have on women in the sports industry. Part three is the section of the research paper that focuses on representation and is titled Why Representation Matters. This

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section will examine Nicole Lynn's book *Agent You* and discuss how women have become change agents in a male-dominated sector.

Following the three study parts that analyze *The Impact of Women in Sports*, a survey was conducted to methodologically evaluate and confirm all research findings under the five categories and seven subcategories that make up those categories.

The triumphs and challenges that lead to contribution

Pursuing equity the successes, difficulties, and possibilities:

Everyone around the globe witnessed the complete fruition of the seeds of women's empowerment planted in the American sports system over 50 years ago with the passing of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, during the summer of 2019. In Lyon, France, the United States Women's National Soccer Team (USWNT) was seeking its fourth Women's World Cup victory in a definitive way. The United States Softball Team won gold at the USA International Softball Cup the same weekend, and the United States Women's Volleyball Team won the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) Nations League Championship. Serena Williams returned to Wimbledon two years after delivering her first child, placing second in the women's singles division and playing in the mixed doubles with Scottish star Andy Murray. The women's softball team from the University of California, Los Angeles, earned their 12th Women's College World Series championship. United States Women's Gymnastics Team member Simone Biles became the first person in history to successfully land a double-twisting, double-somersault, thereby elevating the sport [1-8].

Despite the success of these women athletes, they still faced many triumphs and challenges. Every day, these athletes continue to struggle for the same compensation as men who play the same sport, for protection from sexual assault and harassment, and for equal coverage, to mention a few.

Chasing equity: *The Triumphs, Challenges, and Opportunities in Sports for Girls and Women* written by EJ Staurowsky, focuses on the challenges that girls and women in sports alike face. The article also focuses on very specific topics, but in this research, we will solely focus on five, The Participation of Girls and Women in U.S. sports, The Benefits of Sports Participation for Girls and Women, Barriers that Limit and/or Hinder Participation, Title IX and Athletics Enforcement, and Women Working in the Sports Industry and Media. In order to guarantee that girls and women in America have access to sports and physical exercise, as well as to capture and improve the perspectives of female leaders and the environment for both girls and women who participate in sports in the country, it is important to make sure that they obtain significant immediate and long-term advantages from doing so. During this, the hope is to identify the barriers to progress and the steps needed to be taken to move forward.

In terms of the participation of girls and women in the U.S. sports, it has been discovered that all-female sports environments may promote exceptional as compared to mixed-

gender environments, degrees of comfort, confidence, and involvement.

Although mixed-gender teams have the power to establish support where it would not typically exist, as well as build mutual respect, admiration, and understanding, they also demonstrate that men and women athletes alike are capable and have the same potential. There has also been a development in the professional prospects for women.

A problem that can be found and can be seen as an area of concern is the representation and identifying the contribution of women in sports. In Part III representation of women in sport leadership positions and jobs in the sport industry highlights these challenges. In 2019 the NBA received a B (80.9%), the NFL received a C (74%), the MLB also received a C (70%), and the WNBA received an A+ (97.6%), these grades were based on the reports of hiring women. Unsurprisingly, the leagues that cater to sports dominated by men held a significantly lower percentage rate/grade than the Women's National Basketball Association. The WNBA is also notorious for having most of their team owners being women, as well as the majority of their general manager positions. Along with college sports, there is an uneven number when looking at progress and regression when it comes to hiring women. Following this information, due to Title IX, men's and women's sports programs were merged, but this also caused fear in women that there would be unfair treatment, and retaliation, and their jobs would be lost. For reference 124 schools were included in a study, and only 4 out of 124 of those schools received an A for practicing equity. Lastly in Sports Media, in 2017 it was reported that 62.3% of news reports were written by men while the remaining 37.7% were written by women. It is stated an issue that women who work in sports media face are that these organizations do not offer the flexibility needed to balance work and family life. It is also stated in this article that these women were subjected to frequent sexual harassment and were unable to advance in their careers due to gender-based issues [8].

Gender equality: This article focuses on the contributions of sports to women's empowerment and gender equality. Disparities in Participation, Disparities in Rewards, Disparities in Media Coverage, Lack of female role models, Use of discriminatory language, Cultural and religious barriers, and the Benefits of sport will be the writers' primary focus. Huggins and Randall believe that these issues are critical to sports' contributions to women's empowerment and gender equality. The research question provided in this article is "What is the role of sports in gender equality and women empowerment?" Huggins and Randall, the article's authors, think that knowing how sports may enhance gender equality and women's empowerment is critical. Women and girls must overcome a variety of overt and hidden hurdles to engage in sports and get the numerous advantages of physical activity. Prejudice and stereotyping of women are widespread across the world. Women and girls face several overt and covert barriers to participating in sports, which stops them from taking advantage of the many benefits of doing so and being physically active. Women face bias and stereotyping everywhere. Women athletes encounter

sexist and disrespectful language from the media and people of their communities, as well as less favorable media coverage. The sports business reflects many of today's gender stereotypes and has proven to be highly resistant to substantial gender reform. Individually, communities and organizations may empower women and girls by offering opportunities for them to participate in sports that promote self-confidence, leadership, collaborative skills, and a feeling of belonging.

This article's research methodology is based on an examination of the different problems that women and girls experience when engaging in and working in sports. Health, confidence, teamwork, role models, academic performance, employment skills, community development, economic growth, peace building, and national pride have all been recognized as problems. Each topic delves deeper into that particular difficulty and how it benefits young women and girls. One example is the confidence section, which is believed to assist women and girls by "Helping to create self-confidence, a critical component in encouraging girls and young women to take on new responsibilities and to fight the hurdles that they experience." Furthermore, involvement in sports enhances body consciousness, which has been demonstrated to alleviate stress. When it comes to self-confidence, leadership, and cooperation abilities, Huggins and Randall claim that women and girls are better prepared to deal with and meet cultural standards.

Addressing and assessing women's role in the sports industry

What is your approach: The way men see and connect to sports frequently serves as the foundation for the idea of sports fandom. To better understand female fandom, we examined how women who congregate online define and perceive sport in this study. Using Lenskyj's *Women, Sport, and Physical Activity: Selected Research Themes and Coakley's Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies* to conceptualize sport. We assessed the profiles of women bloggers who publish about sports in two online communities, BlogHer and Women talk sports, to explore women's relationships to sports from a feminist perspective. Women's interests, according to the study, are largely conveyed *via* participation rather than consumption. Additionally, because many of the women in these networks regarded participation and competition as a platform for establishing relationships and emancipating other women, they questioned conventional beliefs about the relevance of sport. Women who wrote about sports fans also fought for women's sports and offered "woman's perspective" on men's sports. We argue that these female bloggers offer a different viewpoint and may thereby challenge the masculine view of performance-driven institutionalized sports.

The article's emphasis on supremacy in competition and the system of values it promotes are problems, as is the fact that women are underrepresented in the fandom. This indicates that the gender culture in sports, with a focus on women, extends culturally to spectatorships and fandoms. Although most literature suggests that not all viewers identify as fans, spectatorship is an important aspect of fandom, and researchers have used the words interchangeably. Males regard fandom as a

ritual that supports their manhood. Because sports are frequently linked with masculinity, researchers investigated how gender affects spectatorship. Winegard and Deaner observed, for example, that whereas women were more concerned with whether a behavior was harmful or right, or fair, men were more concerned with loyalty to members of their in group. Others observed that male fans' connection with the team was stronger than female fans' identification with the team and that males reported participating in fan activities at a higher rate than women. Men were also found to be more engaged in the technical and strategic aspects of sports.

Power in numbers: The experience and attitudes of women in sports media careers were examined in the experience and attitudes of women in sports media careers, which focused on the everyday struggles and temptations faced by women in the industry. It also evaluated the liberal feminist notion that having more women in sports media will lead to greater coverage of female sports by looking at respondents' ideas and dedication in that regard. Although sports departments may have been more welcoming in the last ten years, women joining sports media continue to work in a patriarchal setting that discourages them from obtaining long-term employment. Furthermore, many survey participants appear to have accepted hegemonic attitudes, which make them less likely to support any change for women's sports' disadvantaged situation and more willing to accept their marginal status in the sector. The highlighted issue is that the "symbolic extinction" of women's sports is at least partially due to the prejudices of gatekeepers in the world of sports, the majority of whom are white males. After speaking with a variety of sports journalists about story selection, Annelies Hofers and Agnes Elling concluded that "interest," which is marketed as a "neutral" form of story selection, is frequently used by gatekeepers to justify hegemonic judgments. By upholding an "ideology of neutrality," sports journalists "permit themselves to be sexist and resistant to the coverage of women's sport while still allowing them to pretend impartiality."

This essay considers and examines the sports field, which is the most male-dominated arena in any US journalism. Women make up around 13% of those working in sports media and journalism. It is also common knowledge that women who enter sports journalism do not stay in the industry for very long, with the typical career duration being roughly ten years, and they never advance to higher levels of management. This article also identifies sports as a reinforcing male hegemony, promoting the notion that males are more deserving of dominance in the sport and (concomitantly) culture, and so more appropriate for it. The culturally established gender system in the United States, which considers males as "logical" and "thinking," and hence as naturally adapted to dominate the culture for its advantage, is primarily built on male hegemony. Women are biologically responsible and domestically concerned, making them ideally suited to leadership roles. This dichotomy infuses injustice into all societal structures.

Women in sports media have faced and will continue to encounter the same impediments to career longevity as have been recorded in several previous studies conducted over the last few decades, even though they are content with their

professional choices. According to the study, there are still significant challenges to overcome. It has been assumed that women must exhibit resiliency to deal with a hostile workplace. The topic of why so many women abandon professions in sports media remains unanswered. This was characterized by a lack of advancement in the job and the detrimental implications in their lives outside of the office. More has to be done to teach both men and women entering sports media careers to understand and reject the male hegemony embedded in the status quo's practices and sensible thinking. A real conversation about how sports are defined in American culture, as well as the costs associated with such classifications, is also required.

Addressing job misconduct in the national football league

Women executives and off-the-job misconduct by high-profile employees: A Study of National Football League Team Organizations is essentially about how to prevent workplace misbehavior in companies that support professional sports when it involves women in executive positions or responsibilities. The link between gender composition and the executives of team organizations, for example, it was discovered that businesses with a high proportion of female executives had fewer player arrests. We propose that a critical mass of female executives impacts workplace culture, strategic objectives, and strategic decision-making, all of which have the potential to influence employee misbehavior. To be clear, we do not experimentally test these theoretical ideas in our study. The issue/area of interest is the link between subsequent misconduct by players on particular teams and the gender split of team organizations in a men's professional sports league, as well as research on employee wrongdoing that identifies various organizational-level aspects, such as strong corporate cultures and ethical decision-making settings, that aid in avoiding, restricting, or resolving employee misbehavior. We found that teams with a sizable proportion of female CEOs were successful. In comparison to similar groups that did not have a critical mass of women on the TMT, they made 33 fewer arrests each year and had a 15% lower risk of getting arrested the following year. These are small results, but they are important to genuine team enterprises.

Utilizing a dataset of NFL club organizations from various sources, a test of hypotheses and multiple-level logistic regression analysis were performed to address the study topic. A model of fixed predictors and a few random intercepts were used in the multilevel regression analysis, and the dependent variable tracked how many arrests each squad had during the year. A defined critical mass of female executives was set at 3 female vice presidents, and this resulted in an analysis that underwent numerous rigorous checks and produced a non-significant coefficient of -29. It is said that no matter how the abilities were assessed, the end outcome was the same. To summarize, work misbehavior by high-profile employees is not commonplace in professional sports teams, media companies, and public institutions. The study suggests that looking for preventative and corrective remedies to misconduct are essential structural solutions that are put in place to ensure a large number of women in top management and executive roles.

Why representation matters

The journey of women in sports: Agent you, show up, do the work, and succeed on your own terms tells the story of Nicole Lynn's journey to becoming a sports agent in a typically male-dominated business. Lynn is the first woman to represent one of the top three NFL draft picks in history. In this book, she outlines the measures she took to become the accomplished woman she is now. In her prologue, she makes the book's purpose extremely clear at the period it was written. It's time to stand up for yourself, make your agreements, govern your own life, and establish your standards. It's time to speak for you. The importance of women's representation is underlined in Chapter 7, Get comfortable with losing. Nicole relates the tale of how she found her first collegiate athlete. She goes into detail about how she tried to reach him on social media, text him, and called him but was unsuccessful. This prompted her to drive to his game and personally introduce herself. After a six-hour trip, she arrived at the game without a ticket and sat in her car until the game ended and he walked out. After a long wait and it starting to rain, the player came out and introduced herself, and he laughed in her face. This experience convinced her that she wasn't made out for the industry and that she couldn't do it. It is so uncommon for us to see women and minorities having a position in athletics that this player couldn't believe a woman could do the job of representing him.

It is easy to observe that women's possibilities to participate in and influence sports have expanded considerably in the majority of post-industrial countries. Female leaders' active and continual fight for equal rights and opportunity is one of the contributing factors to this success. Numerous historical analyses have shed light on a variety of aspects of the contributions that significant women made to the development of women's sports and the athletic landscape for women. Sociological analyses of how female pioneers and significant women within sports organizations experience and grow their work and institutional positions are less prevalent to achieve gender equality and provide women with a fairer share of organizational resources. The research challenge in this article is finding how women might be perceived as significant agents of change, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as sports. The top managers in coaching, on the other hand, emphasized that the most important job in their role as change agents was to initiate organizational policies and measures to employ more women into senior positions.

Chapter 9 of the book, Ditch Imposter Syndrome, which addresses the equity and inclusion of minorities and women in sports, is based on experiences. The NFL Draft in 2019 and Nicole's ability to access the greenroom are also discussed in this chapter. She notes that the greenroom is normally designated for the country's best twenty-five players. She reveals that she was hoping for a friendly stranger to lead the way out or even for someone to ask her to dispose of their rubbish. Following this, she proceeded to critique her wardrobe choice and began to beat herself up over it. Nicole immediately noticed she was the only female agent in the room, as well as the youngest. The impostor syndrome finally manifested itself as a result of this. When the draft started, Nicole writes that she was aware that her client

Quinnen Williams wouldn't go in the first round at number one, but he also didn't go at number two. "I'll be revealed as an Imposter-I'm not meant to be here," she writes. I was a failure before I even started [6]. This experience is relevant to the theme of The Equity and Inclusion of Minorities and Women in Sports since no woman in history has ever broken the barrier and taken a player through the first round of the NFL Draft.

Agent you: Show Up, Do The Work, and Succeed on Your Own Terms is a book that encourages readers to discover their purpose and follow it, not only for women but for everyone, regardless of the vocation they are pursuing. This book instills in you the ability to face your fears head-on and never undervalue those who you may see as being the underdog. I was impressed by the genuine and a raw sentiment expressed in the writing and was filled with love and happiness after finishing this book.

Agency of change

The research challenge in this article understands how women might be viewed as significant change agents, particularly in traditionally male-dominated field such as sports. The top managers in coaching, on the other hand, emphasized that the most important job in their role as change agents was to initiate organizational policies and activities to increase the number of women in senior positions. To summarize, some of the article's primary points are Gendering Processes and "Minoritizing"; Powerful Women as Change Agents; Powerful Women at the National Level: Mandates and Practices; A Female Pioneer in Local Sports: Mandates and Practices; Gender and Power Negotiations: Similarities and Distinctions. These primary areas of interest significantly contribute to the study topic, The Equity, and Inclusion of Minorities and Women in Sports. The paper concludes that when women are viewed as change agents for male-dominated sports cultures, there is a strong link that is anchored in committing to the advancement of gender equality in sports organizations. It is also asserted that women can discern dominating power dynamics and plot tactics to achieve respect and power. Finally, it is argued that these evaluations of women's political activities demonstrate women who are devoted, knowledgeable, and confident.

This article's approach is based on three separate studies that looked at the influence of gendering, sports politics, and coaching. The first research was based on an interview with Olga Olaussen, a female pioneer in local sports, in 2005. Ms. Olaussen was the first woman to run a major sports club, and the interview focused on how she was the most powerful woman amongst her male colleagues, as well as what it meant to be a woman in a cultural minority. In-depth interviews with both men and women who were members of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports' board of directors made up the second research. Finally, the third research looked at the gendering of top-level coaching, with the purpose of learning and understanding why there were so few women in the coaching industry. These polls revealed that women performed 10 times more and were more effective than males [4].

This article concludes that there is a strong correlation between women being seen as change agents for male-dominated sports cultures and their dedication to advancing gender equality in such organizations. It is also asserted that women can discern

dominating power dynamics and develop approaches to win respect and earn the authority they deserve. Finally, it is argued that the political practices of women in these analyses reflect women who are devoted, competent, and confident

METHODOLOGY

Research design

A poll was created to gather the thoughts of women who now work in the sports business. The following are the queries that were posed in this survey: What is your name?; How can women who work within the sports industry set themselves apart from their male counterparts? If you could describe your experience as a woman working in the sports industry, please do so; What has been the most challenging part about being a woman in a male-dominated space?; What does it mean to you to be a woman in sports?; What women in sports do you look up to?; What do you think is the biggest barrier in driving the visibility of women's sports?; Where do you see women in sports 10 years from now? These questions were designed to elicit meaningful responses that would take time for anyone completing the poll to respond to.

Several responses that stuck out to me, from a few questions, are as follows, "If you could describe your experience as a woman working in the sports industry, please do so." The creator of the company Sports mist, which was established to promote women in sports, Saria Parker, had an excellent solution to this concern. "As a woman in athletics, I have generally had positive experiences. I enjoy the profession because I love sports, and although the individuals can be challenging at times to deal with, I wouldn't exchange my experience for anything. I know it's shaping me into the person I'm destined to be, therefore I'm grateful". Other responses shared were also inspiring and groundbreaking, "Being a woman in sports means everything to me; I believe it's amazing when women can dominate a masculine area.; I believe that women in the sector may distinguish themselves from men by assisting other women to achieve. If you're ahead of one another, bring that individual up with you, lift as you climb".

Materials

The survey was created using a free online survey creator, freeonlinesurveys.com, which was located using Google. Participants were sent an email with a link to the survey. Long-answer questions and questions with a linear scale were also offered.

Participants

Women, who work in all aspects of the sports industry, including the front offices of leagues, agencies, and player personnel, make up all of the participants. The participants were able to explain all of their views adequately by answering extended response and linear scale model questions.

*All participants left anonymous.

Qualitative research

The qualitative study was done with ten women with a combined 20 years of experience in the sports sector. Participants were asked about their experiences as women working in sports. The findings revealed that the majority of participants believe that being

that being a woman in sports means everything to them as they go through their professions.

Additionally, they experienced what it was like to be molded into the person they were meant to be. Many of the participants had life-changing and wonderful experiences.

RESULTS

According to reports, women are subjected to this kind of prejudice in sports all across the world. According to United Nations Resolution 58/5, which was passed in 2003, governments are encouraged to embrace sports to enhance education, health, development, and peace. Both UNESCO and UNDP have recognized the value of sport as a vehicle for empowerment and development, and both organizations have supported programs that utilize sports to do so.

In the United States, sports are mainly institutionalized and corporate, with a focus on competitiveness. As a result, studies of female fandom must include institutional structures and cultural practices that organize gender. Female fans, particularly those who follow traditionally masculine sports, have the potential to challenge male domination and modify sports' gendered hierarchy. Feminist academics investigated the relationship between the "second wave" women's movement's societal upheaval and women's increased involvement. In 1972, the United States Congress established Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds. Girls and women have participated in sports at a higher rate than ever before since that time. More than 3 million girls participate in high school sports, 200,000 women play intercollegiate sports, and more and more female executives and head coaches are in high-ranking positions. Despite these changes, women's participation in sports has not called the values associated with sports into doubt. In addition, it is believed that women's participation in sports feminizes the activities and makes them appear distinct. Below you will find the results of the linear portion of the survey (Figure 1).

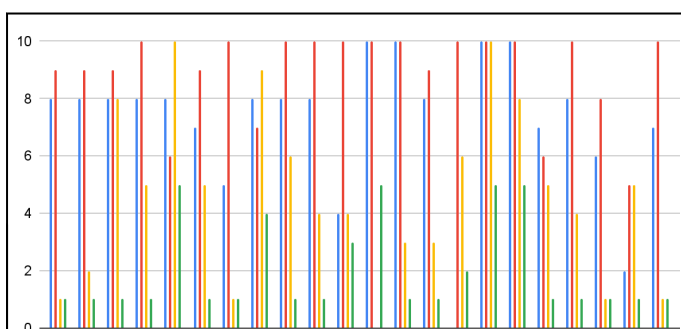


Figure 1: Linear portion of the survey. **Note:** (■): On a scale of 1-10 how positive has experience been as a woman in sports industry; (■): How likely do you think women working in the industry will grow positively in the next 10 years; (■): How often as a woman in sports have you had to defend your integrity and knowledge in your field?; (■): How often do you work harder to set yourself apart from your male counterparts?.

DISCUSSION

Why is women's sports involvement so pivotal? What effects do women have on the lives of athletes? Because there is a dearth of representation in this profession, this research paper will look at how women play a part in sports and their influence on the field. There will be a breakdown of articles and publications concentrating on the tales and repercussions those female athletes encounter. The goal and context of *The Impact of Women in Sports* were illustrated through a deconstruction of six articles and one book. The pursuit of equity and the successes, issues, and opportunities that come with working in the sports industry are highlighted in Part One, "The Triumphs and Challenges that Lead to Contribution." Gender equality in the sports business was also emphasized in Part 1. Part two, *Addressing and Evaluating Women's Roles in Sports*, examined how to approach women who are interested in sports, workplace harassment of women, and the impact that statistics may have on women in sports. Part three of the study report is titled *Why Representation Matters* and focuses on representation. This part looked at Nicole Lynn's book *agent you* and how women have become change agents in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

CONCLUSION

Women have been making innovative steps in sports since 1938. Women tend to have a significant effect on athletics, yet there is still a need for representation. The NBA as a whole employs 60 executives, did you know that? Did you know that just thirteen of these CEOs are women? Throughout history, women have always had to fight for their place in society. Over the last century, women have had fewer legal rights and job opportunities than men. The major role of a woman has historically been that of a wife, followed by motherhood. Before the 1960s, women's access to and participation in the labor force was limited. In addition to excelling in higher education, women in today's culture are breaking into the traditionally male-dominated sports industry. Women have and will continue to break down barriers in both male and female-dominated sports.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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