
Women's Participation in American Sport

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After George Washington's time sports did develop for men, and as the interest grew some inclusions were made for women in the more gentle of sports or the social sports. In the latter half of the 1800's sports grew in popularity and interest for both men and women as spectators and participants, The activities for men were more varied, more vigorous and more competitive than those for women.

The mood for women's activities was sometimes the determining factor of what was good. Quite generally there were limitations in activity of a sports nature for women up to and through most of the 18th century.

Those conditions or events which have given quality, distinction and credibility to sport for men and boys have served, at the same time, to give a good name to similar sport activities for women and girls.

In the early 1900's the mood was that girls in high schools and women in colleges and universities located conveniently enough might responsibly, recreationally and rewardingly participate in sports on an intramural basis, extramural basis or sometimes on a so-called

interschool basis. Some problems existed or came into being when the players went into the wider realms of competition. Problems over travel, rowdy crowds, rude spectators and other detractions occurred. Sport itself or competition was considered to be the cause of all the problems. If the competition were diminished, the problems would be diminished or would be solved. So, early in the 20's the emphasis was given to play at home and stay-at-home events. If and when the girl and women players were to go beyond the walls, they were to participate in play days or sports days.

Physical educators kept a control on competition in most states, and most teacher education institutions in all states educated their prospective professionals for the idea that intercollegiate competition or high level competition was undesirable for high school girls and college women. The mood prevailed for the greater part of half a century, from 1920 until 1970.

National professional organizations, sports organizations, and committees and structures within associations have given the time, the finances and the leadership to encourage what each has believed in its own time to be the high ideal of sport for women.

There is a good attitude in the world and in the United States toward sports for women.

The sports activities of mankind are overlooked in some cases, but in most instances extensive and creditable presentation sets an excellent mood for sport to function as an expression for a full and expressive human being.

Newspapers and magazines feature stories which give credit to and recognize the distinctive qualities of sport for both men and women. When men in sport conduct themselves well as participants and as men, sport for women is well served. The public begins to become astute enough to recognize what is real sport and amateur sport, and to differentiate the authentic sport endeavors from "put-ons" and bad-mannered exhibitionism. Real sport and amateur sport must continue to be enhanced by the participants, the coaches, and the administrators.

Many events show progress for sports in the lives of Americans. The favorable conditions for sport for both men and women make for its development and enhancement. Women often figure in the whole equation and sometimes have special attention.

There are many organizations and events to accomplish the work at hand. The development of sport in general, the facilities, transportation, favorable publicity, social acceptance and clothing styles will encourage and help to carry on sport action. The quality of those who provide services, and those who direct sports will ultimately determine the nature and the quality of sport itself.

The stand is taken for women's sports. The possibility of problems is foreseen - sports for women will not be abandoned again in fear of the inherent problems.

In the past years there has been intelligent and continuous study of sport for women, its physiological factors, its sociological implications, its educational importance, and its financial and administrative obligations. Professional persons, committees and organizations have met problems, designed for progress and directed capably.

Some of the problems, which dominate the thinking of leaders today are the ones which have come up in the past. A few of these problems are common to athletic administration or sports direction in general, for both men and women. Some are unique in these times, or are unique to women.

In conferences and committee meetings they will be met and they will be solved, some of them slowly and some never completely to the satisfaction of all or the ones who have every right by calling and commitment to be the most concerned. The problems will be approached and worked on and solved by those women who are professionally educated, who believe, and who are committed. The design for our problem solving and our attainments must persist in our minds.

Sport for women will be considered in the structure and the restructure of our social and educational planning. There will be decision and there will be knowledge which will allow leaders to create deliberately and fully. Sport will be integrated with the plan and design of a

structural unity in social and educational responsibility. Sport will have a service in relation to total human objectives. The plan and the action of input will be related to the expected output both quantitatively and qualitatively. Sport will be unique to its own purposes but it will be contributive to life purposes.

Sport will continue to contribute to life in America. Sport for girls and women is an activity which is suited to their ways. Sport is expression; sport is joy; sport is appreciation; sport is socialization; sport is concern for teammate and opponent. Sport is beauty of action for the able and the willing. Sport is a way of life for girls and women. The selected and directed action of girls and women will enhance the way of life for girls and women. Their sport will be increasingly creditable. We have the knowledge; we can plan and pursue the patterns toward our objectives. The programs for schools and the activities for individuals will continue to expand the emphasis and enlarge the opportunities for expressive educational endeavors. We have our women's ways. We have the desire and the dedication.

The future is certain. We will make some certain designs for participation in women's sport in America.