

Women in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference 1920-4977

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The Pennsylvania State Normal School Athletic Association was formally organized in December, 1920, Its constitution enumerated the athletic teams permitted for both men and women. This constitution remained in effect until December, 1926 when the Board of Principals of the state normal schools decided to review the rules and regulations of the normal school conference. This revised constitution still listed the teams which the normal schools were permitted to field for men and women. The conference encountered administrative problems and business could not be conducted due to lack of attendance by the normal schools at the district meetings.

In 1926 when the state normal schools became state teachers colleges, the Board of Presidents dissolved the athletic conference and began to operate athletics through a committee of the Board. There was no formal athletic conference, and women were removed from formal competition. The control of intercollegiate athletics by the Board of Presidents lasted until 1951. At that time a new athletic conference was formed; however, women were still excluded from formal participation.

The Educational Amendments Act of 1972 brought women's athletics back in focus again. The first discussion of the Title IX legislation by the Pennsylvania State Colleges Athletic Conference occurred at their November, 1974 meeting. Each athletic director explained what his institution had done to comply with this legislation.

The real stimulus for women's athletic competition in the state colleges came from the bargaining agreement between the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Since 1970 in Pennsylvania under Act 195, public employees had been permitted the right to collective bargaining. APSCUF was recognized as the bargaining agent for the state college faculty and negotiated with the Commonwealth a contract covering the instructional employees of the state colleges and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

The Department of Education under Secretary John Pittenger was not oriented to understanding APSCUF and collective bargaining. Governor Milton Shapp wanted a good relationship established. Thus, Secretary Pittenger and his staff prepared diligently for the 1974 negotiations.

Some of the concerns of Secretary Pittenger were being ignored by the presidents of the fourteen state-owned institutions of higher education. Pittenger saw a way to have his policies implemented by including them in the APSCUF-Commonwealth contract. His desire to end discrimination against women in the state colleges was furthered by the inclusion of the position of Director of Equal Opportunity in Sports (DEOS) in the bargaining agreement. Guidelines for the position were established by the Department of Education. Each of the fourteen state institutions of higher learning were then required to appoint a person to fill this position at that institution.

Dr. William Duncan, President of Millersville State College, appointed Miss Marjorie Trout to the DEOS position at Millersville. Trout became the leading exponent of having women participate fully in the conference athletic structure. Her leadership along with that of Dr. Duncan brought the women's athletic problems before the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Presidents. As Dr. Duncan was chairman of this committee, he was able to oversee the writing of a new conference constitution which included women in the membership thus making the women's programs an integral part of the state colleges athletic scene. Women under this constitution took an active part in all conference activities.

Women were elected to lead the formerly all-male athletic conference, and Mrs. Trout became the first woman president of an intercollegiate athletic conference which had male and female teams. The Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference became a leader in women's athletics in the United States.



Obviously enjoying themselves at the wine and cheese party were Wayne Simpson, Lynne Emery, and Peter Lindsey.