

# The Coverage of Women in Sports in the Negro Press: The *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1924-1948, and the *Chicago Defender*, 1937-1941

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This study deviates from the current historical scholarship on women in sports in terms of both its focus and method. The application of content analysis to newspapers over a continuous and prolonged period is one of the first attempts to create a better means of assessing popular attitudes toward sportswomen. An examination of the Negro press allows historians to move beyond understanding attitudes toward women's involvement in sport merely from a white perspective. Every issue of two Negro weekly newspapers, the *Pittsburgh Courier* from 1924 through 1948 and the *Chicago Defender* from 1937 through 1941 were read to analyze four categories: the style of coverage, the production of the media, the extent of coverage and the type of coverage.

The coverage that the Negro press gave to activities of women in sport appears to be more widespread and favorable than the literature depicts. While never equivalent to men, there were a significant number of newspaper items on women in sports. This coverage resembled that given to men. The Negro press was similar to the daily press in certain aspects, but differed in three of the four categories studied. The most obvious difference was the absence of gender role stereotypes and sexist remarks in the sport section. Since males owned, produced, wrote and edited both national and Negro newspapers, the lack of gender roles in sports reporting is particularly interesting and significant. It suggests that their attitudes rather than their gender greatly influenced the systematic presentation of women in sports.