

Prelude to AIAW: The National Institutes on Girls Sports 1963–1969

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This paper is a study of the five National Institutes for Coaching Girls' Sports held in the 1960's. These Institutes, in essence, paved the way for the creation of the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) and thus, The Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). Their impact is also significant in that this attention to better coaching for girls and women occurred before Title IX (1972). Many documents have covered Title IX and AIAW but almost all these papers have never really analyzed these National Institutes but just mentioned them as an important milestone in the history of girls and women's sports. Consequently, this paper is divided into three parts: the important events leading up to their creation, the Institutes themselves, and the aftermath for the participants and the history of girls and women's sports.

In 1957 the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER—now the Alliance) requested that the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) include Division for Girls and Women's Sport (DGWS) representatives on those Olympic sports committees that governed women's activities. The USOC approved the request and the next year, 1958, a Women's Advisory Board was created under the United States Olympic Development Committee. (The term "advisory" was soon deleted and it was known as the Women's Board.) It is important to understand the significance of this approval for DGWS by the USOC. For years prior to this move, DGWS and leading women physical educators not only were opposed to females in the Olympics but were opposed to any organization that provided a place for high level sports for girls and women. These women leaders had been committed to the pervasive philosophy of "a girl for every sport and a sport for every girl" or in other words, there should be no emphasis on high level competition but on participation for all. Thus, for DGWS to desire to be involved in the Olympic organization which by design was for elite athletes, was a dramatic step in the development of sports for girls and women.

At about this same time Doris Duke Cromwell (heiress of the Duke tobacco fortune) had donated \$500,000 to the USOC to help in the development of women's Olympic sports. The money was allocated to the Women's Board and National Coaching workshops seemed to be the best method to fulfill Mrs. Cromwell's wish for the use of the monies. Therefore, the Women's Board, DGWS and AAHPER co-sponsored these workshops titled National Institutes and had as their overall purpose "to increase the depth of experience and expand opportunities for girls and women in sports." In other words, the Institutes were an attempt to give coaches and physical educators the skills and knowledges of Olympic sports in order that the girls they coached would receive expert instruction.

The First National Institute was held in 1963 and succeeding ones were held in 1965, two in 1966 and the last in 1969. Approximately 1025 teachers took part in these five National Institutes and were charged with the responsibility to hold similar workshops in their respective areas. It is estimated over 100,000 teachers and recreation personnel attended these coaching clinics. Furthermore, the teaching of track and gymnastics formerly not often found in girls' programs became commonplace after these sports were covered in the Institutes. Another outcome of the Institutes and perhaps the most important one, was the beginning of a change of attitude towards girls and women who participated in high level competition. Soon thereafter we had National Championships for Women,

a National Athletic organization for women (AIAW) and some years later a coed National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Appropriately, the following remarks made in 1974 have historic credence:

The interest in women's sports generated by the five National Institutes and their influence on better quality of teaching and performance, cannot be measured statistically, but will be clearly observed all over the world in the mirror of time. Jernigan, Sara Staff. "Mirror of Time: Some Causes for More American Women in Sport Competition." *Quest*, Vol. XXII, June, 1974, p. 86.)