

The Philosophy: The Development and Changes in the Philosophical Stance on Intercollegiate Competition by Women Physical Educators in Early Twentieth-Century America

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This presentation traced the historical development of a national philosophy on women's intercollegiate competition by women leaders in physical education. It provided a chronological overview of the various philosophical Positions taken by the women in the field during each decade of the early Twentieth-Century. A particular focus was on the changes that occurred over time and the cultural influences that may have mandated these changes.

Any discussion of women's sporting experiences must include the perceived physiological differences and how these differences influenced women's culture roles. The medical community's leverage within the cultural was a powerful influence on the perceptions of women's physical capabilities. These perceived physiological differences often were used to set parameters for women's sporting experiences. This reviewed the accepted medical views of the time period and their influence on the philosophies of women in physical education.

A thorough understanding of what the philosophies were of the women leaders during this time period is necessary for an effective analysis of women's sporting experiences. The cultural and medical influences on these philosophies cannot be separated from their development. These philosophies reflected the beliefs and values held by the larger society in which they were developed. An understanding of the society must be gained in order for the philosophies to be fully understood.

Primary sources were utilized to determine the philosophies of the women physical educators, the medical knowledge, and the views on women's physical capabilities during the era. Secondary sources provided background information on the values and beliefs of the culture. Specific resources were the archival records of NAGWS, WDNAAF and AAHPERD. Evidence of the women's philosophies were gathered from correspondences, articles and diaries.

The search for understanding is at the center of all historical research. The first step in an analysis of women's sporting experiences is a comprehensive examination of their stated philosophies on women's intercollegiate athletics. This presentation began that process.