

comparable girls' team existed. Yet social opposition to co-ed wrestling was such that communities tried to find new legal reasons to exclude girls from the sport and because of the nature of wrestling, they tried the moral and quasi-religious objection to "improper touching." The courts, however, rejected these claims and concluded that wrestling was not a sexual activity and that any sin in the sport was in the eye of the beholder. The battle over the gender integration of wrestling was another example of American courts requiring a level of social equality that American society was reluctant to accept.

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Courting Controversy: Gender and Power in Iowa Girls' Basketball

Although the state of Iowa has been recognized within the sport history literature and the national popular press for its tremendous support of girls' high school basketball, the resistance to the game within the state has not been widely acknowledged. The legal challenges to Iowa's "6-on-6" girls' basketball rules in the 1970s and 1980s brought criticism of the game and its governance to the surface. These challenges were well covered in the local, state, and even national media. At that time, the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU), the governing body responsible for organizing and supporting competitive girls' basketball since the mid-1920s faced charges that the 6-player rules discriminated against high school females. Iowa players were at a disadvantage when competing for college scholarships compared to girls in other states who played by the 5-player rules, and they generally did not receive the same opportunities available to Iowa boys' basketball players. My research into the rules' controversy and the discourse surrounding it indicates that the critics of Iowa's 6-player basketball were most commonly identified as women and as feminists and that a University of Iowa professor in the Department of Physical Education for Women was frequently cited as a spokesperson. This was not the first time that a member of that department expressed criticism about the IGHSAU.

This paper explores the controversy that preceded the transition to the 5-player, full-court game known in Iowa as “5-on-5.” While ostensibly a debate over which set of rules to play by, more significantly, the rules’ controversy was a struggle for power; a struggle between the male-dominated IGHS AU and women physical educators and their allies. This was a gendered battle for control of the sport that dated back to the 1920s and was rooted in the founding of the IGHS AU. Girls’ basketball was perennially a controversial matter in Iowa, particularly for women physical educators at the University of Iowa (UI) who did not approve of the IGHS AU’s program and its control of the sport. Though undoubtedly a power at the national level of the women’s physical education movement, the UI physical educators failed to challenge the IGHS AU—that is, until the second wave of the women’s movement moved gender issues to the center of national discussion. Legislative efforts like Title IX and the Equal Rights Amendment highlighted issues of gender and power and most importantly, brought Iowa girls’ basketball into the national dialogue on gender. Within this heightened atmosphere, the concerns about Iowa girls’ basketball could no longer be ignored nor dismissed by the IGHS AU. The always-gendered struggle over the control of Iowa girls’ basketball that had been present since the beginning of the Union came to a head during the rules’ controversy of the 1970s and 1980s. In this paper, I employ discourse analysis to reveal the gender politics at the heart of the rules’ controversy.

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Neither Jell-O nor Mud: Female Amateur Wrestling in the United States

Wrestling historian Mike Chapman argues that “Wrestling in America pre-dates all other sports.” Native Americans wrestled in North America long before Europeans ever colonized. While it is unclear whether Native American girls and women were involved in wrestling, there is evidence that they have been wrestling in various cultures throughout history. In Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century, lower class women wrestled for money. Wrestling in these instances was not recreation and leisure time, but rather paid labor staged for the