

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 IGHSAU 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 IGHSAU. 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 IGHSAU’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 IGHSAU—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 IGHSAU. 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

entertainment of male audiences. While amateur wrestling has traditionally been a male sport, the number of female amateur wrestlers in the United States grew tremendously in the 1990's. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations, 2,474 girls wrestled on high school teams in 28 states during the 1999-2000 school year, up from six in 1984-1985, with an increase of programs with girls from 20 in 1990-1991 to 734 in 1999-2000. This paper attempts to answer two research questions: to what extent does the long history of amateur wrestling in the United States include women's participation; and, how is women's wrestling understood? As the longest running wrestling magazine with the highest subscription rate, Amateur Wrestling News offers a starting point for historical evidence. I also examine several other wrestling periodicals such as W.L.N. and USA Wrestling, as well as wrestling histories devoted to male wrestling such as Mike Chapman's Encyclopedia of Wrestling. Focusing in particular on the growth of female participation in wrestling from 1984 to 2000, I contextualize this expansion in participation within the post-Title IX expectations of female athletes.

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