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EDITORIAL

Title IX: Promises Still Unfulfilled

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When a law is enacted for the purpose of changing social values, the law causes great controversy. Title IX was enacted in 1972, and has been controversial since. Some believe it is morally wrong to "support girls' sports on the budget of boys' football"; wrong to insist that girls have sports; wrong to make a big deal about sports anyway! Others believe it is necessary to allow girls the opportunity to decide for themselves whether sports are important in their lives; necessary to allow for equal opportunity. Regardless of the controversy, those girls who were entering school in the 1970s are the first generation to benefit from Title IX.

Recently, Title IX has received its greatest praise. It has demonstrated to the world that girls and women who also are given the opportunity and encouragement to participate in athletics can succeed. The number of women in the recent Olympic games was an all-time high, and the U.S. women who were given athletic opportunities through Title IX were also a greater presence. Not only were there more U.S. women, but they were more successful than ever before. Clearly, the effects of Title IX have been demonstrated and hailed.

However, the thrust for equity in athletic opportunity is a component of Title IX that has not reached full potential. Discrepancies in collegiate funding for male and female athletes is widely known. Much has been written on the difficulty a school faces in being equitable to its students and fielding a football team. But collegiate athletics is not the only place to find Title IX violations or lack of enforcement.

Well-intentioned educational administrators view the responsibility to provide equitable athletic opportunities as a trivial matter. They believe these opportunities are important only for the highly skilled, competitive athlete. In most cases, the most highly skilled and most competitive athletes have been male. However, the women at the 1996 Olympics showed girls everywhere that high skill levels and high competence are available to girls. It is a shame that girls still need to ask for the same opportunity provided to boys.

Recent Nike commercials have probably raised more awareness of gender inequity than the passage of Title IX did. In one commercial, several girls repeat "if you let me play" while explaining the mental, physical, and social benefits from vigorous physical activity. Would a boy ever ask to be allowed to play? Other commercials focused on the competitive nature of sports and the excellence of women in those sports. But competition and sports are not the only arena for girls provided by Title IX. All physical activity must be available to girls and women.

Elementary and secondary education programs are often in violation of Title IX. It is still common to find boys wrestling and girls dancing, but extremely rare to find girls learning to wrestle while boys dance. Usually, program administrators claim ignorance until someone challenges the inequity.

In the following letter, taken from the Chicago Sun Times (Monday, April 29, 1996), a young female athlete expressed why participation is so much more than competition. As girls across the country become motivated to play or to compete from watching some of the outstanding performances of the women Olympians, let us hope that they too will be vocal and supportive of Title IX the way Carlee Bator is. Carlee, you are absolutely right; a girl's place is in the gym.

A Girl's Place Is in the Gym

I play many sports. My favorite is volleyball. Coincidentally, I just finished a successful history project about Title IX, which is part of the 1972 Educational Amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title IX assures girls the same opportunities in sports that boys have.

At the beginning of my project, I had only a vague idea of what Title IX was about. I didn't really understand the true meaning and its effect on me.

I learned quickly. When I told my social studies teacher (a male) what my project was, he just gave me a blank stare as if to say "Title what?"

I was surprised to receive the same response from the girls at my school and club volleyball teams.

In her April 4 Personal View, [newspaper article] Barbara Butcher put this subject in a different perspective. After I read the article, I talked to my mom about the opportunities she had as a young girl.

I found out that she, too, never had a chance to play any sports except those she learned while her father was teaching her brother to play. Even if she had wanted to play, the opportunity wasn't there.

I believe sports competition helped me develop a mental and physical awareness that I would not have been able to achieve at my age.
During sports competition, I am challenged to think critically, make decisions and execute physical skills.

I now do these same things in everyday life. This gives me more self-confidence and also helps me work successfully with different people in varied situations.

A few weeks ago I was competing at a volleyball tournament when I noticed that some boys had come into the gym to watch. I laughed when I saw this. It used to be that girls would come and cheer for the boys. These boys came and really cheered for us girls.

So now, this female athlete would like to give three cheers for those women who came before us and unfortunately never had the opportunity to play sports.

Three cheers also for those women who cried out that the opportunity to compete in sports was not equal with men, but was much needed.

Finally, three cheers for those women who fought to create the opportunities that Title IX allows.

Although I enjoy the immediate benefits of Title IX, opportunities for women in sports still aren’t equal to the men’s programs. However, I believe we are getting close.

—Carlee Bator

Carlee Bator is 13 years old and in the eighth grade. Carlee’s mother missed out on the benefits from sports that Carlee got, partly as a result of Title IX. Carlee does not believe her opportunities are equal to the boys’, but they are more equitable. In the next 25 years, will we finally have women who are fully participating? Or will Carlee’s daughter write of the unfulfilled promise of her athletic participation?

—Connie Fox is an associate professor at Northern Illinois University at DeKalb, IL 60115.

### NEWS

**Strength Training Best Foundation for Exercise Programs**

The consensus opinion from a survey of nearly 200 certified personal trainers from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) indicates that strength training is the best foundation for an effective exercise regimen. Most experts agree that 25 to 30 minutes of strength training coupled with about 25 to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, plus 5 to 10 minutes of stretching, make for a well-balanced workout.

The NSCA-certified personal trainers say that the formula will produce the results that most people desire if people regularly exercise two or three times a week.

A growing number of Americans are seeking advice and motivation from personal trainers because they want to improve their physical appearance, need motivation, and want effective programs designed for them to meet their personal exercise goals, say the NSCA-certified personal trainers. The majority of those who hire personal trainers are either business executives (34%) or well-educated professionals (31%). Most pay between $20 and $50 per hour twice a week.

The most common mistakes made when beginning an exercise program, according to NSCA-certified personal trainers, is exercising too long or too vigorously (39%); ending a training session without cooling down properly (28%); and increasing intensity or duration too rapidly (20%).

NSCA-certified personal trainers suggest following these training tips:

- Blend strength training with aerobic and flexibility exercise;
- Try to include 6 to 8 weight training exercises;
- Warm up and cool down properly;
- As your training progresses, dedicate 20 to 60 minutes, 2 to 3 times a week, to your exercise program; and
- Hire a qualified personal trainer to learn proper exercise technique.

To receive a checklist on guidelines for selecting a qualified personal trainer or for information about the only nationally accredited certification program for personal trainers, call Dan Brown at the NSCA Certification Commission, at 402/476-6669, ext. 11.

**Sport for Understanding 1997 Summer Program**

Basketball in Italy. Swimming in Holland. Basketball in Australia. Tennis in France. Sport for Understanding (SFU), a nonprofit exchange program for teenage athletes, has announced that 25 teams—in 13 different sports—will travel to destinations around the world during the summer of 1997.

During the three- or four-week program, SFU teams are involved in a variety of sport and cultural learning activities. SFU athletes and their volunteer coaches live with host families during their stay to experience the country’s customs and culture first-hand. The SFU team will train and compete with local teams.

“What sets this program apart,” explains Greg Louganis, Olympic Gold Medal Diver, “is that SFU provides an opportunity for young athletes not only to compete and train, but be part of another culture.”

In addition to SFU teams traveling overseas, international sports teams also visit the United States. Local sport teams and clubs are needed to host the teams and provide them a look at American life through sports.

All applications must be postmarked by April 1, 1997. For further information and an application, write: Sport for Understanding, Dept. C104, 3501 Newark St., NW, Washington, DC 20016, or call 800/TEENAGE.