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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE ■ WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1996

WOMEN'S Sports Facts

In 52 weeks of Sport Illustrated (2/93-2-94) six women were awarded cover shots. The first was in a bathing suit. The second, Monica Seles, was wearing tennis whites and a knife in her back. Numbers three and four were the widows of baseball players. The tennis player, Mary Pierce was number five because she feared her father. The sixth was Nancy Kerrigan after she was clubbed on the knee.

Contrary to popular thought, men's sports participation has not suffered at the expense of providing participation opportunities for women — there were 16,242 more male athletes in 1991-92 than there were in 1981-82. For every two female participation slots created in this 10-year period, 1.5 male participation slots were also added.

Between 1974-79, collegiate coaching positions for college women's teams increased 185%; 182% of the new positions went to men and 3% went to women.

Since 1971, only six women, comprising 6.3% have been appointed to the International Olympic Committee.

35% of the Barcelona USA Olympic team and 33% of the Albertville USA Olympic teams were women. In Barcelona and Albertville, female athlete medal production per athlete exceeded her male counterpart.

Gender was verbally, visually and graphically marked (e.g. "Women's National Championship") an average of 110 times a game in women's basketball, nearly double the rate of gender markings in the 1989 women's games. By contrast, gender was almost never mentioned in men's basketball games.

Less than 33% of collegiate athletic scholarship dollars are awarded to women athletes.

Division I and Division II schools offer an average of 10 more contests per sport for male teams than for female teams.

Compiled by the Women's Sports Foundation, Updated Jan. 1996

Women

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coach at the University of Maryland.

The phenomenon is highlighted in a sport where men and women stand nearly equal — bowling.

Naz Laursen, a four-time winner of the Staten Island Women's Bowling Association all-events title, points out that while some claim male bowlers have a slight strength and stamina advantage, the fact that women can equal men's results challenges that theory.

"At the higher levels, the game even out because the skill lies in finesse and competitive intent," says Laursen, who sports a 200-plus average.

But Laursen adds that prejudiced outlooks nevertheless pervade the sport.

While many women bowlers on Staten Island can put competitive scores in scratch (top-level) leagues, only six or seven participate in the 180-person league at Rab's Country Lanes in Dongan Hills, a center that Laursen manages.

Laursen claims women can be uncomfortable in such a setting, since the men don't always interact with their women teammates socially. Often, the women just sit by themselves waiting for their turn to bowl.

Some men don't want women around because they think they need to watch what they say — they feel their right out with the guys has been ruined," said Laursen.

Laursen has two teen-age daughters who are top-notch bowlers. When the elder, 19-year-old Naz Philpott, bowls for teams comprised mostly of men, Laursen notes a double standard. "I think that the men respect her scores. But she is a highly competitive and vocal person when bowling, and that is not as accepted."

"The guys come up to me and say, 'Boy, your daughter is really a hotshot.' But I say to them, 'The

guys act that way all the time. You don't say anything to them. And then they think about it and say 'You're right, I never thought of it that way.'"

Many successful Island women athletes — including Laursen and Guerrero — express their concern that female athletes lack professional opportunities. Guerrero says, "You do something every day of your life and then what? You're done? I guess if you do it as a means to an end, sure, you can pay for a great education. But I did it because I loved it and I think all women athletes are the same."

Guerrero points out that even recreational opportunities for serious women athletes after college are limited. Men's baseball and basketball leagues thrive on S.I. with many former Island stars playing games year-round, almost daily. The choices for female athletes are often co-ed leagues, with the emphasis on socializing rather than competition. Furthermore, the games are scheduled at inconvenient times — the times rejected by the men's teams — and many women can't participate.

"For five years I have watched my father, brother and boyfriend play in Saturday softball leagues. The one opportunity they created for women was Sunday morning, and I'm at church," said Guerrero.

When Philpott — a graduate from Curtis a year ago, she spent a lot of time deciding what to do for college.

"She had several opportunities to go to college for bowling, but she ended up feeling it wasn't quite worth it and stayed home to go to nursing school," said mom Laursen.

"I do think that if they showed the Ladies Bowling Tour on Saturday afternoons on television, the choice might have been different," Laursen added.

The media has a great effect on the hopes and fates of numerous young athletes. The type and angle is almost exclusively centered around men's sports these days — with a few exceptions.

But this isn't all bad. As Guerrero, Laursen, and several other Island athletes contend, the

Big inequities still exist despite passing of 1972 'gender-equity' law

By URSULA REEL
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Does Title IX represent a milestone for women or a restriction on young male athletes — or both? The 24-year-old law is still a hot topic on college campuses and only one university in the country — Iowa — has pledged total gender equity by 1997.

Other schools like West Virginia University are woefully behind in the process. Only this year did WVU allow the women's basketball team to play in the winter. The Lady Mountaineers previously played their entire season in the fall, and, as one might imagine, fan support and exposure was minimal.

Title IX, which was passed in 1972 and was to be implemented by high schools and colleges by 1975, states "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

From the beginning, the athletic issue has surfaced as the most difficult aspect to implement. Part of Title IX provides that if an institution sponsors an athletic program it must provide equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes. This portion states a three-pronged test must be used to measure accommodation: the school must show (1) history and continuing practice of program expansion which reflects the interests of both sexes, (2) if one sex has been under-represented among intercollegiate athletes, the institution must show a history and continuing practice of program expansion for that sex specifically; and (3) proportionality, which means that the ratio of male-to-female athletes must approximate that of the student body.

According to Pam Roeker, the

Title IX: Albatross or aid?

"No true educators want to see boys shortchanged. By cutting wrestling or swimming programs for example — which is the type of stupid decision being made to 'remedy' the Title IX situation at some colleges — how much are you really saving? You are prohibiting kids from competing and that is ridiculous. You could actually fund all these teams by having 10 less football players."

— Dottie McKnight

Ex-Maryland head women's basketball coach

Wagner College women's basketball coach and women's athletic director, the proper catch-phrase these days is "gender equity" rather than Title IX.

Roeker feels most coaches of women's sports simply want "the opportunity to be equally successful."

But Roeker and other coaches of women's athletics still see inequity in equipment, coaching staff, travel expenses and scheduling. These are such imbalances that prevent equal opportunity.

Dottie McKnight retired as University of Maryland's head women's basketball coach 20 years ago and began her own company — the Athletic and Sport Consultants based in Chevy Chase, Md. ASC studies gender equity issues and re-evaluates the current system. The company provides workshops for college and high school athletic administrators and the goal in these sessions is to initiate compliance with Title IX. She often comes up against football advocates who aggressively disapprove of Title IX.

Many football programs believe they have been the biggest victims of Title IX and feel court victories ruled in favor of women's sports are sabotaging men in general and football in particular unnecessarily and unfairly.

Grant Traft, the former head coach at Baylor, is the executive director of the American Football Coaches Association, and bristles at the thought of improving opportunities for women at the expense of men.

"I can't imagine that would

ever be the answer," he said. "Our system of freedom, government and opportunity has been in place a long time."

Traft believes proportionality is merely a disguise for "a quota system."

The courts are not considering the three-pronged section of the law's original intent, claims Charles M. Neinas, the executive director of the College Football Association. He believes recent court rulings have stressed proportionality more than the two qualifications of showing a history of improvements.

This emphasis on proportionality, according to Neinas, puts football at a disadvantage. Division I-A schools often have 85 scholarships, a figure that is considered inappropriately high by many gender-equity proponents — including McKnight. It also tips the collegiate athletic scale astronomically in favor of male athletes making proportionality nearly impossible to accomplish.

Yet Traft, in material he submitted to a House committee last year, says a properly run football program actually needs 116 players: starters (22), two teams of reserves (44), two special-teams units (22), two offensive (22) and defensive (22) teams of practice players, four kickers and two snappers. He expects the difference (116 minus 85) to be made up with non-scholarship athletes and walk-ons.

McKnight claims her goal is not to curtail the men's opportunities, but rather to ensure fair and equal opportunity for both sexes.

She first wants to dispel the rumor that football programs pay for their own sport as well as others — including the women's athletics. She cited a case that was brought to court involving Auburn University. Testimony revealed that while the school raked in \$4 million from football, the program cost the college \$6 million. This is the norm for most large colleges, according to McKnight.

While a 1993 survey claims two of every three Division I-A schools made a profit in football, McKnight claims this figure is "absolute nonsense."

"The football programs are using creative bookkeeping," said McKnight who has been responsible for tallying such figures for numerous court cases and Congressional committee hearings.

"Gender equity goes both ways," McKnight said in defense of Title IX. "No true educators want to see boys shortchanged. By cutting wrestling or swimming programs for example — how much are you really saving? You are prohibiting kids from competing and that is ridiculous. You could actually fund all these teams by having 10 less football players."

"I just think that a school doesn't need 85-plus kids playing football on scholarship. Look on the sidelines at all the kids that never get on the field — these reserves. It seems a waste to have all of them stand around with their helmets crooked under their arm. You never know — that kid could be a doggone good country runner, but you'd never know it."

McKnight feels that some of the rash, bad decisions made by college athletic administrators — such as the elimination of men's programs — may be made to spite the Title IX proponents.

"Or perhaps it is that the schools have not one ounce of creativity," said McKnight. "No one ever said that to compensate for Title IX you have to keep women's sports and do away with men's."

(The Associated Press also contributed to this report.)



ADVANCE PHOTO BY HILTON FLORES

Naz Laursen, center, and her daughters Lizabeth Philpott, left and Nazareth Philpott are as good as they come in women's bowling but yet they feel prejudiced outlooks pervade the sport.

said. Alyssa McKenna is a junior at St. Joseph by-the-Sea and a major reason Sea's girls' softball, soccer and basketball teams have won city and state titles the past three years.

McKenna is enthusiastic about the chances she has as a young female athlete, but is also realistic about the limits.

"We (girl athletes) take things much more seriously. This may be our last chance to play. We don't want to take it for granted."

Unfortunately, some male high school athletes don't share McKenna's seriousness about women's sports.

At a recent Staten Island girls' high school basketball game, a group of boy basketball players were observed watching the

game. "Oh good, they're wearing white shorts — now we can see their underwear," announced one of the boys, who happened to be his high school team's high scorer.

The comment was received with boisterous laughter and high fives from his friends, to the disgust of the surrounding fans and parents.

When the boys who have grown up playing in kiddie CVO leagues with girls and have seen the numerous city and state titles won by the Island's female athletes don't respect them, what does it mean for the future of women's sports?

McKnight, who is also a spokesperson for the National Association of Women and Girls, has faced her share of hardsell and

bigotry as an athlete and life-long coach, says "Life's too short to be bitter about such things. All you can do is work for the next set of girls growing up under you and hope things continue to advance as they have in the past 10 and 20 years."

McKnight sums up both the recent advances and remaining hurdles in women's sports best when she says:

"Boys and men are expected to play sports and be athletic. Women have gone from being prohibited in sports, to being allowed to play, to being accepted."

"But the final hurdle is to be recognized as athletic. We are not there yet."

(Tomorrow: Who should control women's teams?)

Spring Has Sprung
Hop On Into
PHILPOTT