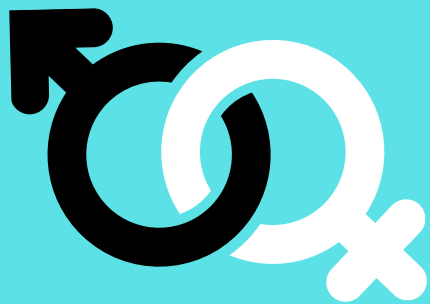
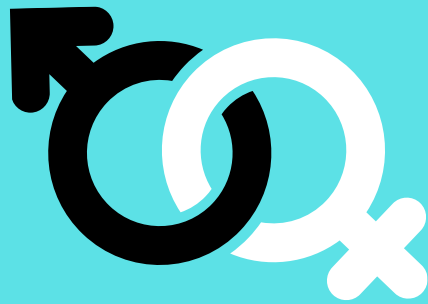


EQUAL POWER



BY MALINI EMU
PARIKH

EQUAL POWER



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The purpose of this eBook is to explain the unfair treatment that women (and others) get in sports. My goal is to get the word out, spread it around, and change peoples mind and perspectives on it. I'm in 6th grade at my school, it's the last grade we have at the school, so we do this big independent study as we call it. We each choose a topic relating to sustainability. My topic is Gender Equality in Sports. Unlike many people in my class, going into the school year, I had a good rough idea of what I wanted to study. I have always been appalled at the way that females are stereotyped, in the way that males are stronger and better at sports, it's always been so ridiculous and unbelievable to me. I have questioned, and still do, why it has to be this way. The people want change (so give them that) and they want equal pay for a reason and that's because they deserve it. One other thing that I didn't do too much research on, and am still super curious about is why at a younger age they don't have the 'boys' team play the 'girls' team, and why there aren't any female football teams (although they can join the men's team) or why there aren't any male volleyball teams.

Since I was young, when it was up to me, I would never let my two older brothers give me an advantage in any sort of game. I hated when they did that, even though they are three and six years older than me, and I was basically positive that I wouldn't win, but I still wanted to lose fairly.



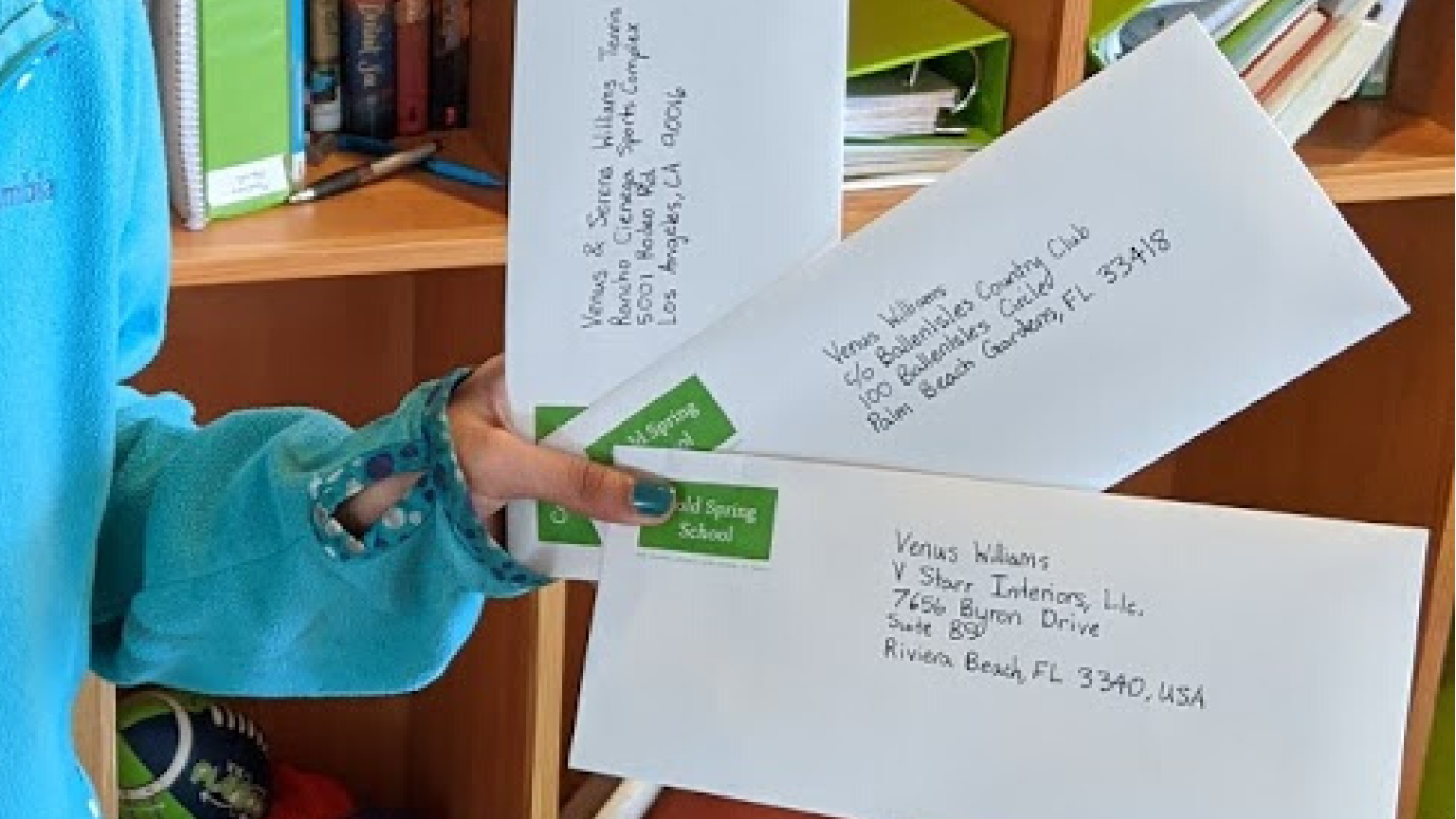
In all, I chose this topic because I've always been passionate about it. That being said, even though I had a thought of what my topic would be about, it wasn't that simple. There were still a lot of struggles I hit, and I didn't even settle on it right away, I was interested in a couple other things (mainly in the gender equality realm), and we weren't sure if it was too broad or too narrow of a topic. And if it related fully to sustainability. I had a hard time with that question. But if you really think about it, it does. The basic definition of sustainability is using natural things to keep things alive or well for a long time. And see, if we don't fix these sexist stereotypes, then the world would basically fall apart because we aren't listening to each other, and not fixing important problems that need to be dealt with. And a world falling apart is not by any means keeping things alive or well, it's practically the opposite actually. Back to the challenges I faced; Well, there were also many times where I sat down to research, or write, and nothing came to mind, I was just stuck, I didn't know what I was looking for. But instead help from my friends, family, and teachers, I got through it and accomplished a lot more than I thought I could.

I've learned so much about my topic that has opened up a new perspective/mindset for me. If you want to learn more about equal pay, access, and other problems in gender equality in sports, make sure to check out my research paper as well. Although I am in full support of gender equality in sports, and things like equal pay, I do consider myself a feminist, yet I have never considered myself an activist, because my definition of an activist is someone who takes action on the cause they want to promote. And I am going to start acting on the situation, using the things I am going to teach you in my eBook! Just talking about it is good and all, but we can do better. That is another thing I want to teach you in this eBook, there's always more we can do, so-let's do it.

A full-page photograph of Serena Williams running on a sandy beach. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored, abstract-patterned jumpsuit and is barefoot. Her long, curly hair is blowing in the wind. The background shows the ocean with white-capped waves under a clear blue sky. The quote "Queen, don't be afraid to rule like a king." is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the image.

Queen, don't be
afraid to rule like a
king.

-Serena Williams



LOTS AND LOTS OF LETTERS

Making Connections

I reached out to a lot of people. But not just any people, famous ones. I did that for a few reasons. First, that it would be super cool to have this athlete that I look up to contact me! I sent 7 handwritten emails out to athletes like Serena and Venus Williams, Shannon Boxx, Billie Jean King, Mia Hamm, Simone Biles, and Megan Rapinoe. As expected, I haven't received anything back yet (although it would go to Cold Spring School and we are of course not receiving that mail). Each letter would include telling them about our 6th Grade Independent Study Research, my topic, and then I would ask them a few questions about their journey, and just general questions like who their inspiration was growing up.

"I feel like a letter is more meaningful, it takes time, and shows that you care"

I also sent lots of emails. I actually got a response from Geno Auriemma. Geno is the college basketball coach for the UCONN Huskies women's basketball team. I thought it would be pretty perfect to reach out to him because he is local. I was so excited when I got a response from him! I was pretty surprised, and really thankful. Here were his responses:

Dear Mr. Auriemma,

My name is Malini Parikh. I am 11 years old and a sixth grader at Cold Spring School in New Haven, Connecticut.

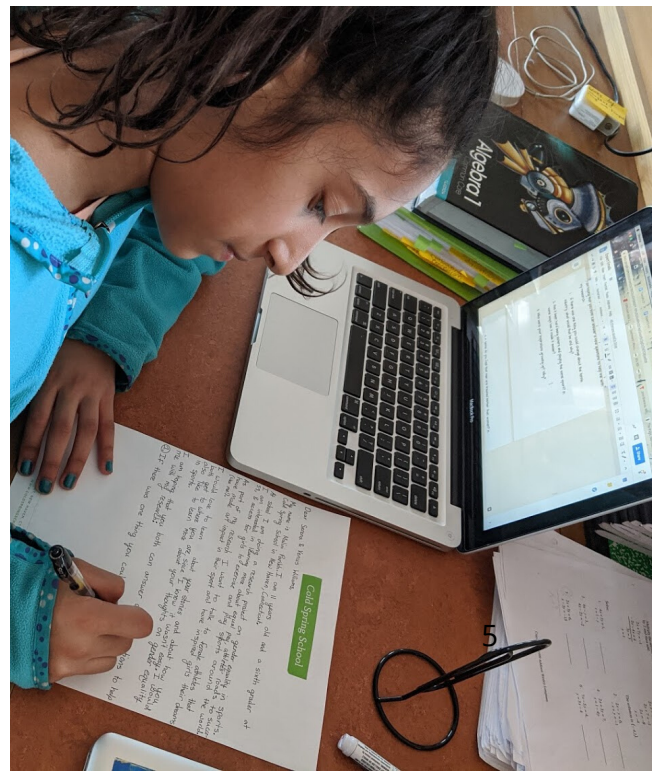
In my class, I am doing a research project on gender equality in sports. I am interested in learning more about equal pay, female athletes' roads to success, and access for girls to exercise and play sports around the world.

I was hoping that I could ask you a few questions to help me with my research:

1. Did you choose to coach women vs males, if so why? *No. It just happened that way. I didn't plan on coaching at all.*
2. Do you think that there should be a difference in how you would coach a men's basketball team, and a woman's team? *No. I would try to be the same cause I have coached men.*
3. Do you believe in equal pay in sports? *I believe in equal pay for equal work.*
4. If there was one thing you could change in the basketball industry to help your team, what would it be, and why? *Less emphasis on the individual and more on the team.*
5. What is going through your mind as your team is playing your rivals? *I hope we play our best. And I want to be there for them when they need me.*

Thank you in advance,
Malini

Thank you Geno Auriemma, Christa Doran, Beth Skudder, Rodrigo Canales, Ahna Johnson, Alison Carney, Sarah Mcquade, and everyone else who helped me with my research.



Transcript

So in the email I asked you what inspired you to work for Girls Coach Girls Run, and you said the program focuses on empowering girls to take good care of themselves, their relationships, perspectives, and behaviors, and their body, and allows every girl to feel like they can understand, and make the best decisions for themselves. How do you, or how do the mentors do that, like what do you do to ensure that girls leave more confident then when they came in?

Sure, excellent question, and it's a question we're always asking ourselves, is are we actually doing what we're saying we're doing? And we feel like having the girls in small groups, with coaches that are well trained gives them plenty of opportunity to talk about the topics, you might remember from Girls Coach Girls Run, each time you came there was a different topic that day.

Yeah.

Even though, at the end, the topics were very related, right?

Yeah.

And giving the girls a chance to talk and respond to what the head coaches are presenting for that day, let's them explore ideas that might work toward the goal, of being more confident, or things that might undermine their work toward becoming more confident. And a lot of that has to do with the choices that their making, and the decisions that they make every minute, when their with their friends or their family or even when their on their own.

Thank you. That first question you mentioned that when the older girls apply for the job of head coaches, they learn important new skills, or you make sure they do, when you interview high-schoolers for the job, what do you look for?

I'm looking for them too have the ability to speak up for themselves, I'm asking them open ended questions, and I want to first of all make sure that they understand what the program is and what their role is going to be and what they would bring to that role. We haven't turned head coaches away, in terms of an application process where we're only picking one, not the other. But we are educating them about the expectations. And that comes in handy during training if a coach looks like she might be having trouble meeting the expectations, it's a chance for me to go back and say, 'You know we talked about this when you and I met one on one, what do you think? How is this going, what else could we do for you to make you feel more engaged in the process? And is this really what you want, we only usually have 10-15 head coaches, we don't have 100 head coaches, because it isn't a job for everyone, it really is a job for a small group of young women, who are really ready to take on that responsibility.

"Giving the girls a chance to talk and respond to what the head coaches are presenting for that day, let's them explore ideas that might work toward the goal, of being more confident, or things that might undermine their work toward becoming more confident."

INTERVIEW WITH BETH SKUDDER



Program Coordinator of Girls Coach Girls Run

I met with director Beth Skudder, who runs Girls Coach Girls Run which is an organization in Guilford that encourages young girls to stay fit and strong through teaching them lessons on how to be confident in themselves as well as teaching their instructors about leadership. GCGR is an organization in Guilford, Connecticut where 8th, 11th, and 12th grade Guilford girls coach 4th grade Guilford girls in running as well as life skills, as well as to be confident and proud of themselves. Here is a transcript of our interview.

Thank you, another thing from the first question, you said that when you were younger, you played a sport, what sport did you play?

I started out playing soccer, and swimming, and as I got into high school, I was playing tennis and field hockey, and lacrosse. And I was the manager for the whole group of my friends played ice hockey, and I actually never played ice hockey, but I was the manager for the girls team all four years of high school, and then when I went to college, I kept doing it with a whole new group of friends, I'm just used to being around sports. And then after college, I worked at a boarding school and, private school and I was coaching field hockey and lacrosse for 10 or 15 years after college with middle school or high school girls depending on which school I was at and what I was doing.

"It doesn't matter what the sport is, it doesn't matter what your skills are, it'll never be a winning team if you don't trust your teammates."

That's a lot of sports! (the three of us laugh)

I was a pretty good athlete, but I wasn't the best on the team. I liked it and I worked hard, and I didn't mind getting hurt or tired. But by college, I was just a regular athlete, I wasn't some amazing athlete and as a coach, I had never thought about coaching before. I just liked continuing the sports, and being involved. And to me anybody can learn a sport, but what happens on a team, to me was always the priority in terms of the community and the trusting each other. You'll never be a good team if you're selfish.

Yeah.

It doesn't matter what the sport is, it doesn't matter what your skills are, it'll never be a winning team if you don't trust your teammates, and I just always hung on to that very carefully.

Thank you. So you said that Girls Coach Girls Run was based off of Girls on the Run, in Branford, but that the mentors were adults, not kids. Do you think it makes a difference if the adults coach or the kids? Why?

Well Girls on the Run I only know a little bit about the program, the goals are very similar as we want young, the youngest of the girls involved in the program to learn about themselves, and to realize what they're capable of achieving. At the end of the day, very similar goals for the program. What our program adds in is also a chance for high school girls to start to have some of that experience too because they're the leaders and their sharing and teaching their own perspectives instead of another adult telling teenagers and young teens, tweens, young girls, 'THIS IS WHO YOU NEED TO BE TO BE A STRONG PERSON'. I think there are a lot of role models, and teachers, and parents, and aunties, and friends that help young women to do all of that, but they don't have a lot of chance to be with older girls. And really a lot of young girls, just want to be an older girl. And having older girls be in the program let's the older girls spread their wings as leaders, but also offers a different connection for the younger girls that it's not just another grownup telling me what to do, it's older girls showing me their own experiences, their own vulnerabilities, and helping them get to the next level. So, programs are very similar but how we do it, it feels very different. And I think Girls on the Run is a national program they happen to be holding it in Branford and they may or may not be trying to do it in Branford again this year, they've been sort of on again off again but I think it happens across the country. And ours is just us. Girls Coach Girls Run is our program, we own it, it was created specifically for us, (chuckles) and we don't have the staff or the plans to make it much bigger than what it is so...

Do you want to expand it? Or...

This is the 11th year for Girls Coach and for the first two years it was in Branford and Guilford and Madison, and then it stopped being in Branford for a while. It was too much for the staff-they had to cut it down. Actually last year, which was my first year here, we did a big study and a big evaluation of Girls Coach because it was going to be cut because it's a little bit of a misfit for the rest of the programs we do here which are really working for adults and older women and part of why I took this job is

because I wanted to run

Girls Coach so I was highly invested in doing a lot of research and analysis to defend the program for both my staff time that I spend on it and for the centers financial investment in the program, paying me to do it and affording me the staff time to actually run the program because its a lot of different pieces to keep in...in play. And we really realized that a lot of the troubles that women come here with as adults, may stem from issues perhaps they weren't so confident or weren't great advocates for themselves all along, their young adult and their adult life. And if we can make that much more solid foundation for a group of young girls it may be helping to prevent some of the issues that women run into when there older so we really worked up a big defense for that and we're going back to Branford this year! So the first two years it was in Branford for 8 years it wasn't, and now this year we're going back to Branford. Eventually we also want to go to Clinton, but one step at a time! (Light laugh from me) And part of how that happened was we now have an intern helping me with just a lot of the logistics work. She's actually done Girls Coach at every grade level and she's taking a gap year between high school and college and she works for me probably 6-8 hours a week. And also I work more paid hours then the person who had my position before specifically because I can run Girls Coach, so the center has really made an investment in making this program not just continue but be all it can be. And I'm trying to live up to that standard! (all laugh) It's a lot of work.

"We really realized that a lot of the troubles that women come here with as adults, may stem from issues perhaps they weren't so confident or weren't great advocates for themselves all along, there young adult and there adult life, and if we can make that much more solid foundation for a group of young girls it may be helping to prevent some of the issues that women run into when there older."

Is it only girls and women controlling at least the Guilford area Guilford Girls Coach Girls Run?

What do you mean in terms of?

Do you only hire women?

Yes, yep! Though we have men on our board of directors who oversee all of the financial decisions, all of our staff and right now all of our interns are all women and all of our head coaches, anybody that's in the program will be a girl or anyone that identifies as a girl.

Have you ever-

(Clancy) Can I actually backup a second?

Sure.

(Clancy) Not this question but the previous one, you said you did a lot of research and you sort of left it at that. I think it would be beneficial for both of us-

Sure.

(Clancy) To understand like what that research actually what were you talking to people were you like collecting data, like what was it?

I can actually send you the report if you'd like.

(Clancy) That would be-

Yes.

(Clancy) perfect.

So we talked to a number of people and some of that happened in way back when in 2017 even though we did this big report in 2019 when we used some information before I started working here came about from a conversation that happened in 2017 with a bunch of stakeholders from different towns. People that work with youth and families that were in the different towns were like absolutely keep Girls Coach running there aren't enough of these kinds of programs. And then last year we did look at programs like Girls on the Run that why are we running this program if we were interested in a program like this then why didn't we just facilitate Girls on the Run happening and let someone else run it you know like back to the staff balance and paying money to have me spending time running this. And then also looking, I don't know if your familiar with the 40 development assets to the Search Institute?

"Giving the girls a chance to talk and respond to what the head coaches are presenting for that day, let's them explore ideas that might work toward the goal, of being more confident, or things that might undermine their work toward becoming more confident."

No...

It's basically a checklist. If a student feels like he or she has most of those things on the checklist in there life and community they have a much higher chance to getting to adulthood and being able to support themselves and not falling into any abusive behaviours, either drug abuse or other issues that will make it so they can't support themselves. And looking at those, matching that with Girls Coach, there's a lot of overlap there, and looking at ways to manage the staff by increasing my hours, hiring an intern, like really looking at how is this going to work and how are we going to expand it? You know ten minutes ago we were thinking we were going to cut the whole program, now we're thinking about not just keeping it **(Clancy laughs)** but growing it was sort of a heavy lift, right? To convince the board, even though everyone sort of liked the idea of Girls Coach, what's the reality of it. But I can share that with you and if I forget it's ok to send me an email and say, do you have that to send that to me?

Ok!

Perfect.

So have you guys ever thought of like a Boys Coach Boys Run?

It comes up-a lot. And it goes right back to what I've mentioned a couple of times is we don't have the time. It's a program that is needed and should definitely happen-somebody else needs to own it. Somebody else needs to run it, there are 7 of us on staff here, and only 2 of us work full time, and the rest of us are part time. And we are all flat out. But I think life for women and families would be improved as a culture and society if more boys had a program similar to Girls Coach themselves, when they were growing up-in terms of learning how to manage relationships in a healthy way, learning how to take care of yourself in a healthy way it would absolutely be a benefit for society and girls if that were happening, we can't do that right now. Maybe one day but that's not happening right now.

(Clancy) You said it would be helpful to girls, could you explain what you mean by that?

I think many girls have relationships with boys, either as parents, or siblings or friends or neighbors or cousins, and ultimately romantic relationships and a lot of the skills that girls are practicing in Girls Coach in terms of noticing unhealthy behaviors in relationships, which for 10-year-olds is mostly about friendships, right? But it certainly overflows into when they're older and having romantic relationships. About recognizing ways people are treating you that aren't good, staying away from drama, advocating for yourself, standing up for yourself, and I think also how to be a good friend, this is what people are looking to you to offer as a good friend. I think it would be great if girls had partners that had similar conversations and expectations. And also for some-not always the default as heterosexual couple but also homogeneous sexual couples as well. But that's where the boy's piece would come in.

(Clancy) Yeah.

Is that the majority of girls are having heterosexual relationships and wouldn't it be great if there partners were as empowered as they are.

So back to the mentors, how did you guys decide that it was for like 8th grade and-

Excellent question.

10th grade I think?

"Really looking to power up bolster girls looking up at those big transitions."

The girls in Girls Coach are 4th graders, 8th graders, and then 11th and 12th graders. And those grades were chosen very specifically because in our local towns, 4th grade is the last grade in elementary school before moving into middle school. 8th grade is the last grade before going into high school and then obviously the 11th and 12th graders are before whatever their next step is going to be. And really looking to power up bolster girls looking up at those big transitions. In hindsight I don't know if you've been at Cold Spring School your whole time?

Basically, since preschool.

Well ok, so a lot of kids, when they get to 4th grade and they're looking at middle school, yikes! Everyone says middle school is scary, I'm worried, I'm concerned, maybe you have had friends and neighbors or relatives looking at middle school, and same for 8th graders looking at highschool and like here's a real

chance to come together and really fortify that big transition and that next big step. So those ages were chosen very purposefully. Now, in Madison, they conveniently rearranged **(everyone laughs)** and 4th grade is now with 5th grade in a lower middle school so third grade is the end of elementary school. It's still a good age, you're 10, you're looking ahead at really being a teenager, it's still ok but it does sort of mess with the model a little bit.

Yeah.

But it's ok! And those are the things we have to evaluate, you know do we want to switch the grade in Madison, do we? And right now we're not cracking that nut, we're sticking with what we know and if the other schools end up switching their schools around, we might do something but right now we still feel like 10-year olds are a good target no matter what their annual grade figuration is.

What are some of your favorite memories of directing Girls Coach Girls Run?

I spend a lot of time during the program going to all the different sites and seeing young girls be comfortable with themselves, partly I think that it's all girls, partly that it's after school, and not real school, right? It's springtime and it's just, every piece of it is just positive. That there is not some of the niggling social group stuff that happens at school. This is a place where that's not happening. It's a place where the girls just feel psyched! And to see the high school girls really stepping out into the role of being teachers, you know by 11th and 12th grade, those girls have had a lot of teachers over time, right? And to watch them figure out how to keep a group of 10-year-olds mostly on task is no small challenge and the things that they think about and talk about and do that in a way that still makes the group feel good, it's real! It's a great thing to see. And then the 5K, the fun run, is just fantastic. It doesn't matter a bit if people are running, or walking, I don't know what your memory of it is. It just feels-

I ran the first part, not sure about the second part! (laughs)

Right! Yeah! But it doesn't matter! It doesn't matter if your running or not running, we're all there together and celebrating everything you've just done and sticking with it through the 12 sessions, but also through the fun run, it's nice to have a party after doing some good stuff!

Yeah.

(Clancy) When is the fun run?

It is on Wednesday, June 3rd, if you'd like to come. You're welcome to come. With a rain date of June 4th and it's at the Surf Club in Madison which is in even not perfect weather it's a nice place to be at the end of the day in June. And we have a DJ and everybody brings sort of Potluck snacky kind of stuff. It just feels good, a lot of parents and friends come. Some teachers come, it's just, lately we've been having friends and families run with the kids too so it feels like it's a thing! **(all laugh)**

(Clancy) Let's see if we can get the whole class to come!

(I laugh) Oh god.

We always need groups to hand out water!

Yeah, we could do that! (All laugh)

You know at little water stations along the way if you had a group of 5 or 6 or 8, 10 kids whatever Yeah!

(Clancy) We'll think of something!

There's 14 of us.

I'll sign you guys up so be careful for what you're offering! **(all laugh)**

(Clancy) We'll have to be strategic of what we ask, but who knows!

So then you get to cheer everybody as they run by. So, that's up to you. That could be part of your project. Well, I don't know how your project goes but.

Yeah! That works! This is just a-what is, who is your favorite athlete?

Oh gosh, right now it's Megan Rapinoe.

I know!

I just, she's a phenomenal athlete, and she could leave it right there, and go home and do whatever she wants to do and that she just leaves it on the floor in terms of the difference she's trying to make off the soccer field, I wanna be her when I grow up! She's just amazing. And my girls are young enough to see her as a hero, like I didn't have that growing up! Like sure, Billie Jean, Christy, I was a big tennis fan but, I mean Billie Jean's a rock star for sure but when I was watching her play, that wasn't happening. Megan Rapinoe, I just love her.

(Clancy) What was it, when you were growing up what did the landscape look like?

"My girls are young enough to see her as a hero."

Well, I played on a town soccer team when I was in like 6th and 7th and 8th grade, all girls town soccer team. And obviously having played soccer for a couple of years, lots of us wanted to play soccer in high school and there wasn't a girls soccer team at

my high school. Think about that now! Like how many kids play soccer and and there wasn't because not enough girls played soccer. So, I didn't, but a couple of the middle school team, played on the boys team. Because that's what they-and they held it on, it was fine. And ours wasn't the only school with a mixed team. It was still the boys soccer team with a couple of girls on it because it was just a different era, it was, it was just a different time. And the rest of the landscape? I felt it was my first introduction to lesbians and my mother couldn't stand that. Like when Billie Jean King came out, like I said my family was big tennis fans, we watched a lot of tennis, we went to a lot of tennis, tournaments, and that just rocked my mothers world, that NOPE, we can't cheer for her anymore, we can't be a fan of hers anymore.

And that somehow being a good athlete put your sexual choices into question kind of thing, but it's like totally unrelated, but in my family, in my household, the conversations that you know, ok to be-to like sports but don't like them too much and turn into a butch or something like that. It's totally different from what it is now where it's like all you know a lot about girl power and you wanna be an athlete, be an athlete! Wanna be a ballerina, be a ballerina. You wanna be a chemist, be a chemist! Like it's so much more regular? Across the board, it wasn't like that when I was growing up. I remember it so clearly.

At what point did you really see like everything-like not everything but something shift to be more open?

I think, a lot through just more, that it wasn't just one name, one name, one name.

"Somehow being a good athlete put your sexual choices into question kind of thing, but it's totally unrelated."

But across the board, strong athletes and I really think, even though I'm older and I think that younger generations are even better at it then I am. People just don't care. Are you a good athlete? You're a good athlete. Who cares? Like what other choices you're making, how you live your life the rest of the way. Megan Rapinoe is a great example. I think we're still evolving. And at least in that respect for sports, I think it feels it's trending in a much

better direction. I'm sure there are athletes that feel differently about that and that there is still a lot more to improve, but it feels better then it did when I was growing up. I mean I remember being in soccer rooms as an athlete and people like 'don't go near her', saying terrible things about people. And I don't think it's like that anymore. Do you play sports?

Yeah. I play soccer and basketball.

(We then realized that Beth's daughter and I both played basketball and soccer and our teams are actually rivals. We then had some heated back and forth discussions on which team is better, which we all know is Guilford NOT Madison)

(Clancy) Did you have, another question?

Not at the moment...

(Clancy) You said we're still evolving, and I'm wondering what you see as next steps.

Pay equity, field and coaching and things that I call program infrastructure equity, oh and this was part of it! We were looking at basketball scores last night, right, because your seasons probably over.

Not yet but keep going.

You're looking toward to the tournaments.

Yeah.

I ended up on the CT basketball site last night, looking for Madison's records because I had never done that before, never knew you could find all that information there, but then on one of the tabs you can also go in and look at just the gym schedules, for who's having practice, where and it at least for Madison's team, a lot of the parent's feel this way, but nobody's actually sat down and looked at the data, but looking through the month of January, the boys sixth grade team had like twice as many practices as the girls 6th grade team. And the whole board of Madison basketball is all men, and I don't know if they have all men, boys or girls as children in the program so pay equity in sports is a thing that Megan Rapinoe, and the tennis stars can all talk about and basketball, and whatever the professional sports are, equity goes down to the 8 and 9 and 10-year-olds in the developmental programs and the equal access they have to good coaching, coaching support, gym time, Lisa who's in 6th grade, one of her best neighborhood buddies who's in 5th grade, there team has had 10 more games then her team has had. Which means, refing, investment by parents, what, why?

Do you guys have your practices once a week? We have it once a week and-

We have it once a week. They've had, the boys have had, as many weeks with two practices as with one. And-

Normally, we have rec and travel.

Right.

Then we have two practices, but now rec ended and travel goes on and we only have one practice.

The team that Lisa's on, she's not allowed to be on the rec team.

We have to be on the rec team.

It's that way I think for 4th graders, but for 5th and 6th graders they are not allowed to be on the rec team.

If you're on the travel team, you can ONLY be on the travel team. Yeah 'cause that-we would have-

See that's why your better, your getting to play twice as much!

Well, we would have preferred that, but, well I was injured at the beginning of the season so I missed like half of it. And so, if then we like HAD to like we didn't have a choice, if you wanted to be on the travel team you HAVE to do rec.

Right. So back to the evolution question, I think we have to get to a place in gender blindness almost. Well everybody can argue the pros and cons of male athletes and female athletes, particularly at younger ages needing or not needing different styles and approaches to your coaching, and you can argue that till the cows come home. I think there needs to be um a gender blindness about oh well we have this many teams to schedule and we have this many gym spots available, how do we do this in an

equitable way. And I'm only using a big data point from one little suburban town but it makes me think that it's not unique. I don't think, especially Madison wants to think they are, I bet they're not that special.

We win. (everyone laughs)

No.

No, yeah we win.

We'll see. **(everyone laughs)** Does that answer that?

(Clancy) Yeah. I was just curious what that use of evaluation was there.

You know how to reach me, you can always call me back, or email me, and I'll try to explain myself.

Thank you. What is-do the Girls Coach Girls Run still like practice?

The coaches are here for training on Thursday afternoons if you wanted to talk to any of them, there here from 3:00-5:00 ish on Thursdays. Until um pretty much April vacation. I don't know if you guys have the same vacation.

Yeah, we do.

And then after April vacation the 4th graders start and they go for the 12 Tuesdays and Thursdays from the end of April until June, so, here we go!

Thank you.

(Clancy) Thanks.

This program is a great way of changing girls' lives. When I look back at my time there, I remember being so comfortable. I did it with a bunch of my soccer teammates. After running for 1 hour, we went straight to our 90 minute soccer practice. As my mom recalled, after picking us up after GCGR, she remembers how confident we were in ourselves, proud of being super athletic girls that after running, we had soccer and just the way in which we acted, reflected on some of the things I had learned at GCGR. Looking back on what I did then. I think that you may not realize it when you are in 4th grade, but it was a super valuable experience, and I can not wait until 8th grade and start teaching 4th graders!

A close-up portrait of Malala Yousafzai, a young woman with dark hair, wearing a bright pink headscarf with a gold border. She is looking slightly upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a solid teal color.

**WE CAN NOT ALL
SUCCEED WHEN
HALF OF US ARE
HELD BACK**

- MALALA YOUSAFZAI

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTA DORAN

Founder and Owner of Tuff Girl Gym and all
around Hero

I bet most of you know Christa Doran, or the gym she owns, Tuff Girl. Tuff Girl teaches, inspires, and builds people up.

I wanted to experience how Christa and the rest of the Tuff Girl team empower females, so Christa invited one of my best friends Livia (one of Christa's daughters) and me to attend a class taught by her and another instructor, Alyssa. The classes usually are only open to people 14+ but Christa made an exception! But before I attended a class, I had an interview with Christa. Here is part of the interview transcribed. This interview was a bit long, so I only transcribed 10/60 minutes.



Transcript

When was Tuff Girl started?

The idea started before the actual first time I showed up. The idea from Tuff Girl was born over nine years in the health, strength, fitness industry where I worked for a lot of different people and saw a lot of things that I thought I could do better, and a lot of things that I could improve upon and I felt that there was a real need for a safe and supportive space that welcomed women regardless of their current fitness level. What their body looked, what the color of the body was, with the size of their body was. They really needed to be in inclusive space where they could come and be supported and educated and taught how to lift weights the right way because, you either had personal training with really good trainers at \$100 an hour which is not accessible to most people and then you had large group classes where people are doing this on the side, for fun and there's no structure, there's no technical coaching and so people are getting hurt. So I had this idea to combine the scale that I had and knowledge and experience that I had from a masters degree working with people in rehab and also being in the strength industry in this group environment which was super fun, also a way for women to connect with each other and to support each other which is what we need more of. So Tuff girl was born I never set out a plan or goal because it just grew organically on its own. Because when something is good, one of the wonderful things about women is that they talk about it and they tell their friends so it grew all on its own, grassroots. And a year after being in the park, working out of parks and rented spaces, with the help of my partner Mike we opened our own facility.

Did you think it was going to grow this big?

No! I had no expectations, no goal. I think the interesting thing about looking back at that woman that started that business 11 years ago is that that woman did not have to believe in herself that I do now. So if you told me that back then that in 11 years you're going to build this incredible thing, I would've said, "no way I can't do that." And that's one of the things I like to help women explore, and I like women to see for themselves that they have the capabilities beyond what they realize. That they are stronger than they know. That they are more powerful than they know. And help them find their voice and then use their voice and take up space and treat their body with love and respect and so I have sort of grown with the business and it has been really an awesome ride but no I did not even know that this thing was something that I was even capable of building or helping to build because I have a whole team of people that help me.

How big is the Tuff girl staff/team?

We have including myself, we have five full-time employees and then we have four part-time employees, there's nine of us all together.

What inspired you to start the business?

"I like women to see for themselves that they have the capabilities beyond what they realize. That they are stronger than they know. That they are more powerful than they know. And help them find their voice and then use their voice and take up space and treat their body with love and respect."

They say in entrepreneur that you create the thing you wish existed. Tuff Girl was born partly out of the idea that I could do it better for women, but also because I have a transplant to this area. I grew up in Western Mass and I had just had Livia, who you know, and I was lonely and I wanted a community of women to help me navigate this new role as a mom which is very lonely and alienating when you don't have a support system, because we need support systems. We need people who are sharing similar situations to help us go through hard things and having a baby for the first time was a hard thing for me and it is for a lot of people. So it was really born out of "I know fitness and I know how to run a class. I want to meet new people. I think there's a need for those so let's throw it out there. Two women showed up the first time and then it kept growing and growing and growing and now I have over 500 members. So yeah it's been really awesome. It was this thing that I really wanted for myself, selfishly, that now we have the privilege of impacting, we've impacted thousands of women. To date, Tuff Girl has now trained 3000 women.

Whoa!

"We need women to step into their power which is there, and they just don't see it."

Isn't that incredible? They don't all stay. Some are just visiting. Some just check it out and don't come back but we've had at least a one hour interaction with close to 3000 women over 11 years, and that is something that is something I'm really proud of, it's been awesome.

Why do you think it's important to empower and inspire and teach women and girls to be confident in themselves?

When women and girls are confident in themselves, they do really brave, scary things with their lives. And we need more women represented in leadership. We need more women at the table helping make big decisions in companies, in the government. We need women to step into their power which is there, and they just don't see it. In my experience, a lot of that has to do with this internal dialogue but they have with themselves that is a lot of times linked to their confidence and their self-esteem, which is linked to their body image. I think that the way women are consumed with their bodies and with their physical appearance is keeping us small in more than one way. It is keeping us quiet. It is preventing us from asking for the raise. It is preventing us from demanding a seat at the table, from speaking up. If somebody talks over us, it's usually men, we don't say something for fear that we are going to be pigeonholed or disrespected or man-splained, they call it. We need this diverse perspective that only women can provide. We need this unique sort of leadership that only women can provide because we are different. We are equal but we are not the same. And the gifts that women have are really beautiful and really need to be represented in leadership. So the more women that can stand up, and be brave, and do scary things, and use their voice, and realize that their ability to create really positive change and do really amazing things is not linked to the size of their body like we've been taught and like we've been told and like we've been conditioned, the more women will take up space in leadership and the more women that you see in those roles. and we're already seeing it right? Look at the presidential race. Which is really awesome to see all these women stepping forward because it's about time. It's 2020 and it's about time.

How old were you when you opened up this empowerment view of the world?

"It's 2020 and it's about time."

People always say "Tuff Girl has changed my life," but Tuff Girl has changed my life. I have been opened up in ways that I have never thought was possible because of the roles that I was sort of forced into and the leader that I had to become to sort of head up this community and deliver what women really needed...So I have a really long history of body dysmorphia and eating disorder and being at war with my body and having my worth directly linked to my body. But that changed when I started Tuff Girl and then it changed even more when I stopped weighing my body every day and then it changed more when I started to set those really big athletic girls like doing mud runs or doing pull ups rather than getting into this size jean or losing this many pounds. So this is been a slow process I would say over the last 11 years that I was seeing from all these women because I had such a large sample size was so saddening to me because if I want them to change, I have to change first. I have to change my own thought process about myself and body and my abilities. So then I can help them change their thought process. And then as a mother and to girl, I wanted to be the best role model I could for them because I didn't want them to be at war with their bodies for so many years like I was. I just wanted them to have this confidence and sense of self that I didn't have that I really think would have served me well back then. Might not have led me to this place, and I think that it served its purpose in my life because here's where I am today and I have this story to tell but I want more for my own daughters. So, you have to live the change, you have to be the change, you can't just talk about it, it's not just words, you have to embody it.

One thing that really pushed me to keep on doing the exercises were the empowering words Christa told everyone in the room while they were becoming stronger. Some of the phrases I heard were, "you are so powerful," "you have such strong bodies," and, "you are so strong!". That definitely pushed me to keep going and keep trying my hardest. I felt like from just that one class I was stronger, not just physically, but also mentally. It gave me the confidence that I needed in myself to try extra hard and to be the best version of myself working out there. This is exactly the kind of thing we need to see more of. People encouraging one another, complimenting them, making others feel the best they can. One of Tuff Girl's main goals is to help make women feel more confident in themselves. This is super important because we can not have women and girls doubting themselves constantly; trust me, that it is not the world you or I would want to live in.

If you would like to listen to the whole interview, you can email me at mparikh@coldspringschool.org and I can send you it.

Mini Biographies About Females in the Sports World

SKY BROWN



Sky Brown is a skateboarder. She actually got admitted into the Olympics this year, but sadly that will have to be postponed. You're probably thinking, so what? Well, Sky is only 11 years old! She is the world's youngest pro skateboarder, and is crazy talented, not just at skateboarding, but also surfing. The reason I am sharing her story with you is to prove the point that age doesn't matter. She is also sending out the message that it doesn't matter your age or size, you should always follow your dreams. She encourages girls to dream big, and follow their dream, and she believes that girls can do anything boys can do. To qualify for the Olympics in skateboarding, only the top 20 skaters are welcome, and only 3 from each country. Pretty impressive.

Sky had her worst fall yet about a week ago. Her dad says she is lucky to be alive. She quickly was rushed to the hospital, she seems to have broken her skull. As she says, her helmet and arm saved her. Even while in the hospital, she says that she is going for gold in Tokyo.

KATELYN OHASHI

You may have heard of Katelyn Ohashi. When she was only 16, she beat Simone Biles. If she had continued gymnastics, she would be the number one in the world. She was amazing. She started the sport at age 3. She was always doing gymnastics as a kid, 24/7. Not a moment of rest. At age 12, she made the national team. She had a really bad back injury, and she was told by the media that she would never be good enough, she went through a lot of body image challenges. She recalls it starting when she was just 14, people saying that she looked like an elephant or a bird that is too big to fly.

She called Val, the UCLA gymnastics coach, and Val had asked her when the last time she was happy in the sport. Her reply was, 'When I was 11'. Miss Val essentially changed her life. Katelyn realized why she even fell in love with the sport to begin with. Things started to turn around. She made the decision to NOT continue gymnastics at an elite level, and to instead go to college, and do gymnastics there. She recalls that it wasn't until sophomore year where she was able to be happy again. She scored SIX perfect 10s in her career.

She's had two shoulder surgeries, and her back will be a problem for the rest of her life. She had found gymnastics very restricting, everyone was constantly on her back about her weight, and the pressure was too much.

I'm sure you have all seen her perfect 10 routine at UCLA. She nailed it. But the inspiring thing about it, was her giant smile while performing. You could tell that she was having the time of her life.





KATHRINE SWITZER

In 1976, Kathrine Switzer was the first woman to officially enter the Boston Marathon. For over 70 years, it was only open to males. This is how it went down. Just like every other person, she had to put in an entry form to sign up. She signed it K.V. Switzer. It was not cheating, but they had no way of knowing if it was a gender other than male entering the race. She ran the race with her coach and boyfriend. As Kathrine recalls (in a video from the website Marathon Women) there was a truck going by and everyone was taking pictures, and utterly shocked at this rare sight of a woman running the Boston Marathon, but it also excited everyone. But there was one guy, that was clearly just insane. He just stopped the bus, and started running after her, "Suddenly I turned, and he just grabbed at me and screamed at me, 'get the he(ck) out of my race and give me those numbers'" He started to grab her and rip her number off. It was frightening to her of course. We are lucky for her boyfriend who out of nowhere gave this wild man a hardy push that sent him flying, and out of the way. After the press tried to interrogate her, they all ended up leaving at some point. She turned to her boyfriend and told him that this just meant that she had to finish this race, no matter what happened. If she did not, it would make it seem that women as a whole could not. Well, she did finish the race (about 4 hours and 20 minutes) It was history. It changed women's sports as a whole. Five years later, women were officially allowed to compete in the Boston Marathon. At the age of 73, Kathrine continues to be an advocate for women. Her courage to finish the race made a strong statement for girls and women.



SIMONE BILES

Simone Biles, like many (but not all) athletes, started gymnastics at a young age. And her life was far from perfect. Since the start, her mom struggled with substance abuse, and Simone was in and out of foster homes at just 3 years old. Her mom was never really a part of Simone's life as she recalls, "I never had a mom to run to. I always remember feeling hungry and afraid." Her maternal grandparents adopted her and her younger sister when she was six, and to this day they are considered her parents. Her two other siblings were also adopted but by Ron's (the maternal grandpa/father of Simone's) sister.

When she was just six-years-old Simone was on a field trip to a farm, but it started raining, so they ended up taking all the kids to the gym, where Simone stood out. She did have a bit of a knack already, but she thinks the reason that she was so good there was because her and her brother played a lot on the swingset and he had (only at age 6!) taught her how to flip off of it and a bunch of other tricks. So thanks to her brother she had a head start!

When she was just 12, she had a very difficult choice to make, to go to middle school and be with all of her friends, or go to a private school that was a few minutes' walk from her gym. Later on, she had yet ANOTHER big choice to make, to continue her education, or pursue her possible career in gymnastics. She couldn't go to her same school and be serious in gymnastics because that would mean a lot of traveling and wouldn't be worth it. At 13 her parents decided to homeschool her. It was really hard for her, mainly because of friends, she felt very lonely and isolated. And she had to make a similar decision again, to go professional, or go to UCLA, an amazing school. She had tweeted she was going and had basically made it official, but she realized this wasn't right for her, and decided to go professional. But she wasn't going to give up her whole education. She found the University of the People, which was tuition-free, and a perfect fit for her.

Simone will sadly be retiring after the Tokyo olympics but she will forever be remembered in gymnastics!



BILLIE JEAN KING

Billie Jean King is one of the many women who has broken barriers on and off the court/field. She started playing tennis at age 11 (6th grade), and after her very first practice she told her mom, "Mom, I'm gonna be number one in the world.". And well, she was not wrong. She was ranked #1 in the world from 1968 to 1975. One thing that she is known for is the Battle of the Sexes, a very impactful tennis match. You probably do not know the full story of the Battle of the Sexes (or maybe you do) and I even did not until I did some research. May 13, 1973, Bobby Riggs and Margaret Court faced off in a \$10,000 winner-take-all tennis match. Bobby Riggs was famously skeptical of women's abilities on the tennis court, so they put together the event. He had originally asked Billie to play, but she simply ignored his invitation (I mean that is completely understandable, he was a knucklehead), and instead, Margaret Court accepted (also an extremely talented player). The game was played in Bobby's home turf, so that was the first disadvantage for Margaret. Secondly, later on, we figured out that he had the court resurfaced to slow down the game, which gave him time to wind up and put more power into his stroke. Riggs lobbed Court's shots back to her, breaking the rhythm she was accustomed to on the hard-hitting women's tour. Clearly rattled, she lost badly, 6-3, 6-1. As soon as the match ended, Riggs again challenged King for the second time, and this time, she accepted. This time, it was a \$100,000 match! It was 29-year-old Billie vs. 55-year-old snobby Bobby, and as you probably know, she DOMINATED the match, crushing him, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3. This was a turning point for women. He was so confident that he would win and prove that men are just better at sports. This in itself, gave women confidence in themselves. A year before in 1972, when King won the US Open, she won \$10,000. The men's winner was awarded \$25,000. Billie Jean King refused to play in the next year if the prize money was not the same. So 1973, because of BJK, both male and female players at the US Open earned the same amount of money. They were just too scared to let go of her. She was truly an incredible athlete. But this also demonstrated that we could in fact do it. We could provide equal pay and it would be for the better. Billie Jean King is an amazing tennis player but she is also an advocate for equality. She won 39 grand slams (singles, doubles, and mixed doubles). Became the first female athlete in ANY sport to earn more than \$100,000 in a single season! In 1974, she became the first woman to coach a co-ed team in professional sports. And in 1984 she became the first woman commissioner in professional sports history! In 1973, she founded the Women's Tennis Association (WTA). The WTA is essentially the "home" of women's professional tennis. It was founded to create a better future for women's tennis. According to Life Magazine, she was one of the top 100 'Most important americans' of the 20th century. She was the only female athlete on the list, and one of the 4 athletes on the list. The other three were Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, and Muhammad Ali. Now, at 76-years-old, she continues to fight for LGBTQ rights, and advocates for gender equality in sports.





NADIA COMANECI

You had to have heard of the great Nadia Comaneci. She scored the first ten in history in gymnastics! That's not even the craziest part, she was only 14 at the time! It was actually quite funny because the Olympic boards were not equipped to display it. The scoreboard only showed 3 digits with a decimal in between the first and second numbers, so everyone thought it said she had scored 1.00! There was much confusion in the stadium until the situation was addressed through the loudspeaker. That wasn't her last 10 though, she has made 7 perfect 10 routines in the Olympics! While we often think of these brilliant players, we don't normally think about how they got to where they are now. For Nadia, it was a bit of a hectic childhood. She was born in 1961 in Romania. She was in a boarding school, run by her coach, Bela Karolyi. He was super tough on her but in a good way. And it clearly paid off because Nadia was ready to compete internationally at age 13! Although Nadia was almost like a celebrity, the treatment she got in Romania was anything but glamorous. In 1981 Bela escaped to the US, The government was afraid that Nadia would do the same so they restricted her to travel and had police follow her everywhere. She ended up retiring in 1984, and in 1989 she escaped from Romania by walking through the forest into Hungary, she made her way all the way to New York, where she was given asylum. She is now 58, and lives with her husband (a former gymnast as well) and has a son named Dylan. She now fundraises for many charities, runs multiple businesses, and helped found a gymnastics school to train future gymnastics stars.

SERENA WILLIAMS



When the Williams were growing up, they did not have too much money. The Williams sisters started learning tennis from their dad, Richard Williams. Early on, Richard did some research on tennis and started teaching himself tennis from watching instructional videos. He then passed his knowledge onto Serena and Venus. After realizing the dedication needed to be a star, the girls practiced hours every day on their dimly lit courts in Compton, California. The courts were supposedly filled with drug addicts' syringes and it was not uncommon to hear random gunfire while practicing. They had to get in the habit of when they heard anything that could potentially be a gunshot, to hide, and NO ONE should have to be in that routine.

What women wear has for some reason always been talked about. That being said, I wanted to focus on (or remind) you of is the whole catsuit debate. For those of you who are not sure of the full story; Serena showed up to a match, wearing this outfit, and the president of the French Tennis Federation criticized her for wearing a skin-tight black outfit that he named a "catsuit", saying that the outfit crossed a line and that he thinks there should be a new dress code rule. First of all, Serena needed to wear that outfit in terms of a medical standpoint, to prevent blood clots.

Second, it does not affect anyone in a negative way. She followed this by going to a match wearing something in many ways, the opposite of the "catsuit", a tutu outfit: We should not be penalized or instructed on what we should or should not wear. That is up to us as women. While we are still on the topic of tennis, you may have heard of rising star, 22-year-old-Naomi Osaka. There was another controversy in 2018 between Serena Williams, and Naomi Osaka. First, you should know that this had nothing to do with each other. In fact, Serena is Naomi's idol, and it was a shame that this was the way the match she had looked forward to forever, went. Yet it is not like it was either of their faults. See, the umpire had called 3 code violations on Serena. The first one was for coaching, implying that her coach in the stands gave her signals to help her which is against the rules. Serena claimed that all she saw was a thumbs up. And she told the umpire nicely, that that was not some secret signal, it is simply the coach wishing her luck, and/or congratulating her, which is what a thumbs-up means. Then she says, "I do not cheat to win. I would rather lose," and she was not lying. But later on, the coach admits he gave a signal, but she clearly did not see that one, and yes it is against the rules, and what the coach said was, "everyone coaches" which is true. But see, that is what the coach did, not what Serena did, and if she did not even see it, I personally do not think that she should be penalized for it, the coach should be, not Serena. The second violation was for racket abuse because she smashed her racket in frustration of the whole situation. And the last violation was verbal abuse to the umpire for calling the umpire a thief for taking a, not just point, but game away from her. She goes on to call the referee over and says that just because she is a woman they are taking this away from her. I, and many others as well as BJK agree that the situation would have been dealt with differently if it was a men's match, and much of it would have been ignored. Some think that Serena Williams was completely unfair and was acting way out of proportion. Others, like me, think that it would have been handled much differently with a man in Serena's place and that she did not do anything wrong. They were not born stars, as you know, they had to endure some pretty tough times, Serena and Venus's family had to commonly deal with racist people judging them based on their skin color. But Serena ignored them, and continued to be the best. In the past year, Serena had her first child, yet came back and is still playing. Serena has 23 grand slams! And even while maintaining her incredible athletic ability on the court, her and Venus fight for gender equality off the court as well.



CASTER SEMENYA

You may have heard of the big uproar about Caster Semenya that happened a few years ago. She was a phenomenal runner. Only one flaw, her testosterone level was above average. Therefore, she was not allowed to compete anymore. She kept winning and people said that it was cheating even though it was just a natural thing that should not affect her career. Plus, that is not a rule for males, it only applies to females. If that counts as cheating, I think it's fair to say that Michael Phelps shouldn't be able to compete because his feet size is above average so it's too similar to flippers which is an advantage.

Caster Semenya is from South Africa, and won gold in the 2016 Olympics in the middle-distance category. There was also a big controversy about Semenya's gender. Many thought that she was really a male because of her looks and high testosterone level, even when there was clear proof that showed otherwise. All of this led to rumors that she was transgender. Which is NOT TRUE.

She had a choice to either take drugs to lower her testosterone levels, but her other option was to just stop competing. These drugs like many others could produce very harmful side effects. She had no intention of changing who she was for everyone else, therefore, her career was on hold. One thing led to another, and she has now decided to compete in the 200 meter race in the Tokyo Olympics. She cannot qualify to anything more yet because she is still a couple 10ths away from the qualifying time. But COVID-19 does give her more time to try and qualify. Good luck!!

KENDALL COYNE

When Kendall Coyne first started skating, people were super skeptical of a girl playing a "boy" sport. A lot of Kendall's friends didn't even know what hockey was. It never seemed to bother her how people thought it wasn't meant to be. Throughout her childhood, she played five sports. When she was younger, the thing that made Kendall stand out was her speed. She was insanely fast. But it wasn't just at a young age, that is what Kendall is known for, her speed. She has won **SIX** gold medals at the IIHF (International Ice Hockey Federation) World Championships, she also got gold at the 2018 Olympics. She is the fastest female hockey player ever.

Throughout her career, the majority of her team were boys. At one point Kendall wanted to try out for a higher league, she didn't make it that year, but the next year she did and did not only make the next level, but the level even higher than that! She was playing with boys that were a year older than her. But at one point she had to stop playing with the boys because they were starting to get a lot bigger than her. Until college she was practicing with the boys, and playing the games with the girls.

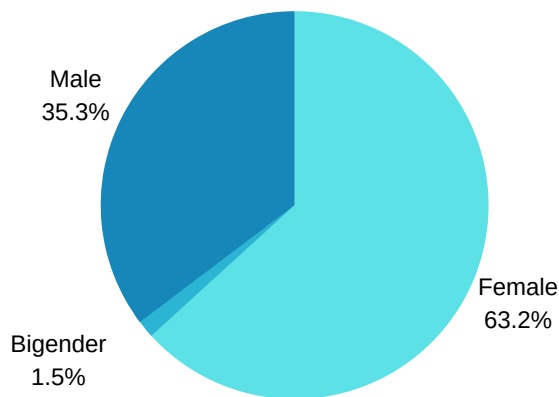
At only 15 years old, Kendall got her first call from the U-18 USA Hockey team wondering if she was interested. At 18-years old, Kendall got invited to tryout for the U.S. Olympic Team, again she was cut. She made the team for the 2014 Olympics at age 22.



Who's *your* Favorite Athlete? Why?

Data on the CSS Community

I sent out a form to the CSS community asking them a few questions. I received 68 responses. Thank you to everyone who filled out the form. Below when I say Non Professional Athletes, that includes when people said their daughter, or uncle for example. When I wrote 'Professional Male' or 'Professional Female' that means athletes that are male or female that only one person mentioned. In the survey I also asked about what sport you play and your favorite sport, which I did NOT include in this data.

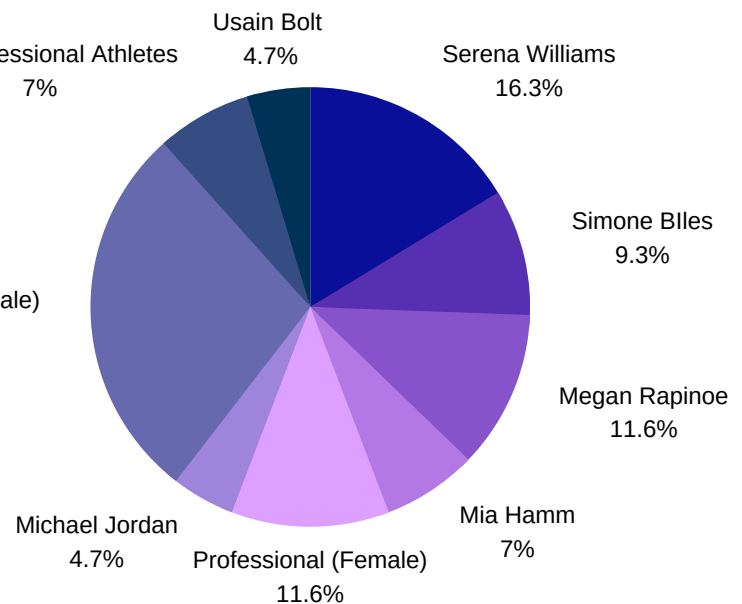


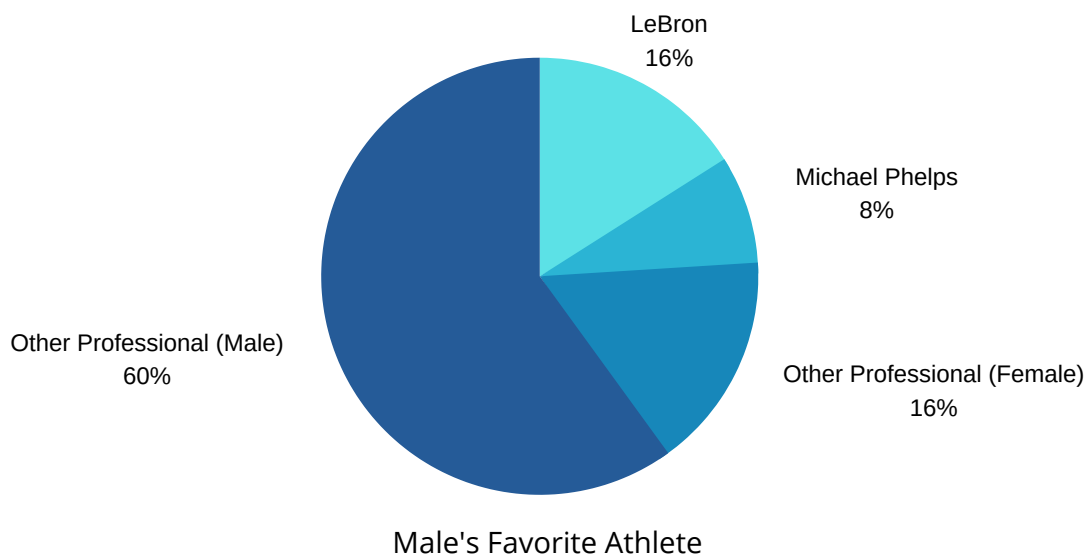
What gender do you identify as?



Female's Favorite Athlete

Professional (Male)
27.9%





53.6% (21 people) of males said their favorite athletes were male, 14.3% (4 people) said female, and 10.7% (3 people) said no answer

% (24 people) of female said their favorite athletes were female, % (16 people) said male, % (4 people) said no answer, and % (3 people) said a non professional athlete

Kids answers to the question of WHY they are your favorite athlete?

- **Kindergarten:** Aaron Judge because he plays for the Yankees and is fun to watch.
- **First grader:** Keith Smart. Resilience, perseverance, & self awareness.
- **Second grader:** Usain Bolt; he's a track athlete and I really like running.
- **Second grader:** Serena Williams, she is amazing!
- **Second grader:** Simone Biles. Because I love gymnastics and she is the best.
- **Second grader:** I don't have a favorite, but I admire Michelle Kwon because rather than being focused only on outcome, she receives joy from the process of her sport - she lives in the moment. When she didn't make Olympic gold, rather than dwell on it, she celebrated the silver and also talks about how much she loved skating her routine. For me, it's a good reminder of how we should all be enjoying our lives.
- **Third grader:** Novak Djokovic. Currently ranked world No. 1 in men's singles tennis by the Association of Tennis Professionals.
- **Third grader:** Dominik Hasek, he is an awesome goalie.
- **Third grader:** Megan Rapinoe, because she is a very good soccer player.
- **Fourth grader:** My field hockey coach at Brown, Carolan Norris. Because she taught me so much not only about how to play, but also about perseverance, teamwork and leadership.

SOME Parents Answers for the question of why they are your favorite athlete?

- **Parent:** Megan Rapinoe - She is not only an amazing accomplished athlete, but she isn't afraid to stand up for her beliefs, despite consequences. She is an amazing role model for children and adults.
- **Parent:** Serena Williams - She was an underdog coming into the sport of Tennis and proved to the world that an "underprivileged" Black girl could dominate in an exclusive sport.
- **Parent:** Michael Jordan - A quote of his that has resonated with me was "I never think of missing a shot before I take it. I only focus on making it!" He always focused on his positive thoughts and not his doubts. His hard work and dedication made him the greatest of all time!
- **Parent:** Serena Williams--I love tennis, she is a phenom, and she is so authentically and powerfully herself, not afraid to stand up for herself.
- **Parent:** Nuria Picas. She is a ski and trail runner who has stamina and who is committed to justice in the world.
- **Parent:** Tough question! Hard to pick just one. I love to watch Chris Paul, Clint Dempsey, Megan Rapinoe, and Christian McCaffrey. They're all great representations of incredible commitment to a specific skill set, routine, discipline, and role. But I also like that they all understand and embrace the larger role, beyond sports, that athletes play in society.
- **Parent:** Sydney Crosby for reaching the pinnacle and constantly improving, upholding the code of excellence among Canadian hockey greats.
- **Parent:** LeBron James - impact to NE Ohio community, role model for so many, ability to reinvent his game.
- **Parent:** Jessie Owens for breaking down racial barriers at a critical period.
- **Parent:** Serena Williams because she is the greatest tennis champion I've ever watched. Fast, hits with power, and is dominant.



Kids answers to the question why they are your favorite female athlete?

- **Kindergartener:** Megan Rapinoe because she's awesome!
- **First grader:** Valentina Vezzali. Strength, courage, humor. And she winked at me once.
- **Second grader:** Same (Michelle Kwon). Though I love so many players on the women's national team for soccer.
- **Third grader:** Ivana Spanovic. In 2013, she became the first Serbian track and field athlete to win a medal at the IAAF Outdoor World Championships.
- **Third grader:** Megan Rapinoe, because she is a very good soccer player.
- **Fourth grader:** My field hockey coach at Brown, Carolan Norris. Because she taught me so much not only about how to play, but also about perseverance, teamwork and leadership.

SOME Parents Answers for the question of why they are your favorite female athlete?

- **Parent:** Serena Williams. Because she is a super strong role-model, a sister, a mother and a badass.
- **Parent:** Megan Rapinoe - She is not only an amazing accomplished athlete, but she isn't afraid to stand up for her beliefs, despite consequences. She is an amazing role model for children and adults.
- **Parent:** Serena Williams - She was an underdog coming into the sport of Tennis and proved to the world that an "underprivileged" Black girl could dominate in an exclusive sport.
- **Parent:** Serena Williams - She is so dominant on the court and puts every ounce of her soul into her game!
- **Parent:** I am actually just so proud to see more female athletes get into this field from Guatemala. There were none before.
- **Parent:** Serena Williams--I love tennis, she is a phenom, and she is so authentically and powerfully herself, not afraid to stand up for herself.
- **Parent:** Nuria Picas. She is a ski and trail runner who has stamina and who is committed to justice in the world
- **Parent:** Megan Rapinoe and Kelley O'Hara. Rapinoe is the rare individual player who can change the game with her presence on the field. But she also makes the most of that ability off the field, too. I love playing soccer, and O'Hara's style of intensely tough, physical defense is exactly how I try to play for my team!
- **Parent:** Simone Biles - inspiring story of overcoming childhood challenges, master at her craft, inspiration to the whole nation.

A full-page photograph of soccer player Meghan Rapinoe in a white USA jersey with the number 15. She has short purple hair and is celebrating with her arms raised, looking upwards. The background is a blurred stadium filled with spectators.

SOMEDAY A
WOMAN'S GOAL
WILL BE
WORTH AS
MUCH
AS A
MAN'S

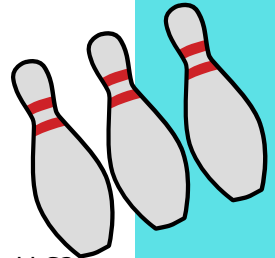
- MEGHAN RAPINOE



Fast Facts!

SPORTS

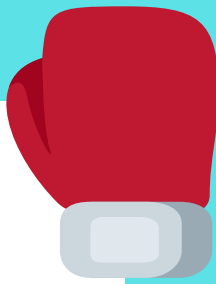
- Did you know that you run about 7 miles in a single soccer game?
- Did you know that athletic shoes make up 20% of all shoe sales in the U.S?
- Did you know that the average lifespan of a baseball is only 7 pitches?
- Did you know that Adidas spent 2.5 years designing the soccer ball for the 2014 World Cup?
- Did you know that gymnastics was at the first olympics?
- Did you know that the original basketball baskets were closed at the bottom...ladders were used to fetch the balls!



ATHLETE'S LIFE

- Did you know that there were actually five William sisters? Three of which were half sisters.
- Michael Phelps broke a swimming world record at age 15!
- Did you know that Usain Bolt owns his own restaurant in Jamaica. He also has a passion for dancing and loves music.
- Did you know that Abby Wambachs favorite show is Grey's Anatomy?





SALARIES

- On average the WNBA earns \$79,000 and the NBA earns \$7,000,000
- On average the NWHL earns **\$15,000** and the NHL earns \$4,000,000
- On average for tennis, there is in fact equal pay for at least the 4 grand slams.
Australian Open: \$71,000,000
Wimbledon: \$49,400,000
French Open: \$48,000,000
US Open: \$57,000,000
- On average the USWNT make \$40,000 while the USMNT make \$60,000 but that is not including all the tournaments, that is only base salary



USWNT VS. USMNT

- The USWNT has won 4 out of the 8 World Cups, the men have had 21 World Cups, and haven't won a single one. The highest they've placed is 3rd in 1930
- The USWNT has won 4 out of the 6 gold Olympic medals, the men? 0. They haven't won gold in over a century
- In 2016-2018, the USWNT created \$50.8 million, the men created \$40.9 million.
- For winning the World Cup, each women would earn \$250,000 if the men were to win the World Cup, they would each earn \$1.1 million. In the 4 times the women have won, they still earn less then the USMNT *would*.



WUSA

The Struggle of Starting a League

The win of the 1999 World Cup gave the women's national team the hope of start a women's professional soccer league. They thought that while the spotlight was on them, that it was an essentially perfect time to start one. Finally womens' sports were becoming more and more popular around the world. The players became more well-known. They started being shown on magazines, TV, morning shows, and were asked to go to the White House.

Here's the problem: those who were just below professional level had nowhere to play and no women's league so they weren't able to make soccer their career. In order to create a league, they needed approval from the US soccer federation. Their relationship with the federation was really bad, it had been for a while. The federation saw the women's success as a threat to the men's league, major league soccer (MLS). US soccer eventually asked MLS to make a plan for women's soccer. The USWNT felt that a women's team under the men would be a second thought. They wanted a league that had nothing to do with MLS. Surprisingly, they had another option.

John Hendricks was a big fan of the women's national team. He was the multi millionaire founder and CEO of the Discovery Channel. He had heard about the women's idea of a professional league, and he saw a business opportunity. He called up three of his friends and pitched them an idea about having a WUSA, Women's United Soccer Association: a league with 8 teams from 8 cities across the country. John asked the cable companies to invest \$5 million for each team, which meant that all together they put in 40 million dollars!

Some of the players on the national team were making just \$1,500 a year, now the WUSA were offering them an 80,000 dollar salary and a 5 year guaranteed contract. As the co captain, Carla Overbeck said, "We didn't want to make millions, we just wanted to survive without having to get outside employment to play the game we loved,"

After months of delays, US Soccer signed off and it was announced that the start of their new league at a launch event in 2000. In December of 2000, over 170 women fought for a spot on the WUSA roster. After a week of tryouts, the names were revealed, and by the end of it, over 100 other women had a new career.

But behind the scenes, the league wasn't doing as well as they thought. In total, the cable companies had invested \$40 million dollars to launch the league and carry it through five years. And now, just halfway through the first season all the money was gone. Everyone expected that with the win of the World Cup, they would blow up and have plenty of money to last them forever. That assurance had led the league to spend millions into national advertising and expensive office space, let alone the 24 MILLION dollars spent on renovation stadiums.

After the first season, the board decided to cut the business plan and start from scratch. They needed a new CEO, and they picked Lynn Morgan. She quickly got expenses under control, changed the staff, and moved headquarters. When the second season came, the team was ready. But after that season, the board demanded even more budget cuts. Lynn proposed a pay cut for the players who got paid the most. The players were mad, but they knew they had to decide between themselves or the team.

But it was all a scam. The business plan didn't include rent or renovation for the stadiums or marketing for the opening game. Their investors could either put in millions more or end the whole league. So everyone agreed that if two or three of the owners refused to support the league, the WUSA wasn't going to work out. However, none of the investors were ready to give up. They agreed that there would be a second year, but a lot of changes had to be made quickly.

The players lowered their pay cut by 25% for the upcoming season, and agreed to give up their guaranteed salaries for the two seasons after that! In return, the board agreed to fund a third season. WUSA had lost \$100 million dollars over the course of three years, but that was pretty normal for a startup league. MLS had lost \$250 million dollars in its first five years!

Everything was going well, except their trust in the investors. John Hendricks had to find new ones in only a few days. He had one option left, to turn to U.S. Soccer. No one was happy about that, but they didn't have much choice. But the federation had invested so much on the men's side that they had a lot riding on their success, and they also doubted that the women could even make it as professionals. So they said no. The day of the meeting arrived, and there were no new investors loan from the federation. And that wasn't it; the WUSA owners weren't willing to invest any more money and the board voted to shut down the league just five days before the 2003 World Cup. Think about how hard they worked to start the league, and then poof, it was gone. It just wasn't fair to the females that just want to play the sport they love. They had sacrificed so much, and it was all taken away so fast. Don Garber (commissioner of MLS) found out that they had lost \$16 million that year and she said, "Oh my God. My owners would give me the biggest raise if I lost only 16 million dollars. We lost \$75 million this year." WUSA only lasted three seasons. One super hard part was that none of those players got to choose when their career ended. It was chosen for them, it was abruptly ended. They had finally got to make soccer there job, but it was taken away 1 and a half years later.

*Source: Credit goes to 30 for 30 Podcasts-Back Pass

WPS

Soon after WUSA ended, a reorganization committee was formed. The committee led to a non-profit organization whose goal was to promote/support all aspects of women's soccer in the US including creating a new professional women's league! In 2006, they announced the relaunching of the league for the 2008 season! It was pushed to 2009 so it didn't coincide with the Women's World Cup and Olympics, also to make sure that the logistics were all planned out. On May 27, 2008, the league announced that it would expand to Philadelphia for the 2010 season. Still, despite the extra time given to the original five cities for preparations, the Dallas franchise did not materialize, citing stadium issues. So the league began with seven teams, one less than they planned on.

The process of choosing players began on September 16, 2008, when WPS (Women's Professional Soccer) announced the allocation of 21 US national team players, three players went to each of the seven teams that began playing in the 2009 season.

WPS's first game was played to a crowd of over 14,000 fans as the Los Angeles Sol's beat the Washington Freedom 2-0. But that victory didn't last long; in the first season, there were several issues, including an uneven schedule due to the odd number of teams, several season-ending injuries, two major trades, and more. The first season was a success, despite many losing more money than planned-which seems to happen a lot if you recall.

Although this success and optimism did not extend to the Sol, as after AEG failed to sell the team, it was announced that the Sol would be scattered. Then the Saint Louis Athletica suddenly and unexpectedly ran into financial problems and folded mid-May. All of this caused the league schedule to be re-done.

Philadelphia Independence did much better, finishing third on the season and ultimately losing the WPS Final to the incredibly dominant FC Gold Pride. Around the same time, WPS announced the addition of a western New York franchise for the 2011 season, spawning from the existing Buffalo Flash organization. Despite these strong showings, overall attendance for 2010 was noticeably down from 2009, and one team (the Washington Freedom) made public mid-season that it was looking for new investors. It was problem after problem, four teams all missed the payment deadline for a large up-front deed meant to prevent what happened to St. Louis from happening again, Gold Pride could not find the necessary money and folded. Chicago was given a 30-day extension but later announced that they would not play in WPS in 2011. Washington and Boston ultimately were able to make their payments, leaving six teams for the 2011 season. The beginning of the league's third season started out with low attendance and even more problems with other teams. But the success of the USWNT at the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup resulted in a major increase in attendance and helped set a new all-time league attendance record for a single game at 15,500! (Currently, the women's game with the most attended fans is over 90,000.) On November 20, 2011, the USSF gave WPS 15 days to field a sixth team, in order for the league to maintain its Division 1 status, after another team was terminated by the league. On January 30, 2012, the league announced a discontinuing of the 2012 season. Prior to the announcement, the Soccer Federation showed doubts about resuming authorization for WPS. On the conditions that WPS expanded to six teams by 2013 and eight by 2014. Which is not an easy thing to do. On May 18, 2012, the WPS announced that the league had officially ended. Its remaining teams were taken into the WPSL Elite League, which is like a semi-professional soccer league.

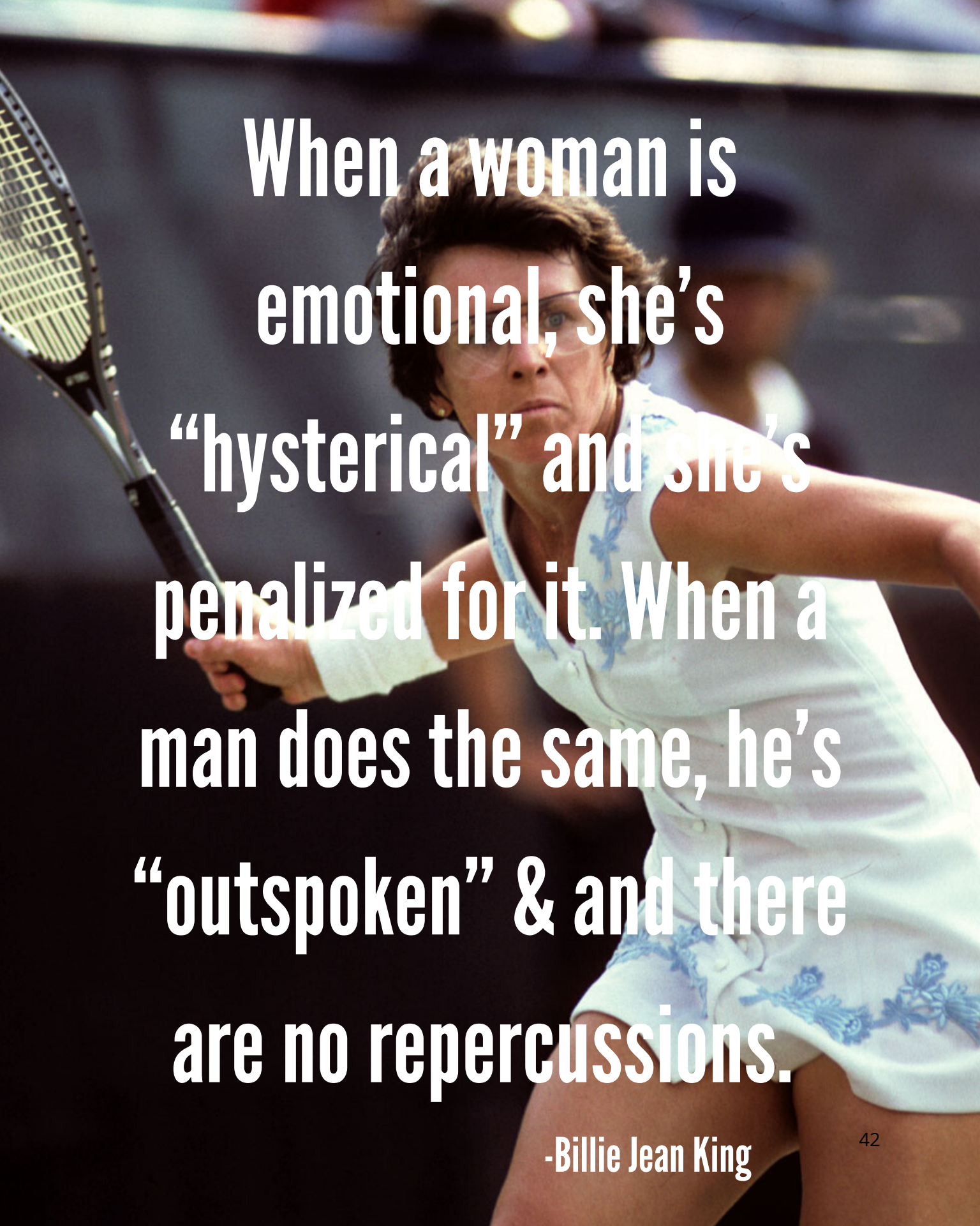
NWSL

Victory at Last

I'll save you the suspense in telling you to not get too disappointed by the last two stories. After the WPS officially folded in April 2012, the US Soccer Federation held a conference to figure out the future of women's professional soccer in the US. No one was ready to give up just yet. The meeting was held in June and by November, after lots of negotiation, a few owners recruited an additional six teams! The difference? This time, they would be more conscious of money, and be more sustainable in general.

In November 2012, it was announced that there would be eight teams in a new women's professional soccer league, with national team players being funded by three federations who would pay for the salaries of their national team players to help the teams in creating world-class rosters while staying under the salary cap (a salary cap is an agreement that places a limit on the amount of money that a team can spend on players' salaries). The federation was hired through to manage certain parts of the league. The teams would own the league, which was some extra freedom that they had not gotten before.

The first NWSL game was held on April 13, 2013, in front of a crowd of 7,000 fans! The 2013 season saw a regular-season attendance average around 4,300, with a high around 17,500! That seems pretty darn successful to me! They had/continue to have a strong women's professional soccer league! And no need to worry, this league hasn't fallen, and instead it will continue to thrive. But keep in mind how hard it was to create one, even though it really shouldn't have been. I hope you've learned in these last three chapters that if you really want something, you have to put in the time and dedication to it. It's not always going to come easy, and you have to be ready for that.

A photograph of tennis player Billie Jean King in a white tennis outfit with blue floral patterns, holding a tennis racket and looking intensely at the ball. The background is blurred, showing a tennis court and spectators.

**When a woman is
emotional, she's
“hysterical” and she's
penalized for it. When a
man does the same, he's
“outspoken” & and there
are no repercussions.**

-Billie Jean King

What is *your* Definition of a Sport?

Is Cheerleading a sport?

I interviewed a few people that were experts in my research topic. In each of those interviews, I asked them all the same question, "What is *your* definition of a sport?" Here are some different answers that I received. As you read these, I encourage you to think about what your definition of a sport is, and if you think that things like cheerleading are sports.

Rodrigo Canales-Works at Yale School of Management

R: An activity that requires physical skill where an individual or teams are competing against each other. Where there are clear boundaries or limits. Person with the most skill within the rules/boundaries wins more often. And luck plays less of a role than actual skill. Like flipping coins is not a sport.

Me: What about cheerleading, is that a sport?

R: Cheerleading has become a sport as it became more complex, more rules, now it absolutely is a sport. Halftime shows are not display of the sport. But the competitions are organized sports. Snowboarding. People goofed off and now they got organized, created rules and standards, people got competitive and it has become a sport.

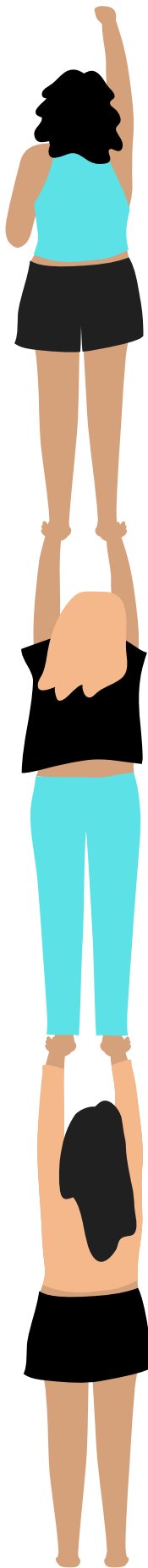
Christa Doran-Owner and Founder of Tuff Girl

Yeah I think there's been a lot of debate of well is cheerleading a sport? And I think it is anything that involves athleticism and skill. I definitely think that gymnastics and cheer are, they are physically demanding. You know dancing is physically demanding. And now there are dance teams that are competing, so I think it's anything where you are fusing athleticism and skill-that's my definition of a sport.



Beth Skudder-Manager of Girls Coach Girls Run

I feel like the word "sport" is one of those words we all use frequently and we all think we know what it means, but then when asked to define it, it feels hard to actually describe because we are so familiar with it. So, I looked up the definition of sport: "an activity in which players or teams compete against each other, usually an activity that involves physical effort." (Macmillan online dictionary.) I agree with this definition as a starter, but feels there's more what "sport" means. I read some other definitions that were similar, but added elements of participating in the activity as a job or for entertainment purposes, or that the activity needed rules to qualify as a sport. I think my definition of what a sport is is very open ended, with few boundaries. I think sports include physical effort, but don't necessarily involve competition. Look at Girls Coach Girls Run: the running component is very much the sport of running, but the only competition in the whole program is only against yourself, and even that is voluntary, and dependent on the maturity and willingness of the participant to engage at that level. Yet, every girl in GCGR is participating in the sport of running. I still participate in many sports, and only rarely compete. I bike, sail, kayak, ski, hike and walk. Only occasionally do I still compete in sailing, and have never competed in the others, yet they all involve physical effort and perhaps some community rules for safety. I very much consider them all sports activities for me, and my family too. I think the focus on competition and winning works well for some people and less so for others, yet all physical activity can count as a sport. By my definition then, cheerleading is most definitely a sport. Cheerleaders perform athletic movements, present individual and team skills, and practice to challenge themselves and improve, there may be rules for a competition, or the activity may be performed as entertainment. I consider ballerinas and dancers athletes as well and am astounded at what they can make their bodies do. There is no competition in their work (beyond competition to get a part in a performance) yet there is athleticism, challenge, skill, practice and talent involved to perform for entertainment. Is ballet a sport? If it takes an athlete to do it, does that mean it is a sport? Do ballerinas consider themselves athletes and their activity a sport? If society at large recognized the athleticism and skill required of dancers at the same level as other well-known athletes and activities, how would that impact our values and how we spend our time and money on activities for ourselves and our families?



Google:

An Activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.

Example: "Team sports such as baseball and soccer"

Similar Words: Competitive Game(s), physical recreation, and physical activity

Mine:

My definition of a sport would be something that involves physical exercise. Where you really have to move around, and that leaves you out of breath! I also think that there has to be a level of competition. Meaning just running by itself I would not consider a sport, yes it takes physical exercise, but there is no competition. There are forms of running that have competition, but not just running.

I think that cheerleading is in fact a sport. If you are at a basketball game and a bunch of cheerleaders come on and just wave their pom poms around and jump up and down, no that is not a sport. But at almost every sports event I've been to, they do these super cool moves as a team and by themselves. Whether it's really hard flips or really any cool gymnastics skills, it takes physical activity, hard work, and dedication. I think that is a tricky one. There is cheerleading competitions, but I'm not sure that the stuff that they do at sports games are the type of cheerleading where you compete. But I'm no expert in that field.

I say, chess is not a sport, no physical activity. Dance is absolutely a sport. A few other tough ones I thought about were bowling, golf, and fishing. What do you think qualifies as a sport?

USWNT-Taking Action



The USWNT has been taking a lot of action on the problem of equal pay. This problem is really bad in soccer. It started getting big in 2016 when there was a complaint filed against the Federation with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), who never issued a decision on the case. However, on March 8th, 2019 (International Women's Day) 28 members of the team filed a lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation, accusing them of gender discrimination. In the lawsuit, it points out that for their win at the 2015 World Cup, they were paid less than a third of what the men were paid for losing in the round of 16. I am not going to go into specifics about what they have done, and where it all stands now, but I will speak in a more general stance.

Of course, it is not as simple as just giving them equal money, there are a lot of factors that go into it. In the past, the women did not generate as much revenue as the men's team which was the argument they used to not provide equal pay. But from 2016 through 2018, the women generated \$50.8 million in revenue compared to the men's team which generated \$49.9 million. My point being that the federation can not say that anymore. Here are some statistics that will blow you away.

1. The women have won four world cups out of the eight. On the other hand, the men's team? They have not won a single one. The last time the men's team placed was in 1930, when they finished in 3rd place. In 1930, the women did not even have a World Cup because of the unfair world.
2. \$240,019: Carli Lloyd's salary in 2015, after the USWNT won the World Cup. \$428,022: Clint Dempsey's salary in 2014, after losing in the round of 16 in the World Cup.
3. When the USWNT wins the World Cup, each player earns \$250,000, if the men were to win, they would get a little over \$1.1 million. That is less than the women have earned all together in the 4 times they have won.

While these are only a few stats, there are so many more absurd ones. This is not fair to them, and it needs to change. The USWNT knows that they have power. They have a platform. And they are trying to educate people and be a role model for the younger audience (like me). They are taking a stand, and will not stop until they get their way; the way it should be, and the way that it will be.

Thank you Meghan Rapinoe, Alex Morgan, and the rest of the United States Women's National Soccer Team. You inspire me everyday, the fact that you are stars on and off the field seems super hard to balance. Thank you.

*Although I did not include what has been happening since March 8th, 2019, there has been a lot going on, and I encourage you to find resources that can help expand your knowledge as to what has been happening since then.

A full-body photograph of tennis player Serena Williams on a red clay court. She is wearing a black athletic outfit with a prominent red waistband and a small white Nike swoosh on the chest. She is holding a tennis racket with a green and black frame in her right hand and has her left arm raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is the reddish-brown surface of the tennis court with white boundary lines.

SINCE I DON'T LOOK
LIKE EVERY OTHER
GIRL, IT TAKES A
WHILE TO BE OKAY
WITH THAT. TO BE
DIFFERENT. BUT
DIFFERENT IS GOOD.

-SERENA WILLIAMS

What can *you* do to help the problem of gender inequality in sports?

1

SUPPORT AND
ENCOURAGE
WOMEN AND GIRLS

2

ROLE MODELS

3

CHALLENGE THE
MYTHS

4

SPEAK OUT ABOUT
GENDER INEQUITY

ENCOURAGE OTHER
WOMEN AND GIRLS

5



DONATE SPORTS
EQUIPMENT AND
SHIRTS AND SHORTS

6



USE SOCIAL MEDIA

7



SPEAK OUT ABOUT
STEREOTYPES

8



Photo Gallery



Beth Skudder giving me a little tour and introducing me to some of the Girls Coach Girls Run staff!

Girls Coach Girls Run



Right after Beth Skudder and I's interview taking a picture in the front desk!



At t 5K at the end of my Girls Coach Girls Run 4th grade experience



TUFF GIRL!

Evolution of Soccer





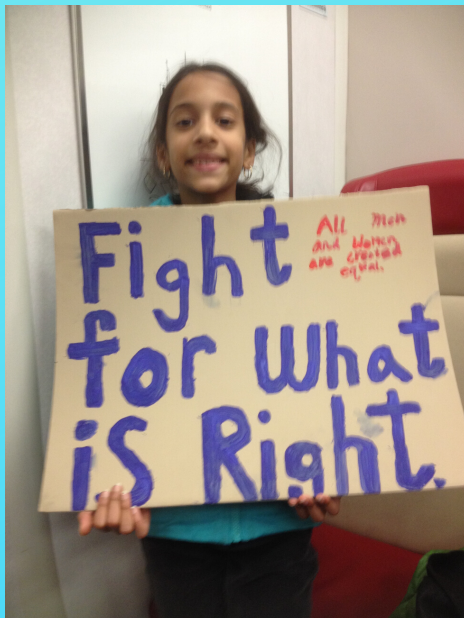
Advocate for Equality



Little Malini ready to march on
Martin Luther King Jr. Day



At the Women's March with a bunch of our family friends;
Hate Never Made us Great; Justice-Equality; Save the
Children; Diversity Respect Truth; Right over Might, Peace,
Fight for What is Right; I'm with Her



On our way to New York in the
subway with my sign



My scousins and I at there costume
party. We dressed up as Rosie the
Riveter!

Conclusion

I hope you learned about how important it is to speak up for what you believe is right. It is super important to do what you think is best, and not what you think others want you to do or say, like standing up to unfair gender equality statements. I hope you saw how unfair the whole situation of unequal pay, not enough access, and not enough media coverage, really is, and you need to realize that it is also not just in sports. Things like unequal pay are everywhere in workplaces, and just out there in the world. And you do not want you, or your daughters to be treated like that when they/you grow up. Because girls deserve SO much more than what they have, and pay and access to sports is just a little part of it, but it is a super important part. Speak up about it, bring it up to others, and try and see what you can do to help. If you would like to learn more about the problems that actually cause it, you can read my paper.

I hope that was helpful, and I encourage you to do some of the things (or all!) that I mentioned in the 'What you can do' section. In conclusion, I want to bring up gender stereotypes. The myth that girls only like pink and that they hate blue, and boys only like blue and hate pink, is false! It is the complete opposite for me and the majority of the girls in my class. YOU get to choose who you want to be, and what you want to act like. These things that people say, just tear others down and hurt people's self-esteem. We want to make the world better, not worse, and by saying things like that, YOU are making things worse. Spread positivity, help one another, and most importantly, just be you.