

Inequality of gender in sports, is it warranted

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Women in Rugby Introduction Rugby has traditionally been considered a male sport, with male teams dominating televised events, fan support and mediacoverage (Fallon & Jome, 2007). However, the female sport is gathering more interest, with a female Five Nations tournament beginning in 1998 (Chandler & Nauright, 1999) and high-profile sports editors calling for more interest in the game (BBC, 2005). Female rugby teams are now common in colleges and universities, and female equivalents to most national teams exist (Carle & Nauright, 1999). Despite this, women in the sport are often misrepresented as being masculine, and may struggle with gender identities in acting out both feminine and masculine roles (Fallon & Jome, 2007). Rugby has a legacy of being a violent game, and feminine identities are thought to either subvert this notion (Fields, 2005) or use the violence as a mechanism of enhancing the femininity of the players (Gill, 2007). There are several reasons given within the literature for women enjoying playing such a traditionally masculine sport; one being subverting the traditional notions of femininity, another being that the participants enjoy being part of a game which requires extreme physical strengths. Further reasons include that it gives the women that participate a sense of empowerment and self-confidence. Further interviews suggest that these women simply enjoy the game of rugby and feel it appropriate to play a sport for which they have this affection, gender-roles ignored (Chu et al, 2003). Women participate in rugby for a number of reasons, and the growing interest in the sport helps to suggest that women do not have to resist traditional notions of femininity to be recognized as true rugby players.

History

The history of women's rugby helps to give some idea of why the sport has developed such controversy. Firstly, the early evolution of the female game is shrouded in mystery, making it hard to define a 'first female rugby team' or any other definitive moments (Chandler & Nauright, 1999). Early female rugby players faced challenges about their desires to play such a violent and masculine game (Fields, 2005).

Salaries

One of the most major discrepancies between the female and male games of rugby are the salaries. Not only are there far fewer professional and semi-professional female rugby teams, but the players get paid a significantly lower amount (Chandler & Nauright, 1999).

Women in Contact Sport

Whilst some female rugby players have suggested that they play simply for a love of the game (Chu et al, 2003), it has been suggested that females should not play any form of contact sport, perhaps due to physical differences or societal pressures on the feminine (Fields, 2005). However, if rugby is so masculine, then why do so many female players experience a sense of feminine empowerment, as found in Chu et al (2003)?

The Popularity of the Game

The popularity of the game is increasing (see Anon, 2012 & Feighery, 2012). This again has implications that the masculinity of the game is not distracting women from the game; it may in fact be encouraging them (Thompson, 2003, Birrell, 1994).

Female Sport Media Coverage

An factor that may be off-putting for some women interested in the game

may be the lack of coverage on female sports (Martinson, 2011).

References