

Women 1906 to
design and
implement rules in



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BUSTER**

Women athletes have been fighting for equal opportunity for years. Title IX, a 37-word law, paved the way to do just that. The passing of Title IX has helped provide women with more equality than ever before.

Prior to Title IX, there were a scarce number of opportunities for participation that existed for women athletes. For example, the only physical activity that girls could participate in for the most part was cheerleading. There was a shortage of women athletes competing in NCAA sports; there were only around 30,000 female athletes competing in comparison to the 150,000 male athletes. Only 1 in 27 girls played high school sports. The National Collegiate Athletic Association was largely to blame for this. The National Collegiate Athletic Association, also known as the NCAA, was formed in 1906 to design and implement rules in men's football.

The NCAA became the elite "ruling body of college athletics and offered zero athletic scholarships for women and also held no championships for women's teams. Furthermore, facilities, supplies and funding were all lacking for women athletes." (history.

com) Title IX was devised to rectify these imbalances and administer equal rights and quality for women athletes. The road to equality for women in sport has been an extensive and rough one. The journey for equality began when Richard Nixon enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972.

The sponsors of the law were Edith Green, the House of Representatives, and Birch Bayh, the Senate. This law stated that, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or

activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Essentially, Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving any type of federal financial aid. Although initially this law was designed to increase federal funding, it now is more closely associated with gender equality in sports. By gender equality in sports, Title IX specifies that “colleges and universities must provide opportunity for intercollegiate competition as well as team schedules which equally reflect the competitive abilities of male and female athletes.” The following factors are put into consideration when determining whether equal opportunities in athletics are available: equipment and supplies, scheduling of games and practice time, travel and per diem allowances, opportunity for coaching and academic tutoring, assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors, locker rooms and other facilities, medical and training services, housing and dining services, and publicity.

After the passage of Title IX, Congress “built in a six-year period for secondary and post-secondary schools to achieve compliance. The date for compliance by colleges and universities was 1978”. There were numerous events that took place after the passing of Title IX that influenced women athletes across the US.

Two major events were the Bobbie vs. Bobby tennis match and the lawsuit of Blair vs. Washington. The famous tennis match of Bobbie vs. Bobby took place about a year after Title IX was enacted. Bobby Riggs, a 55-year-old man thought that he could still beat any woman player.

Riggs felt that “ the best way to handle women is to keep them pregnant and barefoot.” (<http://www.history.com/news/billie-jean-king-wins-the-battle-of-the-sexes-40-years-ago>) After all of Riggs jabbing, Billie Jean King, a woman, faced Riggs. Not only did she face him, but dominated him fair and square in front of 30, 000 fans.

This crowd was the largest in history to ever watch a tennis match. This match is alleged to be what sparked a boom in women’s sport. Another major win for Title IX happened in 1979 when the Northwest Women’s Law Center won in a lawsuit against Washington State University. This lawsuit is known as Blair vs. Washington State University.

The winning basically forced the school to comply with Title IX.

Women’s athletes during this time were still not being taken seriously. The athletic director at the time was having to make 1, 200 dollars stretch to cover the expenses for volleyball, gymnastics, basketball, field hockey, tennis and skiing while the male athletes were being treated to private locker rooms, full resources of the athletic departments and chartered busses. With the testimonies and support of other athletes, coaches, and educators and the help of Sue Durrant, a coach and faculty member represented the coaches and athletes, Karen Blair, the lead plaintiff, was able to win the lawsuit.

(<https://magazine.wsu.edu/2009/07/06/history-was-made-the-fight-for-equity-for-womens-athletics-in-washington/>)