

I am athletic and
feminine: media's
negative view of
women assignment



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I am Athletic and “ Feminine! ” In the early years of my life I participated in any kind of sport my city offered no matter if it dominantly played by male or female. In-between ages 5 to 9 the boys on my team were too young to create a good or bad image of me and just looked at me as another person on the team because I was equally as good as them. However, as the years progressed and my teammates got older, the negative judging and discrimination started coming off very strong, especially from my baseball team.

Even though I was selected as MAP for three years in a row, uniform a girl, you're useless to this team,” “ We don't need girls on this team,” and “ This is a boy sport why are you playing? ” were common remarks I heard from my own teammates. Because of the continuous negative judgment I received from people, at age 13, I decided to leave the baseball team and only play with female only teams from then on. I have no doubt in my mind that I am not the only girl who has gone through this. There are many women around the country of all ages who deal with negative judgment from others because they play sports.

The reasoning for this is because however the media portrays its opinion of something, becomes how the nation believes it is to be. Author Maria Nelson wrote an article titled, “ I Won, I'm Sorry' discusses the negative view toward female athletes that the media creates. Many forms of sports media such as popular sports magazines support Nelson's general idea of the “ traditional gender code” to the fullest extent. Both the media and people constantly demand beauty from females, so those who take on non-traditional traits re

ridiculed, critiqued, and harassed for being strong, shorthanded, or alternatively modified.

Women athletes are more “likely to be judged off the court and out of uniform in comparison to men” sports media scholar Pat Griffin says in an interview. In sports media, men ultimately get to choose how images are portrayed, how they are used and who will get coverage. Griffin also adds “in advertisements, men prefer to see women athletes represented in more feminine ways because it seems more comfortable.” Because of this demand, women need to create a stable wholesome image to obtain sponsorship and positive media attention.

As I took a look through Surfer Magazine I noticed a Rosy advertisement for pro surfer Sally Fissions, in the picture she is riding a wave, seductively smiling, and wearing a small bright colored bikini which portrays this attractive and feminine image of her (See Figure 1). If she were wearing a wetsuit, not looking at the camera because she was full focus of riding the wave, but was still clearly representing the brand, would the advertisement be as strong? Probably not, although in the same magazine pro surfer Joel Conceit is advertising a G-Shock while riding a wave, wearing a wetsuit, and not looking at the camera and doing everything opposite to Sally Fissions picture and it is still an appealing advertisement. (See Figure 2) In Nelsons article “I Won, I’m Sorry’ she says “athletes and advertisers reassure viewers that women who compete are still willing to play the ethnicity game” (In female athlete advertisements their sexuality,

femininity, and heterosexuality is emphasized rather than their strength, triumphs, mental courage, and durability.

If a male athlete were to take a picture for an advertisement and not touch up her face or put on a girl outfit, it wouldn't appeal to any consumers and people would create the idea that she is very manly and possibly even a lesbian. Women are never judged on passion or their dedication in sports, their image is based on their sexiness when men are judged as athletes. This general idea creates a need for women athletes to doll themselves up on and off the playing field to gain media attention and show the public they are heterosexual.

What I have noticed through friends pictures who have been pursuing repressions sports is that when they begin to train for their sport, they begin to become more built and muscular instead of develop a body like a model. Those same girls are the ones who I see touch up their face, place a ribbon in their hair, and look at a mirror before game time and fix themselves up again at halftime. I believe that this is because they want to keep their femininity image strong while playing and keep men's attention.

When I searched "female athletes" on Google, the first results are in relation to the hottest female athletes and pictures of females in dresses and mom half naked striking "sexy" poses. Then I typed in "male athletes" and the first headlines were about male athlete awards and pictures of males flexing, playing a sport, and holding awards. Most women including myself are very concerned with others opinion, especially when it concerns our femininity

because no female wants their womanhood to be questioned or doubted.

Dry.

Strain Linden of Stilling University says, “ girls want to be good at their sport, but on the other hand a question around their femininity is raised because they are considered too muscular. Concerns like these doesn't only pressure women athlete into feeling pressured to touch up their uniform and game time appearance there are issues around eating disorders and body image issues that arise because of that” Dry. Linden adds. The media is at fault for causing women to go to extreme lengths to defend their femininity, like Nelson says, “ it is unhealthy’ (681).

In my opinion, we contribute to these high standards of the physical appearance of a female athlete by going along with them and following the unwritten gender code our society seems to have. Even in interviews women play a feminine roll, a description for one of the interviews I found on [www. Buzzed. Com](http://www.Buzzed.Com) said “ right after she vanquished Canada with a last-second header, [Alex] Morgan was ambushed by TV crews and came off as witty, charming, and totally floored. (See Figure 3) In comparison to an interview with a male athlete, I think it is safe to say you would never find a description like that. Men are more likely to talk more about the team rather than women who much rather describe how they are feeling. In the interviews Vive personally seen of female athletes I have noticed that they always seem to be smiling and giddy and men are always starrng at the ground and respond in short answers. See Figure 4) If women didn't carry themselves in a respectful manner and have great showmanship, people of America would instantly loose interest in them because America loves to <https://assignbuster.com/i-am-athletic-and-feminine-medias-negative-view-of-women-assignment/>

have their athletic sweethearts. Like Nelson says, "if you want to be a winner and you're female, you'll tell pressured to play by special, tamale rules" (68). As time progresses, the impact of social media will continue to grow stronger and the opinions of this informant will always be accountable for choosing the nation's opinion toward things.

Sadly, social media is a robot that we are ultimately in control of. If more individuals started paying more attention to the athletic ability of females instead of the physical features of them, the pressure of being both an athlete and model would be dropped. Women should take pride that they have been blessed with the talent of being athletic and embrace it to the fullest potential. Any women who can beat a man at his own sport should be praised despite how she looks or acts.