

How title ix has contributed to sport's gender equality

Law



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Through the efforts of feminists advocating for equal rights and legislation a provision called Title IX was put into the 1972 Education Amendments drafted by U. S. Representative Patsy Mink. Congress passed the bill saying 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” (20 U. S. C. §1681a). As a result of Title IX, a large increase has been seen in the number of young women participating in high school and college sports and this has led to growth in many aspects of professional women’s sports organizations across the country.

We feel that Title IX was an appropriate modification to youth and collegiate sports that came as a result of the changing times and increasing number of opportunities for women to excel in areas that were not always considered “ traditional”. There have been misconceptions and myths regarding a woman’s ability to excel athletically throughout history, but as a result of Title IX those have been proven false and foolish as there are many female athletes in college and on professional teams who possess far greater athletic ability and prowess than countless men in the same sport. If we live in a society that considers all people equal then that implies that men and women deserve equal opportunity to pursue whatever path they wish, whether or not it is a athletic or business career. Women have been disadvantaged for as long as men and women have coexisted, and although there has been dramatic progress in this over the last 50 years, changes and improvements still need to be made.

Ms. Woolf's opinion seems to be somewhat contradicting to feminist ideals. She argues that women should earn "just enough to be independent" and by saying this it seems that she is limiting the progress that a woman can make in her career. It makes no sense that a woman has to slow her ambitions down once she has made it to a prominent, comfortable and "independent" point in her life. Why should a woman have to be complacent with her success when she could become even more prosperous? Imagine if someone had instilled an attitude of complacency at a young age in some of the most powerful and influential businessmen in the world, then would they be where they are today? By no means are we saying that every woman, athlete or not, should strive to trump all others in their field, nor are we saying that women should take advantage of their fame and beauty and sexualize themselves for monetary gains; we just believe that a woman has every right that a man does to continue to improve themselves without any limitations or remorse.

"Highlighting your sexy" can be taken a few different ways. There is nothing wrong with a woman profiting from presenting her beauty in a form that is tasteful and respectful, models do this for a living. Playboy and Maxim on the other hand are a more raunchy and questionable choice for a female athlete. If a female athlete flaunts her beauty in a manner such as this it could send the wrong message to young girls who are aspiring athletes. This type of sexualization is more along the lines of what the author was referring to in the passage with her comments regarding athletes limiting their spiritual growth and balancing material comforts and feminist ideals. These young female athletes might see the way she presents herself and believe that

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their athletic ability is secondary to their looks. This could be very detrimental because prettier girls might think that their athletic ability doesn't matter because boys are always just going to care more about her looks, or a heavier set, less attractive young girl might see this and be hesitant to pursue athletics because she doesn't think she looks like the girl in the magazine. By "highlighting their sexy" in this form a female athlete does not diminish her athletic achievement, but she can cause indirect damage to young girls which obviously is not her intention. If a female athlete has achieved elite professional status and uses her fame to gain money through sexualization of her fame it does not take away anything from the effort that she put in from a young age and throughout her to career to get where she is now and no one can take that from her, nor could take that away from a man. The issue is that young males don't feel the oppressive media sexualization that females do and this is why some people seem to want to try to take away athletic achievement from females but not males. An example of this double standard can be seen in the attitudes towards The Body Issue that ESPN The Magazine puts out annually. Many of the male athletes who pose nude are heralded for being brave and they may receive from light ridicule from the locker room. Female athletes, however, often receive the opposite sentiment for posing for the same issue and are even questioned for doing so.

If we were sports psychologists dealing with a client who was struggling with posing nude for SI, we would have to examine this woman's goals and how comfortable she is with herself and self expression. Some obstacles this young woman may encounter are extreme media sexualization, her athletic

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prowess may take a backseat to her modeling in the eyes of the public, and she may now receive a lot of unwanted attention. So now we must analyze who this young woman wants to become in her career. What level of success does she want to achieve? To answer this question, we must determine and consider how comfortable she is with expressing herself nude. If this will create an undesirable environment for her, then she shouldn't go about continuing her modeling, but if she is comfortable with herself and has the achievement motivation to continue her rigorous pursuits for athletic greatness she has every right to do what she wants. Anna Kournikova is an example of a successful woman who utilized athletics as a venue to promote her beauty. She was expected to become the next tennis star but leveled out as an average professional tennis player with a very lucrative modeling career. She has/had every right to do everything she did, but it comes down to what this particular athlete wants to achieve through athletics and posing nude. We would need to put our ultimate focus on examining what she wishes to achieve as a professional.

***Bonus* “Genuine to Identity and Self”**

In regards to the media, they almost always will pick the identity that is most controversial, regardless of the different personalities the athlete has, and focus exclusively on that. Johnny Manziel, Tim Tebow, Amanda Beard, and Richard Sherman are some examples of people who have polarized their sport. The media picks these polarizing characters and overanalyzes their faults, personal beliefs, ways of self-expression, and controversial lifestyles to the point that it is extremely invasive. We believe that the media 100% picks one identity and writes and reports on it because it is most salient for

their agenda. It is the same way that any news organization operates, as we have seen with the reporting of the situation in Baltimore. All they are worried about is gaining attention and profit, without reporting all the facts or telling all of the story, and in the process they destroy careers and public images unfairly and unjustly. Michael Sam is another great example. He was SEC Defensive Player of the Year before he entered the draft and he didn't make a single roster in the NFL. Many teams have recognized and admitted that they didn't choose this particular player because of the media attention he receives for just having a different sexual orientation. So to reiterate, we feel that it is almost impossible for someone to maintain more than one equal identity in the eyes of public as a result of the media's agenda.