

## EYE ON WOMEN'S SPORTS: The 20th Year of Title IX

# Has Title IX resulted in equality?

*Many claim women's athletic teams still get shortchanged*

By RACHEL ALEXANDER  
*Daily Northwestern, Northwestern U.*

You've sort of come a long way, baby. Ask, and that's what you'll hear when it comes to women's athletics in the 1990s.

Since the passage in 1972 of Title IX, which required schools to spend an equal amount per capita on male and female programs or risk losing federal funds, the women's athletics movement has changed. But public perception often hasn't.

"Women haven't come close to men when it comes to college sports," said Tamara Flarup, women's sports information director at the U. of Wisconsin. "Things now are completely different than they used to be. But equal? No way."

Although Congress passed Title IX two decades ago, most schools did not significantly include women's teams in their athletic spending until the 1980s. Even today, many women's advocates insist that a large number of colleges are not in compliance with the law. Title IX may look good on paper, they say, but the rules of the game are still one-sided.

"They're not getting the equipment, the uniforms, the access to the facilities or the coaching that the men are getting," said Ellen Vargas, senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center. "I'd bet my bottom dollar that there is nothing resembling monetary equity at most schools across the country."

But when attempts are made to rectify such disparities, the actions are often unpopular. For example, when federal investigators found inequities between the men's and women's programs last year at Wisconsin, Flarup said the cure was difficult for some.

"As a result of the review, (a few) sports were cut from our athletic program, including baseball," she said. "These sports were dropped so Wisconsin could come into compliance with Title IX."

Such cuts in high-profile men's sports don't always sit well with fans and coaches. But as Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delaney said, the law is vital in creating a level playing field for all college athletes.

"Title IX represents what is right and what is the law," Delaney said. "We shouldn't need Title IX, but we do."

Many conferences, such as the Big Ten and the Big Eight, waited almost a decade after Congress passed Title IX to bring their schools' women's teams into league



JASON GREGORY, THE DAILY BEACON, U. OF TENNESSEE

Respect has been hard to come by for top coaches like Tennessee head coach Pat Summitt.

competition. Other conferences, such as the Pac-10, waited even longer, affiliating their women only five years ago.

But affiliation does not necessarily mean equity for many women's teams. While all schools claim to follow the guidelines established in Title IX, very few will release their athletic budgets to the public, and many women's advocates are critical of what the records may reveal.

In addition to questions over equal funding, affiliation also brings questions of equal support. Some women in sports claim that female athletes are better served by schools having two athletic departments, one for men's teams and one for women's.

"We seldom even talk of women's and men's sports separately," said U. of Arizona Athletic Director Cedric Dempsey, who oversees teams of both gender. "It gives the women a base of equality, and it's also a lot more economical. Integration is much less expensive."

But those who do run separate athletic departments strongly disagree.

"When (they) put women into the conferences, a lot of the schools did not merge the two groups, but rather they submerged the women," said Christine Grant, U. of Iowa's women's athletic director, who runs a separate department.

"When you have to do both in one office, the priority usually goes to men's sports. So instead of both sides getting part of what they need, the men get all of what they need

and there's not much time left for women," she added.

Under a centralized system, women's teams get overlooked as departments are overwhelmed by responsibilities related to the men's teams, said Chris Volz, athletic director for the separate women's department at the U. of Minnesota.

When women's teams began to affiliate with the national conferences and come under the control of college's main athletic departments, the effects were felt in the job market as well as on the playing field, said Merrily Dean Baker, assistant executive director of administration for the NCAA.

Baker said many women who had been coaches or otherwise worked with the teams were laid off. Others were reassigned to positions subordinate to men who had previously been their counterparts.

But despite the setbacks, some doors are opening. Barbara Hedges, the only female director of a main athletic department in Division I, has assumed the reigns of the U. of Washington program. Hedges and the Huskies helped destroy the stigma that a woman was incapable of heading a major football program when the Huskies won a share of the 1991-92 national title.

"The reason people are reticent to make a woman the head of their athletic department is the football situation," Dempsey said. "Not that they don't know the game, but people are concerned that they won't be able to deal with the external constituency, like the boosters."

Dempsey, who was in California to see Hedges' Huskies roll at the Rose Bowl, said he hopes the victory will convince others that women can run an athletic department with an extremely successful football team.

"She's a great role model," Dempsey said. "Hopefully, other schools will see her and say 'this can work.'"

## Schools, media turn blind eye to women's teams

By RACHEL ALEXANDER  
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Despite the apparent gains made in female athletics in the past 20 years, few sports fans ever see a college woman smash a forehand or sink a jumper.

No matter how colleges organize their athletic departments, advocates say women's teams still suffer from minimal press coverage, poor promotion and less support from students than men's teams that play the same sports.

"Men's teams have that 'automatic mention factor' that women's sports don't have," said Tamara Flarup, women's sports information director at the U. of Wisconsin.

"Volleyball definitely rivaled football last year in the media," said Flarup, of Wisconsin's 1990 Big Ten volleyball championship team. "But when you think of it, it should have done much more than rival football. When our volleyball team has the best record in the Big Ten, and our football team has the worst record in the Big Ten, you have to wonder when they're getting equal coverage."

Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delaney said it is unreasonable to expect anything different in so short a time. "There's no way that in 10 or 15 years women could have built up the interest that men's sports have in 100 (or more) years," Delaney said.

But this year's NCAA women's basketball championship final between Stanford U. and Western Kentucky U. indicated interest may, in fact, be waning. The game drew a meager 3.7 television rating, the lowest in the 11-year history of the event. Ellen Vargas, senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center, said schools are to blame.

"If the athletic departments don't promote (women's teams), and the newspapers don't cover them, then of course no one's going to trek out to the stadium on a whim," she said.



COURTESY OF U. OF FLORIDA SPORTS INFORMATION  
Swimming against the tide of the NCAA.



COURTESY OF U. OF ARIZONA SPORTS INFORMATION  
Lots of fans disguised as empty seats.