

WOMEN IN SPORTS

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In the ever-evolving realm of sports, the narrative surrounding women's participation has undergone a transformative shift, marking a pivotal moment in the quest for equality and recognition on and off the field.

This shift is not merely about breaking gender barriers but also challenging societal norms and reshaping the narrative around women in sports. The rise of women in professional sports is a testament to their skill, dedication and resilience, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and equitable sporting world.

While significant strides have been made, the road to professionalism in women's sports remains a journey filled with challenges and opportunities.

Historically, women faced significant obstacles in pursuing careers in professional sports. Stereotypes and outdated gender norms perpetuated the belief that certain sports were better suited for men, relegating women to the sidelines.

Over the last decade, there has been a surge in the recognition and celebration of women's achievements in traditionally male-dominated sports.

Same Issues Different Time

Women in professional sports still grapple with issues such as inadequate investment, unequal opportunities, and limited representation in leadership roles.

Isabella Sonkoly, a former division one athlete, stated, "I think that certain teams are recognized well in women's sports or they have better social media exposure although we [women] do not have the opportunity to play as many professional sports as males do."

The path to true equality requires continued efforts from sports organizations, sponsors, and people to dismantle these barriers and create an environment where women can thrive athletically and professionally.



MOOD BOARD OF WOMEN IN SPORTS. COMPOSITE BY CAMERON PIPPIN. FEB. 26, 2024.

As a once-inspiring female athlete, the goal of becoming a professional athlete was only a dream. As an athlete, the stage for female athletics was dimly lit, with basic recognition, and any existing platforms were consistently overshadowed by their male counterparts.

"We go from football season [male sport] to soccer season [premier league men's] to basketball season [male sport] to hockey season [male sport] to baseball season [male sport]," Sonkoly said, "Women's sports are not as well promoted like men's sports are."

According to an article by Scripps News, many female athletes have one to two jobs on top of their sport in order to make ends meet. The average salary for the WNBA is currently roughly \$1.4 million. The average salary for the NBA is \$141 million. That is over 196% difference between each salary average.

The fight for equal pay has gained momentum. This push for fairness is not just about dollars and cents but about recognizing the value of women's contributions to the sporting world. Achieving equal pay is a crucial step towards dismantling systemic gender inequalities that have persisted for too long.

Building Blocks of Change

Building sustainable women's sports teams and infrastructures is a multifaceted endeavor that involves addressing various aspects, from creating a supportive organizational culture to establishing facilities that cater to the unique needs of female athletes.

Ensuring equal amounts of funding, resources, and investments between men's and women's teams is just one way to establish change. This includes financial support, coaching staff, sports science resources, and equipment.

Coach Oliver Germond, the women's soccer coach at Fresno City College believes that the amount of investments and sponsorships are changing and that will help women's sports grow.

"Money talks. The budgets are a lot different," Germond said.

Fostering an inclusive and diverse leadership team that understands the unique challenges and opportunities in women's sports will ensure comfortability and long-term success.

Designing and constructing sports facilities that cater to the specific needs of female athletes -including locker rooms, training facilities, and medical resources tailored to support women's health and performance-ensures that facilities are easily accessible.

THIS IS PART 1 OF A 3 PART SERIES.
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SPANGLISH

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Children of immigrants know the feeling of being corrected for messing up a word in their parent's native language.

The embarrassment of saying "troka" instead of "camioneta" or "parquear" instead of "estacionar."

The idea is that our parents speak "correct and proper" Spanish while we speak more chill Spanish, with an English influence also known as Spanglish.

Spanglish acts like its own language. A version of Spanish that can be easier to understand. It's common here in Fresno, especially in the Mexican community.

This version of Spanish isn't wrong, but it is looked down on as if it's disrespectful or inappropriate. It's the way most younger Spanish-speaking people speak.

I understand why my dad and people from his generation hold their language so near and dear.

When my dad came here from El Salvador with his brothers in search of a better life, Spanish was the only language they knew. They learned some English in their country, but not enough

to get by.

Being in a country and not knowing the language is hard enough, now imagine also being in that country and being worried about your legal status.

All that trauma my parents had to go through to be where they are and have a family to depend on. Now imagine going through all of that just for your son to butcher your language.

It makes sense why they don't want their language to "go away" if we continue with a more Spanglish language.

But just like Spanish is their language, Spanglish is mine and for many other people.

That's how we communicate. It may not be as proper as how my parents speak, but there is no reason why it has to be looked down on.

It's nice when you can meet another

student who can speak in Spanish. You get to connect with them and the one thing we always bring up is where our parents are from.

We're not thinking of how proper our Spanish is, we're just happy someone can speak it as well.



THE FLAG OF EL SALVADOR, MEXICO AND UNITED STATES COMBINED TO REPRESENT MY CULTURE. COMPOSITE BY CHRISTIANNA SCHIOTIS

DEAR MAMA

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"Long live the rose that grew from the concrete, when no one ever cared."

This is one of my mom's favorite quotes from the artist, Tupac. To her, it means that the beauty that grows from ugliness is unappreciated and goes unnoticed but still makes the world a better place.

I think, in a lot of ways, sacrifices are unseen and unheard. To give up something whether that be time, energy, money, or resources is what makes up a hero. And that becomes exponentially harder when you're doing it alone. Single moms don't get nearly as much credit as they deserve and, usually, more criticism than warranted.

In my mother's case, she didn't choose to be a mom but she chose to love her child unconditionally. She broke herself, physically and mentally, to make sure I was taken care of - way too many sleepless nights and not enough thank yous on my part.

But she never asked to be praised for being a single mom, or a mom at that. All she wanted was to make the world a better place, whether that be through her work or her son.

My mom's beauty shines through most with her intelligence, her work, and her strive to make her community better. For all my life she has dedicated every lesson to "how does this help someone else?"

During Christmas, presents were earned by volunteering at shelters and having conversations with the people who lived there. I can remember her telling me "we have so much, you need to help."

This mindset of giving and sacrificing led me to want to change the world through my strength, which is writing.

I was encouraged by my mom to write. Not just write, but tell stories that made people feel something.

I can remember her calling my writing a gift and it made me feel comfortable leaning into journalism as a potential career. For that, I will never be able to repay her.

I've won awards, traveled and been praised all for my writing but my biggest accomplishment is making my mom cry tears of pride and joy when she reads something I wrote. It's the greatest praise I could ask for.

Obviously, growing up a boy with a single mom I always got the question "do you wish you had a dad instead?"

The answer was always the same. No.

I don't need a dad to "learn how to be a man." All I needed was a parent who wanted to be involved. She taught me accountability and dependability. I didn't want an absent dad, I had a present and an incredible mom.

I don't think I'd have the same opportunities without her. I owe her so much.

I love you mama.