

# Title IX

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE  
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This weekend marks the fortieth anniversary of the passage of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 whose section, Title IX, transformed sport in America. After forty years the achievements of Title IX are impressive, while some controversy persists and some misinformation continues to persist. In the past decade the conservative political attack has subsided and Title IX seems to have been removed from those still fighting the culture wars particularly on the issue of feminism.

In 1972 athletic programs for women in American colleges and high schools were rare. Team sports were nearly non-existent. Less than 30,000 women participated in intercollegiate athletic programs, as compared to some 170,000 men.

By 1976 under the influence of Title IX those numbers had begun to change as approximately 63,000 women and 168,000 men participated in intercollegiate athletics. By 1990 the numbers were nearly 93,000 women and 184,000 men, and in 2001 there were about 151,000 women and 209,000 men. In 2012 the number of women participating in intercollegiate programs had reached 200,000. The increases at the high school level have been even greater.

The numbers of course tell only a miniscule part of the story. What has changed more than the numbers are the attitudes in America about women's sports and women athletes. Young women in America today grow up in a world in which they see women participating in athletics from an early age. No one looks askance at a woman who participates in athletics. Few regard sport for women as an unladylike activity. The old mythologies about women's participation in sport and the impact on the ability of women to bear children have long since been demolished.

High school and college girls in the twenty-first century look upon athletic participation as a natural part of their existence. There would be an uprising of considerable severity if anyone told them they could not participate. Students take this for granted and on the campus the star athlete is as likely to be dating or socializing with other star athletes rather than cheerleaders. The older stereotypes are crumbling. Ask any mother or father if

their daughter should have the opportunity to play sports and the vast majority would answer very strongly in the affirmative.

The increase in intercollegiate sports for women has meant a growth in the number of coaching positions available to women. Initially this was substantial, although in recent years as the women's positions have become more attractive in prestige and salary, the growth has been seen more in the number of men moving into the women's programs as coaches. In 1972 nine of ten women's teams were coached by women, while that number today is less than five in ten. There has been an increase in the number of women in intercollegiate athletic administration, but the numbers are still limited. Less than 36% of athletic administrators are women, and just over 20% of athletic directors are women. Only thirty-six of the 215 women AD's are at Division I.

At one level then the story of Title IX has been a success. At the same time there continues to be some discontent from some male athletes and coaches of men's programs who view Title IX as an example of legislation whose unintended consequences have been unfair to men.

One of the chief complaints is that women's sports have grown at the expense of men sports. The sharp increase in the number of men's intercollegiate sports that have been dropped is often cited to prove the case. Wrestling, baseball, tennis, swimming, and track and field have been eliminated on a number of campuses. However the number of Division I football teams continues to increase and the total number of men competing in intercollegiate athletics continues to climb. The number of men's soccer teams grew rapidly in the 90s and over the past fifteen years there has been a rapid growth in women's programs with nine out of ten schools fielding a women's soccer team.

There has been phenomenal growth in the expenditures for intercollegiate athletics over the past thirty years, and it has accelerated in the last five years driven primarily by football. Men's budgets at universities with major football programs on average spent \$20.5M/year on men's programs and \$8M on women's programs

Those who oppose Title IX argue that the elimination of men's minor sports is a result of Title IX. Those who

support Title IX argue that men's sports have been sacrificed to the bloated football budgets. The data would suggest that it is the growth of expenditures on football, rather than on women's sport, that has necessitated the cuts of budgets and teams. Despite the numbers this past week on NPR Frank Deford repeated the view that men's sports have been cut because of the growth of women's sports.

Other questions have been raised recently about the limitations of Title IX. Some studies indicate that African-American female athletes have benefited proportionally less than white female athletes especially in the awarding of athletic scholarships coming out of high school. In another dimension there is a growing feeling that Title IX, which in fact was not originally directed at athletics, needs to be applied more vigorously across the board in colleges and universities where women remain underrepresented in administrative positions especially as you move up the administrative ladder.

For all of the progress that Title IX has achieved it seems to me that the basic question remains unanswered. Are intercollegiate athletics a legitimate part of the educational function of a university, or are they a business and entertainment operation that has become an obstacle to the educational process?

No doubt advocates and opponents of Title IX differ on their answers to that question too.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

(Many of the statistics used in this column are drawn from the excellent thirty-five year longitudinal study of the impact of Title IX conducted by R. Vivian Acosta, Ph.D. and Linda Jean Carpenter, Ph.D., J.D. Professors Emerita, Brooklyn College available at <http://www.acostacarpenter.org/>)

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