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Title IX

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE

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Twenty years ago Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act made sexual discrimination illegal for any high school district or institution of higher education that received federal aid. This meant that it applied to almost every school in the nation. It also meant that in the area of sport, discrimination against women was illegal. This legislation was opposed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the NCAA. At the time of Title IX's passage college athletics for women were under the auspices of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, the AIAW.

On the surface Title IX has been quite successful. Women's athletics at the college level has increased dramatically going from participation levels of 294,000 in varsity sport to nearly two million. Before Title IX women received less than one percent of the total national intercollegiate athletics budgets, while in 1987 that had increased to 17%, and may exceed 20% in 1992.

Such numbers are encouraging and seem to show great progress, but in recent weeks other numbers and analyses have appeared that are considerably less encouraging.

Figures released by the NCAA and then confirmed in a study by the Chronicle of Higher Education indicate that despite the advances precipitated by Title IX, women receive fewer opportunities to compete in athletics than do their male counterparts. In the area of overall expenditures, scholarships, coaches salaries, and recruiting budgets the story is uniformly the same; the monies in every category for men far exceeds that for women.

Although there are slightly more women than men enrolled in colleges and universities, there are 2.24 men for every woman participating in intercollegiate athletics. Men receive \$849,000 in athletic scholarships per institution while women receive \$373,000. Total operating expenses for men exceed that for women by a ratio of 3.42 to 1, while in recruiting budgets that ratio is 4.82 to 1 in favor of men.

The other disturbing developments have been a decline in the numbers of women coaches, very little growth in the numbers of women in sports administration, and after an initial booming growth in the numbers of women participating in athletics at the

scholastic and intercollegiate levels, there has been a leveling off, if not an actual decline. None of these figures bodes well for the future of women's sport in America.

Since the passage of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 a number of things have happened to change the picture from one of optimism to guarded pessimism. First, the control of women's intercollegiate athletics has passed from the hands of women in the AIAW to the traditional and male dominated NCAA. When this development took place in the late-70s there were many who warned that despite some advantages for women's sport within the NCAA structure, the overall impact on women's sport would not be positive. These fears now seem well founded.

Second, as women's athletics have come increasingly under the control of Athletic Departments headed by male Athletic Directors, women's sport has not received the attention it might have enjoyed under the control of female administrators. The decline of women's coaches is likely to encourage this trend.

Third, the Supreme Court in the Grove City College decision of 1984 dealt a blow to Title IX. In this case the court ruled that Title IX applied only to those specific programs receiving funds, not to all female programs within the college. This meant that athletics was unlikely to be affected at all by Title IX, as athletic programs received no federal funds. Within a year the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Education suspended sixty-four investigations, more than half of which involved sports. The obvious chilling affect on Title IX and women's athletics set in immediately as the NCAA and male dominated athletic departments realized they had nothing to fear from Title IX or the federal government. In fact they had little to fear since the beginning of the Reagan Administration.

In 1988 Congress struck down the interpretation in the Grove City College case and clarified the legislation by barring any institution receiving federal aid from discriminating in any of its programs. This seems to have cleared the air, and recent developments indicate that Title IX might again become a force for change.

At the local level the University of Central Florida mirrors the rest of the nation. A study of the UCF athletic program conducted by the Institute for the Study of Sport and Society in 1990-91 indicated a number of problems in the women's programs at UCF. Funding discrepancies were significant, there was only one full-time women's coach in the program at the time of the

study and now there are none, the athletic department was male dominated and women athletes and coaches felt they were being treated unfairly in a number of areas, while the athletic director seemed totally unaware that these problems existed.

UCF urgently needs a radical attitude change towards women within the male dominated athletic department, and needs a major infusion of women coaches and funds into women's athletics. This should take place on a dollar for dollar matching basis as UCF football moves to the big time. Title IX or no Title IX, as NCAA Director Dick Schultz says, "this is a moral issue."

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