

Remarks by Laura Pappano, WCW "Get in the Game" lunch, NYAC 10/27/10

When Title IX was passed 38 years ago, the problem was plain: If you were a girl, you didn't have the same educational access as the boys too top math and science courses, college and graduate programs. In sports, girls were an afterthought.

A June 1973 report by Pennsylvania's Education Committee recorded Pittsburgh's spending on school sports. The middle school offered four boys's ports and had a \$20,000 budget. Girls? Zero sports, zero dollars. At the high school level, the city hosted 10 sports for boys with an annual budget of \$324,000. Girls: Zero sports, zero dollars.

This was not uncommon.

Title IX was important because it opened doors of access. What did that look like? Between 1971 and 2009, girls' high school sports participation rose 979 percent, cccording to the National Federation of State High School Associations -- from 294,00 to 3.17 million. In fact, girls' sports participation has risen so much that it is nearing where boy's participation was in 1971 (3.66 million).

This point deserves emphasis. There is a perception out there that since passages of Title IX women's sports have grown – but men's have not. That's simply not true. There are now 4.45 million boys playing high school sports (a 22% increase).

TITLE IX also increased access for women at the college level. The number of female college athletes has risen from about 20,000 in 1970 to more than 180,000 today.

Despite more access, there is nothing approaching equality between men's and women's sports, particularly at the DI College level—which is important to feeding professional leagues. The NCAA's gender equity report shows that whether the subject is average number of scholarships, coaching salaries, recruiting dollars, officiating, travel expenses fundraising and marketing – even spirit groups – that money spent on men's sports dramatically outpaces that spent on women's sports. The average DI school spends nearly twice as much on men's sports than women's with expenses averaging \$8.6 million for men's sports and \$4.4 million for women's.

In fact, only 15 of 326 DI schools spend more on all of women's sports than they do on Football. And many of these disparities exist at state institutions supported heavily by taxpayer dollars.

Why is this and why didn't Title IX fix it?

The short answer is that when Title IX was passed few could have imagined the skill and intensity of the female athletes we see performing today. But the biggest reason: Title IX never demanded equality. Title IX, in other words, can only take us so far.

Part of the challenge is cultural. Historically, sports have been sharply divided by gender. Men's sports have been about demonstrating masculinity with a focus on competition. For women, sports historically presented all sorts of because there was a perception that women needed to be protected from over exertion. Women could play – but not too hard. Sports were acceptable for developing social skills and becoming fit mothers.

We don't have such sharp distinctions anymore, but the residue lingers. We struggle with the notion that Men play to win and women play for fun, that men's sports are the serious, "real" version.

Partly as a result of this, men's sports get far more media coverage. According to a recent USC Gender in TV Sports report, men's sports receive 96.3% of airtime with women's sports 1.6% and gender-neutral topics 2.1% . Men's sports have more support, better pay, greater visibility. More respect. This shapes attitudes, not just at elite levels, but down to kindergarten T-Ball. It influences who gets to play and how communities and families do – or don't – make accommodations for girls to develop athletic skills.

Research by Sumru Erkut and Allison Tracy at WCW has shown the protective effect of sports participation in delaying girls' sexual activity. But we know girls in urban areas are underrepresented in sports. And in other parts of the world, sports are considered so much the domain of males that girls must fight to be allowed to get fit. Students who write for the WCW FairGameNews.com blog travelled in May to the World Conference on Women in Sport in Sydney and interviewed leaders in Qatar and Afghanistan, including a woman who faced death threats for trying to recruit athletes and obtain equipment. Female athletes still face incredible social and political challenges.

Yet, few people would disagree: This is an exciting time for women's sports. There is no longer one or two female athletes that are household names – there are lots of them. Venus and Serena. Last year Kelly Kulick won the men's Pro Bowling Title. Anika Sorenstam and Michelle Wie have both played PGA events and the LPGA today has incredibly bright young talent. Danica Patrick is racing the guys. We have a compelling women's pro soccer league and a WNBA that has brought President Obama into the stands. The WNBA is drawing on the flourishing women's college basketball scene that last year attracted more than 8 million fans, including 231,000 to the March Madness tournament.

I think all of us here in this room are grateful for Title IX. But its time to look for the second wave of equity. It is – in most cases – not enough to just get access. The goal must be about gaining fair valuation, status, support, airtime, and pay for women's

sports. We must connect the dots, articulating the value of women's competition to skills and attitudes that lead to success in life and work.

Sports can be a tool for equality. But women need to be in the game. We need to be players, yes, but we must also be consumers of sports. We need to buy tickets, we need to tune in and support women's play – and not because it's a charity, but because it's good.

ESPN has recognized that women are 24 percent of their audience. Is espnW the answer? I don't know, but it's clearly an acknowledgement of power – and potential that we need to learn how to use.

Some out there still object to Title IX, but the battle has moved on. The challenge is to shape what comes next. Fortunately, there are leaders like Donna Orender, Gail Marquis, Jill Smoller, Susan Choi who are – and have been -- out front, making it their mission to raise the profile and success of female athletes and women's sports.