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## **Title IX and the Global 1970s: Women's Sports Activism in International Perspective**

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1) Oxford University Press and the American Council of Learned Societies

Date of publication: June 23rd, 2013

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**To cite this article:** Ware, S. (2013). Title IX and the Global 1970s: Women's Activism in International Perspective. *Social and Education History*, 2(2), 134-151. doi: doi:10.4471/hse.2013.09

**To link this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/hse.2013.09>

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# **Title IX and the Global 1970s: Women’s Sports Activism in International Perspective**

Susan Ware

*American National Biography*

## **Abstract**

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Title IX, a piece of federal legislation passed in 1972, spurred dramatic growth in the opportunities for women and girls to participate in sports and athletics in the United States, especially in the 1970s. Whereas only 1 out of 27 high school girls participated in sports in 1971, by the end of the decade the figure was 1 out of 3. These breakthroughs were confined to the U.S. Women’s sports activism did not emerge as a global phenomenon until the 1990s. A key factor in facilitating its emergence were the networks and coalitions encouraged by the United Nations World Conferences on Women, beginning with Mexico City in 1975 and especially Beijing in 1995.

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**Keywords:** title ix, women’s sports, UN conferences on women, olympics, global feminism

# **El Title IX en el Contexto Global de los años 70: Perspectiva Internacional del Activismo Deportivo de las Mujeres**

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## **Resumen**

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El Title IX, ley federal aprobada en 1972, estimuló espectacularmente el crecimiento de las oportunidades para las mujeres y las chicas a participar en los deportes y el atletismo en los Estados Unidos, especialmente en la década de 1970. Mientras que sólo 1 de cada 27 chicas de secundaria participaban en deportes en 1971, a finales de la década, la cifra fue de 1 de cada 3. Estos avances se limitaron al activismo deportivo de las Mujeres de EE.UU, no emergiendo como un fenómeno mundial hasta la década de 1990. Un factor clave para facilitar su surgimiento fueron las redes y alianzas promovidas por las Conferencias Mundiales de las Naciones Unidas sobre la Mujer, iniciándose en la ciudad de México en 1975 y especialmente en la de Pekín en 1995.

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**Palabras clave:** Title IX, deportes femeninos, ONU conferencias sobre la mujer, olimpiadas, feminismo global

2013 Hipatia Press

ISSN 2014-3591

DOI: 10.4471/hse.2013.09

**I**n the United States, the two words "Title IX" have become practically synonymous with the revolution in women's sports which began in the 1970s, but in the rest of the world, the impact of this groundbreaking piece of legislation is probably less well known. The events leading up to Title IX's passage in 1972, and the struggle ever since to figure out how to implement the law fairly, demonstrates how athletics became part of the broader political and cultural struggles of contemporary American life. Title IX also confirms the difficulties – and the rewards – of putting abstract principles like equal opportunity and gender equity into concrete, everyday practice. While there is no question that the 1970s were the breakthrough decade for women's sports in the United States, it is relevant to ask whether women's sports activism was happening on a global basis at the same time. This paper offers some tentative conclusions.

Let's set the stage by introducing three important events from the 1970s: the passage of the federal piece of U.S. legislation called Title IX in 1972, the convening of the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, and the 1977 National Women's Conference held in Houston as part of International Women's Year. Taken separately, they are each worthy of attention in their own right but taken together, they serve as pieces of a larger story that has much to tell about the global histories of sport and feminism, as well as some of the challenges of trying to confine or constrain a broad historical shift to a single decade, even the so-called "long" decade of the 1970s.

Passed as part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the relevant portion of Title IX is only thirty seven words long: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (Ware, 2007, p. 3). Influenced by earlier pieces of civil rights legislation such as the wide-ranging Civil Rights Act of 1964 which banned discrimination in employment on account of race and sex, Title IX extended that protection to education. Note that the original thrust for the law, which was sponsored by Senator Birch Bayh and Representative Edith Green, had nothing at all to do with athletics; instead framers were concerned about other examples of discrimination in education such as higher standards for women's

admission than men's, quotas for women in medical and professional schools, and automatically expelling students if they became pregnant (Sandler, 1977). Plus no one thought it would apply to athletics because sports programs did not receive any federal money. But since the law was interpreted to apply to the whole institution, not just a program receiving federal grants, sports and athletics were covered. And pretty soon it began to dawn on people that the areas in education where disparities in treatment for women were the most extreme were precisely in the field of sports (Ware, 2011).

It took a while for the federal government to write up the guidelines to implement the law, and it took a while for public awareness to spread that there was a new legal tool to challenge discrimination against women and girls in athletics. In spite of those delays, the 1970s really deserve credit as the take-off decade for women's sports in the United States. In one oft-cited figure, the number of high school girls playing sports went from 1 in 27 in 1971 to 1 in 3 by the end of the decade. While not all progress can be attributed to this specific piece of federal legislation, it clearly acted as a major spur. An additional factor was the vitality of second-wave feminism in the 1970s, which put issues of gender equity squarely on the national agenda. This provided a supportive climate for huge breakthroughs in sports for women – in the United States, that is. Whether this phenomenon translated into global success – and when – are the main questions that this paper aims to address.

The second major event on my agenda for the 1970s is the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975. In 1972 the United Nations designated 1975 as International Women's Year, and set in motion plans for a conference. The global gathering attracted 8,000 official delegates from 125 countries (out of 133 United Nations members), plus 6,000 more attendees at a parallel forum of women's NGO's and other groups. By most accounts, Mexico City was a somewhat fractious gathering, politicized over questions of apartheid, racism and Zionism. Beyond that, the conference showed a clear rift between women from the North (the industrialized countries of Europe, North America, Japan, and Northern Asia) and women from the South (Africa, the Asian subcontinent, and Latin and South America) over what constituted women's issues, with women from the North tending to

focus more on questions of legal rights and women's social and political subordination to men while women from the South looked more broadly at questions of poverty, disease, and the need for economic development (Snyder, 2006; Freedman, 2002). As historian Bonnie Smith concluded in her history of global feminisms since 1945, "Finding common ground was a major undertaking for the international congresses of women that took place from the 1970s on" (2000, p. 7).

The rise of global feminism is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that the 1975 Mexico City conference played a huge role in setting it in motion, with the United Nations serving as its "unlikely godmother" (Snyder, 2006, p. 24). Realizing that the problems of the world's women could not be tackled in a year, the U.N. wisely designated the years 1975-1985 as the International Decade of Women, with conferences planned for Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985. As Caribbean activist and participant Peggy Antrobus noted, "The decade opened spaces for women from communities all over the world to meet" and facilitated women "finding their public voice at the international level" (Antrobus, 2004, pp. 37, 43). In addition to creating new networks among activists, the conferences also generated more data and research about the problems that women faced. But it wasn't really until the 1995 conference in Beijing - "the most unified and productive conference of all" (Snyder, 2006, p. 44) and the one noted for its stirring declaration that "women's rights are human rights" - that the movement reached a critical mass. Since then global feminism has grown steadily, in contrast to the lackluster state of many feminist movements in North America and Europe (Tripp, 2006; Stansell, 2010).

My third event is the National Women's Conference held in Houston in November of 1977, convened in observance of International Women's Year. Attended by 2,000 elected delegates from every state in the union as well as almost 20,000 alternates, observers and members of the press, the conference adopted a national plan of action on women's issues that included support for the Equal Rights Amendment, the rights of minority women and lesbians, and support for reproductive freedom (National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, 1978). In many ways the Houston conference was the high point of feminist activism in the United States in the 1970s, as women of varying political agendas came together to build common ground. In

retrospect, it also demonstrated the growing political power and attraction of the anti-feminist narrative, embodied by Phyllis Schlafly marshalling of between 15,000 and 20,000 women to a counter-convention across town for those who claimed that the Houston delegates did not speak for them. Here was the moment in the 1970s when it became clear that the category "woman" was far too broad to embrace everyone of that gender (Spruill, 2008).

How did sports do on this national feminist agenda? The results were mixed. On the media front, one of the most widely covered events was the 2600-mile torch relay to Houston from Seneca Falls, New York (the site where the first women's rights convention was held in 1848). In a widely circulated photograph, feminist leaders such as Bella Abzug, Betty Friedan and sports activist Billie Jean King accompany the torch bearers for the final mile. And yet when it came time to draft the official platform, sports were nowhere to be seen. Despite a sports caucus that tried to introduce the issue, the only mention of sports was an oblique reference to proper enforcement of Title IX in the section on education (Ware, 2011).

This pattern – a disconnect between sport and organized feminism – was also at work on the international level. There is no mention of sport or athletics in the published conference proceedings from United Nations Women's Conferences at Mexico City, Copenhagen, or Nairobi. In fact, it wasn't until the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 that sport was even mentioned – and only in three passing references in the larger sections on education, health, and the girl child (*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1996*)<sup>1</sup>. Given the pressing problems of women worldwide (maternal mortality, large numbers of women living in poverty, rape as a weapon of war, and sex trafficking and prostitution, to name a few (Kristof and WuDunn, 2009)) it is perhaps not all that surprising that sport does not rank as a top priority but it still is an interesting example of how sport has failed to be incorporated into the broader feminist agenda.

And yet we know that women globally now enjoy more access to sports and recreational activities than ever before. Or at least we think we know: reliable and consistent data is remarkably hard to come by, let alone compare transnationally. In general, countries which offer more opportunities for women in sports also seem to generate better data, and

vice versa (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003, p. 270). So the question becomes when did this happen and were events in the United States replicated in other countries in the 1970s, or did the breakthroughs occur later? While this is my first foray into global history, I am pretty confident in concluding that no other country had the explosion in opportunities for women in sports in the 1970s that the United States did.

There are some clear country-specific reasons why this breakthrough only happened in the United States in that decade. First, unlike most of the rest of the world, the United States does not have a state-supported system of sport, which means it lacks a national apparatus or centralized structure to oversee and influence developments in this area (Lenskyj, 2003). Instead athletic opportunities had been left to educational institutions or recreational leagues, and reflecting the general sexism of the times, athletics was seen as primarily for men and boys, with girls and women struggling to get even a tiny amount of support. This just was the way things were, girls were told. Then Title IX was passed and things needed to change, fast. In such a situation, there was nowhere to go but up. And yet as Title IX activist Bernice Sandler pointed out ruefully, when budgets for women's sports go from zero to 20 percent it only means "things have gone from absolutely horrendous to only very bad" (Ware, 2011, p. 74).

In the United States an extremely hospitable set of circumstances came together in the 1970s to set in motion this revolution in women's sports: a revitalized women's movement, federal legislation mandating equality in education and sports, and plenty of room for improvement when starting from scratch. No other country seems to have experienced this combination in that decade. Certain countries like England (1975) and Norway (1978) passed laws banning sex discrimination but they did not have an immediate or clear impact on sports opportunities (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 175; Fasting, 2003, p. 15). Scattered evidence from around the globe suggests that individual women and women's groups were tentatively beginning to identify discrimination in sports as an issue and tentatively beginning to mobilize to try to change it. It's the chronology that's different: the early efforts are usually in the 1980s, with the breakthrough decade in terms of public activism and results being the 1990s. For example, in 1981 the Canadian Association for the



Advancement of Women and Sport (CAAWS), an advocacy group, was formed (Hall, 2003). In 1985 a Women's Sports Foundation was founded in the U.K., clearly modeled on the Women's Sports Foundation in the U.S., founded in 1974 by Billie Jean King; the Japanese Association for Women in Sport was also patterned on the U.S model (Hargreaves, 2000). And yet until more research is undertaken and more consistent data collected, it will remain difficult to make generalizations about these early years. The lack of reliable research on sport is similar to where things stood when the first U.N. Conference was convened, where delegates were hampered by the lack of data in formulating policy recommendations. Thanks in part to the mandates of those conferences since then, critical research on many aspects of women's lives has been sponsored and disseminated (Bahar, 2000, p. 265). Hopefully this will soon be the case where women's sports are concerned.

In terms of critical mass, the breakthrough decade for global sports activism seems to be the 1990s, not the 1970s or the 1980s. This widening of activism both in terms of participants and aims was in part a reaction to the insular character of existing organizations at the time, such as the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), which was founded in 1949 and dominated by physical educators from North America and Western Europe. (The IAPESGW was so apolitical that it held a conference in South Africa in 1977 at the height of apartheid and the topic never came up [Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 217-218]). Activists who wanted to do more pushed in 1992 for the creation of the Women's International Sports Coalition (WISC) with a mandate to "coordinate globally" all the different approaches of national and international sports organizations already in existence "in order to create a more active, interventionist stance for women and sport" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 220). In 1993 the WISC coalition was supplanted by WomenSport International (WSI). Like its predecessor, WSI members were still predominantly from developed countries in Northern America and Western Europe, augmented by New Zealand and Australia, but at least they were becoming more self-conscious about the inherent biases of a sports view based primarily on a white, Western model.

The prime example of this emerging global worldview was the First International Conference on Women and Sport organized by the British Sports Council and the International Olympic Committee (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 200; Hartmann-Tew and Pfister, 2000, p. 273). The conference, which was held in Brighton, England in 1994, attracted 280 delegates, mainly women, from 82 countries. The resulting Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport envisioned a sports culture that "enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport"<sup>2</sup>. Between 1994 and 1998, over two hundred organizations adopted the Brighton Declaration, including the International Olympic Committee in 1995. Similar to the role that the U.N. Conferences played as midwives to global feminism, "the Brighton Conference and Declaration provided a channel of empowerment for women working on female sport in countries with a wide geographic spread," according to Jennifer Hargreaves (2000, pp. 222, 223). Follow-up conferences were held in Windhoek, Namibia in 1998 and Montreal in 2002. By then it truly was possible to speak of an international women's sport movement as "an example of a global cultural flow that links women from numerous different nation states in a common cause" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 217).

There is another player in this story (it's impossible to avoid sports metaphors with this topic): the Olympics. When we talk about the globalization of sport, the Olympics play a large part in that transformation. And unwittingly the Olympics have been a showcase, indeed a spur for women's sports. I say unwittingly, because there may be no more sexist or gender-regressive organization in the twentieth century than the International Olympic Committee. Not for nothing did a feminist sports scholar call the Olympics a "context for institutionalized sexism" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 209). Its anti-feminism started with founder Baron Pierre de Coubertin who wanted to permanently ban all women from participating [as he said pointedly, "Women have but one task, that of the role of crowning the winner with garlands"] (Fuller, 2012, p. 31) and it has been an uphill struggle ever since. Decision-making and control were in the hands of the International Olympic Committee, a self-perpetuating old-boys club which only admitted its first two female members in 1981. Supporters of the cause of women's athletics found it extremely difficult to make the case for expanded participation and more events when national and

international governing bodies were so strictly controlled by men.

If you asked most people today about men's and women's sports in the Olympics, I suspect they would say that they are roughly equal. In fact, they aren't quite equal, but real progress has occurred since the 1970s. At the 2012 Olympics in London and the 2008 games in Beijing, women comprised 44% and 42% of the athletes, respectively; in 2012, every nation that sent a team included at least one female athlete - a first. Compare those figures to the decade of the 1970s: at the 1972 Munich Olympics, women made up just under 15% of all athletes, and 60 out of 121 competing nations did not have a single woman on their national team. At the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, the split was male athletes 80%, female 20%. The numbers of participants for the Winter Olympics are smaller, but the trend is similar: at Sapporo in 1972, 20%, Innsbruck 1976, 22.5%, Lake Placid 1980, 21.6%. If we continue to trace the comparative gender balance as it evolved over the years, there is no great leap forward between any of the quadrennial games, just slow but steady upward progress<sup>3</sup>.

The low participation rates for women at the Olympics could be partially linked to nations' reluctance to train female athletes at the elite level and to train them for a narrower range of sports, especially in developing nations (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 230), but there is also the demand side of the equation: why train those athletes if there are so few events for them to compete in? As part of its indifference to women's sports, the IOC has been extremely slow to add new sports for women to the Olympic roster, a pattern originally rooted in a paternalistic concern for women's supposedly frail constitutions as well as sexist prejudice against women participating in team sports. In general, individual women's sports (which tend to be more socially acceptable) have found it easier to win inclusion while team sports struggled to win IOC support. The first team sport for women, volleyball, did not appear until 1964, women's basketball was only added in 1976, and the women's marathon not until in 1984 (Lenskyj, 1986).

While the Olympics are supposed to be about individual amateur achievement, what they often are about is national chauvinism, especially in the race to win medals. Here a critical piece of the backstory was the entry of the USSR and other Soviet-bloc states into the Olympics in 1952. In a Cold War context with the medal count as a

measure of national superiority, the medals that women could win were suddenly vitally necessary to a good national showing. Soviet bloc women clearly dominated in the 1950s, the beneficiaries of a system of strong state support for training and development [and the liberal provision of steroids along the way] (Jay, 2004; Guttmann, 1991). In contrast American female athletes were basically left to train on their own by the United States Olympic Committee. Despite this lack of institutional support, American women did start winning medals, with African American track stars like Wilma Rudolph (who won three gold medals in track and field at the 1960 Olympics in Rome) leading the way (Blaschke, 2012).

With the ascendance of the Olympics as a popular culture event with an influence far beyond just sports (thanks in large part to television), it was becoming clear that nations ignored women's sports at their peril. The United States learned this lesson, and so did many other countries from around the world. In many nations the main impetus for support for women's sports and athletics became building a pipeline that might produce future Olympic champions, rather than concern for women's sporting opportunities in general. As Helen Lenskyj noted,

In liberal women's sports contexts today, the mythical allure of the Olympics and Olympians shapes the political agenda in both symbolic and material ways. Despite the stated goals of promoting recreational sporting opportunities for girls and women of all ages and ability levels, many women's sports advocacy organizations continue to give Olympic sport and Olympic sportswomen top billing (2002, p. 6).

In other words, the overarching predominance of the Olympics as the premier international sporting event guaranteed that it would affect developments in individual countries. "By the end of the twentieth century," Lenskyj concluded, "the Olympics had become one of the major forces dictating the organization of female sport domestically as well as internationally" (2002, p. 6).

Stepping back, this story resonates as a classic example of the liberal feminist approach to equality: agitating for access and participation opportunities on a par with men in a (possibly corrupt) system like the

Olympics rather than going to the root cause and challenging the travesty of amateur athletics that the Olympics have become. The problem with a liberal feminist approach – to sport, or most other social change – is that it tries to fit women into a pre-existing system which was created by, set up for and administered by men. Eleanor Rathbone called this "me-too feminism"; it is also called "piece of the pie" feminism (Ware, 1993).

Its implications for sports activism are huge. In most countries, a major focus of sports activism since the 1980s has been trying to win more participation opportunities for girls and women. This is of course a noble goal, but it basically accepts the sports system as it is and few systems are as androcentric and male-dominated as sports (Messner and Sabo, 1990; Messner, 2002; Nelson, 1994) and then tries to fit women in. As Denise E. M. Jones observed in her survey of women and sport in South Africa, "Gender equality has been interpreted as increasing the number of women and girls playing sport, not challenging male domination in decision-making positions" (Jones, 2003, p. 140). This pattern is found not just in industrialized countries but in emerging countries eager to take their place in the global sports scene. In a parallel trend, women have increasingly surrendered control of women's sports to men as they have been integrated into existing governance structures. Ilse Hartmann-Tews and Gertrud Pfister summed up the trade-off in their survey of women's sport in comparative perspective, "The general pattern emerging is that women have sacrificed autonomy and control over their sport, but gained financial advantages and access to facilities, coaching and sponsorship" (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003, p. 270).

There are many parallels to this phenomenon in the story of Title IX in the United States. In the early days of Title IX, women's sports activists had hoped they could chart a "purer" course, one that avoided the abuses and excesses of a male athletic system defined primarily by competition and increasing commercialization. However, with their focus on expanding participation opportunities and resources for girls, sports activists and Title IX enforcers set a low bar for equality that focused primarily on access, not fundamental change. In doing so, they lost the chance to challenge and potentially reform a system that had excluded or marginalized women from the start. In retrospect, it is clear

that the huge increase in the numbers of women and girls playing sports since the 1970s has not caused any major paradigm shifts in the field of athletics. Instead women have generally just been absorbed into the reigning male model, with all its drawbacks and problems. Here's a question that is central to any Women's Studies curriculum: does equality have to mean sameness, especially if it means conforming to the existing male model? (Ware, 2011). The emerging global feminist sports movement ignores this conundrum at its peril.

There was an alternative, more woman-centric vision in the United States in the 1970s, but it did not prevail. (Ironically we see something similar in Muslim countries today, where women's sports participation has to be conducted out of the sight of men, which encourages female-controlled enclaves and safe spaces for athletic participation)<sup>4</sup>. In the U.S. this alternative vision had roots in the world of women's physical education, which had pushed for a model of sport that was in direct opposition to what was seen as a corrupt male model based on competition, brute strength rather than finesse, and winning at any cost. "A sport for every girl, and every girl in a sport" was its mantra, with the focus being on the joys of participation and exercise for their own sake, not just to compete on teams. But in the rush to open up opportunities in the 1970s, this alternative vision fell by the wayside and it was replaced by the emphasis on integrating, for better or worse, women into the existing system. A symbolic moment: when the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the coordinating mechanism for women's sports, folded in 1982 and women's athletic programs were basically swallowed up by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, an organization that had aggressively lobbied against Title IX in the 1970s (Cahn, 1994; Festle, 1996; Wushanley, 2004).

There are definitely parallels between the AIAW vision in the 1970s and the emphasis on "sport for all" on the international front. The abiding ideas are similar: instead of focusing resources on a tiny number of elite competitors, the priority is on making sure that broad segments of the population have access to sport and exercise as a central part of daily life. This stance is best represented by the European Sport for All Charter ratified in 1975 which envisioned a "comprehensive sports policy which attempts to extend the beneficial effects of sport on health,

social, educational and cultural development to all sectors of the community” (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003, p. 276). Note that this approach is not necessarily feminist in either its intent or outcome (it does not mention gender specifically) although it certainly contains the seeds for a broad-based participatory model that would include the generally underserved female half of the sporting population. This approach also builds on one of the key insights of feminist sports research: “the most successful community sports programmes for women are those which make no artificial separation of the sporting and the social” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 243). It is this “sport for all” focus that I can see being embraced by global feminists because it fits into the expansive vision of women's rights as human rights articulated at Beijing (Brady, 2005, p. 37). Maybe the disconnect between sport and feminism will finally be broken.

The story of global activism on women in sport is a huge topic, and it will not be easily confined to a specific decade. The 1970s showed tentative stirrings and a somewhat heightened awareness in various countries around the world, with the United States being unique in its passage of legislation which acted as a dramatic spur to action and facilitated a large increase in participation opportunities for women and girls in the decade. But in an increasingly global, interconnected, information-driven world, it is now impossible to ignore the topic of women in sport once it has been inserted on the global agenda through venues like United Nations and the Olympics. Jennifer Hargreaves made this point back in 1994: “With the opening up of Europe and the increasing globalization of sports, no individual country can remain unaffected by international influences” (p. 182). Even though the payoff was not really seen until the decade of the 1990s, the networking, coalition-building and consciousness-raising pioneered by the United Nations conferences on women laid the necessary groundwork for this new level of concerted activism which is finally putting sport on the global feminist agenda. But another way of thinking about the larger question of sports activism and feminism is that the story is still very much unfolding, and that there is still a huge amount to be done before women and men line up not just at the same starting line but live in a society where the goal is providing everyone with the chance to reach the finish line (Hall, 2003, p. 172)<sup>5</sup>.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Here are the three references from the Beijing final report: "Provide accessible recreational and sports facilities and establish and strengthen gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of all ages in education and community institutions and support the advancement of women in all areas of athletics and physical activity, including coaching, training and administration, and as participants at the national, regional and international levels" (p. 32); "Give particular attention to the needs of girls, especially the promotion of healthy behavior, including physical activities" (p. 40); "Promote the full and equal participation of girls in extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama and cultural activities" (p. 115). The lobbying efforts of groups such as the U.S. - based Women's Sports Foundation and Women Sport International were instrumental in the inclusion of these plants in the final document (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 221).

<sup>2</sup>The full text of the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport can be found on the website of WomenSport International: <http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational>

<sup>3</sup>All these figures come from the official Olympics website: <http://www.olympic.org>

<sup>4</sup>While it is difficult to generalize about all Muslim women, the importance of religious modesty does play a role in how and where they participate in sport. If sports participation occurs in single-sex contexts or in indoor facilities where there are no men present, women can wear shorts and t-shirts; if the activity involves male spectators, the female athlete must cover her body and dress "respectably". This prohibition, however, does not translate into an absolute ban on the participation of Muslim women athletes in international competitions such as the Olympics, as Morocco's Nawal El Moutawakel showed in the 400-meter hurdles in Los Angeles in 1984 and as Algerian runner Hassiba Boulmerka demonstrated in the 1500 meters at Barcelona in 1992. Even Iran sent a female athlete to the 1996 games in Atlanta: target shooter Lida Fariman competed in a scarf and coat. For a fascinating introduction to this subject, see "The Muslim female heroic: shorts or veils?" in Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 46-77.

<sup>5</sup>My ending was inspired by this quotation from Bruce Kidd, as cited by Hall: "Equality focuses on creating the same starting line for everyone; equity has the goal of providing everyone with the same finish line".

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