

What's Happening

I N T H E U S A ?

BY LAWRENCE GABLE

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Title IX Has Brought Changes for Women

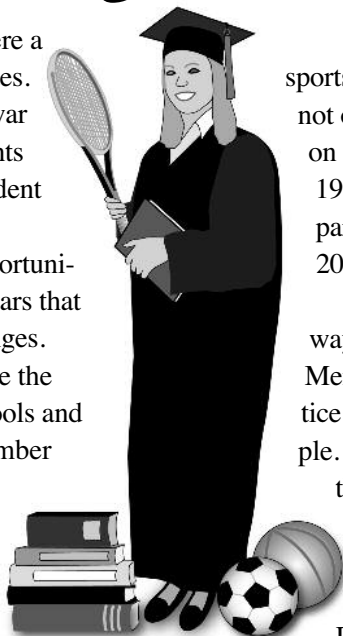
The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of change in the United States. Americans protested to end the war in Vietnam, and they fought for equal rights for minorities and women. In 1972 President Richard Nixon signed a law that required schools and universities to give equal opportunities to girls and women. In the past 40 years that law, Title IX, has caused remarkable changes.

In those days women did not have the same opportunities as men. Medical schools and law schools, for example, limited the number of women that they accepted. Title IX, whose official name was the 1972 Education Amendments Act, affected schools and universities that received money from the federal government. The law prohibited discrimination against girls and women at all levels of education and in all programs, including sports.

The education system did not adjust easily to the law. The NCAA, which governs college athletics, sued in court. It argued that sports programs at a school were separate from the educational programs. However, the court ruled that school sports also serve educational goals, so Title IX applies to them too. Some girls and women sued in court when their schools failed to offer the same opportunities. As schools lost those cases, other schools decided to change their programs.

Before Title IX high schools did not offer many sports programs for girls. Most American girls could not participate in sports like soccer, golf, swimming, volleyball or tennis. If teams did compete against other schools in sports like softball or basketball, their seasons lasted only for a few games. Although boys' teams traveled in buses, parents usually drove the girls in vans. Often girls had to pay for their own equipment and make their own uniforms.

The number of high school girls who participate in sports has grown tremendously. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, during the 1972–73 school year 294,015 girls participated in sports. In 2010–11 that number grew to 3,173,549.



The increase in participation in college sports is also impressive. Now women compete not only against other colleges, but also play on club or intramural teams on campus. In 1972–73 fewer than 30,000 college women participated in sports. However, in the 2010–11 school year 186,460 did.

Over the years schools have learned ways to provide “equal athletic opportunity.” Men and women must have equal access to practice fields, gyms and training rooms, for example. Men’s and women’s locker rooms must be the same size and quality. Schools must offer awards and banquets for all athletes, and cheerleaders and band performances must support both men’s and women’s teams.

Perhaps most important of all, the percentage of female athletes must match the percentage of women and girls in the student body.

Title IX intended to help women in education, and its effect has extended far beyond sports. Now more than five times more women go to medical school, and seven times more attend law school. Today women earn more than half of all bachelor’s degrees in college. Those degrees have led women to careers in professions that men used to dominate.

Before Title IX people used to argue that women were not interested in professions or participating in athletics. It turns out that women are interested, and they are good at those things too. They just needed the opportunities to participate. Beyond athletic programs in schools, women are enjoying success in professional sports like golf, tennis and basketball. At the Olympics in London the American team had more women than men for the first time ever.

At schools there is still room for improvement in women’s sports. There are too few coaches and athletic directors at schools who are women. Scholarships for women still go primarily only to White athletes. However, forty years later Americans can celebrate what Title IX has accomplished. The fight is no longer about the opportunity to participate. The opportunities exist, and women and girls are competing and succeeding.

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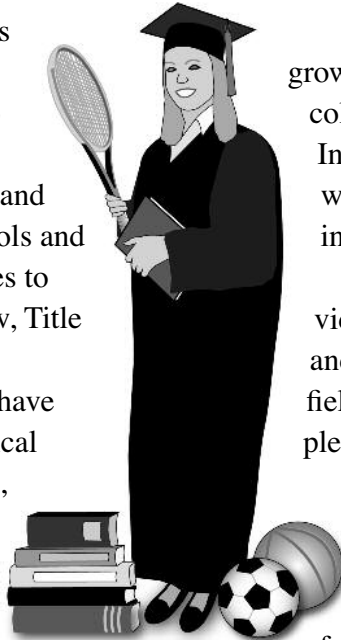
The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of change in the U.S. Americans protested to end the war in Vietnam. They also fought for equal rights for minorities and women. In 1972 a law required schools and universities to give equal opportunities to girls and women. In 40 years that law, Title IX, has caused remarkable changes.

In those days women did not have the same opportunities as men. Medical schools and law schools, for example, limited the number of women that they accepted. Title IX affected schools that got money from the U.S. government. It forced them to give girls and women equal rights in all programs, including sports.

The education system did not adjust easily to the law. Leaders argued in court that sports programs were separate from the educational programs. However, the court ruled that school sports also serve educational goals. Some girls and women won court cases against schools that failed to offer the same opportunities. As schools lost those cases, others decided to change their programs.

Before Title IX high schools did not offer many sports programs for girls. Most girls could not participate in sports like soccer, golf, swimming, volleyball or tennis. If they did have basketball or softball teams, their seasons lasted only for a few games. Although boys traveled in buses, parents usually drove the girls in vans. Often girls had to pay for equipment and make their own uniforms.

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Title IX has helped women in education, not just sports. Now more than five times more women go to medical school, and seven times more attend law school. Today women earn more than half of all college degrees. Women work in professions that mostly only men worked in.

Before Title IX people felt that women were not interested in professions or athletics. It turns out that women were interested, and just needed the opportunities. Beyond athletic programs in schools, women are enjoying success in professional sports too. At the 2012 Olympic Games the American team had more women than men for the first time ever.

At schools there are still problems in women’s sports. There are too few coaches and athletic directors at schools who are women. Scholarships still go primarily only to White athletes. However, forty years later Americans can celebrate what Title IX has done. Opportunities exist, and women and girls are participating and succeeding.

Background Information

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is only 37 words long. It says: “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.”

Title IX also applies to elementary and junior high schools.

The difference in NCAA scholarship money is closing. Women receive \$965 million in scholarships each year, and men get \$1.15 billion.

In 2012 women coach only 43 percent of the women’s college teams.

The first girl to play on a Little League Baseball team did it in 1950. She hid her hair under her cap, used a nickname and pretended to be a boy. After she made the team, she revealed her gender to her manager, who allowed her to play. The first girl officially allowed to play was Maria Pepe. She played three games in New Jersey in 1973 before Little League Baseball ordered her league to stop her. The National Organization for Women represented her in court, and in 1974 a court ordered Little Leagues in New Jersey to allow girls to try out.

In 1972 only 15 percent of all Olympians were women. In London 45 percent of the 10,800 athletes were women.

The National Council of Youth Sports reports that in 1970 only 1 in 27 girls played high school sports. Today the number is 1 in 2.5.

According to NCAA data, male participation in athletic programs has increased by more than 50 percent since Title IX was enacted.

Title IX does not require equal spending on men’s and women’s programs.

Research shows important effects of sports on high school girls. They are less likely to be involved in an unwanted pregnancy, more likely to get better grades in school, and more likely to graduate than girls who do not play sports. As little as four hours of exercise a week may reduce a teenage girl’s risk of getting breast cancer later by up to 60 percent.

Representative Patsy Mink from Hawaii wrote Title IX’s language. In 1965 she had become the first minority woman in the U.S. Congress. After her death in 2002, Congress renamed Title IX as the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act.

Topics for Discussion and Writing

Pre-reading:

- Describe in some detail the opportunities that teenaged girls where you live have to participate in athletics.

Comprehension:

- How has the participation of girls and women in sports changed in the past 40 years?

Beyond the Text:

- In 1896 the Olympics’ founder said it would be “impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic and incorrect” for women to participate. Respond to one of those four points.
- Give an example of stereotypes that you notice about girls and boys, or men and women. Explain why you think it exists.
- Why has it taken longer for women to become coaches and athletic directors than to become participants?

Vocabulary (*advanced article only)

Article-specific: official*; amendment*; discrimination*; to sue*; to apply*; intramural; banquet*; to extend*

High-use: to protest; minority; to require; to affect; federal*; to prohibit*; goal; to participate; equipment; access; percentage; career*; to dominate*; primarily

Sources

Wall Street Journal August 7, 2012

Daily News (Los Angeles) July 27, 2012

Buffalo News July 27, 2012

The Capital (Annapolis) July 1, 2012

Newsday June 22, 2012

National Public Radio “Tell Me More” June 21, 2012

Gannett News Service June 20, 2012

www.womenssportsfoundation.org

Core Curricular Standards

Reading—Grades 5–12

- Quote accurately from text / Cite textual evidence /
- Draw inferences / Determine central ideas /
- Analyze structure of text / Interpret words and phrases

CA Curricular Standards (4–12)

ELD—Intermediate and Advanced

- Reading Vocabulary Development/Comprehension
- Writing Strategies and Applications
- Listening and Speaking

History-Social Science

- 8.6; 11.5; 11.10; 11.11