

Ruchi Hegde/Jan 27, 2023/Week 4: Baseball, Softball, Basketball

Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, "Games of Strife", pp 55-82

Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, "The All-American Girls Baseball League", pp 140-163

Amy Ellis Nutt, *Nike is a Goddess*, "Swinging for the Fences", pp 33-54

All American Girls Professional Baseball League Rules of Conduct, 1943-1954

1. In "Games of Strife", Susan Cahn emphasizes that women were allowed to compete by officials as long as it wasn't a direct means of doing so: For example, "Because students competed for preselected teams that practices prior to the event and then vied against other school teams, cautious administrators judged sport days to be a form of intercollegiate competition." (Cahn 66). This similarly also occurred with baseball: "The fear was that [baseball] would start catching on with women everywhere... In 1904, five female students at the University of Pennsylvania joined in a men's baseball game on campus... Within days female students were prohibited from playing baseball." (Nutt 37). The distinction of teams and competition directly between women frightened officials, which is why most "competitions" had to do with measurement: "On a given day several schools would set up a series of events for their own students on their home fields. Afterwards the schools would report times, heights, and distances via telegraph to determine winners and losers." (Cahn 66). What would you say is the difference between this type of competition versus competing in sports that keep score? How would they justify the mindset many athletes have of competing against yourself?
2. Susan Cahn talks about how women's physical education teachers and other staff started to increase in the 1920's, but they, ironically, were the ones who restricted women's sport the most: "...it was most often women, typically physical educators and recreation leaders, who raised the cry of "masculinization"." (Cahn 55) and "physical educators reinforced the association between vigorous competition and mannishness". (Cahn 81). How do you justify/what do you make of women also being restrictors when it comes to sport?
3. Another important distinction Susan Cahn makes clear is that men and women were treated very differently when it came to sport. This hugely relates to the idea of masculinity and femininity: "Educators' personal discomfort with working-class styles mixed with professional concern, especially the fear that working-class "mannishness" might infiltrate the ranks of college athletics." (Cahn 76). Masculinity was something physical educators and staff feared because of the traditional notion that ties it to being a man. Knowing that, how do you think they

would deal with more masculine-appearing women like Caster Semenya or Dutee Chand?