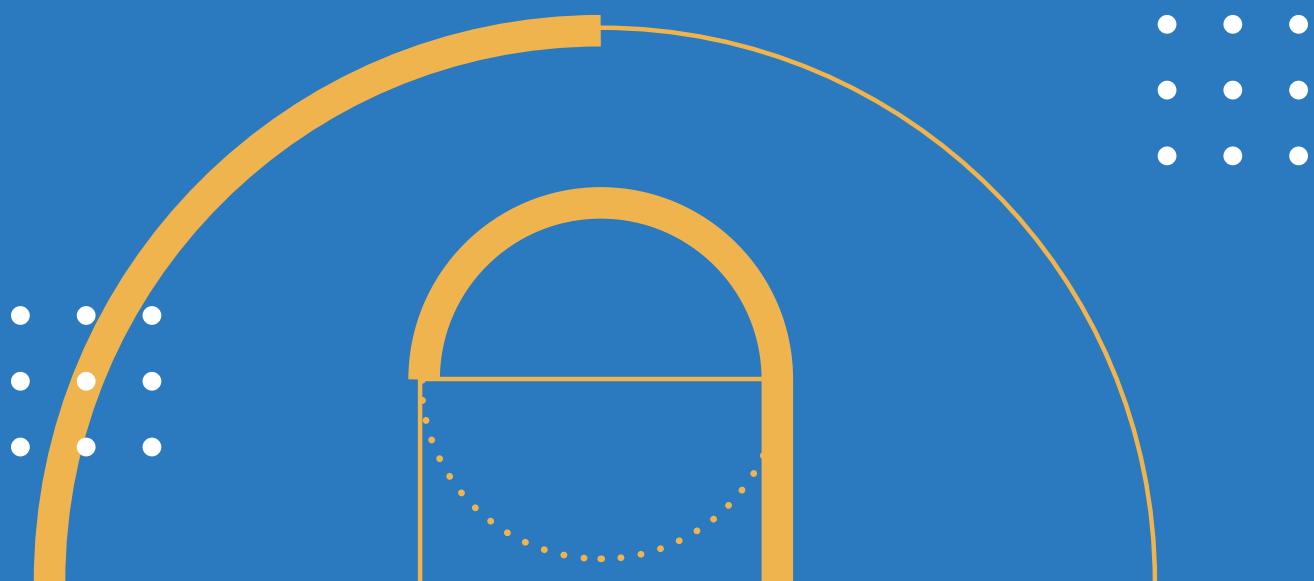


# Game Plan For Girls in Sports

A Guide for Building Effective Sports Programs  
for and with Girls, Coaches, and the  
Entire Community & Gender Equity Resources



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Note: Footnotes omitted for brevity; supporting studies and sources available upon request.

# Introduction



Let's collectively get more girls into the game, support women coaches and all coaches of girls, and advance gender equity in youth sports environments!

Our Guide and Tip Sheets contain quick information and resources to help ensure girls\* can reap the benefits of lifelong health, positive sports experiences, and sustained athletic engagement. The Guide further provides support and resources for women coaches, coaches of any gender coaching girls, allies, and those seeking to promote gender equity in youth sports in any community.

Anyone in girls' lives (parents, caregivers, teachers, afterschool staff, and youth sports coaches/leaders in a school, park and recreation or third party league context) can benefit from reading the Guide in its entirety or in sections.

Girls and women have better health if they play sports, experience lifelong dividends such as lower rates of depression and adult breast cancer, have higher educational attainment, and even greater wages as adults (see Lifelong Benefits section!).



Getting girls in the game and supporting girls with trained, caring coaches is key for community-wide health, wellness, and fulfillment.

You can contact Positive Coaching Alliance ("PCA") at any point to become a partner, explore our resources, and share our materials far and wide. Thank you for checking out the Guide and furthering gender equity in your school, afterschool, or community-based youth sports program. Please email us [genderequity@positivecoach.org](mailto:genderequity@positivecoach.org) with questions or input.

\*Throughout this Guide, "girl," "woman," etc. refers to any person who identifies in the manner they choose, supporting all people in their gender identity and expression.



PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

## Why Girls and Women in Sports: 10 Benefits

*Substantial research reveals direct links between girls who participate in sports and stronger educational attainment, positive health outcomes, and improved adult employment results. Sports are crucial for girls to succeed! This information can help any coach, youth sports coordinator or leader, parent, guardian, caregiver, student, or community member realize how important sports are for girls and women.*

\* All supporting studies available upon request.



### Wide-Ranging Life-Long Health Benefits

**1** Girls and women who are most physically active in adolescence and young adulthood are **20% less likely to get breast cancer later in life.**

**2** Girls who participate in regular exercise experience lower rates of depression.

**3** Girls who participate in sports demonstrate higher self-esteem.



### Myriad Educational Benefits

**4** Overall, girls who play sports have higher grades and score higher on standardized tests than non-athletes.

**5** Girls who participate in sports are significantly more likely to graduate compared to non-athletes. The correlation is particularly strong for Black and Latinx girls.

**6** At the collegiate level, young women who receive sports scholarships graduate at higher rates than young women students generally.



### Employment and Workforce Dividends

**7** Executive business-women report engagement with sports contributed to their success by providing leadership skills, discipline, and teamwork abilities.

**8** A study of 821 senior managers and executives found that 94% of women executives reportedly played organized sports after primary school.

**9** Girls who played high school sports show higher levels of adult labor force participation and are correlated with earning **7% higher wages than non-athlete peers.**

**10** As a result of Title IX (federal civil rights law requiring gender equity), and more girls playing sports, women are entering male-dominated professions at higher rates.

# Designing Welcoming, Equitable, and Positive Girls' Sports Programs—9 Tips

Designing youth sports programs with girls central and in mind is key to making youth sports welcoming, equitable, and positive for all. Check out these nine tips!

\*All supporting studies available upon request.

**TIP  
1**

**Make It Girl-Centered**

■ **Over 90% of girls ages 7 to 13 who play sports like (or love!) to participate.** Younger and older girls, and young women really enjoy athletics. Presume girls are interested and want to play especially when programs are inclusive and accommodating.

**TIP  
2**

**Make It Intentional to Get All Girls in the Game**

■ Black and Latinx girls enter sport at a later average age and leave sport earlier than their counterparts, affording girls of color an even narrower window of opportunity. **Girls of color and girls in low-income communities are getting fewer opportunities to play, yet want to play in greater numbers!** Let's include everyone.

**TIP  
3**

**Make It Responsive to Girls' Interests**

■ Using simple surveys, small focus groups, and/or basic outreach to understand what sports girls want to play, and how, can help set up a lasting, successful program based on girls' interests. For example, volleyball, soccer, and basketball are popular girls' sports nationwide; check what girls want to play in your area.

■ Many girls prefer and thrive in all girls' athletic contexts whereas some girls like co-ed play – check with girls on what they prefer and offer that!

■ Don't assume what girls want to play or base offerings simply on what a coach knows / has coached / what's been historically offered. **Ask and tailor programs.**



PHOTOGRAPHS BY K.M. KLEMENCIC



TIP

4

Make It Safe  
(Physically)

■ **Safety** - Are the practice / game times, locations, facilities, and items like bathrooms safe and accessible (corresponding to identity)? **Simple steps like working lights, adult supervision, and safe, clear spaces help girls play.**



TIP

5

Make It Safe  
(Emotionally)

■ **Comfortable** - Create fun, engaging sport routines so girls know what to expect.

■ **Belonging** - Prioritize support and training for staff / coaches to use positive, gender-supportive language, names, and preferred pronouns, demonstrate empathy, and build connections with girls.

■ **Friends** - Connections with peers is often a driver for participation. Use a buddy registration / team formation system so that girls can know one person, if preferred.

■ **Curb the Negative** - Counter gender stereotypes that can limit girls' participation. **Ensure kids and adults near practice and game space use supportive language.**

■ **Empathy** - Coaches can listen to understand girls' perspectives without judgment.

TIP

6

Make It Accessible

■ **Scheduling** - Getting to practice / games is doable if **scheduling and facilities are considered** - e.g., have sports on / near campuses at ideal times, at a close-by park, and along public transit lines. Support carpools. Consider calendar conflicts.

■ **Cost** - Cost impacts girls in starting and sticking with sport. Make offerings affordable and scholarships available - consider costs (league, equipment, transportation).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

TIP  
**7****Make It Girl-Informed to Understand Barriers**

■ Finding out what's keeping girls from playing is key to **designing inclusive, supportive, positive, girl-oriented programming**.

Common barriers easily overcome include:

- Not knowing how / when to sign up for sports programming
- Knowledge gaps re: sports
- Never having played before
- Gender inequity, such as girls' teams / leagues / divisions getting "less"
- Attitudes of families, communities, and institutions impeding girls' play
- Obligations (e.g., job to support family; caretaking of siblings)

TIP  
**8****Make It Inviting to Break Down Barriers**

■ Use inviting, clear team, division, and league information for sign-ups; **include images of girls actively playing in outreach materials**.

- Explain rules and game to girls brand new to the sport; novices welcome!
- Ensure girls' offerings are gender equitable (facilities, schedules, etc.)
- Share information with girls, families, and all re: why girls in sport benefit (ideally in multiple languages and in engaging ways)
- Offer practice / games when girls are available; explore childcare help for girls with family-oriented obligations

TIP  
**9****Make It Collaborative With Girls**

■ **Voice and Choice** - Share power with girls to help design your program

■ **Effort, Learn from Mistakes, Mastery** - Celebrate progress, not just outcomes

■ **Balance** - Instill healthy competition and fun; mindful of girls' range of motivations



# Age-Oriented Tips for Helping Girls Build an Athlete Identity in Sports

*Sports are a powerful vehicle to help girls reach their full potential. Anyone can play a role in supporting girls by getting them started and engaged in sports. Many girls continue to play sports because they have developed an athlete identity: “I am a soccer player!” rather than, “I play soccer.” Girls that develop athlete identities with support are more likely to stay in sports through their lives. Here are age-oriented tips for getting and keeping girls in the game:*

**Ages  
0-4**

PreK

- Engage girls in sports and play at the very start to help build comfort with athletics to last a lifetime. Girls can jump into sports fun well before Kindergarten.
- Find ways to get her active and playing. Any and all babies, toddlers, and young children—including girls—enjoy playing with soft balls, kicking, running, jumping, playing games, and being active.

- Introduce girls to sport early on through home and community-based play, clinics, beginner leagues, classes, and events (local girls'/women's sports leagues in person and media, e.g., watch a women's basketball game if sports are viewed at home).

**Ages  
5-7**

K-2nd  
Grade

- Girls love physical activity, wanting to run, move and get dirty. Harness the energy by creating fun, dynamic practices. Help connect sports to positive fitness, feeling good.
- Support building motor skills, e.g., balance and coordination through group games while introducing to sport-specific skills. Notice girls that might be hesitant, and bring them in!

- Sessions should feel fun, positive, and playful. Offer encouragement and positive reinforcement. Use regular water breaks and engaging practice plans.

- Incorporate some healthy competition (games!), sharing about rules and keeping score to help girls work towards goals, build teamwork, and prepare for future sports levels.

**Ages  
8-10**

3rd-5th  
Grade

- Respect girls' individuality and support a broad sense of what it means to be a girl. Girls at this age continue to love to run and play hard.
- Building expertise balanced with joy. Help girls become more excited about mastery, performance and competition, while incorporating fun (e.g., new goals at each game).

- Give specific feedback on skill improvement. For example, try remarking, “I appreciate your hustle, Marisol. Now get your feet into position before you bump the volleyball.”

- Include balance of competitive games; avoid over-emphasis on winning / losing.

**Ages  
11-13**5th-8th  
Grade

- Encourage girls to see sport as a part of identity. This is the crucial time when girls stick with a sport and identify as an athlete and some stop playing for a variety of reasons. Some are still new to sport and benefit from inclusive and welcoming attitudes.
- Have conversations with each girl and encourage her to play. If a girl ceases playing, try finding out why because you may still be able to help

**Ages  
14-18**9th-12th  
Grade

- Give opportunities to compete, progress and perform as many girls will engage more seriously in sport, while meeting girls where they're at, if beginning.
- Be a trusted, consistent adult on which they can rely and learn. Be available to talk (referring to other caring adults / experts as needed, depending on topic); treat them with respect, support, and positivity.
- Continue holding high expectations and help develop skills that translate

eliminate barriers, and the information can help generally improve the program.

- Skill development. Girls want to work hard (e.g., in games, tournaments) and see their skills advance. Teach healthy habits too (i.e., warm-up, nutrition, strengthening). Encourage girls to stretch to new heights and be partners in the sports journey.

off the field. Share team guidelines (e.g., be on time, give 100%), inviting girls to comment and add, supporting team ownership.

- Continue to engage in skill-appropriate competitions (league; scrimmages; to test their skills against other teams).
- Help girls consider a lifetime of physical fitness, activity and sports enjoyment! Girls can reach toward college athletic scholarships, club teams, and ongoing adult leagues.





PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

# Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Women Coaches and Coaches of Girls—10 Tips

*Getting more women into coaching and supporting coaches of girls, of any gender, is a key way to get girls in the game. Did you know that only a quarter of youth sports coaches in the United States are women? Women are terrific, skilled, impactful coaches and more and more women want to coach and can. Follow these tips to ensure women coaches and the coaches of girls have what they need to create a positive youth sports culture for girls and all kids.*

## 1 Women Coaches as Role Models

■ Include images of women in coaching roles. In all program materials (flyers, job notices, and outreach), imagery conveys messages that women are very much encouraged to apply, integral in the program, welcome, and should seek out coaching position(s).

**■ Girls and underrepresented youth seeing individuals like themselves is powerful in and around the game.** In fact, 77% of women leaders report a lack of exposure to women coaches which limits girls' sports participation. We can change that!

## 2 Actively Recruit Women as Coaches

■ Personally ask women in your community networks to coach. Reach out to parents/guardians, women volunteer groups and organizations, or local colleges. If they have never coached before or are hesitant, have them start out as assistant coaches or trainees.

**■ Start early! Encourage middle and high school girls to coach.** Reach out to athletic directors

at local schools and park sports coordinators to promote coaching as an opportunity for girl and young women players, plus officiation.

## 3 Promote Women Into Youth Sports Leadership

**■ Support and grow women in youth sports leadership.** Just as girls appreciate seeing a women coach role model in order to get into the game, women coaches and others appreciate women youth sports leaders and such leadership can be encouraging to women to apply to coach and join staff. Women are terrific leaders, to all!

## 4 Tailor and Support Training for Women Coaches

■ Learn the training needs of women coaches and offer support. Some women are new to coaching and some have been coaching and playing sports for decades. A novice women's coaching clinic can be helpful or a "next level / deeper dive" clinic for experienced coaches. **Offer options for women to organize and lead training.** Invest in women's coach training (e.g., licenses, courses, as needed).

## 5 Offer Allies and Networks

■ Provide allies. **Allyship, respect, and encouragement from various coaches, men, and others can aid in supporting women in their roles.** Sometimes a woman coach may be the only one or one of few in her league or division. Support her! Men in assistant coach or co-coaching roles can be supportive, helpful, and collaborative.

■ Build women's coach networks. Create or support connections among women coaches (if desired) from smaller peer groups to events and more (e.g., Global Community for Women in High School Sports, WeCOACH).

## 6 Support Women Coaches

■ **Check in regularly, to see how it's going.** Ask if any tweaks are needed (e.g., more training, more support such as a co-coach or assistant coach, additional equipment, scheduled space, facilities access, and information).

■ Consider family and other caretaking obligations. Recognize the many roles women

play and consider ways to help (e.g., provide programming for women coaches' children to free her up to coach).

## 7 Invite Women Coaches Back

■ Ensure effective women coaches are invited back each season. Be proactive and stay in touch with women coaches; **ask them to keep coaching!**

## 8 Have Women Coach Boys' Teams

■ To create gender equity, we need boys and young men to see women in coaching and sports leadership positions. **Women are great coaches to girls, boys, women, men, and all!** Think expansively about women coaches, their teams, and roles.

## 9 Celebrate Women Coaches

■ Featuring women coaches in youth sports programs for various successes is key (e.g., a great season, championship, high player retention, top marks in player surveys—not necessarily about winning). Consider a women coach of the season or year award to celebrate and affirm

women coaching.  
**Applaud her!**

## 10 Learn From and Be Inspired By Great Women Coaches

■ Increasingly women are coaching at the highest levels of sport from college to the professional leagues. Get to know the many excellent women coaches, learn from their examples, **champion their success, and share models with players.**



**Women lead.**  
**Women inspire.**





# Co-Ed Considerations, Allyship, and Coaches of Girls—10 Tips

Included are considerations for those conducting co-ed sports, how boys and men and people of any gender can be allies, and tips for coaches of girls useful in a wide range of contexts.



PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

## 1 Coaching Girls in Context of Co-Ed Sports

■ **Inclusion is key** – If coaching a co-ed team, ensure girls are included equally and proactively in using the space, getting support, coach attention, and play.

■ **Be supportive** – Provide girls equal playing time to develop skills, try positions, and grow.

■ **Equal expectations** – Coach the skill and experience level, not the gender.

■ **Avoid double standards** – Be aware of perceptions. Notice how boys and girls are coached. Is it the same or different? Why? In what way does adjusting help?

■ **Include everyone** – Create expectations that all kids play

equally in engagement, playing time, instruction, support, and more. E.g., Create “pass to everyone” approaches in practices / games. Celebrate similarities and differences across players / genders.

sports. E.g., boys cheering on a girls’ team pep rally, men being engaged and dedicated coaches of girls; and boys and men as coaches / leaders attending girls’ games.

## 2 Allyship – Boys and Men (and All) Supporting Girls and Women

■ **Allyship goes a long way** – Boys and men are integral in advancing gender equity, along with people of any and all gender identities. The work of making girls and women, and all, welcome in sport spaces is on everyone’s shoulders—together.

■ **Showing up matters** – Boys and men can do a lot to support and promote girls and women in

## 3 Connect With Your Players and Among the Team

■ **Connect with team** – Start each practice by circling up, sharing names / check-in (coaches, players, team helpers) - everyone feels comfortable, welcome, “seen,” and connected.

■ **Introductions** – Introduction moments can be made fun by asking each player to share their name or a favorite color / show / movie while players clap-back after introduction.



## 4 Be Mindful of the Spectrum from Brand New to Veteran

- **Gauge and connect to the level** – Recognize some players (no matter their age) are brand new to the sport, and some girls have played several seasons or years.
- **Foundation** – Ensure basics are clear from start (rules, techniques, practice and game approaches). Check what players know and help them build on the foundation.

- **Goal-setting** – Help set gradual personal / team goals and tailor milestones especially if they haven't played before / very much. Create appropriate goals. And challenge!

## 5 Encourage Play, Practice and Sports Outside of Practice / Game Time

- **Support girls' access to sports in other ways outside of structured times** – Recommend

games players can play at home (e.g., tossing and catching a ball) and playing sports games at recess / P.E. / lunch; watch local college / pro women.

## 6 Use Inclusive, Encouraging Intentional Language and Practices

- **Be inclusive** – Avoid non-inclusive phrases like "hey guys" or "sir" when circling up players and coaches or getting their attention – Try "players / friends / team / [team name]."

## 7 Connect to the Parents / Guardians of the Players

- **Link up** – Make sure to connect (e.g., through email, text, league platforms and in-person) to get to know players' / families; update re: progress.

## 8 Make it Fun, Make it Positive, and Celebrate Often

- **Center fun** – Any kid enjoys an activity if they're having fun. You can have players run laps while they sing or pretend to be different animals (younger); use dance moves! (older)

- **Change it up** – Make sure to try different drills each week with new challenges.

- **Use coaches / helpers to keep things active** – Split girls into groups so they get more play time (vs. long lines); ask parents / guardians to assist (if permitted).

■ **Girls leading** – Give girls responsibilities to demonstrate a skill or lead a drill to help girls get more engaged, build leadership skills / confidence, and connect. Try Captain of the Day!

## 9 Be Available and Get Regular Feedback

- **Prepare** – Arrive a little early to prepare, review team plans, and connect with girls / families.

- **Check-in** – Stay a bit after to cheer player progress, help those struggling, and get feedback.

- **Understand your players' perspectives** – Acknowledge their experiences may be different from yours (e.g., handling home, school, and other challenges).

- **Be present** – In practices and games, avoid distractions like cell phone use and side activities / chats – ensuring your attention is 100% on the team and girls.

## 10 Make Space for Girls

- **Girls having physical and mental safe space for play is key.** Ensure practice / game areas are clear (e.g., kids / boys / men / other girls playing before or after the practice should know to wait their turn for facilities). Politely remind anyone in the play space it's the team's time to play; get staff help; no sideline heckling!



PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

## Overcoming Myths and Barriers— 10 Best Practices for Girls and Women in Sport

*Helping coaches, youth sports leaders, students, and others overcome myths and barriers will help girls and women “breakthrough” in play and coaching. Here are common myths, barriers, and breakthroughs to get girls and women in the game!*

**Attitudes that limit girls' sports experiences and physical activity access can be re-examined and updated.**



### MYTH

✖ Girls don't want to play sports.

In fact, girls want to play sports and enjoy sports, plus related physical activities.

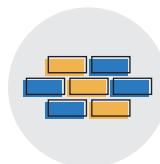
Some adults, families, and youth sports leaders may not realize just how much girls are interested in sports and physical activity (a lot!) and may presume girls aren't up to playing. When youth sports programs and physical activities are welcoming and equitable, girls want to play! Check and adjust personal, family, community, and institutional attitudes to recognize that girls and women want to get in the game.

### MYTH

✖ Girls “drop out” of sports.

While there are studies discussing girls “dropping out” of sports, especially in

adolescence, consider that *girls want to stay in sports* but are facing a mix of internal and external structural barriers that can be removed (e.g., limiting gender stereotypes and conceptions of femininity; family obligations, physical and emotional safety concerns, transportation and cost issues, self confidence, and negative messages). These issues can easily be countered and removed!



### BARRIER

**Girls and women lack opportunity.**

**Girls want to play and women want to coach in far higher numbers.**

Girls in the park and recreation community sports are often roughly one-third of athletes, or fewer, and in the school context are roughly 40% of athletes. Women make up approximately 25% of youth coaches overall. We know girls want to play in far higher numbers and women are very interested in more coaching roles and thus, we can get more girls and women into the game with perseverance!

# Best Practices

## (Breaking Through Myths and Barriers)



■ **Thoughtfully design and persistently implement girl-centered youth sports programs** that accommodate and support girls. Be persistent as growing successful programs takes time.

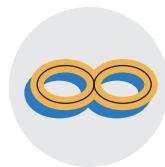


■ **Assess what girls want to play to attract and retain girls.** Survey girls, their families, and girl-serving sports programs to find out what sports are of interest to girls, what's working, what's not, and what adjustments need to be made. Use data (e.g., girls' input from surveys).



■ **Involve caregivers of girls in the equation.** Offering girls' sports programs works

especially if the parent / guardian of the girl is supportive, aware of the benefits of sports (e.g., lifelong health, later employment success), and up-to-date on when / how the sport offering is made such as location, financial aid, adult supervision, facility safety). Connect to caregivers.



■ **Loop in all stakeholders to help girls' sports succeed.** If you're a coach, sports leader, or parent/guardian of a girl, note many different entities are key to making girls' sports thrive (e.g., permitting staff, city council, school leaders, boys' teams sharing space, and others).



■ **Ensure mental and physical safety, well-being and comfort of girls playing.** For example, ensure sport

facility bathrooms are in good order, lockable, and safe. Also, clear a girls' field or court of others during practices and games to afford girls physical and mental space.



■ **Use imagery appealing to girls in recruitment materials.** If a co-ed league is advertising for new players, ensure images in flyers show girls, women coaches, women officials, and girls / women generally engaging. Experiencing a welcoming league increases involvement.



■ **Ensure equipment and supplies are tailored to girls.** Girls and young women report they are more likely to stay in sports if they have equipment and supplies, such as uniforms and other equipment [that] are

properly fitting, right-sized, and comfortable.



■ **Culturally and socially-informed outreach on girls' sports.** If girls in the area come from families speaking a particular language, for example, ensure flyers / registration information is in that language. Use culturally- and socially informed outreach on girls' sports.



■ **Start early.** Offer clinics, programs, leagues, and try-it-out options for girls in their young years and throughout K-12, to build lifelong sports comfort. Connect park classes for preK to school-based P.E. and recess sports, leading to elementary and middle school leagues, followed by high school and possibly college teams for a lifetime of healthy activity!

# Gender Equity in Youth Sports to Level the Playing Field (+ Title IX) – 9 Insights



## Gender Equity in Youth Sports

### ■ Equity is a Game-Changer!

Girls want to play sports, deserve quality in their athletic experiences, and benefit health wise and generally when getting to play. Girls getting ample opportunities to play and day-to-day practice and game experiences on par with boys are able to get into the game, positively engage, and continue playing. **Program-wide gender equity establishes throughout schools and the community that fairness is key, not only in sports, but everywhere!**

■ Great progress has been made on gender equity, and there



is more work to do, especially for girls of color and in low-income communities, in terms of offering greater opportunity and evening out program quality and treatment for girls.



## What Is Title IX?

■ Title IX is a federal law passed June 23, 1972 by Congress applying throughout the U.S., **requiring gender equity in any and all federally-funded**

**educational programs** – in preschools, middle, elementary and high schools, colleges and universities, including athletic programming (e.g., public high school athletics).

■ Some states and areas further have gender equity requirements in community / park and recreation-based sports (e.g., CA's AB 2404). Check your local area for guidelines. With or without the law, equity is key and the right thing to do!

**“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 (1972)



## What Is Gender Equity in Youth Sports and Sports Generally?

- Gender equity means, e.g., girls' and boys' teams in an elementary, middle, high school or college program have equity in opportunities to play on teams and amenities, such as uniforms, schedules, coaching, facilities, equipment, and more.



## Strides Made Under Title IX

- Progress! As Title IX passed, fewer than 300,000 girls played high school sports; **today over 3.4 million girls are playing high school sports**, yet boys have 4.5 million slots—there's work to do to close the opportunity gaps as girls want to play more!



## What Does Title IX Cover?

- Title IX requires gender equitable opportunities for students to play sports. E.g., **if a school has ~49% girls in its student body, the athletic program should afford ~49% of roster slots across its teams to girls** in line with girls' interests (i.e., sports girls want to play).
- Title IX requires equitable treatment and benefits across the board of an athletics program such that girls' and boys' teams should have, for example, equitable facilities, schedules, and equipment.
- Title IX prohibits retaliation (or backlash) against, for example,



coaches, students, parents / guardians that raise concerns or complaints of gender inequity. Institutions should welcome input to fix issues!



## What to Do if You See Gender Inequity in Your Athletic Program?

- Highlight and address gender-based inequity in a school or community-based program; there is much we can do to level the playing field. Speak up and start dialogue (such as with fellow teammates and families, school leadership or the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education). **No matter your role, age, or gender you can be an advocate and ally for gender equity** in school-oriented sports. We're stronger and better together, on a level playing field.

## More Resources re: Title IX

### National Women's Law Center

**"Check It Out Guide"**  
[nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Checkitout.pdf](http://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Checkitout.pdf)

### Women's Sports Foundation

**"Play Fair Guide"**  
[womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/play\\_fair\\_final.pdf](http://womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/play_fair_final.pdf)

This is general topline information regarding Title IX and does not contain further details / legal advice / opinion. Consult help as needed.

# Gender Identity and LGBTQIA+ Resources

*Sports should be available to all, no matter a kid's gender identity, with inclusive, equitable, diverse youth sports cultures available everywhere. Below are nonprofits, resources, and follow-up items to check out if needed, recognizing there are a number of content experts in the field to reference.*



"Athlete Ally believes that everyone should have equal access, opportunity, and experience in sports — regardless of your sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Our mission is to end the rampant homophobia and transphobia in sport and to activate the athletic community to exercise their leadership to champion LGBTQI+ equality."

**[athleteally.org](http://athleteally.org)**



"LGBTQ youth who play sports report a variety of positive reasons for participating, including connecting with friends and teammates, opportunities for fitness and health, and the fun of participation. Importantly, many LGBTQ youth who play sports describe sports as supporting their mental health, helping them cope with stress, and distracting them from negative thoughts. There is a need for policies and practices focused on expanding access to the positive benefits of sports rather than prohibiting youth from being able to access the positive aspects of sports."

**[thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org)**



"All students have a right to feel safe and included at school. Whether in physical education class or in competitive sports, all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, have a right to play and feel like they belong."

**[glsen.org](http://glsen.org)**

# Further Resources to Instill Gender Equity in Youth Sports

In addition to the resources shared, there are a number of nonprofits, advocates, and groups with excellent guides, tools, and activation items that can help get girls in the game, women coaching, aid any coach of girls and kids generally, and support gender equity overall!

## ➊ We Play Interactive [Women's Sports Foundation]

"We Play Interactive is a "go-to" resource for coaches and program leaders serving girls through physical activity and sports. The platform offers professional development training along with a full menu of theme-based activities to use in program + more."

[womenssportsfoundation.org/get-involved/we-play-interactive/](http://womenssportsfoundation.org/get-involved/we-play-interactive/)

## ➋ Made to Play [with WeCoach and Nike]

"In an effort to combat the obstacles against girls in sport and to guide adults through coaching girls in sport, Nike released the Made to Play Coaching Girls Guide in collaboration with We Coach, for adult leaders who lead girls through sports and to retain young female participation."

[nike.com/pdf/coaching-girls-guide.pdf](http://nike.com/pdf/coaching-girls-guide.pdf)

## ➌ Keep Girls in Sport [Up2Us and Adidas]

"A Digital Curriculum for Coaches, Mentors, and Role Models for Girls"

[up2us.org/keep-girls-in-sport](http://up2us.org/keep-girls-in-sport)

## ➍ Her Time to Play [WNBA / NBA / Jr. NBA]

"HER TIME TO PLAY is a national initiative that is dedicated to championing change on behalf of girls and women and providing them with ways to connect, collaborate, and actively engage with one another through the game of basketball."

[jr.nba.com/hertimeplay/](http://jr.nba.com/hertimeplay/)

## ➎ Coaching Girls / How to Coach Kids [U.S. Olympic Committee, Nike, Project Play]

"In sports, girls face different challenges and expectations than boys. In this module, learn more about girl athletes and how to create a culture girls love to play in."

[howtocoachkids.org/page/71/girls](http://howtocoachkids.org/page/71/girls)

## ➏ Coaching Boys Into Men

"Athletic coaches play an extremely influential and unique role in the lives of young men. Because of these relationships, coaches are poised to positively influence how young men think and behave, both on and off the field. Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) is the only evidence-based prevention program that trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength."

[coachescorner.org/](http://coachescorner.org/)

## ➐ Soccer Without Borders

"The Global Goal 5 Accelerator is advancing gender equality on the pitch, on the sidelines, in organizations, and in the media. Each accelerator brings together a cohort of organizations regionally to build girls' participation, advance pipelines and pathways for female coaches, elevate female leaders, and change perceptions in our communities."

[soccerwithoutborders.org/accelerator](http://soccerwithoutborders.org/accelerator)