



Women and Sports in the United States

Jean O'Reilly, Susan K. Cahn

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A spectacular transformation in women's sports has occurred over the past century in colleges, high schools, and recreational leagues across the nation. Gradual changes during the late 1950s and 1960s within the fields of women's physical education and amateur sport provided the initial energy for this transformation. But it took the rebirth of a grassroots feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s to catalyze the radical changes in women's athletic opportunities and attitudes toward female athletes. The assimilation of feminist principles into the broader popular culture solidified the belief that sport plays a positive role in the lives of girls and women. Political activists for women's rights codified this attitude with the passage of Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments, a law banning gender discrimination in educational settings, thus guaranteeing women's legal right to an equitable share of athletic opportunities and resources.

Though the sea change in American women's sports is evident in schools, the media, and local playing fields, scholars are still in the early stages of fully examining the causes and impacts of this historic change. *Women and Sports in the United States* brings together scholarly articles, journalism, political and legal documents, and first-person accounts that collectively explore women's sports in America, with emphasis on the post–Title IX era.

This book was published with the generous support of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University.

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