

American Women in Sports: 1950s-1970s

- I. **Women's Fight for Equality (birth of the modern Feminist Movement, late 1960s)** - In the mid to late 1960s, women began forming groups to increase awareness of women's situation in society.
- A. READ SHIRLEY CHISHOLM'S "EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN" SPEECH
1. LIST some of the "unspoken assumptions" made about women that Chisholm argues support the "calculated system of prejudice" against women in the U.S..
 2. What statistics does Chisholm use to support her argument that men and women are currently NOT equal?
- B. Give 2 examples of women's activism in the 1960s-1970s:
- C. **Title IX:**
1. Forced all federally funded institutions, namely high schools, universities and colleges, to have equal funding spent on males and females both in the classroom and on the playing field.
 2. Title IX was designed to end sex discrimination in educational/sports programming & increase the amount of opportunities & participation for females in athletics.
- D. **Case Study: Billie Jean King & the "Battle of the Sexes"**

"American Masters: Billie Jean King" Film Questions

PART I

1. How did the press and public treat female athletes like Billie Jean King? Consider how they talk about and to her in early press interviews and stories...
2. In 1968, it became possible to play tennis professionally, however, prize money was not awarded evenly between men and women.
 - a. Why? What argument did the US Tennis Association (USTA) give for the continued and growing pay inequality?
3. Many questioned whether it would continue to be possible for women to play as the gap grew and fewer opportunities for matches were offered to women each year.
 - a. What did some of the female tennis players do about this? (At great risk to their professional careers!)
 - b. How did the Virginia Slims tour help promote women's tennis?

PART II

4. How would you describe Bobby Riggs?
 - a. What challenge did he issue to BJK/female tennis pros in 1971?
 - b. Why did BJK initially NOT want to play him?
5. What made the “Battle of the Sexes” “the match of the century”? (Consider both the outcome & impact)
6. BJK was outed by her former secretary and lover in 1981.
 - a. What impact did this have BJK’s career in the short term?
 - b. She came to be seen as an icon of not just women’s rights but also gay rights. Why?

Women’s Tennis after Billie Jean King -> Venus Williams & Wimbledon (2006)

- **READING:** see Google Classroom for a reading & questions