

Women's Participation in Sports: Early 1900s-1960s

I. Women's sports in the late 1800s

- A. Before the 1870s, activities for women were recreational, non-competitive & informal
1. Belief in the 1800s was that each human had a fixed amount of energy. What fear did people have about using that energy?
- B. In the 19th century, what was valued for women? _____
1. Meaning what?
- C. What were 2 concerns doctors had about women's health if they were to participate in sports?
- D. Bicycling
1. Biking was adopted by many middle & upper class men and women in the 1890s. But it was controversial for women. Why?
 2. What did women like about bicycles?
- E. Late 1800s-early 1900s: women more involved in sports but no organized athletics. Small % of women who went to college were allowed to play intramural sports only.

II. Women's sports in the 1900s

- A. The _____ Olympics was the first to include women. They participated in which 2 sports?
- B. Women got the opportunity during WWII to work and to play what sport?

C. By the 1950's & 1960's the push for civil rights and the rise of feminism started to bring about change and progress for women.

1. Give 2 examples of women's activism in the 1960s-1970s:

2. The women's movement led to calls for greater equality in all aspects of life, including sports.

The Thread: These are the Bodies (podcast)

1. @4:15-7:15

Before Title IX, what was the sports landscape like for women & young girls?

How were sports portrayed for boys versus girls?

In 1971, only 7% of all high school athletes were girls, and few of them went on to play sports in college.

Title IX: *“No person in the United States shall, based on 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.”*

2. @ 8:25-9:23 Why were schools (especially colleges) reluctant to comply with Title IX?

A Hero for Daisy (film)

3. For the first 200+ years of its existence, Yale was an all-male institution. How did many Yale men feel about the decision to make Yale co-ed & how did they treat the new women on campus?
4. SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT: The female rowers at Yale experienced different conditions than the male rowers.
5. What did the Yale women’s rowers ultimately do to get the university’s attention?
6. What impact did their protest have on the school and their conditions?

The Thread: These are the Bodies (podcast)

7. @ 22:00 Beyond the immediate change at Yale, what was the broader impact of the crew team’s actions?

8. REFLECTION: Yale might make the argument that it was abiding by T9 because the women had the opportunity to row (they had a team). How does this episode in history show that just having a team to play on does NOT actually meet the intended expectations of the law?