Let's Discuss Women and Girls in Sports

Sports is a gender equality issue.

From youth and collegiate sports teams and professional athletes, to the back-end business of sports, girls and women face discrimination, a lack of access and limited opportunities. Gender inequities are everywhere — limited funding, little media coverage of female athletes and women’s sports, and the pervasive body shaming of female athletes, to name a few. Girls and women face discrimination in pursuing and continuing with sports at every level. Until we level the playing field for girls in sports, we cannot fully realize gender equality.

Learn more:
Clubs.GirlUp.org/Sports
Sports and team activities are proven to help girls build their leadership skills, gain confidence, and increase self-esteem. Here are some examples:

- Half of all girls who participate in some kind of sport experience higher than average levels of self-esteem and less depression.
- Teen girls who play sports do better in school, have stronger leadership skills, and improved physical health.
- Reflecting on their careers, 61% of women executives believe that their personal involvement in sports contributed positively to their career success and advancement.

Yet, if we look at the data, the gender gap in sports is real:

- Compared to boys, girls are twice as likely to drop out of sports by age 14.
- Only 5% of sports media coverage features women.
- Girls of color and girls coming from immigrant families are less likely to be athletes than their male counterparts.

But don't worry!

There are many actions you can take with your Club to break down gender inequalities in sports. This Club Challenge will help you learn about the gender gap in sports and how to take action in your school and community as we approach one of the world’s biggest global sports moments... the 2020 Summer Olympics!
FACTS

According to the International Olympics Committee:

- 11% of coaches at the 2016 Olympics in Rio were women
- 33% of IOC Members are women
- 59% of athletes participating in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang were men
- Men outnumber women at senior manager level in sports even though women outnumber men by 2:1 at the manager level

About the IOC & Petition

Did you know the International Olympics Committee (IOC) was founded more than a century ago to harness the power of sport at the service of humanity? Traditionally, women were not allowed to participate in the Olympic Games until 1900. The Olympic Charter states that one of the roles of the IOC is “to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women” (Rule 2, paragraph 7).

This year, the world will be watching the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan and we want to make sure women and girls are represented and recognized for their athletic abilities. The 2016 Olympics in Rio saw 44.2% women competitors. In 2020, that percentage will increase to 48.8%.

Although the IOC has played an important role in establishing a positive trend to bring more women in sports, the data shows that we still have far to go to reach gender equality in the sporting world. While Olympics competitors are closing in on the gender equality gap, women are still lagging behind in sports leadership and decision-making including coaching, management, and executive roles.

This is unacceptable. We know that gender inequalities in sports are so much more than just the number of women and girl competitors. It’s also the coaches and decision-makers behind this sporting event. Everyone has a role in ensuring representation of women’s sports at the Olympics. We’re asking all Girl Up Clubs to sign a petition telling the IOC to better promote gender equality in sports at this year’s 2020 Summer Olympics.

Help us reach 10,000 signatures and make gender equality a reality at the 2020 Summer Olympics.

Ibtihaj Muhammad is the first Muslim American woman to wear a hijab competing for the US Olympics.

Learn more: Clubs.GirlUp.org/Sports
Take Action

Now that we have you fired up and ready to take action with your Club, check out some ways that you can start making a difference. Plan one of these activities to get your school and community involved. No matter what you do, don’t forget to sign the petition and let your voice be heard!

**Level I – Beginner activities to learn about women and girls in sports with your Girl Up Club. At the end of each activity, ask everyone who participated to sign the petition.**

- Attend a local women’s or girls’ sporting event as a Club outing.
- Make school announcements promoting girls’ sports events.
- Invite your school’s Athletic Director or coach to your next Club meeting and find out how girls’ sports are supported at your school, school district, etc. – and how we can band together to do better.
- Conduct a social media campaign using #SportsforaPurpose and #WomenWorthWatching highlighting women and girls in sports.
- Dedicate a Club meeting to discuss how boys and men can be allies in closing the gender gap in sports, inviting male students to attend.
- Dedicate a Club meeting focused on career paths in sports fields (sports medicine, sports journalism, coaching, etc) and why we need to achieve equal representation.
- Invite a local woman in sports be a guest speaker at your next Club meeting.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Feeling Inspired?

Take a look at our other resources in the Girl Up Community like:

- A step-by-step sports activity guide
- Event guides on how to host your own Sports for a Purpose Forum and Sports Tournament at your school
- Fact sheet on the International Olympics Committee and their gender equality commitment
- Videos from professional athletes sharing their journey in sports and how to get involved
- Stories from Girl Up Clubs getting their Club members active

For a full list of resources and to learn more visit:

Clubs.GirlUp.org/Sports
Why participate?

- Earn special points in the Community for every sports Club activity report submitted
- All participants have a chance to be randomly selected for:
  - Free tickets to attend sporting events (location limited)
  - Free merchandise from Girl Up
- And one lucky Club will get a surprise visit or video from professional athletes!

Level II Intermediate activities to get your Club, school, and community involved. At the end of each activity, ask everyone to participated to sign the petition.

- Host a viewing party of a women’s sports match at your school, inviting your broader school community to attend.
- Register for the annual Girl Up Global 5K and integrate Sport for a Purpose materials into your 5K planning and training.
- If your Club members participate in sports, consider mentoring a younger girls’ sports club or younger Girl Up Clubs at a local middle or elementary school.
- Contact your local sports broadcast TV station and schedule a tour of the studio for your Club.
- Start a running Club or other intramural sports Club at your school.
- Submit a blog of your Club’s sports-related activities to Girl Up via clubs@girlup.org.

Highlight local women and girls in sports in your area via your school newspaper, Club Instagram page, or local newspaper.

For US Clubs: dedicate a Club meeting to learn more about Title IX

Club Spotlight

Girl Up Brasil supported their national women’s soccer team by attending a just-for-fun game. The game was broadcasted live, and Club members had the opportunity to meet the Brazilian female Olympic athletes. Talk about girls supporting girls in sports!
Did you know?

In 2019...

- 100+ Activity Club reports were Sports for a Purpose activities
- 11 countries participated in Sports for a Purpose activities
- 800+ students participated in Sports for a Purpose forums and events
- 50+ Clubs participated in Sports for a Purpose activities

Level III – Pro activities to get everyone you know involved. At the end of each activity, ask everyone who participated to sign the petition.

- Organize a girl-power field day or sports tournament for your school or for younger students – check out the event guide for tips!
- Plan a “Coaches Meeting” event that brings together the Athletic Director and all sports coaches to discuss gender inequities in sports and develop a school-wide commitment to close the gender gap in sports. Check out the event guide for tips in the Sports Community Hub.
- Organize your own local Sports for a Purpose forum to foster a conversation on the gender gap in sports from multiple perspectives (athletes, coaches, journalists, etc.) – check out the event guide for tips!
- Apply for a Girl Up grant to implement a project led by your Club to address gender barriers in sports.

Don't forget!

Share how your Club is fighting for gender equality in sports on social media by using #SportsforaPurpose #WomenWorthWatching