

1

CHAPTER

.

The Segregated History of College Sports

There was a golden age of American sports. An age when coaches were respected teachers in their field, when athletes ran out into sunlight to play for the love of the game, to match strength and skill in defending their school's honor and to stride across campus in their letter sweaters, where baseball and basketball were harmless pastimes played out in Norman Rockwell paintings.

What's missing from this picture? Men. Men's sports like football. Stadiums full of cheering spectators. In the latter part of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries, girls and women at American schools were the ones playing for fun under the earnest auspices of their teacher-coaches. Those coaches were in the first few generations of physical-education professionals, teaching the theories of the rapidly developing disciplines of kinesiology, physiology, and biomechanics.

The stadiums and letter sweaters were there on college campuses, no doubt about it. But men's intercollegiate athletics have always, always been a business, from the very first game contested between two schools. That side of sports has never been pure: The heroes of decades past were paid under the table, they cheated on eligibility rules, and occasionally they were not even students. Schools scheduled games and fostered rivalries because they were good excuses for a crowd to socialize, drink, and gamble.

Women's sports have always been a part of American college life, though they have never been celebrated like men's sports. Their games were always intramural, often held between classes, and conducted in a way that allowed teachers to preach the educational mission and the value of sport. For women, sport meant much more than winning.

The discipline of physical education evolved alongside organized sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, adding a growing

understanding of anatomy and physiology to the age-old philosophy that physical fitness was essential to a sound mind and a healthy life. However, teachers and students of physical education were never connected to the male sports establishment. Men's teams developed out of student-run clubs and were taken over by university administrators early in their history.

As a result, those clubs evolved much like professional teams. Inter-scholastic teams organized themselves into leagues based on location, such as the Big Ten Conference and the Missouri Valley Conference. Private groups, such as the Amateur Athletic Union, put on national championships in a variety of sports.

Both the men's and women's models are unique to the United States. In other countries, schools and colleges may field teams, but they do not devote to them the financial resources or the attention that American schools do. In the United States, athletes compete for secondary-school teams, perhaps for outside clubs in certain sports, and aspire to collegiate competition and perhaps the big leagues beyond. A few sports, like figure skating and baseball, have their own private developmental systems, but in all others, colleges serve as the primary means of elite athlete development.

Students have always participated in various forms of sport, of course. In the English-speaking world, organized games trace their origins to British public schools in the eighteenth century. At American schools and colleges, games and contests of all sorts took a little longer to evolve. Early-nineteenth-century American scholars, rooted in the Calvinist tradition, thought playing sports was about as moral as dancing.¹

Furthermore, upper-class Americans and Britons frowned upon undue physical activity as something reserved for tradesmen and washerwomen. Ladies and gentlemen—especially ladies—were not expected to do anything more strenuous than take carriage rides or stroll in their gardens.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, even the gentry were being led to question such values. Theologians and authors like Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes thought the Anglican Church was becoming "overly tolerant of physical weakness and effeminacy,"² putting society at risk of being overrun by heathens. *Neurasthenia*, a term introduced into psychiatry by George M. Beard in 1869 that covered a range of disorders best described as laziness, was the most in-vogue malady of Victorian England and America, according to Clifford Putney.³

Kingsley argued that athletes would help Britain maintain its place in the world and status as the chosen people "in covenant with God." The medical profession began to advocate mild physical activity, the pursuit of bodily well-being, and, of course, careful eugenics to keep the Anglo-Saxon race pure and free from Slavic, Mediterranean, and other people of

to the age-old philosophy of mind and a healthy life. Physical education were never considered. Men's teams developed out of university administrators early

like professional teams. Intercollegiate leagues based on location, such as the Northern Valley Conference. Princeton, put on national cham-

unique to the United States. In the old teams, but they do not deny the fact that American schools had secondary-school teams, perhaps to collegiate competition in a few sports, like figure skating and gymnastic systems, but in all of elite athlete development.

Various forms of sport, of course. Games trace their origins to many. At American schools and took a little longer to evolve. Games, rooted in the Calvinist tradition, as dancing.¹

Britons frowned upon undue gamesmen and washerwomen. They were not expected to do any work or stroll in their gardens.

However, even the gentry were anxious and authors like Charles Kingsley. Anglican Church was becoming effeminate,"² putting sociologists, a term introduced that covered a range of disorderly-in-vogue malady of Victorian England. Putney.³

Britain maintain its place in the "covenant with God." The physical activity, the pursuit of eugenics to keep the Anglo-Saxon, and other people of

whom Britons did not approve. A similar movement arose in the United States. As immigration of people from southern and eastern Europe into America increased, Anglo-Saxons sought to maintain their physical dominance by exercising at Young Men's Christian Association chapters and pursuing exercises adapted from German and Swedish practices.⁴

As a result, education became an integral part of daily life at most northeastern colleges at that time, especially following the formation of the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, which trained the first generation of teachers of what we would now call gymnastics, acrobatics, and calisthenics, and the success of Hemenway Gymnasium at Harvard under the direction of Dudley Allen Sargent.

Sargent was the most prominent of the early practitioners and theoreticians of physical education. He preached his gospel in halls and gymnasiums all over the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, starting successful training programs in New Haven, New York, and Cambridge. A native of Belfast, Maine, who delighted in working out, Sargent quite literally ran away to join the circus as a teenager, becoming a professional acrobat and gymnast. Performing on the trapeze, pommel horse, and other pieces of equipment, he incessantly worked to convince friends and strangers alike that they would be better off if they exercised regularly. Men, women, children, everybody.

After semiretiring from paid performances, Sargent put himself through Bowdoin College and Yale Medical School by convincing college presidents to hire him to conduct mandatory gymnastics programs for fellow students, even though many faculty members did not believe such activities were proper for gentlemen. He strongly believed that physical prowess and mental acumen were linked. He found proof in observing that among the freshmen he taught at Yale, the top-ranked scholars also ranked high in gymnastics, and the worst in scholarship were the worst in the gymnasium.⁵ He won enough debates on the subject to make a career out of preaching his creed.

Gymnastics was one of the most popular forms of exercise of the day, particularly for students with access to the necessary facilities. When Sargent came to Yale, those facilities consisted of the following:

8 or 10 bath-rooms, all furnished with long, zinc-lined tubs . . . besides the baths, there were four bowling alleys in the basement, and a baseball cage on one side about the width of the two alleys.

The building, 150 feet over all, had a large exercising room, 80 by 50 feet, with cross timbers 25 feet from the floor. A running track, canvas-covered and filled with about 4 inches of sawdust, extended around the room. Over the track, along one side of the room, there was

a series of traveling rings, placed 9 feet apart and 8 feet from the floor, and on the other side, a horizontal ladder hung about 7 feet from the floor.

The equipment consisted of the usual German heavy apparatus. Two long rows of parallel bars, varying in height, fenced off two sides of the room inside the track. Vaulting bars, horizontal bars, flying rings, climbing ropes, double trapezes, climbing poles, and a set of rack bars were a few of the regular appliances. Two long spool ropes, inclined at about 45 degrees and parallel to each other, about 18 inches apart, ran along the lower end of the room. In front of the ropes, two pyramid or peak ladders, 30 feet apart at the base, extended to the tops of the cross timbers. At the same end of the room, they had 6 pulley-weight rowing machines arranged across the room, 6 or 8 pairs of pulley weights imbedded in sawdust at the front end of the room, and a few heavy iron dumb-bells and Indian clubs tossed carelessly on a straw matting in one corner. There was also a lifting machine, with about 300 pounds of iron weights, also a sand bag, weighing some hundred pounds, which was used for a punching bag. These appliances together with a leaping board, a spring-board, and two large corn-husk mattresses, 12 feet by 8 feet and 10 inches thick, constituted the entire equipment.⁶

In other words, this was the forerunner of modern weight rooms. But it was not a training facility for college teams, nor was it a place where people competed against each other in gymnastics or track events. Instead, it was a laboratory of sorts—a place where Sargent could learn and teach what the human body was capable of doing, and where his students could make their bodies (and, the theory went, their minds and morals) stronger. Sargent reconstructed many of the weight machines and other pieces of apparatus to make them easier for smaller students to use and equipped other gymnasiums specifically for women and adolescents. Not long after Sargent moved on to Harvard, 80 percent of students there were exercising between one and three hours a day.

Colleges developed departments of physical education, and by century's end, an ethos of sport as a means of developing manhood was firmly entrenched in higher education and beyond, perhaps exemplified by Theodore Roosevelt. "There is a tendency to underestimate or overlook the need of the virile, masterful qualities of the heart and mind," Roosevelt wrote in 1890. "There is no better way of counteracting this tendency than by encouraging bodily exercise and especially sports which develop such qualities as courage, resolution, and endurance."⁷

Roosevelt touted his own physical prowess throughout his college days at Harvard and his political career. He began lifting weights as a teenager to overcome the crippling asthma of his childhood, rowed and rode across family estates on Long Island, and took up boxing and wrestling during college. According to Edmund Morris, Roosevelt's most recent biographer, "the most celebrated episode in Theodore's Harvard career" was a bout for the college's lightweight boxing title. Roosevelt lost, badly, but refused to give up and earned the respect of his classmates for persisting against a bigger and quicker opponent.⁸

Roosevelt's lifestyle was popular among his classmates and other well-to-do easterners, and many of them were devoted to watching the very best college athletes perform on fields and rivers. Spectator sports first became popular in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, and intercollegiate games became a mania among the social elite.

The first organized athletic contest between two colleges is generally accepted to be a rowing match featuring crews from Harvard and Yale in 1852. It was no mere challenge from New Haven to Cambridge, though. The details almost perfectly foreshadow the future of college sports.

James Elkins, superintendent of the Boston, Concord, and Montreal railroad, proposed the idea of a regatta to James Whiton of the Yale Boat Club in 1851. (Whiton later became the first American awarded a Ph.D.) Elkins offered to pay all the bills for a race between Yale and Harvard at a new resort hotel on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire, to promote the resort and the railroad. Ladies and gentlemen from Boston and New York rode up to the Adirondacks and, along with the crews, enjoyed an eight-day party. The only training of note was that the Harvard team abstained from pastries to prepare for the race. It was enough, as the Crimson beat Yale and won a silver plate.

In 1855, the two universities raced each other again, with Harvard again prevailing. However, the Yale team protested the race because Harvard had used a graduate student as its coxswain—the same man, in fact, who had coxed the 1852 crew. With this, college sport had its first eligibility scandal.

Within the decade, rowing became the most popular sport in the Northeast. Professional scullers such as those depicted in Thomas Eames's paintings had their followings, but collegiate fours and eights were often the main attraction. Saratoga Springs, New York, already holding its horse races, adding rowing races, and regattas often attracted more than fifteen thousand spectators. Many of them gambled on the crews just as much as on the ponies.⁹

Thus, virtually all of the ills of college sports were present at the creation:

- Companies using amateur athletes to market their products
- Colleges requiring athletes to have academic credentials, while at the same time bending those rules as far as they could stretch
- Large amounts of gambling on outcomes

In rowing, and a bit later in baseball, football, and track, students organized their own teams. College administrations quickly took over those teams, as well as the responsibility for organizing rules and contests. Faculty members were never involved, not even physical-education professors like Sargent. College sports grew up in the afternoons of academe, and the connection to the educational process was always tenuous.

The ideal of amateurism in college sports was always inconsistently upheld. Professional sports—baseball, rowing, running, and so forth—were commonplace by the end of the century, and athletes were modestly paid tradesmen. College athletes, on the other hand, were supposed to be joyously unpaid participants drawn from society's elite.

Yet college sports were at least as serious as professional ones—especially football.

Princeton and what would become Rutgers organized the first game in 1869 in New Brunswick. Rutgers defeated Princeton 8-0 in front of a few hundred spectators, in a game that signified the beginning of a national obsession.

It took a few years for some colleges to catch on. In 1876, a group of Cornell students who had been playing football among themselves were challenged to a game by the University of Michigan, to be played in Cleveland. As Mark Bernstein recounts in *Football: The Ivy League Origins of an American Obsession*, the president of Cornell, Andrew D. White, forbade it, saying, "I will not permit thirty men to travel 400 miles to agitate a bag of wind."¹⁰

As Harvard, Yale, and other colleges began agreeing on rules for the game, the sport quickly became a spectacle—first in the Northeast and then spreading to larger universities throughout the country. The *New York Times* reported on an 1877 game in New York between Princeton and Yale:

The hour set down for the game was 2 o'clock, and at that time two rickety shanties provided for spectators were crowded with comely young women and portly old gentlemen, who together with innumerable young men with short hair and canes, and Scotch terriers, viewed the game from the beginning to the close, and expressed their interest in every new phase of the contest.¹¹

Af
north
Rutg
teams
colleg
institi
Ent
the ne
"vars
earlie
many
speed
Sarge

est
fill
tea
the
pac
a g
ma
or

me
to
to t

One
tion is
a publ
to mer
trast b
neat w
tion ar
ural al
one's b
one's r
Protest
one's c
velopm
For c
toxican

African-American men were sprinkled on a handful of rosters in northern colleges in the early days of football, including Paul Robeson at Rutgers. Historically black colleges and universities began sponsoring teams of their own in the 1890s. Howard University founded an inter-collegiate athletics council, and baseball was a dominant sport at most institutions until football took hold in the 1920s.¹²

Enthusiasm for football was less than universal, particularly among the new breed of physical educators. Sargent had deep misgivings about "varsity" sport, especially football, which was particularly violent in its earliest incarnations. Players did not wear protective equipment, and many of their plays involved one team running into the other at full speed or flinging ball carriers over the line of scrimmage. According to Sargent,

In consequences of the popular enthusiasm and the wide public interest in athletics, a large number of young men upon entering college are filled with the ambition to become athletes and get on university athletic teams. In many cases the zeal of these young men is greatly in excess of their abilities, and in their efforts to get into university form and keep pace with the stars, they often do themselves injury. In football especially a great deal of raw material is used as a temporary battering ram, or made to furnish a wall of temporary resistance to develop the defensive or attacking power of the more stalwart rushers.

The coaches cannot afford to use their time and energy in developing men, for their business is to develop football players; so they are anxious to weed out the weak ones, that they may give their undivided attention to the most promising candidates.¹³

One theme running through Sargent's writings on physical education is his desire to bring participation and athletic training to as wide a public as possible. He abhorred any pursuit that was available only to men of a certain size or athletes of superior ability. He draws a contrast between "developing men" and "developing football players," a neat way to sum up the tension between advocates of physical education and those of athletics, even though one might consider them natural allies. For educators, sport is a means to an end—developing one's body in concert with the mind, the ancient Greek ideal. Whether one's motivation is to develop a strong race of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants to resist immigrants or merely to improve the quality of one's own life, sport is only important as a means of personal development.

For coaches and players, though, the game was an end in itself. The intoxicants of winning and the cheering crowd drowned out the moralizing

of physical educators. In the words of Syracuse's rowing coach, James A. Ten Eyck:

Who is it that gets "a hand" from the layman at the finish line? No thought is given to the losers, it is all for the victors, and no small boys are anxious to tote grips and satchels for losers, but hang close to the heels of their heroes. It is human nature, and things will not change until perhaps that far-off millennium is reached. The spirit which permeates the men in charge and the men participating is to win by "all honourable means." There is no getting behind the fact that races are entered to be won. The men who make the crew do not endure the long months of training or subject themselves to the discipline of crew life just for the fun of the thing.¹⁴

The students most likely to be pursuing Sargent's ideal were at women's colleges like Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley. In 1865, a member of the board of governors of Vassar wrote in the college's first prospectus, "Good health is, in the first place, essential to success in study. A suitable portion of each day is set aside for physical exercise, and every young lady is required to observe it as one of her duties."¹⁵

She did a strictly in moderation, however. Two powerful social prejudices kept women from participating intensely in any sport or physical activity alongside their brothers. First, upper-class women were expected to be pale and dainty, and they often wore clothing like corsets that prevented them from breathing, much less running or jumping. Muscles and tans were marks of the lower classes. Second, a woman's primary functions in society were to attract a man and bear children, and participating in sport was thought to impair the ability to do either. Until the middle of the twentieth century, a common myth was that being athletic could cause a woman's uterus to fall out.

As "muscular Christianity" took hold and more women had leisure time that could be used for sport, some forms of exercise became fashionable. While excessive exercise held dangers, moderate physical activity was thought to keep women healthy for childbirth. Bicycling, tennis, and walking were particularly popular for upper-class fin de siècle women.¹⁶ These trends applied as well to college women. The Boston Normal School for Gymnastics began training women in the 1880s, and many of the new women's colleges springing up across the country hired graduates from Boston Normal to begin physical-education programs.

At women's colleges (and for women at coeducational schools), athletics programs were strictly the domain of women, owing to Victorian notions of modesty. Colleges found plenty of women willing to become teachers and mentors in physical education. Some truly enjoyed physical activity and competition; others could not find other jobs. (Most careers

were not open to women at that time; very few colleges would hire women to teach academic subjects.)

Women's physical-education departments took root at many colleges and universities, developing their own curricula, rules, and activities and adapting Sargent's work to their students' and teachers' interests.¹⁷ These teachers had no desire to make a spectacle of their passion. At Smith College, Senda Berenson invented the women's version of basketball shortly after and just a few miles from where James Naismith developed the game. She saw it as a pleasant alternative to the tedium of Swedish gymnastics, swinging Indian clubs, and other forms of calisthenics, but failed to account for the enthusiasm of spectators at the first contests among her students at Smith:

We thought that just a few students would come out to watch, but the whole college with class colors and banners turned out. They filled the broad balcony. . . . They stood along the walls. . . . Except for the fact that we had nine on a side, we played the men's rules. The cheering and screaming . . . was a high-pitched sound I do believe no one had ever heard before. . . . The next day the local paper [had] a lurid description that must have made the staid citizens of the Valley wonder whether Sophia Smith had been wise to found a college in which young women might receive an education equal to that accorded to young men.¹⁸

Basketball became the major sport for women. Berenson published the first official rulebook for women in 1892, and on the far coast, the University of California at Berkeley launched the first team to take on rivals from other institutions.¹⁹ After playing several girls' schools in San Francisco, Berkeley played the first-ever intercollegiate game against Stanford in 1896. Notably, the Berkeley women refused to play at Stanford or in front of a mixed audience. "Playing before a lot of college men . . . [would] be lowering a certain standard of womanhood," sniffed their coach. At San Francisco's Union Hall, Stanford won, 2-1.²⁰

In 1899 Berenson helped found the National Women's Basketball Committee, which later evolved into the Committee on Women's Athletics of the American Physical Education Association. Its stated purpose was to develop common rules for the sport of basketball, but it also took on the duty of controlling "unrestrained" competition among college women.²¹ They limited intercollegiate games to a very small number, preferring to emphasize intramural contests.

Women's teams were not school or college teams in any sense that twenty-first-century Americans might recognize. They did not hold try-outs or regular practices. They did not wear uniforms. Their coaches were physical-education teachers. This was nothing like men's sports of the day, and that was by design.

In old photos from the turn of the century, women stare out posed as class teams instead of teams representing their colleges. They usually have 98 or 02 or the like stitched onto the front of dark dresses—their year of graduation, not their uniform number.

Despite these limitations, or perhaps because of them, women's sports proved popular at colleges across the country. The 1909 *Silhouette* yearbook for Agnes Scott College, in Decatur, Georgia, has seventeen pages of pictures of sports teams, as well as the college's "Athletic Song":

I'm a Hottentot from Agnes Scott,
A player of basket ball;
I jump so high I scrape the sky,
And I never, never fall.
When once I get the ball,
I toss it above them all;
I'll get it in, my side shall win,
Our foes shan't score at all.

One day I went on fun intent
A-prancing to the gym.
If not too late I'd learn to skate
Then I'd be in the swim;
Instead I hit the floor,
I'll never walk any more.
I broke my skate, and split my pate,
I tell you, I was sore.

Another day I went to play
Upon the hockey field;
I thought it fine, oh most divine,
A hockey stick to wield.
Twinkle, twinkle star
I wonder what you are;
I cracked my shin, and tore my skin
And had to come home in a car.

Then in the gym, with greatest vim,
Those long ropes I did climb,
And on the bar, I was a star.
Oh my! It was sublime.
I tried to ride the horse,
But dear me what remorse,
He gave a bound, I struck the ground;
No safety in a horse.

As ent
coaches i
perhaps n
esty and
for the s
member c
eration, i
goes to pi
the streng
is the opp

The sec
was being
games cau
ship. It ex
the broad
were cont
understan
were espo

The wa
wrong, we
acter train
to these m
of men's a
shrine of t
idly all ov
ideals of w

Rowing
Springs re
Princeton-l
game did
took place

As wom
controlled :

And so you see at A.S.C.,
 There's something every minute.
 You surely have to hustle here,
 Or else you'll not be in it.
 We're crazy 'bout the gym,
 The hockey and the swim,
 So now three cheers and each who hears
 Will raise it with a vim.²²

As enthusiastic as these women were about sports, their teacher-coaches insisted on keeping games low key for two reasons. First, and perhaps most predictably, they wanted to preserve young women's modesty and accommodate their perceived daintiness. "Girls are not suited for the same athletic program as boys," wrote Ethel Perrin, a board member of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation, in 1928. "Under prolonged and intense physical strain, a girl goes to pieces nervously. A boy may be physically so weak that he hasn't the strength to smash a creampuff but he still has the 'will' to play. A girl is the opposite."²³

The second was a general suspicion of competition, particularly as it was being practiced in men's sports. An excessive focus on winning games caused male participants to lose sight of fair play and sportsmanship. It exalted the most athletic and the most skilled at the expense of the broader pool of less talented players. Furthermore, men's sports, were controlled by coaches and administrators who did not necessarily understand the philosophy and morals of physical education as they were espoused by men like Sargent and women like Berenson.²⁴

The way men were conducting intercollegiate sports was inherently wrong, women thought. "We must guard carefully the chances for character training, not allowing a passion for superior technique to blind us to these more worthwhile efforts," wrote Mabel Lee in 1930. "The field of men's athletics is full of sorry instances of this mad worship at the shrine of technique. Now that women's athletics are developing so rapidly all over our land, let us caution all our leaders to hold fast to the ideals of worthy citizenship even if at the expense of fine technique."²⁵

Rowing teams had become de rigueur for colleges as the Saratoga Springs regattas got under way. Similarly, football flourished after the Princeton-Rutgers game. But the Berkeley-Stanford women's basketball game did not spawn a flood of imitators. Some intercollegiate events took place in the early twentieth century, but only a handful.

As women's sports evolved, so did most of the major organizations that controlled amateur and recreational sports in the United States, including

many that no longer exist. Among them were the American Playground Association, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Amateur Athletic Union, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

In 1917, the National Women's Basketball Committee was replaced by the Committee on Women's Athletics of the American Physical Education Association (APEA). Six subcommittees, governing basketball, field hockey, swimming, track and field, soccer, and publicity were empaneled under the committee's auspices by 1922. APEA was the professional association for physical-education faculty members, formed at the same time and for the same purposes as the Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association. The NCAA, by contrast, was never aligned with any academic organization.

The women's sports groups were established partly in response to the Amateur Athletic Union's decision in 1914 to allow women to participate in swimming championships, as well as track championships shortly thereafter.²⁶ Women viewed this as an intrusion of men into women's sports, and coaches and collegiate athletic administrators held their athletes out of AAU competitions. In 1920, they also organized the National Association of Directors of Physical Education for College Women (NADPECW).

This was only one of several battles for control over amateur sports, both men's and women's. The AAU, the NCAA, and the American Olympic Committee had a long-running battle over which group got to pick athletes for Olympic teams, and in 1923, dissatisfied with the AAU, the War Department organized the National Amateur Athletic Federation to provide broad-based opportunities for children and young adults, promoting physical fitness both for future soldiers and for American society as a whole. NAAF was happy to include prominent women as stakeholders, even creating a Women's Division under the auspices of Lou Henry Hoover, better known as Mrs. Herbert Hoover.

These three organizations—the Committee on Women's Athletics of the APEA, the Women's Division of NAAF, and NADPECW—had overlapping memberships and responsibilities, and it is difficult to chart or describe their precise impacts. The important point is that these organizations inherited the suspicion of varsity-style athletics from Sargent, Berenson, and others in physical education. They promoted instead an intramural, recreational approach to women's sports.²⁷

The participatory goals of women's sport were woven into every bylaw of every governing organization and every meeting of coaches and phys-ed teachers from the late nineteenth century until 1982, when the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women disbanded. They are

perhaps best summed up in the 1924 platform of the Women's Division of NAAF, which calls on colleges and schools to promote physical activity to the masses; play for the sake of play and not to advertise corporations or even colleges themselves; and keep women in charge of women's athletics:

The Women's Division believes in the spirit of play for its own sake and works for the promotion of physical activity for the largest possible proportion of persons in any given group, in forms suitable to individual needs and capacities, under leadership and environmental conditions that foster health, leadership, and physical efficiency, and the development of good citizenship.

To accomplish this ideal for women and girls, it aims:

- To promote programs of physical activities for all members of given social groups rather than for a limited number chosen for their physical prowess.
- To protect athletes from exploitation for the enjoyment of spectators or for the athletic reputation or commercial advantage of any institution or organization.
- To stress enjoyment of the sport and the development of sportsmanship, and to minimize the emphasis placed on individual accomplishment and the winning of championships.
- To restrict recognition for athletic accomplishment to awards which are symbolical and have the least possible intrinsic value.
- To discourage sensational publicity, to guide publicity along educational lines and to stress through it the sport rather than the individual or group competitors.
- To put well-trained and properly qualified women in immediate charge of athletics and other physical-education activities.
- To work toward placing the administration as well as the immediate leadership of all physical education activities for girls and women in the hands of well-trained and properly qualified women.
- To secure adequate medical examination and medical follow-up advice as a basis for participation in physical activities.
- To provide a sanitary and adequate environment and facilities for all physical activities.
- To work for such time allotment for a physical education program as shall meet the need of the various age groups for growth, development, and maintenance of physical fitness.
- To promote reasonable and sane attitudes toward certain physiological conditions which may occasion temporary unfitness for vigorous athletics, in order that effective safeguards should be maintained.

- To avoid countenancing the sacrifice of an individual's health for the sake of her participation in athletic competition.
- To promote the adoption of appropriate costumes for the various athletic activities.
- To eliminate gate receipts.
- To discourage athletic competition which involves travel.
- To eliminate types and systems of competition which put the emphasis on individual accomplishment and winning rather than upon stressing the enjoyment of the sport and the development of sportsmanship among the many.²⁸

But the academic suspicion of women's competition did not necessarily extend to the general public. Female stars became accepted public icons in individual sports, like track (particularly in the African-American community), tennis, and swimming. Helen Wills Moody, the Wimbledon champion, and Gertrude Ederle, the English Channel swimmer, were household names in the early twentieth century, along with the multi-sport star Babe Didrickson Zaharias. Even so, team sports remained tightly governed, especially in scholastic settings.

At most, college women could hope to visit another campus during "Play Days." Charlotte West, retired women's athletics director at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, participated in several during her undergraduate days at Florida State University. A group of athletes, especially physical-education majors, would drive to the University of Florida or another college and spend the day choosing up teams and playing basketball, volleyball, field hockey, and other sports. Teams were not "intercollegiate" in the normal sense; a random group for women from two (or more) colleges would compete against another random group of their peers. The exercise would be more social than competitive, and that was by design. By 1930, half the colleges in the country, both all-women's and coed, reported participating in Play Days, according to a NAAF survey. Play Days were common well into the 1960s.²⁹

Also popular were "Sports Days," for which colleges would choose their best intramural teams and send them to compete informally against other teams in the area. By 1936, 40 percent sent teams to Sports Days. Meanwhile, 11 percent of colleges in 1930 and 13 percent in 1936 had varsity-style intercollegiate teams.³⁰

The governance groups centralized in the 1930s and 1940s. The Committee on Women's Athletics of APEA became the National Section on Women's Athletics, and in 1940 merged with the Women's Division of NAAF. The following year, the new organization sponsored the first women's intercollegiate national championship, a golf tournament hosted

by O
nual
Th
sport
think
grou
the n
Or
orga
ing o
curb
trato
ing c
them
but t
onsh
putec
and a
In
vard,
thing
not a
later,
the I
follor
Asso
In
need
to in
Inste
did tl
Big T
the st
In
often
War
the e
Kent
had c
Civ
Mian
powe

dividual's health for the
ion.

stumes for the various

olves travel.

ion which put the em-
nning rather than upon
development of sports-

etition did not necessar-
became accepted public
in the African-American
Moody, the Wimbledon
Channel swimmer, were
, along with the multi-
, team sports remained

another campus during
letics director at South-
ed in several during her
A group of athletes, es-
re to the University of
choosing up teams and
ther sports. Teams were
dom group for women
gainst another random
re social than competi-
colleges in the country,
ig in Play Days, accord-
well into the 1960s.²⁹

colleges would choose
pete informally against
t teams to Sports Days.
13 percent in 1936 had

s and 1940s. The Com-
he National Section on
ie Women's Division of
on sponsored the first
golf tournament hosted

by Ohio State. Following World War II, the championship became an an-
nual event.

Throughout the first half of the century, governance groups for women's
sports kept their activities low-key, which is one reason many people
think collegiate sports for women emerged fully formed in 1972. Women's
groups disdained publicity and insisted that sports remain informal, for
the most part.

One could not find a starker contrast than with the NCAA, which was
organized in the first decade of the twentieth century as an annual meet-
ing of college presidents, faculty members, and athletic officials trying to
curb abuses and injuries in football. Its history is one of college adminis-
trators trying to retain control over rapidly expanding sports, and tak-
ing control from other sports organizations as opportunities presented
themselves. The NCAA began sponsoring championships in the 1920s,
but those events were seen as secondary to the AAU's amateur champi-
onships. It took the NCAA seventy years to establish itself as the undis-
puted authority over competitive sports for men in the United States,
and another decade to do so for women.

In October 1905, President Roosevelt summoned presidents of Har-
vard, Yale, and Princeton to the White House to ask them to do some-
thing about the brutal style of play in college football (although he did
not ask them to ban the sport, as is commonly supposed).³¹ Two months
later, representatives of sixty-one colleges met in New York to form
the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, which the
following year changed its name to the National Collegiate Athletic
Association.³²

In its bylaws, the NCAA paid lip service to educational ideals and the
need for colleges to compete on a level playing field, but it had no power
to investigate violations or punish offenders, short of kicking them out.
Instead, it mostly functioned as a rules-making and scheduling body, as
did the conferences that began to spring up around this time, such as the
Big Ten and the Southern. The pressure to win and attract crowds made
the stakes too high for principles to deter opportunists.

In the 1920s, colleges across the country built megalithic stadiums,
often naming them Memorial Stadium to honor students killed in World
War I. College football as a focal point of campus life spread far beyond
the elite northeastern institutions, even to tiny colleges like Centre in
Kentucky and the University of the South in Tennessee. Both institutions
had dominant barnstorming football teams in the 1920s.

Civic associations in warmer climes like Pasadena, New Orleans, and
Miami organized holiday games in the teens and twenties and invited
powerful teams from different parts of the country to come play each

other—and bring along their fans for a Christmas vacation. This was the age of the first generation of college athletes and coaches who were folk heroes, such as Hobe Baker at Princeton and Jess Neely at Vanderbilt and Sewanee.

In the Northeast, the Upper Midwest, and the West Coast, colleges sponsored the broadest possible array of sports for men—track, golf, tennis, lacrosse, wrestling, swimming, and others beyond the crowd-pleasing football and basketball.

In 1929, the Carnegie Foundation published Bulletin 23, the first systematic critique of college athletics and its relationship to educational goals. In the words of the foundation's president, Henry S. Pritchett, investigators were supposed to ask, "What relationship has this astonishing athletic display to the work of an intellectual agency like a university?" and "How do students, devoted to study, find either the time or the money to stage so costly a performance?"³³

Pritchett finds the university's role in "the development of the intellectual life" at odds with its function as "an agency to promote business, industry, journalism, salesmanship, and organized athletics on an extensive basis." Howard J. Savage, the principal author of the bulletin, was extremely critical of the expenses universities incurred to mount big-time football programs, noting in particular "extravagance on special personnel, including budgets for coaches, publicity agents and expenses of newspapermen, and the fictitious exaggeration of the importance of athletics, especially football."³⁴

Sport was a huge part of undergraduate life at the time of the Carnegie study. According to the bulletin, between 18 and 25 percent of the student body at the 112 institutions studied were varsity athletes, and as many as 63 percent participated in intramural sports.³⁵ Moreover, two-thirds of the colleges had special programs set up to recruit athletes, as well as "soliciting and subsidizing" athletes with scholarships. Researcher found, though, that despite the beliefs of alumni, enrollments did not fluctuate based on how sports teams fared in competition, and that athletics were characterized by a "lack of intellectual challenge to the young and alert mind."³⁶

As they do today, educators at the time complained that extracurricular activities of every type, be they fraternities or sports teams, were dumbing down the undergraduate experience. At Howard University's commencement in 1930, W.E.B. DuBois complained that "our college man today is, on the average, a man untouched by real culture. He deliberately surrenders to selfish and even silly ideals, swarming into semi-professional athletics and Greek-letter societies, and affecting to despise scholarship and the hard grind of study and research."³⁷

In
roo
sche
pro
tion
how
the
into
thre
N
ball
hosi
the
cam
T
such
"sch
whi
tice,
of N
cure
St. F
R
foot
train
to h
cruin
Pre-
ting
C
scan
Squ:
City
Brac
volv
part
first
D
acad
cruit
colle
quir

vacation. This was the coaches who were folks like Neely at Vanderbilt

On the West Coast, colleges for men—track, golf, and beyond the crowd-

bulletin 23, the first system of scholarship to educational institutions, Henry S. Pritchett, who has this astonishing agency like a university, find either the time or

development of the intellectual to promote business, athletics on an extension of the bulletin, was used to mount big-time success on special person- and expenses of news- importance of athletics,

the time of the Carnegie 25 percent of the student-athletes, and as sports.³⁵ Moreover, two- to recruit athletes, as scholarships. Researcher, enrollments did not petition, and that athletic challenge to the young

He noted that extracurricular sports teams, were Howard University's noted that "our college real culture. He deliberated swarming into semi-id affecting to despise ch."³⁷

In the years after World War II, controversies over college sports mushroomed. The debate over payment to athletes, whether in the form of scholarships or outright paychecks, became a national controversy that propelled the NCAA's members to form committees to investigate allegations of rules violations and to punish offenders. Colleges discovered how to make money from radio and television broadcasts, prompting the NCAA to begin bundling the broadcast rights to individual games into packages to sell to networks. In New York, gambling scandals threatened the survival of college basketball.

Meanwhile, the elite northeastern schools opted out of big-time football and formed the Ivy League, and the University of Chicago and a host of other institutions dropped football altogether. Some reinstated the sport later, in the "college" division of the NCAA, which later became the low-key and nonscholarship Division III.

The debate over scholarships and pay became tawdry. Southern schools such as Georgia Tech and Louisiana State had long sworn by giving out "scholarships" as if football players were getting academic fellowships, while members of the Big Ten pronounced themselves above the practice, which they said amounted to bribery. In the words of one University of Minnesota official, "The only thing we do for any athlete is to procure him a part-time job at a recognized business in Minneapolis or St. Paul."³⁸

Recruiting had become a fine art. Colleges had sent many of their football coaches into the military during World War II to coach teams at training centers. Murray Sperber tells the story of Bear Bryant, en route to his first collegiate head coaching job at Maryland, forswearing recruiting in favor of marching his entire squad from the North Carolina Pre-Flight Training Center up to College Park, enrolling them, and putting them out onto the field within a week.³⁹

College basketball was rocked in the early 1950s by point-shaving scandals originating with the gamblers in the corridors of Madison Square Garden in New York. Players from Long Island University, the City College of New York, New York University, Manhattan College, Bradley University in Illinois, and the University of Kentucky were all involved. The Wildcats, under legendary coach Adolph Rupp, were hit particularly hard in the new enforcement process, earning the NCAA's first "death penalty" for the 1952-53 season.⁴⁰

During the 1960s and 1970s, the NCAA first implemented national academic standards for athletes in an effort to prevent coaches from recruiting players off the street and ones who were not prepared for college-level academics. First came the "1.6 rule," in 1966, which required colleges to admit only those athletes whose high-school grades

suggested that they would be able to achieve at least a 1.6 grade-point average, or a C-minus, at the college they attended.⁴¹

At the end of the 1960s, men's sports were a highly developed and often controversial institution on college campuses of all sizes across the country. In the years following World War II, however, most colleges found themselves unable to compete with large land-grant institutions simply because they could not spend as much money on facilities, coaches, or scholarships. A smaller organization, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, sprang up among regional universities, especially those with good basketball teams. The NCAA split into "college" and "university" divisions, with separate championship events for each.

All levels focused on championships. Most colleges were organized into conferences by the early 1960s, and conference champions earned berths in national tournaments and playoffs. These would expand dramatically later in the century, but by the 1950s and 1960s, the focus on competition had spread beyond individual rivalries and into national dramas.

This history is lavishly documented, both for individual colleges and conferences and for the NCAA as a whole. Intramural sports programs for women flourished, but in obscurity. Athletes in individual sports often achieved some level of fame, and America's first group of elite women athletes emerged in the 1950s in an unexpected location: the poorer historically black colleges of the segregated South.

The elite black institutions, such as Hampton and Howard Universities and Spelman College, disdained women's sports as unladylike and a waste of study time. Officials at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and Tennessee State University had no such qualms and fielded top-quality basketball and, especially, track teams.

Their greatest moment was the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, in which members of the "Tigerbelles" track team from Tennessee State swept the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the 400-meter relay. Wilma Rudolph, Mae Faggs, and other sprinters were celebrated in a way few other female athletes ever had been, but they faded into obscurity soon after the games.

At the predominantly white colleges in the mainstream, pressure was building among female students who wanted the chance to compete, not just to play. AAU programs and industrial leagues, which had existed since the 1920s, flourished in certain pockets of the country. Especially in rural areas, girls were encouraged to participate in sports to stay out of trouble.

In 1957, several governing organizations formed the National Joint Committee on Extramural Sports for College Women to sanction events

and ch:
though
along t
Americ
which i
on Wor
Publi
1960s,
Union
the nee
beating
realizec
women
to acco
empan
develop
Perh
sports
women
overco
wanted
Befo
sary to
law pa
the for

least a 1.6 grade-point
1.⁴¹

ily developed and often
l sizes across the coun-
r, most colleges found
ant institutions simply
1 facilities, coaches, or
Association of Intercol-
rsities, especially those
"college" and "univer-
for each.

lleges were organized
nce champions earned
se would expand dra-
id 1960s, the focus on
ies and into national

individual colleges and
nural sports programs
s in individual sports
s first group of elite
xpected location: the
South.

nd Howard Universi-
ts as unladylike and a
in Alabama and Ten-
elded top-quality bas-

s in Tokyo, in which
nessee State swept the
0-meter relay. Wilma
ebrated in a way few
d into obscurity soon

stream, pressure was
ance to compete, not
s, which had existed
ie country. Especially
: in sports to stay out

ed the National Joint
ien to sanction events

and championships for varsity-style teams. Doing so proved unwieldy, though, and in 1965 the group agreed to disband and pass its functions along to the Division for Girls' and Women's Sports (DGWS) of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, which in turn had been formed by the merger of the APEA Committee on Women's Athletics and the Women's Division of NAAF.

Public interest in the Olympics intensified through the 1950s and 1960s, particularly as a way of waging the Cold War against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As a result, sports officials began to discuss the need for elite programs for female athletes, to give them a chance at beating the Communists. The physical educators who belonged to DGWS realized they needed to sponsor their own programs to retain control of women's sports and, hopefully, extend their philosophy of participation to accommodate the burgeoning interest in competition. In 1967, DGWS empaneled the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women to develop national championships for female athletes.

Perhaps inevitably, this brought the educational model of women's sports into conflict with the commercial model of men's sports. The women in charge of DGWS and other organizations did not want the overcommercialization and rampant cheating of men's sports, but they wanted to give women the chance to realize their fullest potential.

Before we pick up the narrative of this conflict, however, it is necessary to explain the other imperative facing schools and female athletes: a law passed in 1972 that guaranteed the latter access to all the benefits of the former.