

Women's Sports Matter Too

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What defines a woman? That question seems difficult to answer in current times as everyone has their individual viewpoint. Let's ask these questions instead. What defines women's sports? Why are there separate categories for men and women's sports? If men and women were the same physically, mentally, and emotionally, we would not need gender divisions in sports. This, however, is not the case.

In the article "We need to be able to talk about trans athletes and women's sports" from *The Washington Post*, Megan McArdle (2022) [addresses how transgender athletes take away opportunities from woman in sports](#). The 2020 NCAA women's swimming national championship is a main point she revolves her article around. In this example, the first-place trophy of the 400 freestyle race is claimed by a transgender woman. McArdle talks about the unfair advantage a transgender woman has in the majority of women's sports. This leaves little opportunity for cisgender women who have spent [months, even years, training hard to compete in their given sport](#). She presses the readers to ask themselves who's rights are more important. Of course, McArdle herself leaves the question unanswered to give the readers something to ponder further. Overall, McArdle brings to light how important it is for women's sports to be protected [and leaves us wondering if trans women should compete alongside cisgender women](#).

[I agree with McArdle on how crucially important women's sports are in our society](#). However, I feel that she misses the urgency in this topic. Recognizing the importance to push for women's rights holds the utmost urgency. Unfortunately, many people ignore or forget the importance here. Having transgender females play women's sports takes away from the whole reason the female category was created in the first place. Women's sports create a platform for women to perform safely and [more importantly, compete fairly](#). McArdle needs to bring more

urgency on her topic in order to keep trans athletes out of women's sports because it creates unfair opportunities.

Diving in, it is common knowledge that men are built different than women. McArdle touches on this simple fact in her article. She goes over some biology that gives men the edge in almost every sport. As McArdle (2022) states in her article, "Male puberty makes you taller, confers greater muscle and bone mass, larger heart and lung capacity relative to your size, and more hemoglobin." Having such a physical advantage gives any biological male a clear edge in competing. Why should there be an exception made just because a man identifies as a woman? Undoubtedly, there is a wide divide in physicality. Let's take a look further into the NCAA swimming national championship. Lia Thomas, the winner of the 2020 competition, identified as a female, yet was born a male and still had fully male genital parts. Thomas won the 400-freestyle swim, beating a woman named Emma Weyent, who won the silver at the Tokyo Olympics. Breaking it down we can see that a biological male, transgender woman, took the trophy from an Olympic medalist. [We, as a society, have no way of justifying this.](#) Simply said by Paulina Dedaj (2022) from *Fox News* "Women's records are separate from men's records. It's its own distinct category because no woman is going to be as fast as a man." [This is undeniable, when gender lines start to blur in sports, woman will always fail to come out on top.](#) Looking to world records any person can see that men's records are considerably greater and faster. According to the *National Library of Medicine*, a study by Alison Heather (2022) finds that "In strength-related sports, world records can differ by 10–30% between males and females." At an elite level, even one percent drastically gives an edge to a person. Knowing this, we can imagine how large of a gap ten to thirty percent truly is. After learning that men generally have a significant advantage, it is no wonder there are separate categories for men and women.

Society is developing and discovering new research on how our hormones impact our physicality. Now, many people will argue that this new hormone replacement therapy changes men's physicality to match closer to that of a woman's. It is true that after about one year of this hormone replacement therapy, a trans woman develops more feminine body characteristics. In fact, Io Dodds (2022) reports in her article how the hormone replacement therapy works, she states, it "means growing breasts, thinning body hair, changes to their emotions, shifting body fat in an 'hourglass' shape, and-most relevantly to sports-drops in muscle mass and strength." However, despite this therapy, trans women still hold an athletic edge in sports and physicality in general. The *National Library of Medicine* have done in depth studies on trans women competing against cisgender women. Their findings make it clear that biological men hold the advantage. In the report, Alison Heather (2022) explains how "sex differences in muscle mass in elite athletes can be 50-75% in favor of males, thus the decrease of 5-10% reported in studies of transwoman after 1-2 years of estrogen therapy will most likely provide, at most, a modest reformatting of male muscle strength in the transwomen athlete." Although trans women can lose muscle mass, ultimately, they will still overpower cisgender women. Because of this, trans women should not be allowed to compete in women's sports regardless of the therapy they undergo.

Moving further, throughout history women's rights have been a huge topic of debate. To this day, women are still fighting for equal opportunities, equal rights, and equal pay. When we were finally given a platform to compete fairly in sports, it was as if all our efforts had paid off. Women's sports became a place of empowerment, where women could show their skills in any given sport. We were safe here. Although now the very stronghold we fought for is being taken from us yet again. By allowing trans women to compete in women's sports, we are subjecting

ourselves to failure. Women's sports were created for females to show their grit, strength, and skills. McArdle herself talks about why women's sports exist, saying, "We didn't create separate leagues to reinforce the special feminine identity of female athletes; if anything, women's athletics was supposed to break down such divisions." She continues further with saying "The separation is a nod to biology." Not only is this separation a nod to biology, but it is a victory for all the women who have fought for this sports platform. It is our right that we, as women, should be able to play sports competitively and fairly just as men do. Hard work, energy, and passion have gone into creating this platform for women. Countless voices have spoken up to give women a chance to compete professionally. [In the past year women have even received their own sports network. According to statistics in Kaitlin Balasaygun \(2022\) article, "39% of Gen Zers are watching more women's sports than they were a year ago, along with 29% of millennials."](#) For years women's sports have been growing and expanding and have just recently started receiving the attention they deserve. Yet now change is beginning. While sometimes change brings benefits, in this circumstance that is not the case. Allowing trans women to compete and race against cisgender women destroys everything that has been built. [Women's sports were meant to create a level playing field.](#) Adding biological men to the women's field undoubtedly strips away opportunities for cisgender women to win.

McArdle's article brings light to many important points on trans women in sports. However, at times she fails to point out the urgency, as this is affecting women across the globe. Women's rights are being put in jeopardy right now and people need to take a stand. This dedicated research has enlightened me to see how easily our rights can crumble in front of our eyes. One minute women are building an empire for sports and the next all our progress is regressing. As a female athlete myself, I am impacted by these changes and can attest that our

opportunities are lessening. NCAA championships are going to trans women and new “women” records are being set by biological men. If this does not call people to protest, then women’s sports have already lost their significance. There is hope though. Earlier this year the Olympics made the decision to not allow transgender women to compete in track and field events. This is a small victory and will hopefully carry on to other sports alike. If we raise our voices together for women’s sports, then change will come. No matter what obstacle women face there will always be some who stand up for what we deserve. Equal opportunities, equal chances, and equal rights. It truly is as simple as that. Let’s stand up for our platform and our rights. We will face backlash, ridicule, and mockery, but if it’s something we have a passion for then it deserves to be fought for.

Author’s Note:

Going through the rough draft and editing this paper has been a true test of my morals and the opinions of others. I debated deeply about each adjustment I made. I wanted to make sure my point was coming across correctly and how I intended it. Some feedback I received I disagreed with. It was helpful though as it made me think about why I truly was writing this paper. The changes I made, deepened some of my thoughts and helped smooth out my paper. I emphasized some of my points and took away unnecessary sentences that distracted from the main subjects. I read through the paper out loud to make sure each paragraph makes sense and flows well. Overall, in this revision I focused on how my argument came across. I wanted it to be direct and urgent, yet respectful as well. It needed to address some tension points in society, and some will certainly disagree with it, but that is okay. If it makes people uncomfortable, then they might be pushed to make a change. No significant change ever happened by people staying in their comfort zones. I learned so much from this paper and put my heart into writing and revising it.

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