



CALIFORNIA
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER

FAIR PLAY FOR GIRLS IN SPORTS:
A PROJECT OF CWLC

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Benefits of Sports for Girls

The many ways sports participation, equity, and
access for girls benefits their lives and communities

Equity Laws for Schools and Parks & Recreation

Title IX requires that girls receive both (a) equal opportunities to play school sports and (b) equal treatment and benefits in all federally-funded schools, including secondary schools and colleges. In California, AB 2404 (California Government Code Section 53080) goes further—it requires equity in local youth athletics and expands Title IX mandates to public sports programs, as well as third party leagues using public resources, such as those run by local parks and recreation departments.



Why are Title IX and the Fair Play Act Important?

Substantial research reveals a direct link between participating in sports and better educational opportunities, positive health outcomes, and improved employment results for girls. Note, key benefits of girls' (and all youth's) sports participation relate to exercise, character development, life skills, teamwork, resilience, and more. Girls need not even play varsity-level sports or specific kinds of sports—benefits stem from any and all sports participation. Sports are pivotal in girls' and women's success, as highlighted by the following:

Education

- Girls participating in sports are significantly more likely to graduate compared to non-athletes.
- This correlation is particularly strong for Black and Latina girls.
- At the collegiate level, girls/women who receive sports scholarships graduate at higher rates than female students generally.
- Overall, girls who play sports have higher grades and score higher on standardized tests than non-athletes.

Health

- Female athletes are more likely than female non-athletes to postpone sexual activity, and use contraceptives when they do engage in sexual activity.
- Girls who play sports are half as likely to get pregnant as young adults than those who do not.
- Girls who engage in regular exercise experience lower rates of depression.
- Girls who participate in sports possess higher self-esteem.
- Women who were physically active in their adolescence and young adulthood were 20% less likely to get breast cancer later in life.

Employment

- Executive businesswomen report that involvement with sports contributed to their success by enhancing their leadership skills, discipline, and teamwork ability.
- 74% of female executives believe a background in sports helps to accelerate a woman's career.
- 77% of C-suite businesswomen think that women who played a sport make good employees.
- A 2013 study of 821 senior managers and executives found that 94% of female executives reportedly played organized sports after primary school.
- Almost 70% of women earning over \$100,000 per year in leadership roles previously played competitive sports.
- Girls who participate in high school sports have higher rates of labor force participation and earn 7% higher wages.
- On average, the annual wages of former athletes are 7% higher than those of non-athletes.



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Health

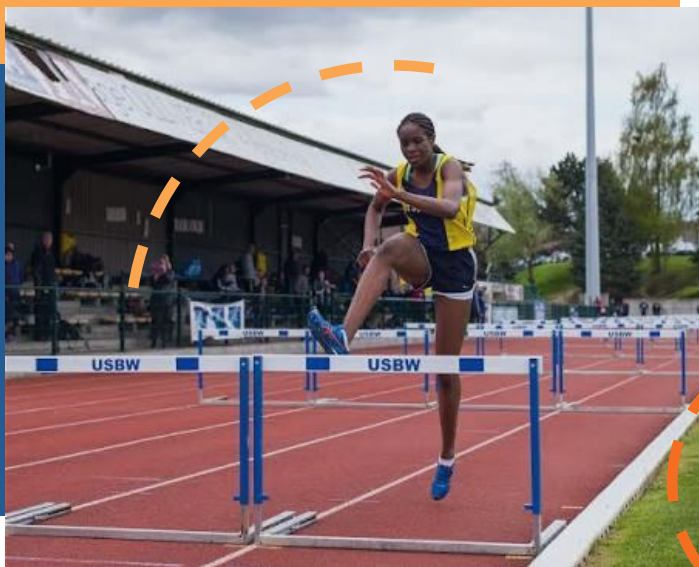
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The mission of California Women's Law Center is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education.

*Note, while this material and work focus on youth identifying as girls, California Women's Law Center (CWLC) supports equitable athletic access for all youth regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomics, ability, and more. CWLC notes the drafters' binary approach and language in laws covered in these materials and further underscores the importance of ensuring inclusive, equitable, welcoming, and safe environments for all youth.

Thank you to all who contributed to CWLC's Fair Play materials, including Goodwin Procter LLP.

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