

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Fair Play in Community Sports Act (Parks and Recreation)

Cal. Gov. Code § 53080

Information on the rights and responsibilities stemming from the California law (2005) requiring gender equity in youth, community, competitive athletic programming run by or through parks and recreation

THE FAIR PLAY ACT

The Fair Play in Community Sports Act (Fair Play Act), AB 2404, California Government Code Section 53080, is a California law prohibiting gender discrimination in community youth sports programs. The Fair Play Act requires that girls receive opportunities for participation in competitive sports programs that are *equal, both in quality and scope*, as those that boys receive. If the local park and recreation department (Department) is not complying with the law, the Department runs the risk of suit as the law allows for community members to file a court action against a park and recreation department that is not in compliance.

Did You Know?

Girls who play sports have **higher self-esteem, greater physical fitness, and make healthier decisions** about drugs, alcohol, and relationships.

Female high school athletes **earn significantly higher wages** as adults in the workplace.

California is the first state in the country to **pass a law requiring gender equity** in its community youth sports programs.

Under the Fair Play Act, Departments **must provide youth sports programs for girls and boys** in numbers that reflect the percentages of girls and boys in the community, or show accommodation of all unmet interest.

The Fair Play Act requires that girls' sports teams get the **same quality of and access to fields, equipment, coaching**, and other benefits as boys' sports teams.

Community members have the **right to complain or bring a lawsuit** if their Department does not comply with the Fair Play Act.

Many community members do not know that **Departments have to comply** with the Fair Play Act.



What Does The Law Require?

The Fair Play Act requires that Departments provide girls and boys with equal opportunities and equal treatment in their youth sports programs. The Department must provide youth sports participation opportunities for girls and boys in numbers that reflect the percentages of girls and boys in the community. If not, the Department must show it is fully meeting the interests of girls in sports. Additionally, the law requires that girls' and boys' sports experience **equal access to resources** such as athletic fields, referees, and sports equipment. The Fair Play Act covers programs run directly by Departments as well as programs run by third-party youth sports organizations using public facilities and resources.

What Can Our Department Do?

Information is available to help the Department, and community members, clearly understand the law. The Fair Play for Girls in Sports project of the California Women's Law Center offers a comprehensive toolkit to help parks and recreation departments comply with the Fair Play Act. The toolkit provides step-by-step instructions on the Fair Play Act and compliance issues. **This toolkit can be found at [cwlc.org](https://www.cwlc.org).**

Be Proactive

The best way to avoid complaints is to **be proactive** in spurring the Department to be compliant with the Fair Play Act. More importantly, treating all youth athletes equally is the right thing to do. For more information on the Fair Play Act, contact the California Women's Law Center.



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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