



As a result of changes brought about by the Title IX legislation, women now have many more opportunities in the world of college athletics. Quality and skill of women athletes has gone up dramatically since the amendment

was created in 1972, but recent steps taken by members of the Reagan administration may detract from some of the progress made in this area. Patti Holthaus, pictured here, is a member of the Aggie women's softball team.

Opportunities for women

Title IX impact great

by Kelly Krauskopf

Battalion Reporter
Ever since women were barred from the ancient Olympic Games — to the extent that they were not even allowed to watch — female athletes have come a long way. The growing interest of women in competitive athletics is reflected through the rapid increase of participation on both the high school and collegiate levels.

During the period from 1971-1978, for example, the number of female participants in organized high school sports increased over 600 percent, according to figures obtained from National Federation of High School Association's data. In the same period, a survey supplied by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women reveals that women's participation in intercollegiate sports increased 102 percent.

However, as women rush into athletic competition, they are continuously striving for equality in sports.

One federal law which has had a tremendous impact on women's programs because of its broad coverage of discrimination is Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

The law states that: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

In simple words, Title IX prohibits sex bias in every school activity from classrooms to extracurricular clubs, from class enrollment and employment of teachers to every other educational area and policy. Yet athletics — with its multi-digit budgets, dramatic performances and strong alumni pressures — has been the most controversial activity affected by Title IX.

On most campuses, the primary problem confronting women athletes has been the absence of fair and adequate services and benefits, such as budget allocations, practice times and promotional support. Under Title IX, there are three areas of compliance that universities are expected to meet: scholarships based on athletic ability, meeting the interests of male and female students and compliance in other programs such as equipment and supplies, game and practice times and travel.

The federal government considers an institution in compliance if its selection of sports and levels of competition effectively meet the interests and abilities of both sexes.

Wally Groff, associate athletic director for finance at Texas A&M University, says the athletic programs are in compliance even though the University has not referred to the law in the last five years.

"We have not really had to refer much to Title IX here at A&M concerning athletics," he said. "We feel like we have built our program so that we are in compliance. I don't think schools are as concerned today as they were three years ago because it is kept in the back of everyone's mind. We have been trying to do the right thing under Title IX. We feel our women's programs deserve to be pushed forward."



Assistant AD Kay Don says skill of women athletes up



Associate AD Wally Groff says NCAA has advantages

Although Texas A&M has not called much attention to Title IX, John Kasser, women's athletic director at the University of Houston, said his school's athletic programs recently went through a major review of the law.

"We reviewed Title IX last spring to see if we were making progress for women's athletics," he said. "We are very much in compliance in all areas."

For universities to be in compliance with Title IX scholarship regulation, institutions must provide financial aid for members of each sex in proportion to the number of students of each sex participating in athletics. For example, if a university has a total scholarship fund of \$100,000 in a school with 70 male and 30 female athletes, the male athletes would receive \$70,000 and the female athletes would get \$30,000.

Scholarship aid is deducted from the fixed athletic budget for each sport and the issue is complicated when considering equalizing male and female budgets. At many universities,

than \$4 million, while the women's budget amounts to \$980,000. Although the figures indicate a disparity, Groff said each program receives the proportionate amount required under the financial aid regulation.

"We have to realize that there are obviously more participants in men's football," he said, "therefore, there will be more scholarships given. Also, the cost of football is much bigger than any of the women's sports because of the necessary equipment. It is a very big revenue-producing sport."

Donna Lopiano, women's athletic director at the University of Texas, said she agrees that revenue-producing sports such as football require higher expenditures than most women's sports.

"It is true that most revenues come from football," she said. "Just to open our stadium for a football game costs \$20,000. We don't have any women's sports with expenses that high. That is good example relating to the nature of the sport."

However, Lopiano said, just because football brings in more revenues doesn't mean that it should receive special treatment.

"If the psychology department was bringing in more students and raising the amount of tuition money received, you wouldn't expect to give them any special treatment," she said. "The same principle should apply to all other departments."

To be in compliance in other athletic benefits such as maintenance of equipment, scheduling of games and travel expenses, institutions must have comparable programs when measuring availability, quality, opportunities and treatment afforded to members of both sexes.

At Texas A&M, Groff said, there are no limitations on the women's program in the area of equipment and facilities. However, he said there may be some travel variance between the men and women.

"There may be some degree of variation in the travel area with men and women's basketball," he said. "The men go to more tournaments, but they are guaranteed a certain amount of money to play in the tournaments they are invited to."

Kay Don, assistant athletic director for women at Texas A&M, also agreed that there are some travel differences between the programs.

"We may be low in the travel area, but it is very small," Don said. "Comparatively, the men probably travel more."

Many positive changes have occurred for female athletes as a result of Title IX. The National Advisory Council reports that the average college now offers about twice as many sports to women. In 1974, a woman could choose between two sports for every seven offered a man.

Kasser said Title IX has brought about more opportunities for women's athletics.

"I think Title IX has definitely increased opportunities for women on all levels," said. "The opportunities for young kids, well as the collegiate level, is unbelievable now as compared to 10 years ago. We are going towards stronger women's programs."

Title IX has helped women establish their position in athletics, he said.

"We are over the hump of getting women in," he said. "Title IX has helped women get where they are today. I think universities are committed to giving their women's programs the opportunities and benefits they don't think that just because there is a law saying we have to treat women athletes equal that we would dump them on the law failed."

At Texas A&M, Don said, in addition to increasing opportunities, the quality of women athletes has increased.

"The quality of athletes has definitely risen over the last 10 years," she said. "Since the high school programs have improved, most of the athletes are much stronger in skill."

Although women's athletic programs have started to see enforcement of Title IX, it has been weak and the law is facing serious challenges from the Reagan Administration.

Lopiano said the Office for Civil Rights, the office responsible for implementing Title IX, has weakened the enforcement of the law.

"We have not seen as much progress in the last five years as we did when the law was first established," she said. "The government is not interested in forcing civil rights laws and an effort not to enforce Title IX threatens women's opportunities and progress. Title IX is the kind of dwindled with the Reagan administration."

The Reagan administration wants to reduce the role of the federal government in education and eliminate what it sees as burdensome requirements that only were necessary a few years ago. A Title IX amendment, S. 1361, introduced in June 1981 by Senator Orrin Hatch, could have a more devastating impact on Title IX than any other attack made by the administration.

The amendment would prohibit from discriminatory practices only programs that receive federal funds directly. Currently, if a school receives federal money in any single program activity, the entire institution must comply with Title IX.

The amendment also would remove employment discrimination from Title IX. The decision to pass the amendment presently at a standstill in Congress but if passed, equal education opportunities would be seriously weakened, if not destroyed.

An even more serious danger to the survival of Title IX is the demise of the organization that kept it safe from attack throughout the 1970s — the AIAW. Since it began, the AIAW — the first and only governing body for women's college athletics — has promoted the campus opportunity for women and defended Title IX against the NCAA's opposition.

Last year, however, the NCAA voted to start its own championship for women and many women's coaches and administrators feel the NCAA takeover will remove women from the forefront in directing their own programs.

At Texas A&M, Don said she has mixed emotions about the change from AIAW to NCAA.

"I have tried to be very positive about the change," she said. "I think it (NCAA) will help the budget area and also promotions. But the leadership of women might decline a little."

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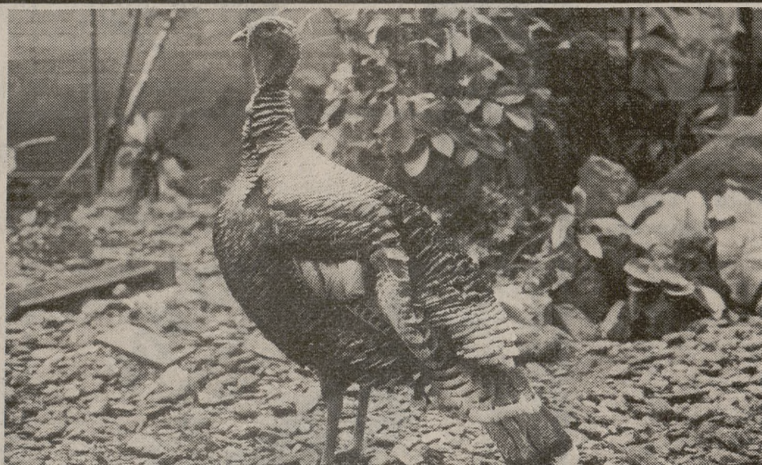
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