

Not fair ball says sex equality sport report

Sports groups, physical educators and female athletes have confirmed the findings of a report on women in sports recently released by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Fair Ball: Toward Sex Equality in Canadian Sport, commissioned to assess sexual equality in sport, is co-authored by Ann Hall, a physical education and recreation teacher at the University of Alberta and Dorothy Richardson, Canadian Human Rights Commissioner who is a former athlete and physical educator.

The council is studying the report and plans to make recommendations soon. The study reveals that women are grossly under-represented at the policy-making levels of athletics in Canada and in other countries.

Despite women's increasing interest in sport and fitness, said Ann Hall, the number of women coaches, sports executives and administrators has not increased and is declining in some areas.

Cheryl Hassen, member of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport, and executive director of the Canadian Fencing Association, said that of 63 policy-making positions within her association, only three jobs are held by women.

School budgets

A comparison of total budgets for boys' and girls' interscholastic programs shows that although slightly more money was made available to female participants between 1973 and 1976, the budgets were still not fairly divided. In 1973-74, boys received 66.8 per cent of the funds while girls got 33.2 per cent. In 1975-76, the boys still received more — 63.5 per cent compared to the 36.5 per cent for girls. "The fiscal inequities are related to the emphasis put on boys' football teams," the report stated.

"When it comes to sports, women are still considered second class citizens," said Hélène Dallaire, a professor of physical education at the University of Ottawa. She resigned four years ago from her post as women's intramural director at the university's school of physical education, because she was "fed up with taking leftovers".

"I felt there was no sense fighting anymore. Men's athletics were always given more money, better equipment and prime time use of facilities."

Ann Hall, who is the former president

of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, said the study also showed that coaches of both male and female teams are virtually all men.

A survey of coaches in Ontario high schools showed that only 26 per cent were females. At the very highest level of expertise — coaches of national teams — only 13 per cent are women.

Other statistics in the report reveal that: — women comprise about one third of the volunteer sector of amateur sport and 26 per cent of the professional sector of national sport-governing bodies such as the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association; and

— women in Ontario fill the majority of executive positions in sports that have only female participants, but they are

under-represented in other sports organizations. They comprise 26 per cent of all provincial sports executives in Ontario and only 19.5 per cent of executives in integrated sports.

Public awareness of sex discrimination in sport has been raised through the publicity surrounding complaints to human rights commissions, yet legislation has proved to be an ineffective means for remedying the problem, said Ann Hall.

About 50 cases of sports-related complaints are pending before provincial human rights commissions, but many cases are lost in legal wranglings over interpretation of the law because some provincial commissions do not consider sport and recreation within their jurisdiction. Most of the complaints were submitted because no opportunities exist for talented girls to play the team sport of their choice so they seek to play on boys' teams.



If the inequalities claimed by Fair Ball, the report published recently by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women were eliminated, more Canadian women could attain the championship status of high jumper Debby Brill (above) and trapshooter Susan Natrass. Debby Brill, who demonstrates her patented back flip, cleared 1.99 metres in Edmonton last January for a world indoor record. Susan Natrass won the silver medal in the women's world trapshooting championships in Caracas on November 8. Miss Natrass, winner of the six previous world trapshooting championships, placed ninth after the first day of shooting but missed only once on her final 75 shots on the second day to place second this year.



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