

## Book Review

**Developing Sport for Women and Girls: First Edition**

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**Developing Sport for Women and Girls First Edition**

Developing Sport for Women and Girls is a unique and well-organized text, which grants readers a thorough analysis of contemporary sport development with a female-specific focus. Given the international growth of women's sport (media, participation and leadership roles, gender equity dialogue etc.), this one-of-a-kind book serves as a valuable addition to the existing body of research for scholars and sport for development practitioners. The book holds the global perspectives of authors from the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom while providing cultural contexts for a range of national sport systems including the National Football League (NFL), One Day International (ODI), International Olympic Committee (IOC), and many others. The text divides the general concepts into three themes: participation and inclusion, development *through* sport (SFD), and development *of* sport (SD).

Theme one (chapters 3-10) begins with a discussion of the history of Title IX, future implications for sport participation for women, and the role of sport organizations in providing opportunities. The authors emphasize motivations and barriers for females in sport while elaborating on populations such as mothers with dependent children, girls and adolescents, older women, gender-diverse communities, women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women, and underserved communities. In this first section, readers will further understand the history of the challenges for females in sport as authors advise organizations to modify rules and allow for movement between higher and lower competitive levels. Overall, the authors skillfully compared sport systems across the globe while suggesting opportunities for future research that may be useful for enhancing one's

general understanding of female representation within an ever-changing industry. Concerning potential recommendations for this theme, in-depth, qualitative explorations of the impact of sport within underserved or indigenous populations may provide additional research used to improve SFD programming. For many of these populations, sport provides more than a healthy lifestyle. It is impactful for fostering positive self-esteem and combatting societal issues which may include reducing crime, providing a pathway out of poverty, or challenging negative stereotypes.

Theme two (chapters 11-14) contained an exploration of women's experiences in SFD programming in addition to proposing a theory of empowerment helpful for the improvement or revision of SFD programs. Not only is this a timely and relevant discussion, but it provides an introduction to the conversations highlighting underrepresentation in theme three. The authors include case studies such as The Girl's Empowerment through Cricket (GET) program which aimed to increase the self-efficacy of girls by empowering them through cricket participation. This particular program included educational sessions as well as opportunities for female staff to undertake leadership and management roles. The authors also encouraged the work of the Go Sisters program in Zambia, which utilized sport to empower disadvantaged young women. This theme excelled at providing a critique of education through sport. From a higher education standpoint, the information in this section contains valuable case studies and examples for those involved in the design of sport governance curriculum. For program development, authors imply that in addition to considering the achievement of outcomes, practitioners should tailor sport to encompass a wide range of movement forms (dance, etc.), while providing culturally sensitive

forms (dance, etc.), while providing culturally sensitive curriculum. It is suggested that programs should challenge the position of women in society while also educating others in the community (men and boys) to further the overall impact. The topic of gender, sport, and livelihoods is also necessary for understanding restrictions surrounding women's mobility. While both SD and SFD face challenges in creating employment, women often have dual roles which include domestic commitments in addition to income generation. The discussion here is important for issues of pay inequity, cultural restrictions, and the potential for home-based income activities. While the conclusion of this theme excels at providing direct, causal links between sport participation and health benefits, one recommendation would include an elaboration of culturally appropriate methodologies within the promotion of sport, health, and physical activity.

Theme three (chapters 15-20) includes the necessary discussion of the development of sport regarding the underrepresentation of females in leadership roles such as coaching and officiating. Chapter 15 begins with specific concerns regarding female high-performance athlete development. Concerning SD, the authors emphasize the importance of youth-level referees and umpires as fundamental to both sport systems and high-performance athlete development. Moreover, just as the goal of SD is to use sport as a tool for positive change, this section provided evidence of these benefits through programs that emphasize both gender equity and improving diversity. Future female coaches will benefit from an understanding of the gendered nature of coaching and the liberal feminism surrounding the development of women coaches. Similarly, this theme highlighted the need for sport programs to enforce policies and strategies to minimize bullying, performance detriments, and sexual harassment. As with these policies, the authors focus on debates surrounding the regulation of high testosterone in international women's sport. The research and insight here are not only useful for providing education but also awareness as groups such as the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) and the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) have already taken steps to demand change from sports' governing bodies.

As the authors highlight in this text, there are certainly improvement opportunities for solving current inequality issues in sport. Not only does this text support the international intersectionality of female roles in the industry, but it also provides a conceptualization of the two arms of sport development. While other textbooks and resources separately highlight sport development or the roles and marginalization of females in sport, this text

uniquely connects and combines the two topics in an applicable and pertinent format. As it is coherent and understandable in nature, sections of this text may be valuable for supplemental discussion within undergraduate or graduate settings in sport management or sport governance courses. Additionally, researchers and practitioners would benefit from the critical analysis and the application to theory and practice. As mentioned above, the book provides a variety of well-supported case studies that not only prompt future considerations but encourage feedback from global viewpoints. Lastly, regarding limitations, the authors openly admit to the need to apply updated frameworks to current concepts. A closing call to action reflects the work of Title IX, but draws attention to the recognition that participation and inclusion are the building blocks of sport development. Despite the ever-changing industry and persistent challenges of discrimination and inequality, this book delivers a respected overview of sport as a vehicle for female empowerment and societal change.