

# Rarely Have We Asked Why:

## Reflections on Canadian Women's Experience in Sport<sup>1</sup>

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It has taken a long time but there is a growing interest among feminists in sport. On a practical level we see the exciting growth of alternative structures and programs designed specifically by and for women such as the Women's Sports Foundation in the USA, women's running clubs, wilderness groups offering outdoor experiences exclusively for women, specialized magazines like *Women's Sports* and *Fighting Women*, and the feminist health movement which is finally beginning to take an active interest in physical fitness.

Feminist literature, on the other hand, is virtually devoid of discussions about sport. This should not be surprising since no matter what the intellectual tradition, it has been fashionable to consider sport so trivial and insignificant that to waste time and words studying it was perceived as a senseless pursuit. Elizabeth Janeway, for instance, suggests in *Man's World, Woman's Place*, that just as women's skills once necessary for feeding and clothing mankind have deteriorated into hobbies, so too have men's survival skills and prowess degenerated into

sport. They have, she continues, become adult play which imitate the realities of work and become a substitute for living.<sup>2</sup> No one denies that the very essence of sport and games is the sense of make-believe, spontaneity and freedom. In fact, one Canadian sportswriter has disparagingly labelled sports "the play-pen world" and the "toy universe." Despite its childish image, sport is incredibly pervasive, touching the existence of all individuals, male and female, at some point during their lives. Some grow to hate all forms of physical activity, others despise the crass commercialization of professional sport, but many find pleasure in maintaining a life-long fitness through some form of physical recreation. Feminists, however, even if they believe in its importance to one's general well-being, have not taken up the cause of sport and have, for the most part, dismissed discriminatory sporting practices as being unimportant compared to the real issues underlying the sexist nature of our society.

At the same time, most sportswomen and those in-

volved as professionals in physical education, the recreation and leisure fields have shown little interest in feminism and the women's movement in general. Beyond the apathy there is often antagonism, resentment and unfortunate misconceptions.

Why is it so important to ask "why" and not just simply accept the sporting world as it is and get on with it? Why not accept the fact that there are fewer status alternatives available to women athletes, hence far fewer rewards (both psychological and material) and considerably less access to power and prestige? To do so is to accept a double standard for male and female athletes. Why, for example, must a professional woman athlete possess attractive features and a curvaceous body before she can benefit from lucrative product endorsements? We do not ask the same of our male athletes because, quite simply, they often become demi-god heroes regardless of how handsome or ugly they may be. Why, for example, are there no women members of the International Olympic Committee? Why, for example, do girls and women in contrast to boys and men, participate less frequently in fewer numbers in a limited range of sports and physical activities? Are boys more naturally predisposed to physical activity? I would suggest not. But time and time again, we as sportswomen accept all this and never, never, ask why it should be. To question the sex structure of sport is to challenge the very nature of the sex structure of society. It is, therefore, vitally important to ask "why."

What I wish to argue in this paper is that Canadian women have naively and complacently accepted their second-class status in the sporting world. For much of the past one hundred years there was little we could do about it given the restrictive and reactionary attitudes towards female involvement in an androcentric and patriarchal sports world. The sporting qualities and achievements of the dominant sex tended to provide the absolute evaluative criteria against which women were judged (except in those sports which possess obvious aesthetic qualities where it often worked in reverse—

figure skating, for instance). Rarely was women's sport evaluated as something worthwhile in its own right without the illegitimate and irrelevant comparisons to the qualitatively different sporting achievements of males.

When describing and discussing women's experience in sport, it is important to understand what is meant by sport. Sport sociologists and philosophers agonize over the nature and precise meaning of sport, and are often more confusing than elucidating.<sup>3</sup> In this discussion, I use the term "sport" in the way I feel most people use it; that is, in its everyday sense. Quite simply, sport is a spectrum of physical activities which range from the more recreational, unorganized pursuits of uncommitted individuals through to competition at the highest levels, requiring a high degree of intense commitment and arduous training. The problem with this everyday use of sport as a generic term, in other words as something all encompassing and collective, is that a certain refinement is missing, and no distinction is made between the social reality of sport and the relationship of the individual to this reality. For example, much of the reality of sport is irrelevant to women. With the exception of golf, tennis and figure skating, very few women athletes have the opportunity to become professionals, earning their living on the circuit. Much sport on television is irrelevant to women—Canadian and American football, ice hockey, basketball, soccer, auto racing, boxing, etc. There is, therefore, both a subjective and an objective dimension to an individual's involvement in what we call sport with its recreational-competitive continuum. Subjectively, and there is no difference here for males and females, individuals define for themselves the relative primacy of recreation and competition for any particular sport situation, or indeed their approach to sport in general. Objectively, there is an orderly hierarchy of competition which is pyramidal in structure. Whereas men are free to occupy all levels of the hierarchy, women often have a difficult time climbing to the top rung and in many sports it is completely impossible. It has been this way since the beginning of organized sport for women.

Let us briefly review the history of women's sport in Canada over the past one hundred years. The backdrop will provide a basis for understanding why the sports world is so slow to change and why Canadian sports-women themselves have been even slower in pushing for reform.<sup>4</sup>

The 1860s and 1870s saw the beginning of female participation in Canadian sport, albeit extremely limited and somewhat passive—fox hunting, tobogganing, ice skating, roller skating, swimming and croquet were the only acceptable activities simply because voluminous skirts and Victorian ideas kept women out of many more. Except for riding habits and bathing suits, women's sportswear was unheard of in this era, and so the enthusiastic skater or tobogganist was often at a loss for suitable and practical apparel. Croquet, proclaimed by *Harper's Weekly* as "the greatest outdoor game for women yet invented," presented little problem since the appeal of the game lay in its courting value which no doubt was greatly enhanced by the occasional glimpse of an ankle.

The real beginning of women's sport in Canada occurred in the last two decades of the nineteenth century; everything that had gone on before was merely a prelude with its purpose not in exercise but innocent amusement. There was a revolution in women's fashions, the new styles often the outcome of participation in vigorous activity. The heyday of crinolines and corsets was fast disappearing; and in their place came the bicycle skirt, the bloomer costume and the golf suit; ladies' sportswear had finally become necessary and fashionable. There was tremendous growth in organizations and clubs, sport being no exception. Middle-class women in organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1883), the National Council of Women (1893), and the Women's Institutes (1897) found themselves actively drawn into some area of social reform and many more into the suffrage movement. Through suffrage they sought the power to achieve reforms in family, property and labour laws affecting women and children.<sup>5</sup> Among

other things, the National Council of Women took up the cause of sport, declaring: "To the young, the strong, and the rich, the choice is wide and varied; but to the poor, the busy and the woman who is no longer young, the problem of athletics on ever so modest a scale is a difficult one."<sup>6</sup> Particularly in Eastern Canada where access to the major urban centers was easier, women's sports clubs mushroomed and championships were instituted. As educational opportunities for young women expanded so did their interest in exercise and physical culture.

The safety bicycle was seen as the great liberator and did more to increase women's participation in sport than anything else in this era. As the *Toronto Globe* pointed out, "one bicyclist wearing an advanced costume does more towards furthering dress reform than a score of theorists, writers and lecturers."<sup>7</sup> Luckily most women did not succumb to the ridiculous suggestions of permanent physical damage and immorality, to say nothing of the controversy surrounding the contentious bloomers; rather it brought them to realize that more vigorous sports like tennis and racquets, basketball, ice hockey, curling and golf were all within their capabilities.

Throughout the early 1900s the so-called "modern" woman, no longer bound by Victorian ideas but still hesitant to show her ankles, ventured into most forms of physical activity. The only sports which remained strictly forbidden were those where body contact was possible and, if an invasion was imminent, the men made rules to prevent it. Women could compete so long as they did so with their own kind. In 1914 the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union was resolute in its determination to prevent women from competing or giving athletic exhibitions in games or meets where men or boys were entered. But despite the voices of protest from medical authorities, less liberal minded women and, of course, the male sporting fraternity, the modern sportswoman had become a reality by World War I. The mushrooming of clubs, organizations, unions and leagues demonstrated that women were seeking greater control in their sporting

affairs. Power, however, was as illusive as ever since most facilities were controlled by the men's clubs and organizations; women members, although usually welcome, had little control over the policies affecting them.<sup>8</sup>

Although wide-scale mobilization of the civilian population in Britain during the Great War (1914-1918) enabled large numbers of women to enter occupations or engage in activities previously impossible because of their sex, Canadian women did not experience the same magnitude of freedom. Certainly there was a growing labour shortage as the war dragged on and eventually women were recruited to solve the problem. For those who did not have to or want to work, the war effort took on a voluntary nature essentially directed at maintaining the home front. Since by and large these were the same women who had the leisure and inclination to participate in sport, their involvement became almost a patriotic duty. Local tennis and golf tournaments, and occasionally swimming exhibitions, were sponsored in aid of the Red Cross or war orphans. Although most national and provincial championships were cancelled, a few international matches went ahead and contributed financially to the war effort. Rather than showing a marked decline due to the war, women's sports continued to flourish and in some ways benefited for it was "up to women to carry the sacred torch of sport in the absence of men bent on sterner sport."<sup>9</sup>

By the 1920s, 15.5 per cent of the labour force in Canada consisted of women with only a small percentage increase since the turn of the century. Remarkably few married women worked (3 per cent).<sup>10</sup> Marriage, coupled with work, at least among middle-class women, was rarely possible if not by reason of legislation then because it simply was not done. Women were segregated in job ghettos, as they are today, primarily in personal and domestic service, as teachers and nurses, in clerical work and sales, and in the clothing and textile industry. Two contradictory images of women existed simultaneously. On the one hand she was lauded as the ideal homemaker, feminine and maternal, morally superior to men

but requiring protection; on the other hand there was a concern that too much education and work experience might destroy her maternal instincts.<sup>11</sup>

This contradiction between the feminine/maternal/weak and the masculine/efficient/strong image of women was also reflected in women's sport in the 1920s and early 1930s. Some have called it the Golden Age of sports activity for Canadian women.<sup>12</sup> Although this is probably an over-statement, in some ways it is correct. It was an era when Canada produced world champion speed skaters, basketball teams, swimmers . . . and dominated women's track and field at the 1928 summer Olympics in Amsterdam. Spectators flocked to support women's basketball and baseball; women's teams were sponsored by private patrons; radio stations carried women's sporting events live; and several newspapers employed women sportswriters who wrote special columns on women's sport. Organizations governing women's sport were either reorganized or founded and flourished as women strove for autonomy in their sports. But at the same time as girls and women were striving to escape their athletic chains of the past and revel in this newfound freedom, many influential voices of alarm were being heard. Most of this concern came from the United States where in 1923 the Women's Division of the National Amateur Federation condemned the then current emphasis on competition for women and stated flatly that it would henceforth support the "fun for all and all for fun" philosophy behind girls' and women's sports. Physical Education in Canada in the 1920s was in its infancy and many women in the field, particularly in Eastern Canada, went to the United States to attend graduate schools or conferences.<sup>13</sup> They too began to have doubts about the desirability of highly competitive sports and unfortunately we have suffered from this legacy of doubt for over fifty years.

As the mid-1930s approached and the Depression was at its worst, there were signs that the so-called Golden Age of women's sport in Canada was over. The reactionary attitudes towards competition for females were

taking hold; and commercialized professional sport for men was on the rise, meaning that boys' and men's sports were given priority of access to public facilities; spectators were drawn away from women's games to the exclusively male professional sports like ice hockey, football and baseball; it became increasingly difficult to find sponsors for women's teams, and the newspapers were turning their attention away from both men's and women's amateur sport.<sup>14</sup>

World War II took its toll on women's sports as it certainly did men's. Although many of the leagues continued, nobody took it very seriously. All international competition was cancelled until the 1948 Olympics in London. During the war, the mobilization of women into industry was merely "for the duration." In the immediate post-war era, through government legislation and simple peer pressure, married women were forced to return to the home and unmarried women were channelled into the traditionally female occupations.

From the immediate post-war period until the early 1960s, Canada could boast of some highly successful international women competitors, although all in individual sports. In 1948, Barbara Ann Scott won the Olympic, World and European figure skating titles. A sixteen-year old student, Marilyn Bell, became the first person of either sex to swim across Lake Ontario in 1954. Whereas Canadian women won but a single medal in the summer Olympics between 1952 and 1964, they were a force to be reckoned with in the Winter Games—skiers Lucille Wheeler and Anne Heggtveit, and figure skaters Suzanne Morrow, Frances Dafoe, Barbara Wagner, Maria Jelinek, Petra Burka, Debbie Wilkes all were medal winners or world champions. By force of circumstances countries like Canada, Australia and the United States had not suffered nearly as much as Great Britain and the European countries from the deprivation and chaos of war; therefore, this sudden splurge of international success they all experienced should not be surprising. For women, it was also a time of family consolidation, suburbia and, as one writer put it, "embody-

ing the ideal female existence according to the prevailing ideology."<sup>15</sup> In sport, the ideology held true to form. Women could compete without derision and in the international arena in those activities which were either traditionally acceptable, such as swimming, tennis, golf, athletics and skiing, or appropriately feminine, such as figure skating and gymnastics. Marriage and family were the expected outcome after a short-lived athletic career.

Where do things stand today? The Canadian sports environment is very much dominated by professional male sport, specifically ice hockey and football, and to a lesser extent baseball. Media coverage, a good deal of which is American in origin, is almost entirely about professional sport. Amateur sport, and by implication much women's sport, is relegated to a position of minor importance if and when it receives coverage. On the other hand, a major American television network recently gave several weeks' coverage to some ridiculous pseudo-athletic contests between cheerleaders from the American football league. There are only a handful of professional women athletes in Canada—a few golfers and tennis players and very recently a few softball and basketball players have joined newly formed professional leagues in the United States. At the international level, Canadian women continue to be successful, in fact, more successful than their male counterparts, particularly in the Commonwealth and Pan-American, and less so the Olympic Games. However, at the college and university level where quite often in Canada large amounts of money are budgeted for sport, men's teams receive more attention, funding, coaching and better access to facilities.

At the school and community level, although there has been a rapid expansion in Canada in recreational opportunities for girls, funds are not divided equally, public recreation programs still provide more competitive sports and leagues for boys than girls, and the integration of boys and girls on teams is often rejected arbitrarily. Although age group swimming, for example, is totally integrated, many similar programs such as ice

hockey, football and baseball, are no more than breeding grounds for the professional leagues with girls virtually always excluded. Nevertheless, women are starting to combat this problem with sports of their own. Women's field hockey, for example, has become sufficiently well organized in the last few years to sponsor junior development programs, clinics and leagues. Ringette (similar to ice hockey but without the physical contact) has been designed specifically for girls and now provides athletic competition for thousands across the country.

Little has been said throughout this discussion about adult women's physical recreation and leisure. From a historical standpoint, what women did in their everyday existence was rarely recorded, leaving us with very little information about women's leisure time activities in the past. As for the present, we are only now beginning to gather information and to understand women's leisure patterns.<sup>16</sup> It is also extremely difficult to make any valid cross-cultural comparisons about leisure activities since national studies, when they are carried out, often collect and analyze information in different ways. Despite the problems, it is remarkable how similar women's physical recreation and leisure patterns are, at least in western countries.<sup>17</sup> The constraints imposed by marriage, family and possibly work (over forty per cent of all married women in Canada are in the labour force) are very real to women who, in many cases, place *their* interests and leisure pursuits far behind, if not to the point of total exclusion, their commitments to the maintenance of a household. What is particularly tragic, is that often when married women with families do pursue their own interests, they feel guilty for doing so. On the bright side, something seems to be happening recently as more and more women, particularly middle-class professionals, are showing an increasing interest in a fitness-oriented lifestyle.

What is being done to break down the ideological, legal and institutional barriers preventing girls and women from participating fully and without criticism in competitive and recreational sport? Within the Canadian

context, women in sport have been the focus of several conferences beginning with the National Conference on Women and Sport in Toronto in May, 1974, followed by provincial conferences, for example, in Ontario (June, 1974), Saskatchewan (October, 1975 and March, 1977), British Columbia (October, 1975), and Alberta (January, 1977). The most recent national conference held at Simon Fraser University in March, 1980, focussed on *The Female Athlete*.

A few Status of Women Councils in Canada have made women's sport a special area of concern, beginning with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970), the implementation of which are monitored by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Provincial advisory councils on the status of women currently exist in six of the ten provinces (Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and P.E.I.) but, to my knowledge, only three of these councils have placed any special emphasis on the female in sport, physical education and/or recreation. The Ontario Status of Women Council has published a booklet entitled *About Face: Towards a Positive Image of Women in Sport*. The Conseil du statut de la femme in Quebec has paid particular attention to sport and leisure in their recent and extensive study of Quebec women (*Pour les Québécoises: égalité et indépendance, 1978*). Similarly, a Nova Scotia task force on the status of women made several substantive recommendations concerning the physical health, sports, recreation and leisure needs of Nova Scotian women.

Again at the federal level, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women released the Canadian government's intentions regarding the "World Plan of Action" adopted in 1975 when the United Nations proclaimed 1975-1985 as the Decade of Women. The plan outlined the federal government's "commitment to the women of Canada to equalize opportunities and ensure progress through a series of specific changes to government legislation, policies and programs."<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch's "plan of action"

does not differ substantially from their reply in 1974 to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women as to what they had done concerning the original recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. In sum, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch of the federal government has made virtually no progress in the last five or six years towards doing anything it had promised regarding women in sport.

The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER) has recently (1978) published a "Position Paper on Women and Sport." After opening with several platitudes about equality and equal opportunity, the prevailing conditions which prevent equal treatment for females in physical activity and sport, and the need to change existing attitudes and beliefs, the CAHPER paper presents a series of recommendations to the various levels of government, to sport and recreation agencies, to educational authorities, to status of women groups, and to individuals *which are virtually word for word* from the Report of the National Conference on Women and Sport held in May, 1974. Therefore, even CAHPER's position and thinking (presumably reflecting the profession) has not advanced beyond a series of recommendations made six years ago, some of which have already been implemented by the agencies to which they were originally addressed.

Unfortunately, little of the resurgent interest in women's sport appears to have filtered through to the Canadian university scene and, more specifically, to the faculties, schools and departments of physical education, recreation, athletics, kinesiology, human kinetics, leisure studies, kinanthropology or whatever they may be called. It is true that a few universities have seen fit to offer special courses and programs related to women in sport, and a few have conscientiously sought to remedy some of the inequities in budgeting, coaching and facilities within inter-collegiate athletic programs. But, to my knowledge, none has examined the role and status of women in their physical education department and in the field in general, or the lack of appropriate role

models for female students in physical education, or the substantial influence physical education departments could have on changing the many sex-stereotyped physical activities taught to females within the school setting, or the very damaging effects of "intellectual sexism" which is rampant in physical education, texts, courses and curricula.<sup>19</sup> I would stress, however, that the blame for this lack of concern within the university setting does not lie entirely on the broad shoulders of the male-dominated power structure of university physical education. Women make up approximately twenty-three per cent of the Canadian university physical education faculty and have generally contributed little to raising their own consciousness and that of their male colleagues to the level at which action seems appropriate, necessary and beneficial to all. In other words, women in physical education in Canada, with few exceptions, have been only vaguely aware that there is a women's movement and have done little to inform themselves as to how feminism might be relevant to improving their own position and that of the girls and women they teach.

Although in Canada the usefulness of legal channels in establishing equal opportunity for girls and women in sport is quite limited, there are some who nevertheless have sought restitution through the courts. These cases are useful, however, more because they draw attention to the issues surrounding sex discrimination in sport than they assist in promoting justice for all. In Canada, unlike the United States which has a constitutionally entrenched guarantee of equality under the law, there is statutory protection from discrimination only under provincial and federal human rights legislation. Canadians are protected from discrimination on the basis of their sex (also race, colour, age, religious beliefs, country of origin, ancestry, marital status, and sometimes physical disability, sexual orientation and political beliefs) in employment, accommodation and services or facilities generally available to the public. The majority of sport cases thus far have involved girls wishing to play in all-male leagues such as ice hockey, soccer and softball, where the regulations of an amateur sports governing

body may restrict participation to "every male person." These cases are brought forward under the denial, on the basis of sex, of the "services or facilities" provision of all human rights legislation. The legal arguments make it clear that sport-related cases under such provisions had never occurred to the original drafters. This is in marked contrast to human rights legislation in Great Britain and Australia where such "problems" were predicted and exemptions dealing with competitive sporting activity were incorporated directly into the relevant sex discrimination Acts.

In Canada, these cases present an embarrassing legal problem, borne out by the fact that several of them have had to be heard at three different judicial levels. They have also been slow, taking three to four years to be resolved. Given the critical ages of the complainants, the matter is usually academic by the time a final verdict comes down. They are instructive, however, because they focus attention on the sometimes ludicrous arguments brought forward by defense counsels to maintain the status quo: boys would play "softer" if girls were on the field or ice rink in view of the young male's upbringing and chivalrous attitude towards girls; sex-segregated sports are better and more suitable; fears of "invasions of bodily privacy"; boys' greater size would put girls in a precarious and dangerous position (despite the fact girls are usually bigger than boys at the ages we are talking about here!). They are perhaps best summed up by a male hockey official who, when asked what harm a girl would do playing on their all-star team, stated emotionally:

I don't know. It's my personal opinion; I feel it in my heart. I don't believe it's appropriate and I don't feel it will do society any good.<sup>20</sup>

What these cases do is to bring public interest, concern and pressure to bear on eliminating unequal, sex-discriminatory sport and recreation programs. Many parents and coaches no longer blithely accept the lack of sport opportunities for their daughters. More important-

ly, sport and recreation agencies and organizations, most of whom are dependent on public facilities and funds, can no longer sustain the argument that they have no moral and legal obligation to provide equal opportunities for both sexes.

What can be done? The first step along the road to achieving power and personhood in sport is to recognize that the change cannot come only from within sport itself. Those interested in changing the sports world for the betterment of women must themselves become part of the more global feminist revolution. So often I have heard my female colleagues in sport and physical education say, "Oh, I'm not a women's libber or even a feminist, but I think . . ." and there follows a whole litany of "grievs and beefs" which challenge the very heart of the patriarchal sports world. More often I hear: "Heck, I've succeeded without any trouble in this so-called male world. I've never had any problems, so who needs this feminism stuff anyway?" Such attitudes are surely no longer acceptable. All women must develop a feminist consciousness in sport as in other issues.

For women actively involved in sport, no matter what the level, to question and ask "why" would be the first step towards developing a feminist consciousness. Why should toys and activities be sex-stereotyped? Why should there be sex-segregation and not integration in athletic programs? Why should girls and women have unequal access to funds and facilities within public sport and recreation programs? Why should it be the right of minor sports leagues to provide programs (in public facilities and with public money) for boys only? Why must there always be unequal representation among women within the organizational structure of sports where both sexes participate equally? Why do we need male "protectors" like the International Olympic Committee who refuse to allow women to run more than the 1500 meter race when thousands of women are showing themselves quite capable of running a 26 mile marathon? Why do we allow usually sensible people to rage against contact sports for females on the grounds that such ac-

tivity will irreparably damage, among other things, their naturally protected reproductive organs, whereas the fact that the exposed male genitals have to be protected is never considered problematic?

Once having asked questions such as these, the next step would be to take action. This will not always be easy given, for example, the nature of the Canadian legislative system. Unlike the United States where Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act exists (no one shall, *on the basis of sex*, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any educational program or activity receiving financial assistance from the federal government), we do not have in Canada a similar mechanism with which to rectify past injustices within our educational system. The effects of legislation like Title IX are dramatic, and the improvements and benefits to girls' and women's sport programs in the United States have been truly remarkable. It also produces problems since the price of parity is costly and women's sport programs often become carbon copies of male models which are sometimes neither rational nor particularly humane. Such legislation, however, allows for serious discussion of issues which may never get a hearing in Canada: single versus separate physical education classes and athletic teams; athletic scholarships; unequal expenditures; differences in regulations; recruiting procedures and practices; equality of opportunity in obtaining teaching, coaching and athletic administrative positions; merged versus separate structures; funding and salaries; and most important of all, differing philosophical beliefs among men and women in sport.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever action is taken must be undertaken within some sort of philosophical, indeed ideological, framework. The basis of feminism is a radical and revolutionary re-evaluation of the sex structure of our individual cultures, that hierarchy of the sexes based on gender roles and statuses, and until women in the sporting world recognize this, fundamental change at whatever the level will not be possible. A feminist should

not accept the notion that women although different are physically inferior to men and therefore require special consideration and protection. A feminist should refuse to accept the dogma that boys are more naturally predisposed to athletic activity than are girls. A feminist should challenge the stereotyping of human traits on a masculine/feminine dichotomy as having no useful function other than to accentuate the oppressive nature of our society for both females and males. A feminist should realize that play, games and sport are probably among the most potent oppressive agents of our society; paradoxically they are also among the greatest liberators.

#### NOTES

1. This paper is based on a keynote address given at the First National Conference on Women, Sport and Physical Recreation, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, January 20-23, 1980. The author is also grateful to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council for financial assistance during a 1979-1980 sabbatical leave.
2. Elizabeth Janeway, *Man's World, Woman's Place: A Study of Social Mythology* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), p. 265.
3. One of the best definitional analyses of sport is found in Chapter One of John W. Loy, Barry D. McPherson and Gerald Kenyon, *Sport and Social Systems* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978).
4. Much of the material in this section comes from my unpublished master's thesis, "A History of Women's Sport in Canada Prior to World War I," University of Alberta, 1968.
5. Introduction, in Linda Kealey (ed.), *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 1-14.
6. Elizabeth Mitchell, *The Rise of Athleticism Among Girls and Women, Report of the Third Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Council of Women of Canada* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1896), p. 106.
7. *The Globe*, 4 June 1895.
8. Marian I. Pitters-Caswell, "Woman's Participation in Sporting Activities as an Indicator of Femininity and Cultural Evolution in Toronto, 1910 to 1920," Unpublished master's thesis, University of Windsor, 1975.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
10. *Women at Work, Ontario 1850-1930* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), pp. 266-281.
11. Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s," in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (eds.), *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977).
12. See, for example, Jean Cochrane, Abby Hoffman and Pat Kincaid, *Women in Canadian Life: Sports* (Toronto, Fitzhenry

- and Whiteside, 1977), as well as S.F. Wise and Douglas Fisher, *Canada's Sporting Heroes* (Don Mills: General Publishing, 1974).
13. Helen Gurney, *A Century of Progress: Girls' Sports in Ontario High Schools* (Don Mills: Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations, 1979).
  14. Cochrane *et al*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-55.
  15. Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Penguin Books, 1975.
  16. For an excellent review of the available literature, see Margaret Talbot, "Women and Leisure," A State of Art Review for the U.K. Sports Council—Social Science Research Council Joint Panel on Sport and Leisure Research, 1979.
  17. See, for example, *Leisure—An Inappropriate Concept for Women?* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975) for Australian data; M. Ann Hall, "Sport and Physical Activity in the Lives of Canadian Women," in R.S. Gruneau and J.G. Albinson, *Canadian Sport: Sociological Perspectives* (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley, 1976) for Canadian data; M. Ann Hall, "Women and Physical Recreation: A Causal Analysis," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham (England), 1974 for British data; and Dorothy A. Richardson, "Women and Physical Activity: A Sociocultural Investigation of Primary Involvement," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1974 for American data.
  18. *Towards Equality for Women*, (Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Government of Canada, 1979), pp. 26-27.
  19. For more information on the status of academic women in physical education in Canada, see M. Ann Hall and Patricia A. Lawson, "Womansport: Implications of the Changing Roles of Women," Position paper written for the Second National Conference of the Canadian Council of University Physical Education Administrators, Brock University, May 9-12, 1979. For a discussion of intellectual sexism in physical education, see M. Ann Hall, "Intellectual Sexism in Physical Education," *Quest*, 31(2), 1979, pp. 172-186.
  20. Abby Hoffman, "Towards Equality for Women in Sport . . . A Canadian Perspective," *Momentum: A Journal of Human Movement Studies*, 4(2), Summer, 1979, pp. 1-15.
  21. See, for example, Patricia L. Geadelmann, Christine Grant, Yvonne Slatton, N. Peggy Burke, *Equality in Sport for Women* (Washington: AAHPER Publications, 1977).