

My name is Angela Riniker. I reside in Minnesota. I am a hurdler. I am a quarter-miler. Despite the fact that my days of competition have long since passed, I will always hold these distinctions; because I earned them.

I was a State Champion, I was an NCAA Division III National Champion, I trained for the Olympic Trials. Despite the fact that all I have to show for it are the photos and awards on my shelf, I will always hold these distinctions; because I earned them.

My sport, my races were the center of my world, they were my identity. I was always the last one out of the weight room, I was the last one off the track, I was the one doing one extra 400 at the end of a grueling workout that you never thought you would survive. I was the one who was always in Coach's office riddled with fear that I wasn't doing enough and I was the one calling him the day after a meet to break down my performance in each race. All I wanted was to prove to myself, and others I suppose, that I was the best and that no one loved the 400 meter hurdles more than I did...that would simply be impossible. I feel confident in saying you can ask anyone who knows me and any of my former teammates who the toughest, most dedicated, committed and passionate athlete was that they trained and competed with and my name would be at the top of the list.

The most gratifying, rewarding, heart-breaking, life-defining moments of my life happened on that track. The most sacred friendships I have were made on that track. The entire trajectory of my life was determined on that track.

I could easily be describing the story belonging to thousands of other young girls and women. THIS is why I am now so passionate about saving the integrity of girl's and women's sports that I get goosebumps talking about it. I get angry. I think, how dare you try to take this story away from any young girl in Junior High or High School. How dare you try and take this story away from a woman in college. How dare you try and take this story away from a woman vying for a place on the world stage. Do you know what we have sacrificed? Do you know that our sport pulses through our veins? Do you know that this story could be ripped away from us by thousandths of a second? We earned our spot on that track. We succeed because there is a level playing field. That needs to be protected. That needs to be honored. In my opinion, any woman who doesn't agree isn't and never was serious about her sport.