

I am an almost 62 year old amateur powerlifter who took up the sport in my late 50's. I currently hold Minnesota state records in Women's Masters II and III which are age divisions in the USA Powerlifting (USAPL) federation. It seems serendipitous as other than casually playing co-ed bar volleyball in my 30's and a few women's golf leagues in my 40's I have not participated in any competitive sports since high school in the 1970's.

I attended a small rural grade school in the mid to late 1960's. There were virtually no organized girls sports back then, especially at the grade school level, and really not even at the high school level. I never gave a thought to girls "sports" in those days because there really weren't any. However, being naturally athletic, I played for fun and played to win. I was always one of the first chosen for any dodgeball, kickball team or whatever else we ever played in gym class or at recess. I was always the fastest kid in my class, winning every foot race against any boy, all the way through the 6th grade.

Things really changed for girls in general and for me in particular in the fall of 1973. After the passing of Title IX, my school started its first girls swim team and then girls track the following spring. I was shocked at how fast the boys had become in the 3 years between 6th and 9th grades. The boys and girls track teams practiced together and I certainly discovered I wouldn't be winning any sprints against boys anymore. But all through high school I competed in girls swimming and track meets. I won ribbons and coin sized medals, and saw my name in tiny print in the sports results in the local newspaper. Those years were so much fun and very fulfilling. However, there was not much pressure or encouragement to pursue "sports" after high school in those early days, and frankly it didn't even occur to me to try.

Much has changed in the last 45 years. We know how much emphasis is placed on sports today--it's big business after all. Competitive female sports have afforded countless girls and women college scholarships; state, national and world competitions and records; careers in sports, etc.

We know there are obvious and vast physical differences between males and females, even in the 6th grade when a girl can beat any boy in a 50 meter sprint. It saddens me to think that in the future, if we continue down this path of allowing transgender women (male bodies) to take the places of young girls and women on sports teams, the sports careers of many talented females will never make it more than a few years past the 6th grade, if at all.

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