

# Women's Pages and Sports Journalism History: Discrimination and Innovation in the Pre-Title IX Years



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**Abstract:** For decades, women journalists were restricted to the women's pages of newspapers. They were not allowed into the sports pages - but it did not prevent them from covering sports. In their women's sections, they covered athletic events that were otherwise ignored. In doing so, they exposed sports to an audience that may not have been reading the sports section. In addition, the women's page editors who tried to cover men's sports often experienced discrimination. They shined a light on marginalization and documented what many women in sports and sports journalism experienced. This presentation focuses on the sports content in the women's pages in the 1940s through the 1960s.

## **Research Question:**

How were sports covered in the women's pages of newspapers in the World War II years and beyond.

## **Method:**

Examining American women's pages at metropolitan newspapers across the country in the 1950s and 1960s.

## **Conclusion:**

The women's pages of newspapers represented women in sports before Title IX. These reporters also exposed the sexist treatment they endured by covering sports.

## **Findings:**

**Reporting:** News of Maggie Savoy's work as a women's page reporter became news in 1959 when she was interviewing New York Yankee Manager Casey Stengel. She was transcribing the interview in shorthand. He stopped the interview when he realized that his actual words were being taken down verbatim, telling her "sports writers don't do that." A report of the incident ran on the national Associated Press wire service.

Miami News women's page reporter Rollene Saal was assigned to cover the 1959 Patterson-Johansson World Heavyweight Championship fight and write about what she saw: "That turned out to be Patterson's devout mother, her lips moving in prayer for her son, and then the Big Swede himself, handsome in his stained robe, who brushed so close that I could not only smell his sweat but I saw the color of his fear."

**Football:** When *Milwaukee Sentinel* women's page editor Dorothy Kincaid retired, she shared this memory of being banned from the press box during the 1963 Rose Bowl when she traveled to California with the University of Wisconsin Badgers football team. Her assignment was to write a color piece about the parade and game. She had tried to make advance plans to cover the game knowing she would likely not be allowed in the press box due to her gender. The plans fell through and she asked if she could have space to file her story. Instead, she had to file her story from a public phone booth under the stadium as the University of Southern California marching band was practicing nearby.

Nebraska women's page editor Marjorie Paxson graduated during World War II and was able to work at a wire service because so many men were away in the service. She was allowed to cover everything but football games and executions in the 1940s.

**Golf:** Betty Jaycox was the *Beacon Journal* women's editor when she was banned from the press tent during the 1960 PGA Championship at the Firestone Country Club. She wrote: "I wear a big red press badge on my lapel, my car windshield has a green press sticker so large that I can scarcely see around it to drive. I can buy 'press' coupons for eating purposes, but I can't go in the press tent. Why? Because I am a woman. Now did you ever hear anything so downright laughable? I never knew I was so dangerous. Here I am, assigned to write PGA stories to tell about the crowd, about the wives of players, about the color of the scene, about the interest women have in a game that probably has as many women devotees as men, and I have no place to write, no spot for a typewriter, no hook for messages. Why? Because men sports writers decided in the historic past that golf is a man's game, and that no woman journalist will ever clutter up the confines of their cluttered sanctuary."

**Women's Sports:** North Dakota women's page editor Doris Eastman's section covered women's golf in the 1950s: "I do believe that if we hadn't publicized it in the first place, that women's golf wouldn't have gotten as far as it did go. In those days, there were very few items about women's sports in the sports page."

## **References:**

Kimberly Voss, *Re-Evaluating Women's Page Journalism in the Post-World War II Era: Celebrating Soft News* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

Kimberly Voss, *Women Politicking Politely: Feminists Making a Difference in the 1960s and 1970s* (Lexington Books, 2017)



# An Exploration into the Perceptions of Physical Fitness and Exercise Held by Pre-service Teachers

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## Introduction

The prevalence of metabolic diseases and obesity along with the related comorbidities continues to expand despite orthodox dietary and physical activity recommendations from leading health and medical organizations. The obesity epidemic and the wave of metabolic diseases associated it may require the assistance of schools to help alleviate this health crisis. The K-12 classrooms offer opportunities to foster health, food, and physical literacies. However, to implement strategies to develop these literacies, teachers must possess competency in health, food, and physical literacies. Thus, there is a need to explore and describe the physical fitness and exercise perceptions held by pre-service teachers.

## Purpose

This pilot study surveyed: pre-service teachers' perception of physical fitness and exercise. The implications of this study may be used to modify the curriculum and instruction in health education, physical education, and life science education courses that are part of the teacher certification program. Moreover, the findings from this study may be considered at a larger scale by including specific coursework that advances physical activity knowledge, skills, and affect in teacher education programs. These objectives are magnified due to the potential of teacher healthy lifestyle habits modeling.

## Participants

These students were enrolled in Life Science Studies which is an integrated lecture/laboratory course emphasizing principle areas of the life sciences and their applications in society and to science education. This course is a prerequisite for the teacher education program who are pursuing EC-6 or 4-8 teaching certification. Seventy-one students participated in this pilot study. Ninety-nine percent were female, and the majority were Hispanic. Participants in the 21 to 25-year-old category accounted for two-thirds of the student age.

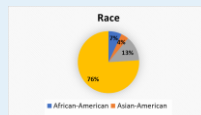


Figure 1. The racial makeup of the pre-service teachers.

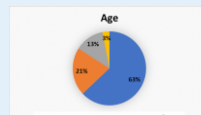


Figure 2. The age of the pre-service teachers.

## Methods

Students completed an online questionnaire on the first day of class before any discussion on health, food, and physical activity habits. In addition, a constant-comparative method was utilized to identify and classify critical elements in participant responses.

## Results

### The Meaning of Physical Fitness

- Generically perceived as being active or exercise.

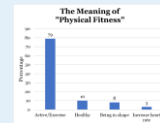


Figure 3. The meaning of "physical fitness" held by pre-service teachers.

### Sports Enjoyment and Participation

- The majority of students enjoyed sports in high school and college.
- The majority of students did not participate in sports in high school.
- The majority of students do not participate in sports in college.

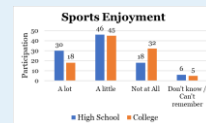


Figure 4. The enjoyment of sports in high school and college.

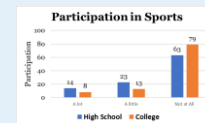


Figure 5. Sports participation in high school and college.

### Physical Activity Participation

- Walking and running were the most common forms of physical activities.
- The frequency of physical activity participation was sparse and infrequent.

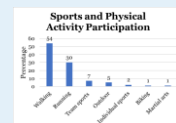


Figure 6. Current sports and physical activity participation.

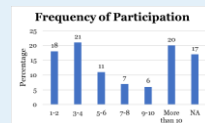


Figure 7. The number of times a participant engaged in a sport or physical activity during the last four weeks.

## Results

### Barriers to Participation

- Lack of skills/knowledge, family commitments, and lack of time were cited as barriers to participation in sports or physical activity.

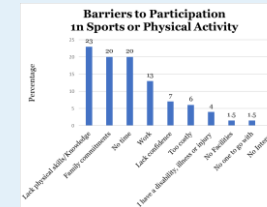


Figure 8. The barriers that limit participation in sports and physical activities.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Physical fitness is perceived generically – being active, moving, or exercising. The lack of specificity may be indicative of a superficial understanding of physical fitness and exercise. Most students associated physical fitness with caloric expenditure for weight management. However, no students cited a reduction in metabolic diseases, improved cognitive functioning, or increased spiritual or mental well-being. A cross-curricular approach in which health, food, and physical literacies are emphasized may provide a comprehensive understanding of the health status outcomes. Specifically, the synergistic effects of healthy lifestyle habits, dietary choices, and physical activity on cardiovascular, physical, and mental well-being should be part of the curriculum so that students can make informed decisions.

The physical activities the students engaged in were cardio-centric. This choice in activity participation is in line with the traditional emphasis on walking and running to improve health. Most students enjoyed watching sports and indicated a desire to be more active. However, only 20% of the participants were engaged in physical activity 10 or more times in four weeks. The “halo effect” may explain the disconnect between “enjoyment/motivation to pursue engagement” and “actual participation.”