

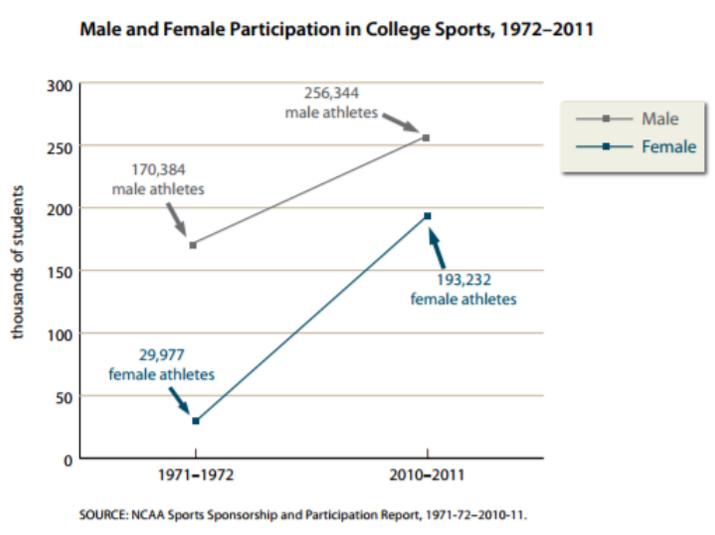
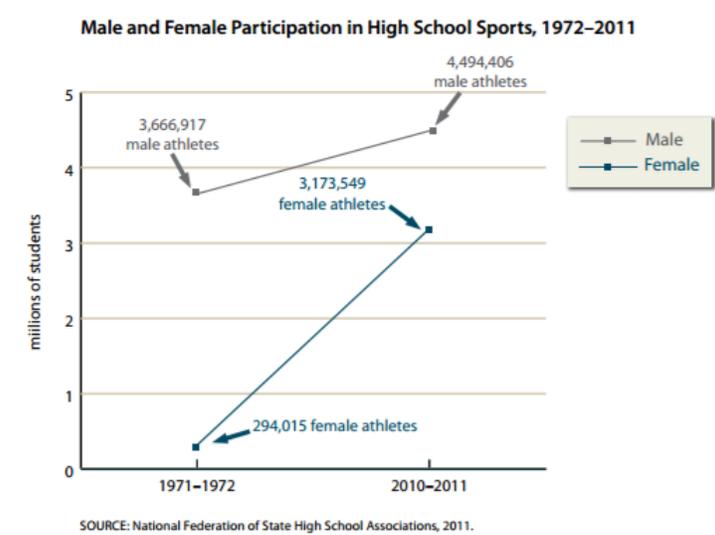
A Brief History of Women in Sports and How It Can Influence Change in Disc Golf



-Notes from the 2017 PDGA Women's Symposium by Sarah Hokom #34563

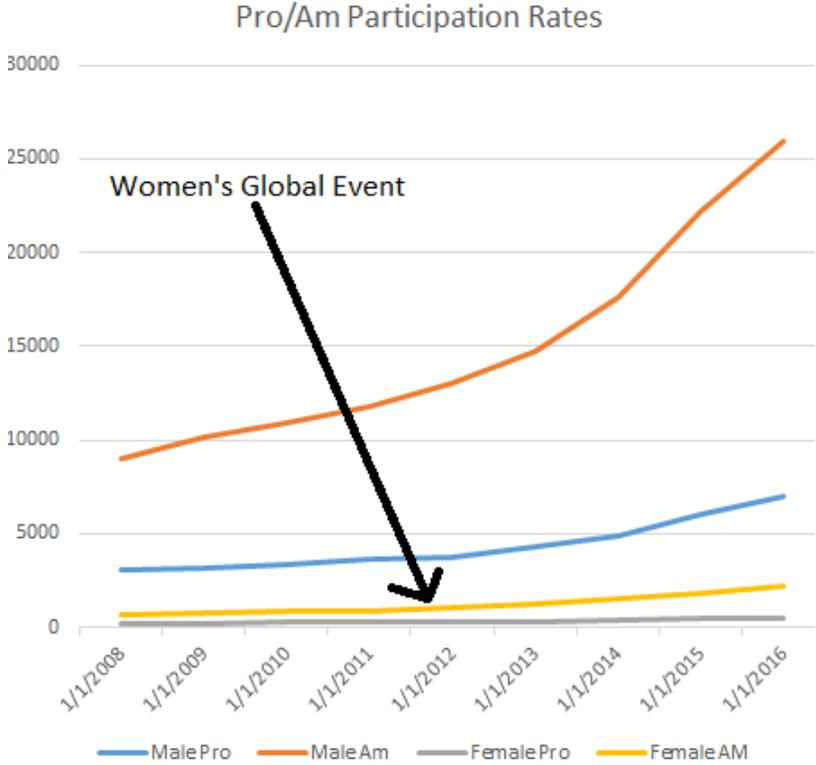
Title IX (passed in 1972) required that schools treat the sexes equally with regard to participation opportunities. Before Title IX, women were excluded from most athletic competitions in school.

Figure 1- High school and college sports participation rates by gender.



Over the last 40 years, high school rates increased from 7% before, to 41%! And college participation rates increased from just 2% to 43%!!! This proves that in women's sports, interest often reflects opportunity. This applies to disc golf as well.

Figure 2- Participation rates in disc golf



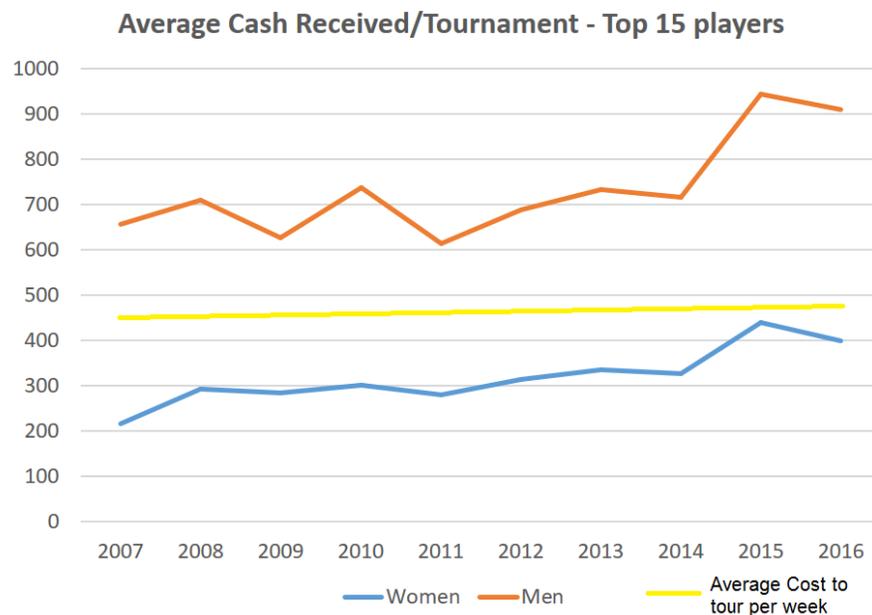
This graph shows participation rates of 4 main categories: Pro men & women, as well as Am men & women. The orange and blue lines show Am men and Pro men, and the yellow and green lines show Am women and Pro women. We see that the Am men's growth rate is very healthy, however, we see almost no growth in the pro women's division. Around 2012, the rates of Am women begin to increase and diverge from the pro women. This growth correlates with the creation of the Women's Global Event created by the wonderful PDGA Women's Committee. The success of this event increased the average growth rate from less than 10% per year, to almost 20% per year afterward. If we continue to increase numbers in women's leagues, continue to increase the number of women's only tournaments, and continue to host the Women's Global Event, we will continue to increase the numbers of amateur women playing. Unfortunately, we can see the rate of growth has flat-lined for pro women.

Three factors in disc golf that need immediate consideration in regard to women in disc golf: Access, Funding, and Media.

A. ACCESS: TDs need to start increasing the number of registration spots available by a minimum of 25%-30% in order to accommodate the growth happening on the women's side of the sport, as well as account for an increase at that rate. In addition, when an event receives increased prestige due to the inclusion as a National Tour, Pro Tour event or Major, 35%-50% more spots should be allocated to ensure that any qualified woman that wants to play, won't be turned away because of a registration cap. With so few women competing, every single additional female competitor makes a big difference.

B. FUNDING: The pro women's division has a top-heavy earning environment, which creates extremely **HIGH** turnover in the pro women's division and discourages players from moving up.

Figure 3-Payout comparison of top 15 men & women in disc golf



In this chart, we compared the prize money earnings of the top 15 men and women in the US over the last 10 years. The blue line at the bottom shows the average prize money earnings per week for the women & the orange line shows the average prize money per week of the top men. We see that the women are making around 40% of what the men make at the most elite level. The semi-straight yellow line present in the center of the graph represents the average cost to tour per week, which I calculated at \$470. In order for a professional disc golfer to earn more than they spend each week, they have to earn a wage above this line.

We see that the top 15 men are averaging above the cost to tour each year, while the top 15 women are averaging below the cost to tour. In 2016, the top 4 women, earned above the minimum roughly 3/4 of the time, however, no other US women outside the top 4, earned over the minimum more than 1/4 of the time. Some high profile female players earned under the minimum nearly every single tournament, and many times.....they earned nothing. The prize money available is only enough to support 4 women. In order to offset this, it is recommended that a multifaceted approach be taken.

1. **Sponsors** need to increase their overall support of their female players.
2. **Additional fundraising** measures should be explored to increase the prize pool in a way that specifically increases the number of players that can tour professionally. Examples of additional fundraising measures would be offering paid clinic opportunities to pro women, selling fundraiser discs for the women's purse, and offering paid entry fees and/or travel funds to pro women.
3. **Alternative payout distributions** should be explored to begin to offset the pay disparity. An example would be allowing sponsors to specifically earmark funds for certain divisions, like the women. A second example would be to create a payout curve that was less top-heavy, to distribute more prize money to finishers outside of the top 3. Another example would be offering more equitable amounts of sponsor-added cash to the women's pro divisions.

C. MEDIA: Media has the ability to CREATE or PREVENT interest in women's sports.

In Disc Golf, video production favors men at a rate of 5:1. In disc golf, as in many other sports, productions of women's rounds are often of lower quality, with less staff involved, less statistics, less commentary, fewer cameras and less personal story lines. Women should be given equal time in all media to ensure that future players know that this sport is equally accessible and rewarding to both men and women, regardless to what current participation rates are.

LONG TERM GOALS:

1. Create developmental programs specifically for girls. In order to promote future growth in women, we must create positive opportunities for girls and expose them to strong, female athletes to serve as role models.
2. Women need to take on Leadership Positions
 - a. Tournament Directing & League Directing
 - b. Governing Boards of both the PDGA and local clubs.
 - c. Teach Disc Golf and facilitate exposing schools to disc golf
 - d. Start the LPDGA

As an individual, you can help in a lot of ways:

- Spectate at a women's disc golf event
- Attend a women's clinic or meet n greets
- Watch & share videos
- Read, comment on & share news articles
- Reach out to media to encourage them to cover women's divisions
- Celebrate media when they do cover women's divisions
- Become a TD for a women's event or run a women's league
- Sponsor or Volunteer at a women's tournament
- Run for the board of your local club or for the PDGA board
- Support companies that support women, buy discs and gear with women's names on them or directly from them

Resources:

1. PDGA Participation Information-<http://www.pdga.com/demographics>
2. Examination of Gender Equity and Female Participation in Sport. *The Sport Journal* (2016)-<http://thesportjournal.org/article/examination-of-gender-equity-and-female-participation-in-sport/>
3. Progress and Promise: Title IX at 40 Conference, a White Paper. *Women's Sports Foundation*. (2012)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/equity-issues/progress-promise-title-ix-40/>
4. The Sports Industry. *Business Reference Services* (2016)-https://www.loc.gov/rr/business/BERA/issue3/issue3_main.html
5. Addressing the Needs of Female Professional and Amateur Athletes. *Women's Sports Foundation*. (2001)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/athletes/addressing-needs-female-professional-amateur-athletes/>
6. The Battle for Gender Equity in Athletics in Colleges and Universities, *National Women's Law Center*. (2011)-http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2011_8_battle_in_college_athletics_final.pdf
7. Pay Inequity in Athletics, *Women's Sports Foundation* (2015)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/equity-issues/pay-inequity/>

8. Go Out and Play - Entry Into Sports, Dropping Out of Sports-*Women's Sports Foundation* (2008)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/equity-issues/go-play-entry-sports-dropping-sports/>
9. Gender Equity in Athletics and Sports-*Feminist Majority Foundation*. (2014)-<http://www.feminist.org/sports/titleIXfactsheet.asp>
10. Evian Pay Equity Study. *Women's Sports Foundation* (1996)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/equity-issues/evian-pay-equity-study-1996-2/>
11. Women's Sports Facts-*Women's Sports Foundation*. (2011)-<https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/article-and-report/athletes/womens-sports-facts/>