

CASE STUDIES

IN SPORT MANAGEMENT

Special Issue on The Business of Women's Sport

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Evidence for the growth and momentum around the business of women's sport is prevalent. In February of 2022 alone, news has broken about how the USWNT have reached a \$24 million settlement in their long-standing lawsuit aimed at delivering equal pay to both the men and women within USA Soccer (Carlisle, 2022). Ratings for the USA vs. Canada Gold Medal women's hockey game at the Olympics had 3.54 million viewers in the US, which was higher than any regular season NHL game this season (Hruby, 2022a). In the first year since the NCAA women's basketball championship has been allowed to use the "March Madness" branding and have expanded the women's bracket to include 68 teams, the women's broadcasts sold out of ad revenue for the tournament (Hruby, 2022b). Looking beyond the headlines from early 2022, we see additional evidence of growth in areas like women's softball, where in 2021, the NCAA Women's College World Series averaged 59% more viewers than the Men's College World Series (Brennan, 2021). In 2021, the WNBA saw a 74% jump in viewership over the 2020 season which was an impressive jump considering they had also already jump 68% from 2019 into the 2020 season (Stone, 2021). Beyond ratings, we are also seeing women's sport organizations and women athletes lead societal conversations, evidenced for example by the WNBA's leadership in the Breonna Taylor and #BlackLivesMatter/#SayHerName.

While there are many indicators of growth and momentum around the women's sport industry, there are still limitations in the scholarship and education around women's sport. A content analysis of the Case Studies in Sport Management journal over the last decade revealed that while just under half of the cases focus on sport contexts that include both men and women, there are just four cases (3%) that focus solely on women. There is an opportunity to extend this library of cases focused on the business of women's sport to help educate future sport managers and infuse more of these women in sport contexts and organizations into the classrooms.

In 2019, Lough and Geurin edited the Handbook of the Business of Women's Sport, which included a wide range of chapters focused solely on women's sport. This book was the first of its kind to pull in literature from faculty experts on all areas of sport management and include the history of various women's leagues, insights on the consumer behaviors of women as fans, management and leadership within women's sport contexts and so forth. There is a need to expand the literature and curriculum developed around women's sport. This call also comes as we approach the 50 year anniversary of the passing of Title IX; a law that while passed in the US has had impacts around the world. As we reflect on this impact, we must also realize the work that is left to be done.

The aim of this special issue is to bring attention to the opportunities and the key considerations within the business of women's sport, by women as employees in the sport industry, or by women as fans. The insights and case scenarios established in this issue can serve as learning

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tools for undergraduate and graduate classrooms to expose students to examples beyond those traditionally offered by examining men's sport cases.

The scope of this special issue is broad in terms of curriculum, provided they focus on the context of women's sport. We encourage submissions that involve, but are not limited to, professional sport, intercollegiate athletics, youth sport, non-traditional sport (e.g. extreme sports), facilities and events, governing bodies, including associations and leagues, sport media, for both individual and team sports.

The range of topics covered in this special issue are diverse and can span sport management curriculum. Cases could focus on the marketing of women's sport with topics such as athlete or team branding, sponsorship, endorsements, activism, media coverage, communication, or could examine topics of the management and leadership structures within women's sport, the governance of new and existing leagues and federations, an exploration of the various stakeholders within women's sport including but not limited to coaches, athletes, officials, owners, front office staff, administrators, agencies, sponsors, media partners, broadcasters, and fans.

Examples of Cases: In this issue, we encourage a range of original and unique case studies focused specifically on the business of women's sport. Examples of these cases might include:

- Examining the sponsor portfolio among a new women's sport franchise
- Decision making around a new women's sport league including things like leadership structure, expansion decisions, facilities, partners
- Addressing the pay gap between men's and women's sport and opportunities and recommendations moving forward
- Exploring name, image, and/or likeness (NIL) opportunities among women athletes
- Investigating strategies to best communicate with women sport fans
- Trends and recommendations for brand development among new women's sport teams
- Assessing the challenges in creating exposure for women's sport
- The role that influencers play in women's sport marketing
- Selling women's sport to important stakeholders like sponsors and media partners
- Athletes as influencers and the role that social media plays for women athletes
- Exploring innovative broadcasting options for women's sport including digital streaming
- Addressing challenges faced among administrators, managers, coaches, officials, and athletes in women's sport contexts
- Identifying opportunities to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within women's sport
- Merchandising opportunities for women's sport or female sport fans

Notes for Prospective Authors: Submitted case studies should not have been previously published, nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. All case studies are refereed through a peer review process. A guide for authors and other information for submitting case studies are available on the *Author Guidelines* page:

<https://journals.humankinetics.com/page/authors/cssm>. Authors new to writing cases for CSSM

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are also encouraged to review recently published cases and/or contact the special issue editors for direction. When prompted during the submission process, please indicate that you would like your submission to be considered for the special issue on Innovation in Sport Management.

Important Dates: The deadline for submission is **Friday September 2, 2022 by 11:59 EST**

Questions: Questions regarding submissions to this special issue may be directed to the special issue editors:

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