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### The Inequality in Female Professional Sports

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# The Inequality in Female Professional Sports

By: Aileen Leano



# Where is their representation?

What had interested me about this topic initially was when I was trying to find the channel to watch Seattle Reign play and with an Xfinity remote, they have a button that shows all the current professional sports playing. I pressed the button but no women teams appeared on the screen, it was just men teams. Why don't women teams get any attention and appreciation? A University Wire Article mentioned that "Some will argue that men's and women's sports can never be treated equally because men's sports are so much more popular. If that's the case, we might ask ourselves why men's sports became more popular in the first place" (University Wire).



Why don't Americans support their women professional sport teams as much as we do with our men professional sport teams? Why don't women find as much success in this industry? Why are professional women's sports not as publicized? Why are men paid multiple times the amount as women?



**1,693 Women = 1 Man?**

## **GENDER PAY GAP**

In an Article by The Economist titled Better play, lesser pay; (Proper) football.(inequality in professional sports), they mention how although women professional sport teams perform better, they are paid less than men. They quote "It is common for female athletes to be paid less than men. The combined salaries of the 1,693 women playing in the top seven football leagues add up to \$41.6m, just slightly less than the \$41.7m salary paid to Neymar, a Brazilian forward, by Paris Saint-Germain. But football in America is unusual because the women's team is paid less than the men, despite more people tuning in to watch them" (The Economist). With this information, it takes 1,693 women to match one man's salary. Women are worth more.

# U.S. WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM LAWSUIT



In a 2019 Washington Post Article titled USWNT, USSF agree to mediation in gender-discrimination lawsuit after World Cup by Liz Clarke mentioned "All 28 members of the U.S. women's soccer team reached a tentative agreement to pursue mediation with their bosses, the U.S. Soccer Federation, after the Women's World Cup ends to resolve the gender-discrimination lawsuit they filed in March, a U.S. Soccer official confirmed Friday" (Liz Clarke). Their lawsuit was filed about three months before the World Cup and they argued that the USSF paid women less despite doing the same jobs as the U.S. men's national team. According to their lawsuit, between 2013 to 2016, women earned a maximum of \$4,950 per friendly, non-tournament game that they won and the men's national-team players earned an average of \$13,166 for the same thing.



# ABBY WAMBACH



Abby Wambach, a retired member for the U.S. women's soccer team mentioned in an interview by USA Today's Sports that there's a double standard in the way they celebrate victories. She also mentions that there's a stereotype and expectation that they're supposed to be polite, thankful and grateful for being at the world cup but she argues that they are now going to be unapologetic and confident and "celebrate their asses off" because they are allowed to do that. Personally, I agree with her because they shouldn't have to hold back to keep up with a "lady like" image.

# WNBA SALARIES



The inequality in women's professional sports is in the WNBA. I never see WNBA playoffs being promoted as much as NBA playoffs are. It's quite shaming to admit but most of the time, I don't even know when their season is happening or who wins the championship. I think this is due to the lack of representation they receive in media coverage. The WNBA has much fewer people who attend their games compared to the NBA where we see packed arenas. There's no surprise that the NBA players make more than the WNBA players but what surprises me is how big the wage gap is. In a 2018 comparison, according to Black Enterprise, it was found that WNBA salaries for the 2018 season had a minimum salary of \$41,222 and capped at about \$115,000 and according to High Post Hoops, their average salary was \$77,878. Compared to the NBA and according to Black Enterprise, the NBA had a minimum salary of \$580,000 and an average NBA salary of \$7 million.

# **AVERAGE HOME GAME ATTENDANCE**

**WNBA**

**Averaging 6,535 fans per home game**

**NBA**

**Averaging 17,750 fans per home game**



# CANDACE PARKER



In a Candace Parker interview, she mentions how much more NBA players get paid and that if her daughter were to ever pick up a basketball, she'd want her to have the same opportunity that her nephew has.

# WNBA'S NEW DEAL



Most recently, the WNBA has taken steps to lessen the pay gap between the NBA. Nneka Ogwumike, a Los Angeles Spark mentioned in an interview that “I think we realized that it was more than just equal pay, it was equality and fighting for what we deserve moving forward”.

The new deal includes performance-based bonuses, plus paid maternity leave and fertility and adoption benefits, as well as entitlements for more comfortable travel and expanded marketing opportunities.



## DISCUSSION

Women should demand equality and should receive as much respect for the game that men get. I believe that these women who are doing the same jobs as men and might I say that they're doing them even better and should be paid just as much as them. As a society, we should give more support to our female athletes because they deserve it.

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abby Wambach talks USWNT's World Cup title, equal pay and responds to the haters. (2019, July 10). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLqewaF2kzE>

This video addresses Abby Wambach's opinion after winning the world cup. She mentions the double standard between men and women in sports and the stereotypes that people view of women. It's useful to my project because it's a recorded interview of a United States women's national soccer player that gives input to my claim. It is a trustworthy interview because it was filmed so it has credibility.

“Better Play, Lesser Pay; (Proper) Football.” *The Economist*, vol. 431, no. 9149, 2019, p. 26.

This article addresses the topic of the gender wage gap between female soccer players and male soccer players. This article is useful for my zine project because it gives important information on soccer player's salaries that supports my claim that there is inequality within the professional athlete world between men and women. This article is trustworthy because it was peer reviewed and found on the UW library page.

Broughton, A. L. and D., & September 10, 2019. (n.d.). WNBA Turnstile Tracker: Attendance Down At End Of Regular Season. Retrieved from <https://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Daily/Issues/2019/09/10/Research-and-Ratings/WNBA-Turnstile-Tracker.aspx#:~:text=The WNBA regular season concluded,down 3.5% from last season.>

I chose this source to show the average attendance of WNBA games. This is useful for my project because it shows the lack of support.

Candace Parker joins the Nation to talk LeBron, WNBA pay gap, Sparks and more. (2018, July 20). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFTQFWCCD5k>

This source is an interview of the WNBA Los Angeles Sparks player Candace Parker. She addresses the wage gap between the WNBA and NBA and the lack of opportunity women have compared to men. This is useful to my project because it's an in person interview of an athlete who experiences the inequality my claim mentions. This source is trustworthy because it was filmed so it has credibility.

Clarke, L. (2019). USWNT, USSF agree to mediation in gender-discrimination lawsuit after World Cup. *Washingtonpost.com*, p. *Washingtonpost.com*, June 21, 2019.

This article addresses the lawsuit the gender-discrimination lawsuit United States women's national soccer team filed against the U.S. Soccer. This article is useful for my zine project because it gave a recent event that occurred that also supports my claim that women's teams are treated unequal compared to men's teams in an aspect of a lawsuit. This article is trustworthy because it was found on the UW library page.

Delmore, E. (2020, February 11). 'We didn't back down': How women's basketball players scored major wins for equal pay. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/know-your-value/feature/we-didn-t-back-down-how-women-s-basketball-players-ncna1131561>

This article talks about the upcoming plans the WNBA has for closing the gender pay gap. This source is useful to my project because it explains the deal that the WNBA has negotiated for more equality with the NBA and just better benefits in general. It addresses the new changes in this year.



Gough, C. (2020, May 8). NBA average attendance (regular season) 2006-2020. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/193632/average-regular-season-home-attendance-per-team-in-the-nba-since-2006/#:~:text=In the 2019/20 season,an average of 17,750 people.&text=The total attendance at regular,games during that particular season.>

I chose this article because it gave data that showed the comparison of fan attendance.

Runcie, D. S. (2019). The Gender Wage Gap in Sports: Explaining the Pay Gap in Sports.

This source talks about the gender wage gap in sports. I used this source because it mentioned the minimum and average salaries of WNBA and NBA players. This source supports my claim because it mentions how big the wage gap is between men and women. I credit this source because it cites where they got their information from and I used Google Scholar to find a more trustworthy source.

Townes, C. (2019, October 9). WNBA Coverage Needs Perspective. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceceliatownes/2019/10/09/the-wnba-needs-perspective/#19a1ab372bca>

This article is about the WNBA's lack of coverage in the media and the struggles that these women go through. I used this source for my paper because it gave me perspective of information that I should cover for my project. For example, it gave me the idea to talk about the lack of appreciation for women sports.

Wamsley, L. (2019, March 8). U.S. Women's Soccer Team Sues U.S. Soccer For Gender Discrimination. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/08/701522635/u-s-womens-soccer-team-sues-u-s-soccer-for-gender-discrimination>

This source is a more in-depth explanation of the 2019 lawsuit that the United States women's national soccer team filed against the U.S. Soccer. It gave me more facts of the case for a better understanding. I used this source for my project because it gave insight of what the soccer members were fighting for.

Why is gender inequality in sports still a thing? (2017). University Wire, p. University Wire,  
May 2, 2017.

This source talks about other sports that have gender inequalities rather than just soccer and basketball. I chose this source because it's important to be informed about less popular sports and is useful to my project because we need to be informed about the issues that aren't covered as much in the media. This article is trustworthy because it was peer reviewed and found on the UW library page.