

I am a true believer in gender equality in general and very passionate about equal recognition, equal rights, and equal pay. I believe that equal rights should not only be an issue when we refer to our female athletes but for girls and women in general. all across the globe. Gender Inequality in sports is a serious issue so let's take a closer look.

I have young daughters and I'm hoping that at some point in their lives, they will love sports just as dearly as I have been doing throughout my life. My daughters will definitely be encouraged to love sports, to learn and play, and get into some sort of sports activity while they're still young.

And if they choose to take their favorite sport to a further level someday, like I guess most parents would like, I sincerely hope that they will be met with the same conditions and opportunities as their male counterparts.

Gender equality (especially in education and sports) has continually been a highly controversial issue. Even the gentleman who founded the modern Olympic Games (Baron Pierre de Coubertin), said at the end of the 19th century that "Regardless of how toughened a female sportsperson might be, the organism of a woman is not shaped to sustain specific shocks."

Even today, though gender equality made some great steps forward, such as the 1978 recognition by the UNESCO organization of physical activity and sports as a basic human right, the discrepancies between women and men are still existing and gender equality hasn't come by far where it ought to be.

In the USA, some forty percent of all sportspeople are women. However, only a mere 6 relate to women's sports. We also see that stories related to women-only sports are adding up to not even a mere 4 percent of all sports stories in our nation's four major newspapers.

The US Women's Sports Foundation reports that male athletes are receiving some \$180 million more annually in athletic scholarship grants than female athletes do. On top of that are colleges spending only 24 percent of their total athletic operations budgets on female sports activities. Additionally, the college and universities spend only 16 percent of their recruiting budgets and just over 30 percent of their scholarship and grant budgets on female athletics.

There are people who say that "women's sports activities aren't interesting enough". Well, women's sports popularity has been growing rapidly now for a number of years, yet, unfortunately, the sponsorship dollars and media coverage haven't followed suit and gender inequality remains an important and not-resolved issue. And this applies to inequality in education as well.

For example, let's look at the 2015 Women's Soccer World Cup Final in Vancouver, Canada. It was the by far most-watched soccer match in North America ever (both men's and women's). Almost 26 million viewers saw that final in the United States only! However, the women players were paid far less than their male counterparts would be.

The gender equality (or better: inequality) discussion was reignited a few years ago when South African Raymond Moore (the former tennis professional) made some nasty or maybe even stupid comments that were very degrading to women in sports. His comments were met with fierce backlash from males and females including Serena Williams who became very vocal in expressing her personal views on this subject.

It all boils down to the fact that we, women and men collectively, must intensify our efforts when it comes to gender (in)equality. We must pave the way for our children equally be it for our sons or our daughters. There is no room for disparity or inequality in the world of sports, the world of our

workplace, or in our lives. Women should be regarded, treated, and respected in the same way as men. Gender should never lead to a separation between fellow athletes.