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“It Doesn’t Need to Be Equitable”: Student-Athletes’ Perceptions of Gender Equity

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Despite federal legislation, gender equity has yet to be achieved, specifically within sport spaces. Although 43.5% of all NCAA student-athletes are women (McGuire, 2023), men are viewed as superior athletes and often given more opportunities and resources than their female counterparts (Coakley, 2016). Informed by distributive justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994), the purpose of this study was to explore NCAA student-athletes’ perceptions of gender equity. Using convenience sampling, 4 female and 4 male college athletes participated in semi-structured interviews. The data from the interviews divulged 2 themes: *fairness and opportunity*, and *education*. All participants spoke to equity and equality, and felt that football was “treated different” when comparison to all other sports. The results of this study can assist athletic departments in meeting the needs of all student-athletes through equitable means. *key-*

words: distributive justice, discrimination, gender equity, gender equality, student-athletes

Historically, gender inequities have existed in many facets of life (Senne, 2016), intercollegiate athletics are not immune to gender discrimination (Lough, 2015). Men have long been seen as superior athletes (Coakley, 2016); thus, limiting athletic opportunities for women in sport (e.g., Yuracko, 2002). Prior to the implementation of Title IX, few regulations focused on gender-based discrimination in educational settings (Acosta & Carpenter, 2015).

Since the implementation of Title IX, women participating in intercollegiate athletics has increased by 545%, and girls participating in interscholastic (high school) sport has increased by 990% (Staurowsky et al., 2020). Although Title IX dramatically increased sport participation for women, and despite the legislations guarantee of equal treatment (Brake, 2020), opportunity does not equate to equality (Henderson et al., 2022). Inequities continue to exist that are unrelated to opportunity (e.g., quality of resources, equipment, access to academic services, facilities, medical treatment, travel, scheduling, food) (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Rubin & Lough, 2015).

Female athletes are viewed as invaders in sports, violating traditional gender orthodox ideologies (Coakley, 2016; Senne, 2016). Women's sports often lack exposure and the opportunity for growth and development (Sheffer, 2020). The argument presented to defend such inequities often revolved around in inability of women's sport to generate revenue, fan engagement, and donor involvement (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Marx et al., 2023; Rubin & Lough, 2015). However, women's sports are at a disadvantage due to a lack of media coverage, the sexualization of fe-

male athletes, and lack of women in decision making positions (e.g., Cooky et al., 2015; Person, 2002; Rubin & Lough, 2015; Sheffer, 2020).

Although great strides have been made in regard to women's sports, especially at the collegiate level, there are still uncertainties around whether Title IX has truly created an equitable environment for both male and female athletes (Acosta & Carpenter, 2015; Anderson & Osborne, 2012; Henderson et al., 2022). Informed by distributive justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994), the purpose of this study was to explore NCAA student-athletes' perceptions of gender equity. The results of this study may assist stakeholders in making informed decisions to ensure equitable treatment of all student-athletes.

Review of the Literature

Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by distributive justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994), which consists of three principles (equity, equality, need) (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). Although distributive justice argues that three forementioned principles should determine resource allocations, it also insist that such decisions be rooted in fairness (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015). In regard to equity, effort, ability, and/or productivity should be considered. Equality insinuates that every group should receive the same recourses. Prior work (e.g., Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Patrick et al., 2008) has determined that men and women view equity and equality differently, with women placing higher value on equality and men favoring equity. Although student-athletes believe that discrimination based on sex is visible in society (Druckman et al., 2018), when compared to

current student-athletes, former student-athletes were more likely to perceive inequities (Sartore-Baldwin & Warner, 2012).

Title IX

It is difficult to discuss education within the sport setting without addressing Title IX (e.g., Henderson et al., 2022; Liu, 2020; Rubin & Lough, 2015; Senne, 2016; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Yuracko, 2002). Title IX (1972) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits gender-based discrimination at any institution receiving federal financial aid, which includes athletic programs. Title IX not only broadens and deepens the scope of understanding of women in sport spaces, but such legislation has enabled the enhancement of women's grit and leadership (Liu, 2022).

Since the implementation of Title IX in 1972, women's sports have received increased funding and institutional opportunities (Staurowsky et al., 2020). To its credit, Title IX has assisted in significant advancement in the opportunities and involvement of women in sports. Before Title IX, one in 27 girls participated in sport; however, as of 2016 that number is two in five. However, there is still an observed presence of inequities that exist (Liu, 2022; Lough, 2015; Staurowsky et al., 2020).

It is also difficult to discuss the impact of Title IX on intercollegiate athletics without acknowledging the consequences of Title IX. Rubin and Lough (2015) study examined female leaders in intercollegiate athletics. The participants described the challenges they faced due to Title IX. Such challenges consisted of resources and developmental programing. Additionally, the participants described the difficulties they encountered pursuing a career in intercollegiate sport (Rubin & Lough, 2015).

Women coaching women's teams is also a consequence of Title IX. The lack of women coaching women's teams is also a consequence of Title IX. Pre Title IX, 90% of women's collegiate sports teams were coached by women (Person, 2002). Across the

NCAA membership, women represent 41% of head coaches and 25% of athletic directors (McGuire, 2023). Stokowski et al. (2017) work demonstrated that male coaches are choosing to coach women's intercollegiate teams due to competitive compensation and notoriety. Title IX has also been used as an excuse to cut underperforming men's sports programs (e.g., Marx et al., 2023). However, Marx et al. (2023) discovered that when men's sports are cut, resources are not allocated to women's sports, but rather resources are allocated to high profile sports such as men's football and basketball.

Gender Equity

Knowing the difference between equity and equality is essential due to the common confusion between these two terms. Equity pertaining to gender consists of fairness and impartiality (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015). Fairness acknowledges that gender equity must be just treatment without the influences of favoritism or prejudice. Impartiality revolves around treating all parties involved equally, in this case, equal treatment between men and women (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015).

The patriarchal history in the United States often expatriates gender biases (Person, 2002). Traditionally, women and girls were only thought to be "suited for activities which emulate the aesthetic side of sports such as gymnastics, ice skating, cheerleading" (Person, 2002, p. 2). This developed the notion that women should not participate in physically demanding, high-contact activities such as wrestling, football, or ice hockey (Coakley, 2016). Title IX mandates equal opportunity, but it does not mandate equal opportunity in specific sports (Person, 2002).

Gender equity in sport spaces has "always been seen as a masculinized entity, and therefore, women are perceived as intruding

on male boundaries” (Senne, 2016, p. 2). Title IX was initially “enacted to ensure equal educational opportunities for males and females, but eventually, it was used to create equal opportunities for women in sports, not equitable ones” (Senne, 2016, p. 2). Although Title IX has been instrumental in increasing the participation of women in sport, women still face scrutiny and stereotyping because of social norms. Such norms define women as fragile, incapable, and passive, and depict men as assertive, strong, and driven (Coakley, 2016; Senne, 2016).

Media

Although women’s sports have continued to grow and there is increased interest surrounding women’s sports, media coverage of women’s sports has remained stagnant (Cooky et al., 2015; Romney & Johnson, 2020; Liu, 2022). Additionally, it should be recognized that the quality of coverage surrounding women’s sports is often low (e.g., Sutton et al., 2021). Women are more likely to be portrayed in non-athletic roles and such media framing often exacerbates stereotypes and stigmas related to female athletes (e.g., Person, 2002; Romney & Johnson, 2020; Weiller-Abels et al., 2021).

Weiller-Abels et al. (2021) analyzed how the media framed their commentary and discussions involving women’s sports. The results indicated that female athletes and teams received a limited amount of total sports-media coverage when compared to their male counterparts. The media often framed female athletes in a way that emphasizes their femininity and conformity to traditional gender roles (Weiller-Abels et al., 2021).

Sheffer (2020) supported this claim as only 9.7% of articles in *Sports Illustrated* from 1990 to 1999 were dedicated to female athletes, and from 2001 to 2011 women appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* 4.9% of the time. The limited attention female athletes received also extended to social media. ESPN posted the

most images, followed by Fox Sports, CBS Sports, and NBC; however, there was a significant difference in the number of female athlete images when compared to male athletes. Only 2% of the Instagram images and 7% of *SportsCenter* Snapchat stories depicted female athletes. The media portrayed female athletes as passive and less competitive in aesthetic sports, while men were depicted as aggressive and strong while competing in combat sports (Sheffer, 2020).

Like in many facets of sport, the media (and its coverage) favors male athletes (e.g., Person, 2002; Romney & Johnson, 2020; Sheffer, 2020; Weiller-Abels et al., 2021). Women's sports are often ignored, and female athletes are not valued for their athletic ability but rather objectified. Simply put, within the media, inequities exist for women's sports and female athletes.

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Sex	NCAA Classification	Athletic Conference	Sport	Age
Grace	Female	DI	ASUN	Softball	21
Anna	Female	DI	CUSA	Softball	23
Maria	Female	DI	ACC	Softball	21
Suzie	Female	DI	ACC	Softball	22
Mason	Male	DI	SoCon	Baseball	21
Jacob	Male	DI	Big Ten	Soccer	22
Ethan	Male	DI	ACC	Football	20
Nathan	Male	DIII	WIAC	Hockey	23

Method

As the primary researchers are current Division I softball student-athletes, it was determined that convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling technique. To thus, using convenience sampling (Suri, 2011), four female and four male student-athletes participated in semi-structured interviews (see Table 1). Semi-structured interview method provided clear instructions for all researchers, allowing the data to be reliable and comparable (Patton, 2002). The interview protocol consisted of demographic questions and 15 open-ended questions informed by the review of literature.

Data Analysis

Each transcript was coded which allowed for organization and interpretation. Initially, open coding was utilized to dissect the transcripts, researchers labeled relevant words, phrases, sentences, and sections (Charmaz, 2006). These labels were categorized through actions, concepts, differences, and opinions. Then, axial coding was utilized to find the connections between each category. There were many categories formed and connected during this step of the coding process (Saldaña, 2009). These connections and possible differences were then interpreted using selective coding, which helped the researchers decide on one overarching theme or core category (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through a pilot study and member checks (Dittmore & Stokowski, 2019; Patton, 2002). In an effort to ensure the interview protocol was aligned with the purpose of the present study, a pilot study was conducted with three Division I student-athletes. Based on the results of the pilot

study, the interview protocol was altered to enhance the quality of the responses. Additionally, member checks assisted with ensuring trustworthiness. Upon completion of the interviews, participants were emailed their interview transcript. The participants had the opportunity to read their own words to ensure their words were accurately reflected.

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore NCAA student-athletes' perceptions of gender equity. Overall, two themes appeared throughout the data, *fairness and opportunity*, and *education*.

Opportunity and Fairness

The first theme, *opportunity and fairness*, described the participants' perceptions of equity and equality. Two subheadings appeared throughout the data (*in*)equity and equality.

(In)Equity

The participants related equity to fairness; however, the participants described that certain sports, like football, were treated differently. According to Grace, "I would say that equity is like giving everybody what they need to reach the same level of success. So, it might be different for other people. But basically, getting each person what they need specifically." Similarly, Anna stated, equity was "Fairness between genders." Nathan cited a common approach to equity by describing the commonly used 'equity graphic.'

So, equity, I always like a thing that is like a little old picture of three kids, watching a baseball game and they're all different heights, but they're all given one box and that is equality. Giving everybody the same thing, even though one kid might

be 6 feet tall, and the other one might be 4 feet tall. The 6-foot-tall kid can watch the game over the fence while the 4-foot-tall kid cannot. Equity would be giving the kid that's 4 feet tall three boxes so he can see the game while giving the 6-foot kid none because he can already see the game on his own. And then you can apply that gender equity by just giving women more sports more funding or enough resources, so they get the same luxuries as the men's sports.

Perhaps what is most interesting about Nathan's response is that such graphic has been criticized as it depicts differentiation as opposed to equity (Kitsis, 2021; Sohn, 2017). The graphic referenced supports biological characteristics which imply privilege (Kitsis, 2021; Sohn, 2017). Equity involves meeting (and recognizing) individual needs (e.g., Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021); however, most of the participants were unable to accurately define equity.

Several participants described that football was treated differently, and as Suzie indicated, football was "allowed to do their own thing." Jacob felt that his institution focused on women's sports and for "guys...all they really focus on is...football." Mason stated that he felt football was "not affected by [Title IX]...they get to do their own thing." Ethan who played football in the ACC indicated that his institution needed to do a better job because "they advertise the main sport [football]." Most of the participants indicated that football had more resources and exposure than all other sports. As Jacob stated, "they put all the money into football."

Jacob also did not feel the current collegiate model should have to be equitable, as he believed that superior athletic performance should equate to additional benefits. Jacob stated,

I actually think that it doesn't need to be equitable between men and women. I think it should be based on the success that the teams are having ... I think there's a big difference between equity and equality, though I think people should talk more

about equality. Equity, I think, discussing something as gender equity is really stupid compared to discussing it as equality because it shouldn't be about making everybody equal. It should be giving people the opportunity.

Equality

Equality involves providing everyone with the same resources (e.g., Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021). Thus, in regard to the present study equality meant providing all student-athletes with the same opportunities and resources, regardless of gender and/or sport classification. Throughout the data, the participants connected equality and opportunity. In fact, all participants referred to equality as, "being the same." For example, Maria said, "Equality would be more of a flat baseline that everyone gets the same thing." According to Jacob, "Equality, I think, is an opportunity. Making sure you have equal opportunities and are treated the same with the potential for growth." Nathan replied,

Equality is kind of like the state of being equal. Especially for a specific person, or it could be anything, especially in their status rights, and opportunities. So just an equal playing field nothing's above one another everyone has the same playing field, anything at the same playing field.

Education

The final theme, *education*, had two subthemes, *learning* and *media*. Overall, the participants reported a general lack of understanding of Title IX legislation and issues related to gender discrimination and inequities. However, the participants could provide some context or description of inequities in intercollegiate sport. Although Suzie stated, "I'm not really sure what it [Title IX] is," she provided an example of gender discrimination,

One of the big ones was the basketball thing a couple of years ago Sedona from Oregon. Just, for example, in the NCAA

tournament, the men's got like this big weight room. They got like these goody bags and got a whole bunch of gear from NCAA. And then, the women's teams got like not even half of that.

Mason expressed his view on Title IX stating, "I don't know. I kind of just feel like it only hurts men's sports, and it helps women's sports, and then football is not affected by it." Jacob expressed that:

A lot of SEC schools don't have men's soccer teams because of how dominant football is, and they want to make sure that it's equal in terms of how much opportunity girl sports get so they'll have to cut certain programs and even certain things out.

When asked about Title IX, Ethan said, "I think title IX is like laws written about discrimination and education and athletics. That's really all I have for that." Maria mentioned, "I think it's the, honestly, I don't really know like the definition of it. But I know it has something to do with like having as many female sports as men's sports. I think I don't really know."

In all, the participants did not have a good grasp on Title IX. The Male participants indicated that Title IX placed male athletes at a disadvantage. As with the first theme, the participants continued to feel that football took precedence over all other sports.

Learning

All student-athletes must participate in mandatory training that involves Title IX. Although the structure of such training appeared to be inconsistent, a few participants spoke about their experiences with Title IX training. Ethan explained what their athletic department did for educational engagement,

They have a lot of groups that bring the genders together, and it doesn't just like, we don't have an all-guys group to talk about this, like we have like, we make it like a co-ed type of

thing. Where if we're going to talk about this problem, we're not going to just have just all guys talk about it like we're going to bring people that we think would be best for us regardless of their gender.

Mason described flyers and posters at his institutions that promoted gender equity. Nathan's institution had "multiple meetings throughout the year about discrimination" and he felt his school "does a great job of promoting gender equity across all the programs."

Media

Television coverage (or lack thereof), especially in women's sports, appeared throughout the data. The participants, particularly the female participants, felt that women's sports were not promoted due the lack of media attention. Additionally, the media attention that women did receive failed to focus on their athletic ability. Anna stated,

I feel like there's a lot of stuff in the media like promoting like women's athletics ... they preface everything by basically saying "oh, like women's sports aren't as good as men's, so you need to do this because like now they're doing better." you know, and instead of just presenting it as, this is a sports team, we're all just kids in college playing the sport that our parents signed us up for when we were younger.

Similarly, Maria said,

I feel like the way the media portrays female athletes is way different from male athletes and a lot of female sports, you can kind of tell by the way pictures are sent out or like what kind of goes viral, it's normally like the pretty girl on the field, or if it's like a really strong basketball player, then it's kind of more of a masculine post. So, when it's males it's all about being strong and, "oh, my gosh! Look how hard this person hit that" versus in females it's like, "Oh, my gosh! This person looks so good in their uniform.

Another strong point revolved around social media engagement. Grace noted,

Social media, for example, I mean you've also like a lot of people who have seen comments under men's basketball posts as opposed to like women's basketball posts. Men, they'll post about a championship, and everyone's excited and I'll post something about women and everyone's under the comment saying, "make me a sandwich" or "nobody wants to watch this."

The female participants all had examples for how they felt women were portrayed in the media. The male participants did not seem to think media coverage in regard to women's sports was problematic. As Ethan described, "however you see the media, that's kind of how you'll take it."

Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored NCAA student-athletes' perceptions of gender equity. The first major theme that appeared was *fairness and opportunity*. This theme had two subthemes, *(in)equity* and *equality*. The framework that informed this study, distributed justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994). The distributive justice framework has three principles (equity, equality, need) (Mahony & Pastore, 1998), the participants in this study spoke specially to equity and equality.

In regard to equity, distributive justice scholars (e.g., Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015) believe that this principal involves ability, productivity, and effort. Every participant mentioned that football was treated differently. This finding was not surprising given that the literature (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Rubin & Lough, 2015) has demonstrated that inequities exist in regard to resources. What was surprising was that all student-athletes, including male participants,

indicated that football was given resources that other sports were not privy to.

By definition, equity is meeting the needs of the individual (Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021). Thus, perhaps by football being treated differently, football student-athletes are being treated equably. Such an argument was made by Jacob who felt that sport was about providing opportunity and not equity. Perhaps the words of the participants are in line with previous studies in which male athletes tend to favor equity over equality (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Patrick et al., 2008). However, treating football equably should not leave student-athletes in other sports, specifically, female student-athletes, at a disadvantage (Lough, 2015; Staurowsky et al., 2020). To thus, Senne (2016) comments regarding Title IX creating opportunity but not equity for women in sport appear to be valid.

Decision making in distributive justice involves fairness (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015). All participants described equity as fairness, with male participants describing their female counterparts as receiving the most attention (outside of football). Druckman et al. (2018) found that student-athletes believed gender discrimination in society persists. The participants in the present study felt that gender discrimination did indeed exist, but overall, they felt they were treated fairly. Sartore-Baldwin and Warner (2012) study found that there was a significant different in how current and former student-athletes viewed discrimination. Perhaps being removed from college sport, the participants will begin to reflect upon their experiences differently.

The participants also spoke to equality, a key principal of distributive justice (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Patrick et al., 2008). The participants believed that equality was "everyone gets the same thing," which is in line with the formal definition of equality (Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021). However, there appeared to be a

consensus in that equality should be a “baseline” that allowed for “growth.” The participants words differed from previous studies (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Patrick et al., 2008) that found female athletes prefer equality of equity.

It should be noted that none of the participants spoke to the third principal of distributed justice, need (e.g., Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Rubin & Lough, 2015). Perhaps such a finding demonstrates that the environment for female student-athletes has improved enough where the athletes did not feel inclined to speak to “need.” It could also be that the participants simply did not have the perspective to understand what they needed (Sartore-Baldwin & Warner, 2012).

The second theme, *education*, yielded two subthemes, *learning* and *media*. Overall, the participants were unaware of what Title IX was or the meaning of such legislation. This finding is problematic as not only has Title IX increased opportunities for women in sport spaces (e.g., Henderson et al., 2022; Liu, 2020; Rubin & Lough, 2015; Senne, 2016; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Yuracko, 2002), but such legislation “also addresses employment discrimination, opportunities to pursue math and science, fair treatment for pregnant and parenting students, and protection of students from bullying and sexual harassment in educational settings” (Marx et al., 2023, p. 93). All student-athletes must receive effective Title IX training due to the sheer impact that this legislation has on their lives.

The participants also discussed the role of the media in their responses. The female participants reported feeling that the media only intensified negative perceptions of female athletes. Such sentiments have been well captured in the literature (e.g., Person, 2002; Romney & Johnson, 2020; Weiller-Abels et al., 2021). The female participants also reported feeling that they “aren’t as good as” men. The words of the participants in are line with previous work in that women are often seen as invaders in sports (Coakley,

2016) and not valued for their athletic role (Henderson et al., 2022). What was concerning (but perhaps not surprising) was the lack of awareness the male participants had of how their female peers were portrayed by the media.

Previous literature reported that gender inequities still exist in sport (Henderson et al., 2022; Liu, 2020; Rubin & Lough, 2015; Senne, 2016; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Yuracko, 2002). Research has shown that women received fewer resources (e.g., Rubin & Lough, 2015) and media converge than their male counterparts (Person, 2002; Romney & Johnson, 2020; Weiller-Abels et al., 2021). In the present study, the participants reported that equality should serve as a “baseline” and athletic departments should strive for opportunity and fairness.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations existed in the present study. Although efforts were made to remove bias, the primary researchers are Division I softball student-athletes, as such researcher positionality could have impacted the results of the present study. In hindsight, the primary researchers should have taken part in a bracketing interview to assist in further removing bias. Only eight student-athletes, four female student-athletes and four male student-athletes, took part in this study. All female student-athletes represented one sport, softball. Additionally, this study had different sports represented and one participant participated in the Division III classification. As such, the sample size of this project should also be viewed as a limitation. To ensure transparency, it should be of note that this paper was the result of a class project. Although the primary researchers received guidance, this was the primary researchers first time conducting a research project (and it was very much a learning experience).

Future qualitative research should involve a larger sample size and perhaps future work should extend to student-athletes

throughout the membership. Additionally, future qualitative inquiries should be grounded in different theoretical frameworks (e.g., equity theory, stakeholder theory). It would be interesting to limit future qualitative studies by sport classification and/or gender. Future studies should also be quantitative in nature, as such a method would allow for generalizability and comparison between groups (e.g., gender, sport classification, NCAA classification). Athletic administrators and coaches should be considered as potential participants in future inquiry, as the perspectives of gender equality from those in positions of power would be a welcomed addition to the literature. Future work should examine resources and programming to ensure equality. Lastly, additional research is needed on the educational programming student-athletes received related to Title IX.

Implications

This study sought to explore gender equity through the lens of distributed justice. The participants spoke to equity and equality; however, collectively the participants felt that football was given more attention and resources than any other sport. Treating football equably should not disadvantage other student-athletes. Athletic departments should take note that student-athletes are noticing that high profile sports are treated differently. Although this may be unintended, efforts should be made to promote all sports and student-athletes.

Student-athletes need to understand Title IX policies, how to interoperate such policies, and where to access resources related to Title IX compliance. Student-athletes should be made aware of the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) which often helps institutions determine Title IX Compliance (Staurowsky, 2018). Although some participants felt that their institutions did a "great job" in regard to Title IX programming, their responses would in-

cate that more impactful training is needed to ensure student-athletes are learning about Title IX legislation and compliance.

Lastly, athletic departments, teams, and even student-athletes themselves should consider using the distributive justice framework in decision making. The three principles (equity, equality, need) of this framework warrant consideration when determining a just course of action. Most importantly all decision should be rooted in fairness.

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