



WOMEN & SPORT GROUNDBREAKER SERIES

Roundtable discussion 2023 – Lausanne edition



Topics of discussion

Female workforce & representation

Sports formats

Player development

Commercial & fan engagement

Female workforce & representation

SPORTING WORKFORCE

- **Workforce representation** of women is still limited in many sports; historical focus was on athlete representation, but the rest of the ecosystem needs to catch-up
- Many **pathways and systems for workforce such as coaches** are designed for and skewed towards men
E.g., experience coaching women valued less than coaching men; in football, coaches cannot qualify for a pro license if they are coaching women's teams
- Whilst there has been change, a negative perception of **female referees and officials** as weaker and less qualified remains prevalent across many sports
- Workforce representation can be addressed through **targeted initiatives** addressing pain points of the sport
E.g., in basketball, maternity plans for referees; in motorsport, targeted pathway initiatives for girls

Female workforce & representation

LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORKFORCE

- **Board level representation** of women is still limited in many sports
- **Dedicated staff** within federations committed to women's sport is essential for continued growth, but this can take different forms
E.g., could be dedicated department or individuals across departments
- It is important to have advocates for women's sport and **buy-in across all departments** to drive agenda forward
- **Implementation of quotas** is necessary at early stages of journey to ensure representation

Sport formats

- There are existing differences between men's and women's formats and competition structures across all sports with the **exception of a few sports such as football, rugby** who have the same rules & regulations across genders;
- **New formats** can accelerate the growth of women's sport
E.g., 3x3 basketball, rugby 7s (as seen in US, Brazil)
- **Technical adjustments** could be used to increase inclusivity however player perspectives on it are often mixed
E.g., in basketball, women play with a smaller ball
E.g., in Football, players do not want differences in rules to the men's game

Player development

- **Physical differences** between men and women impact the ability of women to compete in sports which have been designed for men
E.g., in motorsport, the physical structure of cars is designed for men
- Federations should consider **pathway structures** for optimum inclusivity and development; the most effective pathways include both integrated and separate boy/girl elements; Structures are highly sport specific e.g., physical nature of rugby necessitates stricter limitations on boys and girls playing together
- There is a need for further **female-specific research** in sports science and medicine to support athlete development E.g., Football currently has a high number of ACL injuries amongst professional female footballers with limited clarity on reasons

Commercial & fan engagement

- There is a **proven audience** for women's sport; there is a need now to create the environments required to reach that potential value and convert one-off viewers to long term, habitual followers
- Fans of women's sport **have different behaviour and characteristics** to fans of men's sport; Sports should consider how women's sport can be leaders and positively influence men's sport
- There is a need to increase investment before being able to increase **prize money** and achieve parity with the men's game
- Increasingly, **sponsors and broadcasters are demanding equality** as a condition of involvement
- **Unbundling sponsorship rights** is still dependent on the maturity level of each sport; there is further work that needs to be done on unbundling the different women's sport products within the same sport/organisation

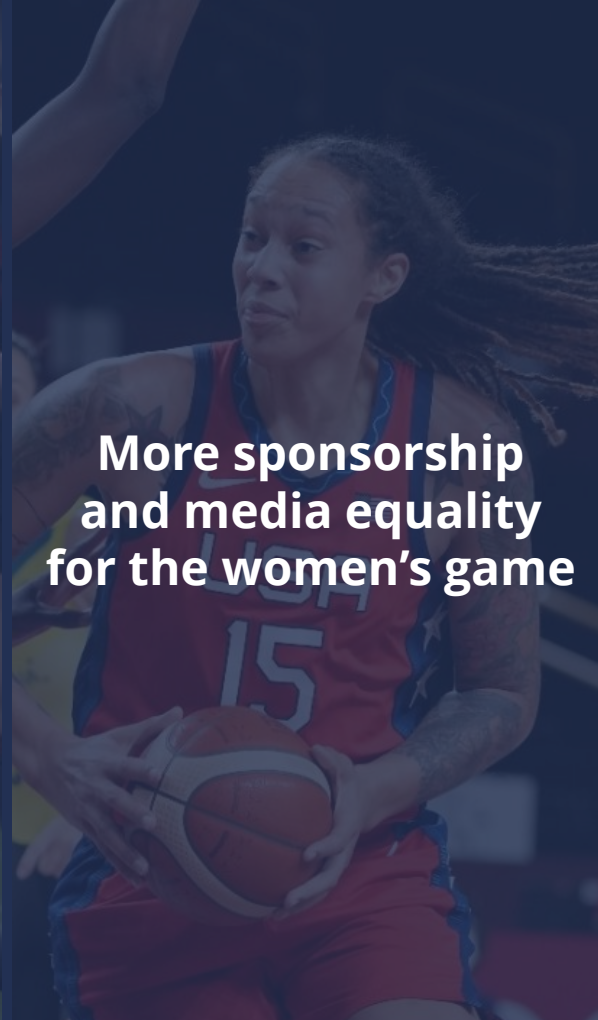
What is the one thing that would make a big shift in women's sport going forward?



Women's regional club competitions



Higher prize money for international competitions



More sponsorship and media equality for the women's game



More funding and reduced reliance on physical strength