

Open search panel



Search

Search the Insight Hub...

Cancel

- [Insights](#)
[Rangahau](#)
- [Events](#)
[Hui](#)
- [Partnerships](#)
[Rangapū](#)
- [Impact](#)
[Whakaaweawe](#)
- About
Mō Mātou
 - [Overview](#)
 - [History](#)
 - [Support](#)
- [☆ 0 Saved](#)

[☆ 0 Saved](#)

 EN 

- [Sign in](#)
- [Submit](#) 




Toggle navigation

[Submit](#) 

Five things to know about women and sport

Theme:
Participation

 Five things to know about women and sport

Co-authored by UN Women

Women's sports are on a winning streak, reaching new heights and shattering records. From the Olympics achieving gender parity to the growing audience for women's sports, there is much to celebrate and explore. Yet many gender gaps remain. Here are five key things to know about women and sport:

1. Women's sport is growing

For the first time in Olympic history, women athletes will have as many places in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games as male athletes. This achievement shows the extraordinary trajectory of women's sport since the first modern games featuring female athletes in 1900, where women represented just [2.2 per cent](#) of competing athletes.

[Audiences are also growing](#), with 7 out of 10 people now tuning into women's sport. Almost 73 per cent say they watch women's sports at least a few times a year, not far behind the percentage who watch men's sports with the same frequency (81 per cent). The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023 was a huge success with [record attendance](#). The event attracted the largest audience for women's sports in history, reaching approximately 2 billion people, highlighting the growing popularity and changing attitudes towards women's sports.

2. Girls who play sport gain life-long benefits

Girls who play sport tend to stay in school, delay pregnancy, and get better jobs. Playing sport boosts their confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills. These benefits extend into their daily lives, empowering them to take initiative and attempt things they never imagined were possible.

A [recent survey](#) found that 80 per cent of female Fortune 500 CEOs played sports in their formative years, emphasizing the impact of early exposure to sport on the development of young women. A [2023 Deloitte report](#) also revealed that 85 per cent of surveyed women who played sports as children believed the skills they developed were crucial to their professional success. This rises to 91 per cent for women in leadership roles, and 93 per cent for those earning USD 100,000 or more. Additionally, [92 per cent](#) of global audiences agree it is important for girls to play sports, with 61 per cent considering it "very important".

Despite the positive data, girls drop out of sports by age 14 at [twice the rate](#) of boys due to social expectations, lack of investment in quality programmes, and other factors. For example, [21 per cent](#) of female professional athletes have experienced sexual abuse at least once as children in sport, compared with 11 per cent of male athletes. Efforts to track and respond to such cases are increasing worldwide, but gaps in the magnitude and prevalence of violence in sports persist, and prevention efforts are often lacking.

3. Women athletes are impactful role models

Although media coverage of female athletes has nearly tripled in the last three years, women still receive far less coverage (just 16 per cent of total sports coverage) than their male counterparts. Increasing the visibility of female athletes is essential to providing more role models in sports who can inspire girls to continue playing.

A recent survey by Parity Now found that [88 per cent](#) of sports fans regard pro women athletes as impactful role models for young women. There is also a commercial imperative, as fans are [2.8 times](#) more likely to purchase a product recommended by a woman athlete rather than by another type of influencer. According to World Athletics, female athletes enjoy a [14% larger social media following](#) than male athletes and recorded a [four per cent spike](#) in the number of Google news searches of female athletes in 2023 compared to 2022.

4. Women lead the future of sport

Women are taking on more leadership roles in the sports world, driving better policies and increasing investments. This leadership has led to record attendance and coverage of women's sporting events and increased attention to women's demands, from narrowing the pay gap to addressing various forms of violence and abuse.

Despite these strides, barriers and gender bias persist. According to the Sport Integrity Global Alliance's most recent survey in 2023, only [26.9 per cent](#) of executive positions in international sport federations are held by women. The same study reported that of the 31

International Sports Federations surveyed just three had women at the helm.

In the International Olympic Committee, [41 per cent of members are female](#), with more diversity in terms of age and regional representation. Gender-equal representation on IOC commissions was reached in 2022, a historic high and 100 per cent increase since 2013.

The number of women on the [World Athletics Council has grown from eight members to 13](#), including one female Senior Vice President, achieving gender parity four years ahead of the body's target set for 2027. There is also a goal to increase the number of female coaches to at least 20 per cent by the [World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025](#).

However, a real gender gap still exists among coaches and leadership roles within the athletes' entourage. Although Paris 2024 will break new ground, the representation of women holding leadership roles such as Chef de Mission, Technical Official, and coach remains remarkably low. [At Tokyo 2020, only 13 per cent of coaches were women](#).

5. Equal play for equal pay

Unequal pay in sports is a long-standing inequality. A global sports salary survey by Sporting Intelligence in 2017 showed that, among elite athletes, women earn on average [only 1 per cent](#) of what men earn. [No women](#) feature among the Forbes 2024 list of 100 highest-paid athletes in the world and prize money for women's sport continues to lag behind men's. For example, in 2023 the Women's World Cup awarded USD 150 million in prize money, a 300 per cent increase over 2019, but still [only about a third of the USD 440 million the men got](#) in Qatar 2022.

Prominent athletes and teams have led the push for [pay equity](#). Tennis was the first sport to guarantee equal prize money for major tournaments. The US Open started this in 1973, due to Billie Jean King's advocacy and the creation of the Women's Tennis Association. Since then, all four major tennis tournaments (US Open, Australian Open, French Open, and Wimbledon) have adopted equal prize money. The [Professional Squash Association](#), [World Surf League](#), and a handful of other professional sports have also [equalised](#) men's and women's prize money.


In the world of football, Norway became the [first country](#) in 2017 to offer male and female football players equal pay when representing the country in international games in a standard-setting move that has since been adopted by other football associations across the world including [Brazil](#), [Wales](#), and [Australia](#). In 2022, [the US Women's National Soccer Team secured a landmark equal pay settlement](#) after a years-long legal battle that set an equal pay rate in all international games, including the World Cup, going forward. The settlement also included USD 22 million to compensate players for past discrimination.


However, many women's teams still struggle with deep inequality. The average monthly salary for female footballers in Argentina's Primera División is USD 225, while the men's national team, [winners of the 2022 World Cup, took home USD 42 million](#). Wage theft is also an issue, with women's teams in Jamaica, Colombia, Nigeria and South Africa reporting unpaid salaries. A recent study by FIFPRO, the global professional footballers' union, found that [29 per cent](#) of women players who responded had not received any payments from their national teams for World Cup qualifying tournaments.


The sky is the limit

The recent progress and achievements in women's sports are nothing short of extraordinary. As the world stops to celebrate these triumphs, the voices of women in sports must continue to resonate across the planet. Their stories of resilience and determination will inspire future generations of girls to dream big and pursue their passions.

Keep cheering, keep investing, keep believing in the incredible potential of women in sport. Let's create a world where every girl knows that the sky's the limit, both on and off the field.


Save this Insight






Print this Insight


Download Insight assets
For use in your own documents

Was this Insight helpful?



Share this Insight


-  [Facebook](#)
-  [Twitter](#)
-  [Email](#)
-  Copy this page's URL

 Save this Insight

 Print this Insight

 Download Insight assets

 [Email this Insight](#)

 Close 'Download Insight Assets' modal

Download Insight assets

- [Five things to know about women and sport.pdf](#)
- [UN.png 1.1MB PNG](#)


Was this Insight useful?





Similar Insights (73)


[Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Hibiscus Coast Football](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Hibiscus Coast Football


[Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Active Wahine](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Active Wahine

[Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Kia Ora Academy](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Kia Ora Academy

[Change in Action Week - Rangatahi FINALIST - Sylvia Brunt](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Rangatahi FINALIST - Sylvia Brunt

[Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Wāhine Toa](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Innovative Impact FINALIST - Wāhine Toa

[Change in Action Week - Rangatahi Winner - Carmel College](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Change in Action Week - Rangatahi Winner - Carmel College

[ADIDAS BREAKING BARRIERS RESEARCH](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

ADIDAS BREAKING BARRIERS RESEARCH

[Kiwi women take clean sweep of the Ski Podium at The North Face Frontier 4- Competition](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Kiwi women take clean sweep of the Ski Podium at The North Face Frontier 4- Competition

[GUIDE TO CREATING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS FOR YOUNG WOMEN](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

GUIDE TO CREATING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS FOR YOUNG WOMEN

By Emma Evans - Sport New Zealand

[A 2024 SURVEY FOR: Women in Trail and Ultrarunning](#)

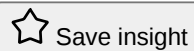
☆ Save insight

Participation

A 2024 SURVEY FOR: Women in Trail and Ultrarunning

By Ali Pottinger - Squadrun

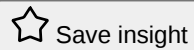
[2022 IWG: Christine Young - Integrity in HP Youth Sport](#)



Participation

2022 IWG: Christine Young - Integrity in HP Youth Sport

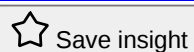
[2022 IWG: David Cabello - A Gender Policy for Increasing Women's Representation in Badminton](#)



Participation

2022 IWG: David Cabello - A Gender Policy for Increasing Women's Representation in Badminton

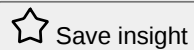
[2022 IWG: Nicole Terril - Bruce Pulman Park – Collaborating, Connecting, Enabling Our Wāhine in Sport](#)



Participation

2022 IWG: Nicole Terril - Bruce Pulman Park – Collaborating, Connecting, Enabling Our Wāhine in Sport

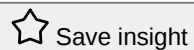
[2022 IWG: Kirsten Spencer - Sport as a social development tool](#)



Participation

2022 IWG: Kirsten Spencer - Sport as a social development tool

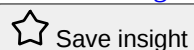
[2022 IWG: Erin Hatton - Driving transformational change](#)



Participation

2022 IWG: Erin Hatton - Driving transformational change

[Understanding Period Poverty Infographic](#)

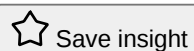


Participation

Understanding Period Poverty Infographic

By Cheycoda Cocks - Sport Manawatu

[Well Wāhine Week Case Study](#)



Participation

Well Wāhine Week Case Study

By Helayna Ruifrok - Sport Gisborne Tairawhiti

[Netball Resources for Clubs and School Administrators](#)



Participation

Netball Resources for Clubs and School Administrators

By Jenna Murie - Netball New Zealand

[Girls Smash Modified Girls Only Cricket Programme](#)



Participation

Girls Smash Modified Girls Only Cricket Programme

By Jess Davidson - New Zealand Cricket

[Innovative approaches to encouraging women's participation in Golf](#)



Participation

Innovative approaches to encouraging women's participation in Golf

By Roxanna Holdworth - This is ME

[Netball Volunteer Programme](#)



Participation

Netball Volunteer Programme

By Jenna Murie - Netball New Zealand

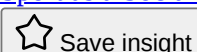
[Mind. Set. Engage. Rugby's mental wellbeing programme.](#)



Participation

Mind. Set. Engage. Rugby's mental wellbeing programme.

[Sport as a Social Development Tool](#)



Participation

Sport as a Social Development Tool

By Kirsten Spencer - Auckland University of Technology

[Netball Player Development Programme](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Netball Player Development Programme


By Alysha Jensen - Netball New Zealand
[COACHING GIRLS GUIDE: HOW TO GET \(AND KEEP\) GIRLS PLAYING](#)

 Save insight

Participation

COACHING GIRLS GUIDE: HOW TO GET (AND KEEP) GIRLS PLAYING


[Why Aussie women's sport needs to talk about fertility](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Why Aussie women's sport needs to talk about fertility

[She Belongs: Building Social Connection for Lasting Participation in Sport](#)

 Save insight

Participation

She Belongs: Building Social Connection for Lasting Participation in Sport

By Canadian Women & Sport - Canadian Women & Sport
[Sport for Sustainable Development: Designing Effective Policies and Programmes](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Sport for Sustainable Development: Designing Effective Policies and Programmes


[The Volunteer Capacity of Community Sports Clubs to Support Women and Girls in Sport](#)

 Save insight

Participation

The Volunteer Capacity of Community Sports Clubs to Support Women and Girls in Sport

[Huge uptick in girls and women playing football in New Zealand](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Huge uptick in girls and women playing football in New Zealand

[Resources on Male Allyship](#)



Save insight

Participation

Resources on Male Allyship

[Rally Report Insights: Body Confidence](#)



Save insight

Participation

Rally Report Insights: Body Confidence

[Rally Report Insights: Mental Health](#)



Save insight

Participation

Rally Report Insights: Mental Health

[What type of uniforms do women want to wear when they referee or umpire sport?](#)



Save insight

Participation

What type of uniforms do women want to wear when they referee or umpire sport?

[Women & Padel: Start of a love story.](#)



Save insight

Participation

Women & Padel: Start of a love story

[Empowering young women to lead their experiences - Journeys Central Otago](#)



Save insight

Participation

Empowering young women to lead their experiences - Journeys Central Otago

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Creating safe environments for young women to be active their way.](#)



Save insight

Participation

Creating safe environments for young women to be active their way

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Kōhine māia](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Kōhine māia

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Yeah! Girls Move - Cricket not the way you know it](#)

☆ Save insight



Participation

Yeah! Girls Move - Cricket not the way you know it

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[For young women, by young women - WORD girls-only programme](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

For young women, by young women - WORD girls-only programme

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Not just for the "sporty", the Not-So-Sports-Club](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Not just for the "sporty", the Not-So-Sports-Club

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Manawatū Cricket Association case study](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Manawatū Cricket Association case study

By Cheycoda Cocks - Sport Manawatu

[Backyard Smash & Sista Smash](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Backyard Smash & Sista Smash

By Roxanna Holdworth - This is ME


[The female-friendliness of New Zealand's tennis clubs](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

The female-friendliness of New Zealand’s tennis clubs

[Removing Period Poverty As a Barrier to Participation](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Removing Period Poverty As a Barrier to Participation

By Roxanna Holdworth - This is ME


[Te Awamutu AFC starts 2024 off strong with growing demand](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Te Awamutu AFC starts 2024 off strong with growing demand


[Has the Olympics become too sexualised? How sex and gender debates drove online discourse](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Has the Olympics become too sexualised? How sex and gender debates drove online discourse


[Pacific Women's Leadership Programme Impact - Sela Vaenuku](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Pacific Women's Leadership Programme Impact - Sela Vaenuku


[IWG: Claire Badenhorst - Iron regulation throughout the lifespan - An active female perspective](#)

 Save insight

Participation

IWG: Claire Badenhorst - Iron regulation throughout the lifespan - An active female perspective


["Beginning Day 1" Checklist: How to Coach and Support Women and Teen Girl Athletes](#)

 Save insight

Participation

"Beginning Day 1" Checklist: How to Coach and Support Women and Teen Girl Athletes

[Nutrition For Female Athletes](#)

 Save insight

Participation

Nutrition For Female Athletes
[Coaching through a Gender Lens Infographic](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Coaching through a Gender Lens Infographic

[Angel City Equity House Podcast: Myth Busters presented by Gatorade](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Angel City Equity House Podcast: Myth Busters presented by Gatorade

[2022 IWG: Emily Davidson - She Loves Golf Presentation](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

2022 IWG: Emily Davidson - She Loves Golf Presentation

[Hikurangi Golf Club president Felice Croft encouraging more women into the sport](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Hikurangi Golf Club president Felice Croft encouraging more women into the sport

[Running and periods: The myths about exercise and your menstrual cycle, debunked](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Running and periods: The myths about exercise and your menstrual cycle, debunked

[Updated Pregnancy guidance from UK Sport](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

Updated Pregnancy guidance from UK Sport

[IWG: Daenin Roth - Grassroots Role Models Inspiring Change](#)

☆ Save insight

Participation

IWG: Daenin Roth - Grassroots Role Models Inspiring Change

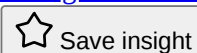
[IWG: Dr Riki Tesler: Social capital and health among participants in the cachibol league in Israel](#)



Participation

IWG: Dr Riki Tesler: Social capital and health among participants in the cachibol league in Israel

[Young Women Profile - September 2021](#)



Participation

Young Women Profile - September 2021

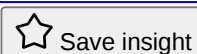
[IWG: Etsuko Ogasawara - New Way of Thinking to Promote Physical Activity for Girls](#)



Participation

IWG: Etsuko Ogasawara - New Way of Thinking to Promote Physical Activity for Girls

[New Zealand Football Performance & Prevention - Considerations for Female Athletes](#)



Participation

New Zealand Football Performance & Prevention - Considerations for Female Athletes

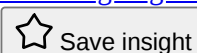
[IWG: Christine Young - Women in Taekwondo - Over 40 is not Over the Hill](#)



Participation

IWG: Christine Young - Women in Taekwondo - Over 40 is not Over the Hill

[Co-Designing Effective Programmes for Young Girls: Insights and Principles](#)



Participation

Co-Designing Effective Programmes for Young Girls: Insights and Principles

By Briana irving - Aktive - Auckland Sport & Recreation

[How To Co-Design A Programme With Participants](#)



Participation

How To Co-Design A Programme With Participants

By Briana irving - Aktive - Auckland Sport & Recreation

[Empowering Disengaged Girls Through A Participant-Centered Programme](#)



Participation

Empowering Disengaged Girls Through A Participant-Centered Programme

By Briana irving - Aktive - Auckland Sport & Recreation

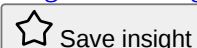
[Aktive Women & Girls Facility Guide](#)



Participation

Aktive Women & Girls Facility Guide

[Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #1 "Rethinking the offering"](#)



Participation

Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #1 "Rethinking the offering"

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

[Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #2 "Empowering young women to lead their experiences"](#)

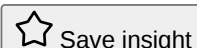


Participation

Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #2 "Empowering young women to lead their experiences"

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

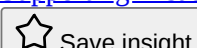
[IWG: Helen Parker - Transgender competitors in women's sport - Change for the better?](#)



Participation

IWG: Helen Parker - Transgender competitors in women's sport - Change for the better?

[Supporting Disabled Teenage Girls to be Active](#)



Participation

Supporting Disabled Teenage Girls to be Active

☆ Save insight

Participation

400 Games: Melony O'Connor Reaches Refereeing Milestone in Sal's NBL

By Amy McClintock - Basketball New Zealand
[Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #3 "Focus on Wellbeing and creating a safe environment"](#)



☆ Save insight

Participation





Insights to Young Women's Participation - Webinar #3 "Focus on Wellbeing and creating a safe environment"

By Rachel Howells - Sport New Zealand

Our Partners

-  Sport NZ Sport NZ
-  NZ Foreign affairs and trade NZ Foreign affairs and trade
-  US Embassy NZ US Embassy NZ

[Women in Sport Aotearoa Insight Hub](#) | [Ngā Wāhine Hākinakina o Aotearoa](#)

-  [Facebook](#)
-  [Instagram](#)
-  [Twitter](#)
-  [YouTube](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Terms of use](#)

© 2024 Women in Sport Aotearoa

Subscribe to our newsletter

Receive the latest news, events and insights as we publish them.


Name:

Email:

[Subscribe](#) >

✕

Close panel

 Women in Sport Aotearoa Insight Hub | Ngā Wāhine Hākinakina o Aotearoa

Subscribe to our newsletter

Our weekly email delivering the latest insights as we publish them, tailored to your tastes.

First name:*

Email:*

Preferences

Select those that apply to you to help us customise your Insight Hub experience.

Insight Themes

- ☒ All
- ☒ Leadership
- ☒ Social Change
- ☒ Active Lives
- ☒ High Performance
- ☒ Visibility and Voice

Insight Content Types

- ☒ All
- ☒ Research
- ☒ Case studies
- ☒ News stories
- ☒ Toolkits

Subscribe now >