

UW WOMEN'S SPORTS HISTORY, 1974-2004

Women's sports participation at the University of Wisconsin began in 1895 when Coach Andrew O'Dea consented to coach a women's boating crew. Women's basketball was introduced at Wisconsin in 1897. Badger year-books from before 1920 show women's teams receiving honor letters and wearing athletic sweaters, but these were interclass teams and not intercollegiate teams.

It wasn't until 1970 that the recreational play days of the past 70 years gave way to a club sport program that allowed for more elite competitive opportunities for women athletes. Kit Saunders was appointed the first Women's Club Sports Coordinator with a budget of \$2,000 in 1971-72.

By 1973, it was clear that the Women's Sports Club budget could not be adequately funded by the Intramural Recreation Board, and additional funding through the University was sought by Saunders. Another impetus for women's athletics appeared on the scene at this time in the form of Title IX of the Educational Amendment's Act of 1972. Similar to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination based on race, Title IX applied to discrimination based on sex. It became the single most important factor in the gains in women's sports nationally.

UW Chancellor Edwin Young appointed a committee to study women's athletics in 1972, and again in 1973. The committee proposed the first changes in facility usage, remodeling and scheduling which would allow for women's sports participation on competitive teams, faculty participation, and non-competitive recreation. The committee's recommendations resulted in the remodeling of facilities which would provide women

with soap, showers and towels in more than one building for the first time on the Madison campus.

The Athletic Board approved the inclusion of the 12-sport women's program on March 1, 1974. The sports, Director of Women's Athletics Dr. Kit Saunders, and a budget of \$118,000 officially moved into Camp Randall Stadium on July 1, 1974. During that first year of competition, the Badger women's teams won one national championship and competed on the national level in three other sports.

All this at a time when no scholarships were offered female athletes. Players often had to buy their own uniforms or share with other sports (Basketball, volleyball and track all shared the same uniforms).

The NCAA had no interest in sponsoring women's athletics so national championships were organized by the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). The Big Ten Conference also did not officially sponsor women's athletics, although unofficial championships were held in each sport until 1981.

Partial scholarships were first provided to the women's basketball team in 1976. By 1977-78, there were 62 total scholarships with basketball, volleyball, track and swimming each receiving eight.

In 1981-82, the NCAA and Big Ten Conference officially recognized women's athletics and sanctioned national and conference championships.

For the 10th anniversary of women's athletics in 1984, the budget for women's athletics had grown to \$1 million. In 1994, that figure was up to \$3.5 million.

Today, the women's sports program at the UW has a budget of \$9.1 million including 391 women's



Kit Saunders-Nordeen with Billie Jean King at the first fund raiser for UW women's athletics, a tennis exhibition in 1977.

team participants and scholarship equivalencies of 120.34 (227 student-athletes).

All 12 women's sports are fully-funded with the full NCAA complement of scholarships and coaches. Support services include full-time academic advisors, athletic trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, and sports information staff.

In addition to the numerous national and Big Ten Conference team and individual champions (see page 2), Badger women athletes have accomplished the following:

- 18 Wisconsin athletes-- 14 rowers, three track athletes, and one swimmer--have competed in the Olympics

- female student-athletes have earned 471 All-American honors

- 626 female student-athletes have been named to the Academic All-Big Ten team in their respective sports

12 ORIGINAL WOMEN'S SPORTS AT UW-MADISON 1974-75

Badminton
Basketball
Cross Country
Fencing
Field Hockey
Golf
Gymnastics
Rowing
Swimming & Diving
Tennis
Track & Field
Volleyball

12 CURRENT WOMEN'S SPORTS AT UW-MADISON 2004-2005

Basketball
Cross Country
Golf
Ice Hockey
Lightweight Rowing
Openweight Rowing
Soccer
Softball
Swimming & Diving
Tennis
Track & Field
Volleyball

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS MEMBERS WISCONSIN HALL OF FAME

Peggy Anderson—Diving
Cindy Bremser—Track
Kathy Butler—Track, XC
Rose Chepyator-Thomson—Track, XC
D'Lynn Damron—Diving
Cathy Branta Easker—Track, XC
Ann French Gonsalves—
Badminton
Carie Graves—Rowing
Suzie Favor Hamilton—Track, XC
Theresa Huff—Basketball
Stephanie Herbst Lucke—Track, XC
Pat Johnson McMillan—Track
and Field
Lisa Boyd Piekarski—Volleyball
Kit Saunders-Nordeen—
Administration
Heather Taggart—Soccer
Amy Wickus—Track

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM TITLES 1974-2004

1975 Rowing—Varsity 8
1979 Rowing—Novice 8
1980 Rowing—Jr. Varsity 8
Rowing—Novice 8
Rowing—Middleweight 4
1983 Badminton
1984 Cross Country
1985 Cross Country
Rowing—Novice 8
1986 Rowing—Varsity 8
Rowing—Jr. Varsity 8
1993 Rowing—Novice 4
1995 Rowing—Novice 4
1996 Rowing—Novice 4
2004 Rowing—Lightweight 8

Individual Titles

Track & Field—40 titles
Swimming & Diving—3 titles
Cross Country—3 titles

All-Americans

Track & Field—209
Swimming & Diving—182
Cross Country—39
Soccer—16
Volleyball—12
Tennis—5
Basketball—4
Hockey—3
Softball—1

Olympians

Rowing—14
Track & Field—3
Swimming & Diving—1

BIG TEN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS Team Titles, 1974-2004

Cross Country—15 *
(1978, '79, '83, '84, '85, '86, '87,
'88, '91, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99,
2000)
Fencing—4 *
(1979, '80, '85, '86)
Golf—1 (1994)
Soccer—1 (1994)
Tennis—1 (1996)
Indoor Track—11 *
(1978, '79, '80, '81, '82, '84, '85,
'86, '87, '90, '97)
Outdoor Track—13 *
(1976, '78, '79, '80, '81, '83, '84,
'85, '86, '90, '91, '96, '97)
Volleyball—4
(1990, '97, 2000, 2001)

Individual Titles

Cross Country—13
Fencing—6
Swimming & Diving—82
Indoor Track—104
Outdoor Track—116

* Championships held prior to
1981-82 were not officially sanc-
tioned by the Conference Office.

TITLE IX FEATURE ON UW WOMEN'S SPORTS

By Steve Schumacher

As appeared in *On Wisconsin*, Fall 1997

While the spirit of Title IX - assuring gender-equity in education and collegiate athletics - is clear, carrying out the letter of the law requires a complex game plan.

When Title IX of the Education Act was passed in 1972, its intent was to prohibit discrimination against girls and women in all aspects of American education - from the physics labs to the playing fields. Yet as the law's twenty-fifth anniversary has been commemorated this year, the focus has been almost solely on athletics.

It's no wonder. Nowhere has Title IX had a more profound

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Gilda Hudson-Winfield

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effect than on women in sports. Before its enactment in 1971, one out of every twenty-seven girls in high school took part in interscholastic athletics.

By last year, that number was one in three, meaning that 2.4 million high school girls now occupy the playing fields and courts where - not so long ago - they were rare indeed.

During the same time span, the number of women playing collegiate sports has increased more than fourfold, and the level of competition and support has seen dramatic growth.

"The contrasts are startling," says **Gilda Hudson-Winfield '77**, a Chicago attorney who has just completed a four-year term on the UW Athletic Board. She should know. She came to Wisconsin in 1973, at the dawn of Title IX, and was one of the university's first women athletic scholarship recipients.

"I had never participated in organized sports before I set foot on this campus," she says. "But I was lonely, and I saw some women at track practice one day, and decided to join them." Before she graduated, she became a good enough sprinter to win the Big Ten 100-yard dash championship and qualify for the 1976 U.S. Olympic Trials.

"Sometimes I think we forget how far we've come," she says. "Now, we sit on the Athletic Board pondering whether we should allow Reebok to come in with all their equipment and uniforms and millions of dollars in support in exchange for having their logo here. In the first years, we rode to track



Kit Saunders-Nordeen (L) and Paula Bonner were the first administrative team directing the Wisconsin Women's Athletics program from 1974-89.

meets in one of the team member's mother's car. We had to share shoes. That first year, we even had to share our uniforms with the basketball team."

The journey toward equity in athletics is not complete, of course. And it has been a sometimes bumpy and contentious road.

Kit Saunders-Nordeen, who became UW's first director of women's athletics in 1974, recalls the program's early struggles. "It was frustrating to deal with the Athletic Board in those days," she says. "They didn't really believe there would have to be equal opportunities for women in such things as scholarships. Title IX definitely pushed things along. But sometimes it seemed like it was taking forever."

Title IX/Page 2

Saunders-Nordeen even got

"friendly" advice from a local sports reporter who claimed to be supportive. "He told me, 'Don't be a pushy broad,'" she says with a laugh.

"There were people who thought women wouldn't stand up to the pressure, wouldn't practice, wouldn't develop strong high school programs to feed the system," she adds. "I think we proved them wrong."

Saunders-Nordeen was promoted to associate athletic director for men's and women's sports in 1983, and **Paula Bonner** succeeded her as director of women's athletics. The times were not easy; they struggled to manage twelve women's teams with not much money to go around.

"Our main concern was in upgrading financial support for the women's programs, in areas like travel budgets, recruiting, coaches' salaries, even just adding some assistant coaches," says Bonner, who left the Athletic Department in 1989 and is now associate executive director of the Wisconsin Alumni Association. "We were trying to improve our athlete's lives in basic, fundamental areas - like going from traveling in vans to using buses."

Bonner marvels at today's women's program. "I walk into the Field House and see eight-thousand, ten-thousand people there for a women's basketball game; it gives me goose-bumps," she says. "Women now seem so fully incorporat-

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Kit Saunders-Nordeen

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ed into the athletic program. I mean, I had to go out and buy the orange drink and mix it up for the basketball games."

Bonner says the roadblocks just a decade ago were substantial: there was not very aggressive oversight of Title IX at the federal level; administrators had a sacrosanct view of the men's revenue sports of football, basketball and hockey, thinking they should be separate from the equity question; officials thought the women's program "was doing pretty well, and wondered why we wanted more;" and the athletic department was struggling financially in all areas.

Still, Bonner says, the women's program had solid community support, and continued to compete well within the Big Ten and nationally, as it had under Saunders-Nordeen. "I was proud of what we accomplished," she says.

The Athletic Department's commitment to women's athletics was truly tested in 1989. In May, the board agreed to begin tracking the program's

commitment to Title IX. And shortly thereafter, a citizen filed a complaint with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, claiming that Wisconsin wasn't in compliance with the law. The OCR was obliged to begin examining the Badger program. University officials have been in ongoing negotiations with the OCR since then, trying to reach consensus on just what constitutes compliance.

"We've struggled with that," says UW-Madison political science professor Dennis Dresang, a UW Athletic Board member and the board's point person in negotiations with the OCR. "And not just us. The Office for Civil Rights has struggled with how to best do their job, too."

In fact, Dresang says, Wisconsin is acknowledged by the OCR as in compliance in twelve of the agency's thirteen criteria - equity in such things as locker rooms, scheduling, level of competition. The thirteenth is the sticking point: a requirement that the percentage of women athletes be "substantially proportional" to the percentage of women in the student body. In other words, if 51 percent of a university's students are female, 51 percent of the athletes should be female.

Nationally, women comprise 53 percent of the collegiate student body, and only 37 percent of intercollegiate athletes. UW-Madison does better: 52 percent of UW-Madison students are women, and 42 percent of its athletes are women. Still,

the discrepancy exists.

The major reason, at Wisconsin and elsewhere, is football. No women's sport can come close to matching the one hundred or more male athletes that most Division I football teams carry. Some institutions have approached the problem by cutting out men's non-revenue sports. Wisconsin doesn't want to take that route, Dresang says. The board cut five sports from the Badger program in 1991 - three men's sports, including baseball, and two women's sports. The athletic department was deeply in debt at the time and the cuts were made for budgetary reasons, not Title IX reasons, Dresang says, but it created bitter feelings.

"It is quite clear, both on the board and within the athletic administration, that we have a firm commitment to increasing opportunities for women," says Dresang. "But we want to do it in a smart, responsible way, without cutting opportunities for men."

The board has added both women's softball and women's lightweight crew to the athletic program in the past three years, bringing the number of sports to eleven for both men and women. Earlier this year, the board voted to add two more women's sports during the next eight years. Board members and administrators believe that those changes will remove any doubt about both the university's complete commitment to women's athletics

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Cheryl Marra

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and its full compliance with all Title IX guidelines.

Cheryl Marra, who came to the UW Athletic Department in 1990 to head the women's program and is now in charge of a number of both men's and women's sports, likes the current approach.

"There is a healthy respect for women as athletes here," she says. "That's not the question. I have no doubt that if we had the money, we could solve the gender-equity question tomorrow."

"If there has been a backlash, it's because Title IX was a law passed with no finances to back it up. Did we get money for more facilities? For coaches? No. So in some cases, universities have had to drain resources from one population - men. No wonder people have been angry about that."

But she sees the anger abating. "There is a new generation of men growing up," she says. "In 1972, men had to lose something for women to gain. But that's not true now. I have a fifteen-year-old son and an eighteen-year-old daughter, and they both grew up playing sports. My son isn't angry that girls have their gym time. He's

not threatened or feeling a sense of loss.

"This next generation accepts girls in athletics as a matter of course." Within the athletic department administration itself, gender lines are beginning to blur, which Marra says also has helped. "I oversee men's basketball as well as women's basketball," she says. "And I don't feel any differently about one than the other - I want the best for both of those teams."

Former women's athletic director Bonner also feels good about the state of the athletic program. "I believe Title IX was critical in creating the level of progress we've made," she says. "But I also think it has created a culture of women in athletics that wouldn't go away now even if the law weren't on the books."

Hudson-Winfield, the former athlete and board member, adds: "We still have decisions to make. Are we providing enough opportunities? How are we trying to attract young women? Twenty-five years later, we're still looking at those things."

"But I laud the University of Wisconsin. We are trying to keep our integrity as a university. We're doing this because it's the right thing to do, not because it's mandated by law."

**Steve Schumacher, UW Office of News and Public Affairs
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Dr. Katherine "Kit" Saunders-Nordeen

First UW Women's Athletics Director, Associate Athletic Director, 1974-90

"In the beginning, the major obstacle for incorporating women's athletics was a question of educating people and their attitudes—letting them know and really believe that we were serious, and that we were here to stay. Then later on, the most serious obstacle was competing for scarce resources, and being seen as competing against the men's sports for those resources. But the most significant thing for women's athletics to happen ever was Title IX."

Kit Saunders-Nordeen has been an advocate of girls and women's athletics all of her life. A native of Teaneck, N.J., Kit played for the North Jersey Field Hockey Association and the New Jersey Lacrosse Association while earning her bachelor's degree in physical education at Trenton State College in Trenton, N.J.

After graduating from Trenton State in 1962, she returned to Teaneck High School to serve as a physical education teacher for two years. There she coached girls basketball, field hockey and lacrosse.

The University of Wisconsin drew Kit in 1964, where she worked as a teaching assistant in physical education while earning her master's degree in the same field. After receiving her master's degree in 1966, Kit served as a lecturer and instructor in physical education while also coaching the women's tennis club team. Her career as an administrator also began in 1966, as the coordinator of the Women's Recreation Association (WRA), the recreation and competitive sports program for women.

Kit was instrumental in the growth of women's sports at the University of Wisconsin becoming the first athletic director for women in 1974. Supervising the 12-sport program and its \$118,000 budget, she oversaw the transition of Wisconsin sports from the recreation level to the intercollegiate status. She earned her Ph.D. in educational administration from Wisconsin in 1977, and continued in her administrative role watching the women's sports budget grow to \$1.5 million.

In 1983 she was named an associate athletic director for men and women supervising the 22 non-revenue sports. Kit later resumed her job as the primary women's administrator in 1989 until her retirement in 1990.

Active in women's sports on the state, regional and national level, Kit was involved with various positions of leadership in numerous athletics groups. In 1971, Kit helped to found the Wisconsin Women's Intercollegiate

Athletic Conference and served as the WWIAC president in 1978-79. She received the WWIAC Distinguished Service Award in 1982.

Kit was the commissioner of the six-state Midwest Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (MAIAW) from 1974-77, and was the chair of the Wisconsin Division of Girls and Women in Sport from 1974-76. On the national level, she was the first vice-president of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletes for Women (AIWA) from 1979-82.

A recipient of a number of awards, Kit was the first inductee into the UW Women's Athletics Hall of Fame in 1984. She was named the 1986 YWCA Woman of Distinction and in 1997, received the Women's Sports Advocates of Wisconsin Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1991 she was named W Club Woman of the Year, and was inducted into the Madison Sports Hall of Fame in 1992. She became a member of the University of Wisconsin Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998.

A lifelong supporter of the University of Wisconsin, Kit has a UW scholarship endowed in her name. She has served on numerous university committees including University Ridge Golf Course and Athletics Hall of Fame Committees. She and her husband, Buzz, are also long-time members of the Bascom Hill Society.



Dr. Kit Saunders-Nordeen presents UW track and cross country coach with his 27th Big Ten Championship trophy at the 1990 Big Ten Indoor Track and Field Championship held in Madison. The first women's athletics director at Wisconsin, Kit hired Peter in 1976.