THE FOUNDATION POSITION

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BENEFITS – WHY SPORTS PARTICIPATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

A MATTER OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Founded in 1974 by Billie Jean King, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity. That’s what the Foundation does, but the “why” is most important. Although there is a federal law that mandates equal participation opportunities for male and female students in secondary and post secondary institutions of higher education, the real reason we want equal opportunity for our daughters to play sports is so they too can derive the psychological, physiological and sociological benefits of sports participation. Sport has been one of the most important socio-cultural learning experiences for boys and men for many years. Those same benefits should be afforded our daughters. It is important for all of us to know that:

• High school girls who play sports are less likely to be involved in an unintended pregnancy; more likely to get better grades in school and more likely to graduate than girls who do not play sports.
• As little as four hours of exercise a week may reduce a teenage girl’s risk of breast cancer by up to 60%; breast cancer is a disease that afflicts one out of every eight American women. (Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 1994)
• Forty percent of women over the age of 50 suffers from osteoporosis (brittle bones). (Osteoporosis, 1996) None of us should want our daughters to repeat the experiences of generations of women—our mothers and grandmothers—who were not permitted to play sports or encouraged to participate in weight-bearing exercises that are necessary to establishing bone mass.
• Girls and women who play sports have higher levels of confidence and self-esteem and lower levels of depression.
• Girls and women who play sports have a more positive body image and experience higher states of psychological well-being than girls and women who do not play sports.
• Sport is where boys have traditionally learned about teamwork, goal-setting, the pursuit of excellence in performance and other achievement-oriented behaviors—critical skills necessary for success in the workplace. In an economic environment where
the quality of our children’s lives will be dependent on two-income families, our daughters cannot be less prepared for the highly competitive workplace than our sons. It is no accident that 80% of the female executives at Fortune 500 companies identified themselves as former “tomboys”—having played sports.

WOMEN WITHOUT SPORTS EXPERIENCE ARE DISADVANTAGED IN THE WORK SETTING

The existing American business model is a male model of organizational structure and human relationships. Males learn the rules of human organizations and interactions from sport. Sport is one of the most important socio-cultural learning environments in our society and, until quite recently, has been reserved for boys and men. This is not to say that the male model of business or organizations is the preferred model. In fact, women are bringing new strengths to business and organizations that are based on their skills in group process, preference for cooperation models and sensitivity to human needs. Eventually, as women rise to executive positions, the organizational models of business will reflect more female characteristics and become androgynous.

Right now, however, women who don’t know the written and unwritten rules of sport are at a disadvantage in understanding business models of organization based on sport. How important is it that our daughters learn the same rules as our sons? It’s critical. The most important of those rules are:

1. **TEAMS ARE CHOSEN BASED ON PEOPLE’S STRENGTHS AND COMPETENCIES RATHER THAN WHO IS LIKED OR DISLIKED.**

This seems like such a simple concept, yet women have traditionally learned to pick their friends and emphasize human relationships rather than skill competencies.

2. **SUCCESSFUL PLAYERS ARE SKILLED IN PRACTICING THE ILLUSION OF CONFIDENCE.**

Boys are taught at an early age and through their participation in sport that it is not acceptable to show fear. When you get up to bat or play any game, it is important to act confident and not to let your teammates know you are afraid, nervous or have a weakness – even if you are not confident. Employees who are skilled at practicing the illusion of confidence—calmness under
压力，确信自己的能力和能力等——去打最重要的位置，并且更有可能成为先发。坚持自信的人使一切看起来都很容易，不需要不断的强化或支持。

3. ERRORS ARE EXPECTED OF PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO DO NEW THINGS. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE.

错误会被立即承认，每个球员和球员被期望去改正错误，不要坐等、不要将批评错误个人化。游戏不是讨论你应该如何，应该如何去改正错误的时刻。那是在比赛前或比赛后的事情。

4. LOYALTY TO YOUR TEAMMATES IS VERY IMPORTANT.

许多女性不明白，当一个男人没有做好自己的工作时，他的工作被保护而不是被辞退。男孩们从体育运动中学到，每个人在团队中都有一份工作可做。甚至坐冷板凳的球员都是积极的团队力量。只要这些球员是好球员，就总是在鼓励队友。对于那些满足于坐冷板凳并等待机会的人，他们会被评价为团队和谐的推动力。如果没有人可以做这样的工作，他们将总是会促进团队的团结，而不会提到自己的弱点。

女性不打体育比赛的女性更加挑剔，当有人问她们时，她们会挑出同事的弱点。当女性在商业组织中这样做时，她们被认为是不忠的。

这并不意味着我们必须容忍无能。重要的是我们的方法。如果我们有无能的员工，那么好的队友需要找到一个他或她可以发挥的位置，或者将他或她重新分配到另一个团队。这意味着我们需要帮助重新安置我们不再希望留住的员工。

5. “I WILL” EQUALS “I CAN.”

男孩们被教导说，“好一个位置”是一个功能，是实现目标的意愿，是学习那个所需的基本技能的要求。他们也学会，你需要打这个位置才能成为那个位置的能手，从而掌握那个位置。因此，男孩们长大会认为，他们能做他们承诺要做的事情。这不是自大或事故，这仅仅是因为他们已经训练得相信他们“能”接受新的挑战，新的位置，并通过做来学习。女性，另一方面，认为晋升到新的位置需要认证，课堂训练，学位或其他可证明的，他们说“我有资格”，在增加。
to being confident that they can meet the demands of a new position. If they haven’t played sports, they haven’t had as much experience with the trial-and-error method of learning new skills and positions and are less likely to be as confident as their male counterparts about trying something new.

6. IN A HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION, YOUR BOSS (THE HEAD COACH) GIVES THE ORDERS AND THE EMPLOYEES (PLAYERS) FOLLOW THE HEAD COACH’S INSTRUCTIONS.

Men’s organizations are very hierarchical in nature. When playing the game in the business setting, the coach is all powerful and players follow orders. If a player has a better idea, he or she gets to the coach in an informal setting and persuades the coach to consider that idea. The idea then becomes the coach’s idea and is carried into the business setting.

Women’s organizations are more decentralized and collegial. Women are much more likely to bring a group together, ask everyone to present their ideas and then come up with an idea or direction that has the support of the majority of the group. It may be unrealistic to expect organizations led by men who have been trained in hierarchical organizations to adopt problem-solving or decision-making models preferred by women. It may be equally unrealistic to expect your coach to understand when you speak up to disagree during team meetings.

It is important for our sons and daughters to learn about the differences in how men and women create different decision-making and problem-solving organizations, and how to operate successfully in each environment.

7. WINNING AND LOSING HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR WORTH AS A PERSON.

In sports and in organizations, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. Sport gives you experience so you learn to win graciously and accept defeat without blowing the experience out of proportion. You learn to separate the outcome of a game or your performance in one game from your worth as a person. A bad practice does not make you a bad person. This is a critically important lesson for all workers.

8. PRESSURE, DEADLINES AND COMPETITION ARE FUN.

In sports and in organizations, pressure, deadlines and competition are commonplace. Sport gives players the experience of dealing with these realities and learning to enjoy and conquer their challenges. When there are only two seconds left on the clock, your team is one point down, and you go up for the jump shot, you learn what pressure, deadlines and competition is
all about and how they can be perceived as exhilarating and fun rather than scary and distasteful. The bottom line is that most organizations want to hire people who enjoy and excel in competitive environments. If we don’t give sports to women, we don’t allow them to learn how to handle these challenges.

9. WHEN YOU ARE TOO TIRED TO TAKE ONE MORE STEP, YOU KNOW YOU CAN.
Ultimately, participation in sports teaches players all about the work ethic: that hard work, repetition and constant practice are the keys to successful performance. Athletes know that no matter how tired they are, they can tap into a reservoir of stamina, strength and good thinking—even under the most difficult of circumstances - and continue to compete successfully.

10. PERFECTION IS SEQUENTIAL ATTENTION TO DETAIL
In sports and in business, being exceptional is leaving no detail unattended to. Every athlete has a precise checklist of details involved in every skill from throwing a curve ball to shooting a jumpshot. The more you study your opponent and prepare for a game, the more successful you are. Great players are students of their game, and great students are always learning.

GIRLS AND WOMEN NEED ENCOURAGEMENT AND ASPIRATIONAL ROLE MODELS
Many people think that girls are not as interested in sport as boys. Women’s Sports Foundation research shows that boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 9—and their parents—are equally interested in sports participation. However, by the age of 14, girls drop out of sport at a rate that is six times greater than boys. Girls and women simply do not receive the same positive reinforcement about their sports participation. Boys receive balls, gloves and sports equipment by the age of 2. They see their images on television as sportsmen, they see their photos in the sports section and know from their parents and friends that they are expected to play sports.

Even though our daughters are not as likely to be discouraged from playing sports as they were 10 years ago, they simply aren’t encouraged to the same extent as little boys. As a result, they enter organized sport two years later than little boys and are, therefore, less likely to have the skills necessary for early success experiences. If a child is unskilled, he or she is unlikely to have fun. It’s no fun to strike three times in row. The no. 1 reason why boys and girls play sports is because it’s “fun.”
We must do a better job of supporting our daughters’ sports participation. For Christmas and birthdays, we must find books about girls in sports, give gifts of sports equipment and sports lessons. We need to take our sons and daughters to see women playing sports so they grow up appreciating and respecting the sports skills of women and so our daughters see images of themselves excelling in sports—because she is not going to see those images on television or in the newspapers. It’s no accident that girls’ sports participation in Olympic sports increases significantly following the Olympic Games, one of the few times that coverage of women’s sports is equal to that of men’s sports. Aspirational role models drive youth demand for sports. This top to bottom synergy has not yet become commonplace in women’s sports because of limited college and professional sports opportunities and television coverage.

However, the trend is clear: the increased participation and success of female athletes at the Olympic Games, increased television coverage of women’s college sports, new women’s professional sports leagues and the participation increases of females in all sports and all age levels.

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