

# The Women's Sports Foundation Report Brief: 2018 Olympic Games and Paralympic Winter Games Preview

## Overview

This is a preliminary look at what is known about women's participation in the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Following the Games the Women's Sports Foundation will publish its sixth report in the series that follows the progress of women in the Olympic and Paralympic movement.<sup>1</sup> The published report will provide the most accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date examination of the participation trends among female Olympic and Paralympic athletes and the hiring trends of Olympic and Paralympic governing bodies with respect to the number of women who hold leadership positions in these organizations. It is intended to provide governing bodies, athletes, and policymakers at the national and international level with new and accurate information with an eye toward making the Olympic and Paralympic movement equitable for all.

## Athletic Participation

Although the exact total number of athletes and the precise numbers of athletes by country will not be known until after the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games are over, for many sports and events we do know the quotas that have been assigned to male and female individual athletes and teams. Even though there are some sports with equal representation and some that have added opportunities for women, the numbers are not large enough to move the needle for women since 2014. The percentage of female athletes in the Olympic Winter Games has held steady since the 2010 Games, when women made up 40.4% of the athlete delegation, an improvement from 38.2% in 2006. It's expected that female participation in the Paralympic Winter Games will increase from 25.4% in 2014 to 28-29% in 2018.

## Leadership

Over the past 10 years, women have made incremental advances in Olympic and Paralympic leadership. The IOC Executive Board is slowly incorporating greater female representation, from one female board member in 2006 to four in 2017; however, no woman has ever served as IOC president. Likewise, women IOC members have more than doubled, from 13% in 2006 to 29% in 2017. While the percentage of women filling NOC leadership roles has slightly increased, from 4.4% serving as president in 2010 and 7.5% in 2017, female NOC

representation remains well below the IOC's 20% desired threshold. Women on the USOC Board of Directors has also slightly increased, from 27.3% in 2006 to 37.5% in 2017.

## 2018 Olympic Winter Games Projections

### Athlete Participation Projections:

- There are several sports with equal quotas and in which we expect equal participation for female and male athletes: biathlon, curling, individual figure skating, ice dancing, pairs figure skating, and short track speed skating.
- There are several sports in which gender inequities continue to exist: bobsleigh (23.5% expected female participation), skeleton (40% expected female participation), hockey (38% expected female participation), Nordic combined (no opportunities for female participation), ski jumping (30% expected female participation), and snowboarding (45% expected female participation).
- Hockey is one sport where inequities exist in not only overall numbers for female and male athletes, but also the number of teams. There will be 12 men's teams and eight women's teams competing. Each men's team has a roster of 25 athletes, while women's teams have rosters totaling 23, up from 21 in 2014, accounting for 16 additional women (for a total of 184, compared to 300 men) in 2018.
- The other sport that created more opportunities for women is luge, with four additional spots for female athletes.
- There are no other indications, based on the quotas for each sport, to expect a significant increase in the participation of female athletes in 2018.
- Female athletes accounted for 40% (1,158 women, 1,708 men) of the athletes in 2014. With eight additional hockey athletes and four additional luge athletes, the addition of 12 women to the female participants will not increase the percentage to a noticeable degree.
- Inequities continue to exist in sports and events for female and male athletes related to distance of races, including cross country skiing, speed skating, and ski jumping.

<sup>1</sup> These reports can be found at <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/research/articles-and-reports/all/elite-athletes/>

- There are seven events that offer no opportunities for female athletes to participate: Nordic combined – individual normal hill, Nordic combined – individual large hill, Nordic combined – team, ski jumping – individual large hill, ski jumping – team, bobsleigh – four-man, and luge – doubles.
- The percentage of female athletes in the Olympic Winter Games has held steady since the 2010 Games, when women made up 40.4% of the athlete delegation, an improvement from 38.2% in 2006.

#### Olympic Leadership:

- The IOC Executive Board is composed of four women (26.7%) and 11 men. This is an increase in female leadership from 2006, when Gunilla Lindberg served as the only female representative on the 15-member board.
- The IOC membership consists of 29 women (29%) and 71 men, an increase in female membership from 2006, when only 13% was female. No woman has ever served as IOC president.
- Of the 26 IOC Commissions, women chair six (23.1%) and hold 179 (37.8%) of the 473 positions. This is a notable increase from 2010, when women held just 17.3% of commission positions. However, two Commissions still remain below the 20% threshold established by the IOC that was supposed to be met by 2005: the Coordination for the XXIII Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 and the Marketing Commissions.
- Only one woman serves as a president of a Winter International Federation, Kate Caithness of the World Curling Federation. In 2010, no women served as Winter International Federation presidents. Of the 80 positions

on Winter IFs' Executive Councils, women hold 13 (16.3%). For a complete gender breakdown of Winter International Federations, see Table 1.

Winter Federation	Men		Women		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Biathlon	8	88.9%	1	11.1%	9
Bobsleigh & Skeleton	8	100%	0	0%	8
International Ice Hockey Federation	11	84.6%	2	15.4%	13
International Skating Union	8	61.5%	5	38.5%	13
International Ski Federation	17	94.4%	1	5.6%	18
Luge	9	81.8%	2	18.2%	11
World Curling Federation	6	75%	2	25%	8

- Although there has been slight improvement, as indicated in previous reports, National Olympic Committees continue to fall below the 20% threshold established by the IOC. In 2010, nine women (4.4%) served as presidents and 17 (8.4%) served as secretary generals of NOCs. Of the 201 total presidential positions and 197 secretary general positions in 2017, women held 15 (7.5%) and 32 (16.2%), respectively.<sup>2</sup>
- For a breakdown of NOC presidents and secretary generals by region, see Table 2.

	Presidents			Secretary Generals			Total		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
ANOCA	48	5	53	45	6	51	93	11	104
	90.6%	9.4%		88.2%	11.8%		89.4%	10.6%	
PASO	35	5	40	30	9	39	65	14	79
	87.5%	12.5%		76.9%	23.1%		82.3%	17.7%	
OCA	42	1	43	40	3	43	82	4	86
	97.7%	2.3%		93%	7%		95.4%	4.6%	
EOC	44	4	48	38	9	47	82	13	95
	91.7%	8.3%		80.9%	19.1%		86.3%	13.7%	
ONOC	17	0	17	12	5	17	28	6	34
	100%	0%		70.6%	29.4%		82.4%	17.6%	
Total	186	15	201	165	32	197	350	48	398
	88.6%	7.46%		83.76%	16.24%		87.9%	12.1%	

2 Not all NOCs report a Secretary General.

### United States Olympic and Paralympic Leadership:

- The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Board of Directors is composed of six women and 10 men; the USOC Executive Team is composed of four women and 10 men.
- Of the 12 positions on the Paralympic Advisory committees, women hold four.
- As of November 2017, women did not chair any of the eight National Governing Bodies of winter sports. In 2010, only the US Figure Skating NGB had a female chair.
- All NGBs of winter sports meet the IOC's 20% threshold, with US Speedskating having the lowest female representation. For a complete breakdown of the gender constitution of winter NGBs, see Table 3.
- In the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, 65 men and six women served as main coaches of Team USA.<sup>3</sup> Of the six female main coaches in 2014, three coached figure skating and three coached hockey. Although not all coaching rosters have been released, it is likely the number of women coaches of Team USA will decline in 2018 as the female head hockey coach and female assistant hockey coach were replaced by men.

### Olympic Media Coverage Projections

- NBC has increased coverage of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang across all platforms (2,400 hours), compared to the 2014 Games (1,600 hours).
- Previous research indicated that the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi marked an increased amount of media coverage in terms of clock time dedicated to female athletes, compared to previous winter Olympiads (MacArthur, Angelini, Billings & Smith, 2016).

- Ideally, the increased media coverage overall will lead to increased clock time and more equitable portrayals for female athletes.

### 2018 Paralympic Winter Games

#### Athlete Participation Projections:

- There are no sports in the Paralympic Winter Games that offer gender equity. The sport with the greatest percentage of female participants is cross country skiing, with 41% of the allotted quota (this is up from 36% in 2014).
- Female athletes account for 32% of participants in alpine skiing, up from 26% in 2014.
- Sled hockey added eight spots for women, making it a mixed sport and marking the first time female sled hockey athletes will compete in the Games. However, this similar opportunity exists in wheelchair rugby in the Paralympic Games, with only a few countries choosing to include a female on their mixed team.
- The quota for female athletes in wheelchair curling is down to 20% from 38% in 2014.
- Snowboarding will be a first-time Paralympic sport in 2018, with female athletes accounting for 34% of the participants.
- Female athletes accounted for 25.4% of the athletes in 2014. With the additional spots for women in hockey, along with cross country skiing and alpine skiing, female athletes may increase to approximately 28-29% of the total athletes in 2018.

**Table 3: NGBs Executive Boards/Committees Gender Breakdown**

NGBs Executive Boards/ Committees	Men		Women		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
US Biathlon Officers	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7
USA Bobsleigh and Skeleton Board of Directors	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	15
USA Curling Board of Directors	19	76%	6	24%	25
US Figure Skating Board of Directors	7	43.8%	9	56.2%	16
USA Hockey Board of Directors/Executive Committee	13	76.5%	4	23.5%	17
USA Luge Board of Directors	8	72.7%	3	27.3%	11
US Ski and Snowboarding Board of Directors	15	68.2%	7	31.8%	22
US Speedskating Board of Directors	8	80%	2	20%	10

<sup>3</sup> Main coaches include those pictured in the USA Media Guide with a biography, including but not limited to: head coaches, assistant coaches, and general managers. Various other positions were listed in the media guide but did not include biographical information; therefore, they were not included in this calculation. Such positions include, but are not limited to: ski technicians, sled mechanics, or team leaders.

**Paralympic Leadership:**

- The IPC Governing Board is composed of 10 men and 4 (28.6%) women, a decline from 2010 when women held 30% of the membership positions. The IPC Executive Office consists of five men and seven women (58.3%). The IPC Management Team is 54.4% female.
- While the IPC headquarters is moving toward gender equality, the National Paralympic Committees still largely fail to meet the IPC’s established threshold of 30%. For a full breakdown of NPCs president and main contact teams by region, see Table 4.

	Presidents			Main Contact			Total Positions		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Africa	42	6	48	38	9	47	80	15	95
	87.5%	12.5%		80.9%	19.1%		84.2%	15.8%	
Americas	21	9	30	19	13	32	40	22	62
	70%	30%		59.4%	40.6%		64.5%	35.5%	
Asia	36	3	39	34	8	42	70	11	81
	92.3%	7.7%		81%	19%		86.4%	13.6%	
Europe	38	9	47	26	21	47	64	30	94
	80.9%	19.1%		55.3%	44.7%		68.1%	31.9%	
Oceania	7	2	9	5	4	9	12	6	18
	77.8%	22.2%		55.6%	44.4%		66.7%	33.3%	
Total	144	29	173	122	55	177	266	84	350
	83.2%	16.8%		68.9%	31.1%		76%	24%	

Data from an upcoming report:

Houghton, E.J., Pieper, L.P., & Smith, M.M. (2017). *Women in the 2018 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games: An Analysis of Participation, Leadership, and Media Coverage*. East Meadow, NY: Women’s Sports Foundation.