

Fans must not forget: Women are athletes, too

With millions of dollars being poured into sports where men are the principals performing, every so often sports fans have to be reminded that women are athletes and would also like some of those millions used to give them a chance to make an adequate living.

For the past few years, with women playing professional basketball each year backed by the National Basketball Association, things seemed bright enough for females athletes who played in other sports to expect fans to appreciate their endeavors by attending their contests.

Oddly, this has not been the case at the women's leagues, such as bowling, soccer, softball, and skiing; they have thrown in the towel because of the lack of funding to keep the athletes employed.

Yet men's teams, such as the New York Yankees, Los Angeles Lakers, Golden State Warriors, Orlando Magic, just to name a few, can give million dollar salaries to just one player while women like Mia Hamm, Jackie Joyner Kersey, Gayle Devers, and Peacabo Jones can't make a living in their specialties.

Of course, women are very active in tennis and golf, but, even then, the purses don't come anywhere near the prize money given to the men on both of those tours.

The Texas Rangers gave Alex Rodriguez's \$250 million to play and then traded him to the New York Yankees for the same amount of money. For Rodriguez's salary for a year, he could sponsor the entire women's bowling league for ten years.

The same for Michael Jordan who made enough money as a player and doing commercials to become a billionaire; he could also be a sponsor of a women's team.

At Stanford University, the tennis stadium where there is a Women's Tennis Association each year, alumni gave the school a tennis stadium. The Freita family gave most of the money to build a women's softball stadium at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

Before the formation of the WTA, the women were under the guidance of the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA), and were getting the same amount of money for their tournaments. So, they formed the WTA and Virginia Slims and went out on their own playing tournaments all over the



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world.

In some tournaments, such as the U.S. Open, the purses are the same as the mens but they haven't convinced the French that they should get

equal pay.

Last weekend, a fine example of the discrepancy in purses was shown in the golf tournaments of the Ladies Professional Golf

Association (LPGA) at Mobile, Alabama and the Franklin Templeton Shootout at Naples, Florida

The women's winner, Heather D. Donofrio shot a 269 for four rounds (69, 66, 64, and 70). She received \$130,000 for her four rounds. The men's winners, Hank Kuehne and Jeff Sluman shot three rounds of alternate shot, better ball, and scramble for a minus 29 and received

\$300,000 each. Three rounds as partners and they split \$600,000. Second place at Templeton received \$187,000 each.

Liz Johnson, a woman bowler, qualified last week for the men's professional bowling event at Cheektowaga, New York finishing fourth in field of 64. However, the next day, it was single loss knockout, she lost to Brad Angelo 4-2 but shot a

278 in the third round to her partner's, 230. She however, knew where the money was.

A million dollars was at stake the WTA's final event between Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova. That's the kind of money the women in other sports should be getting but the ones with the money, like Earvin "Magic" Johnson, haven't taken the word that women's sports are (See Sports Pace, Page 16)



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