

Men in Synchronized Swimming

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Men in Synchronized Swimming

In today's sports culture, the desegregation of traditionally male-dominated sports seems a natural move in the context of American society's growing dialogue on women's rights. However, one aspect of gender equality in sports which remains practically unaddressed is the issue of men's participation and acceptance in traditionally female-dominated sports. There exists a serious "cultural roadblock" (Arnold 1998) that affects men competing in sports which are traditionally associated with women and, in some cases, a legal roadblock as well. One of the most shocking examples of sex discrimination in a [sporting](#) event is faced by male synchronized swimmers. Men were until very recently not allowed to even participate in synchronized swimming events in the Olympics and other internationally recognized competitions such as those associated with the [Federation Internationale de Natacion Amateur](#) and the Pan American Games. Many [opponents](#) argue that, in a male-dominated society, issues such as the discrimination against male synchronized swimmers are simply irrelevant. However, it is important to remember that gender equality means equal rights and opportunities for both men and women.

It is hard for many to even accept synchronized swimming as a sport. It has a 'frivolous'

reputation, is included as parts of Hollywood musicals and Las Vegas shows and is viewed by many as pure entertainment rather than athleticism. Indeed, synchronized swimmers have problems being taken seriously on a variety of fronts. For example, "in 1996, the French Olympic team was banned from using a routine in which swimmers attempted to portray the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust" (Arnold 1998). The issue becomes even...

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...ture, especially in American sports culture. The issue of men's participation in synchronized swimming is a good example of the struggles that men are currently going through in order to ensure that gender equality in the sports world applies to everyone.

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