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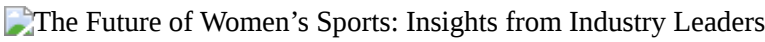


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The Future of Women’s Sports: Insights from Industry Leaders

Theme:
Voice & Visibility



Co-authored by Eye on Annapolis

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Women’s sports are experiencing unprecedented growth, attracting increased investment and global attention. The opportunities for further development are clear as awareness and demand continue to rise. But what does the future hold, and how can stakeholders ensure continued progress?

What is the Future of Women’s Sports?

The last few years have seen a seismic upheaval of women’s sports. The 2024 Paris Olympics achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first Games with gender parity among athletes, solidifying the global commitment to equality.

Revenue in women’s sports has also skyrocketed, surpassing \$1 billion globally in 2024, driven by increased sponsorships, viewership, and merchandise sales. This marks a 300% growth in just three years, a testament to the untapped potential of this market.

In the U.S., the WNBA recorded its highest viewership ever in 2024, further proving that the appetite for women’s sports is stronger than ever. Events like Nebraska’s women’s volleyball game, which drew 92,003 fans to a football stadium, have shattered attendance records, showcasing the growing demand for women’s sports on larger stages.

Why Investing in Women’s Sports is a Game-Changer

Investing in women’s sports is no longer viewed as entirely driven by a moral imperative—it’s a smart business move. A recent Deloitte study revealed that 99% of brand decision-makers have increased their investments in women’s sports over the past five years.

This aligns with analysis from Avenue Capital’s [Marc Lasry](#), who identifies women’s sports as having “the most upside potential” in the current market. He has emphasized that women’s sports present substantial opportunities for investors, citing the increasing demand and viewership as key drivers for future media rights deals.

Sponsorship deals are a major driver of this growth. For example, the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup secured 30 sponsorship partners, a 150% increase from 2019, illustrating the rising commercial appeal of women’s sports.

Individual athletes are also reaping the rewards. Alex Morgan, a U.S. soccer star, earned \$6.3 million in off-field sponsorships in 2022, far surpassing her playing salary of \$800,000. This highlights the growing recognition of women athletes as valuable marketing assets.

Economic Impact and ROI for Brands

Women’s sports fans are unique and highly engaged. Research shows that women are more likely to purchase merchandise and share their enthusiasm on social media, creating a “buzz-worthy” fandom that brands are eager to tap into.

Investments in women’s sports also yield broader benefits, including:

- Enhanced brand awareness and positive public perception.
- Improved employee engagement, as companies align with socially responsible initiatives.
- Early-stage opportunities with high ROI potential, as the market remains underdeveloped compared to men’s sports.

The Role of Women’s Sports in Empowering Future Generations

The impact of women’s sports extends far beyond the playing field. According to a Deloitte study, 85% of women who played sports said the skills they developed were crucial to their career success.

The numbers are even more striking among women in leadership roles:

- 91% of women leaders said sports skills were vital to their success.
- 93% of women earning \$100,000+ credited sports for their achievements.

These findings underscore the transformative power of sports in shaping resilient, strategic, and confident leaders.

Encouraging Girls to Stay in Sports

Visibility is key to inspiring the next generation of female athletes. The growing prominence of women athletes as role models encourages young girls to stay involved in sports, fostering critical skills like teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving.

The societal and economic benefits of increasing numbers of girls interested in sport are immense. Girls who play sports have greater self-esteem, better communication skills and thrive in team environments – in short, they’re more likely to excel in their careers, contribute to their communities, and break barriers in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Overcoming Barriers to Growth in Women’s Sports

Despite significant progress, the gender pay gap remains a pressing issue in women’s sports. Women earn approximately 82 cents for every dollar earned by men, and this disparity is even more pronounced in athletics.

The solution lies in increased investment. More sponsorships and higher viewership directly translate to better pay for women athletes, creating a more equitable playing field.

Enhancing Data and Measurement

One of the biggest challenges for women’s sports is the lack of comprehensive data. Unlike men’s sports, which have established metrics for revenue and performance, women’s sports often rely on less robust indicators.

Brands must adopt creative KPIs, such as:

- Social media engagement and follower growth.
- Brand awareness and sentiment analysis.
- Fan loyalty and merchandise sales.

These alternative metrics can help quantify the value of women’s sports and attract more investment.

Expanding Infrastructure and Opportunities

The increasing use of larger venues for women’s sports is a promising trend. For example, the 2024 [NCAA](#)-ESPN deal valued the women’s basketball tournament at \$65 million annually, nearly double its previous valuation.

This shift toward fairer valuations and larger platforms is crucial for leveling the playing field and maximizing revenue opportunities.

Strategies for Sustained Growth in Women’s Sports

Creating Distinct Business Models

For women’s sports to thrive, stakeholders must develop unique products and commercial strategies tailored to their audience. This includes creating standalone leagues, designing innovative merchandise, and exploring new revenue streams like streaming platforms and NFTs.

Mobilizing Collaborative Investment

Initiatives like the Athena Pledge are mobilizing brands to invest in women’s sports. By fostering partnerships between companies and sports organizations, these efforts amplify the impact of investments and drive long-term growth.

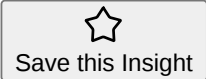
Leveraging Media and Technology

Media coverage is a game-changer for women’s sports. Increased visibility on historically male-dominated platforms, combined with the viral power of social media, has expanded fan engagement and reached new audiences.

Technology also plays a crucial role. From advanced analytics to immersive fan experiences, innovation is reshaping how women’s sports are consumed and monetized.

A New Era for Women’s Sports

Women’s sports are at an inflection point, offering unprecedented opportunities for growth and impact. With increased investment, strategic planning, and a commitment to equity, the future of women’s sports is limitless. Now is the time for brands, organizations, and fans to champion this movement and build a thriving, inclusive future.





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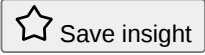
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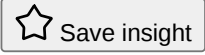
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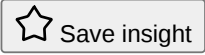
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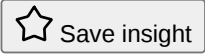
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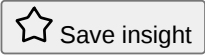
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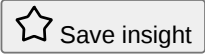
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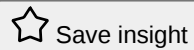
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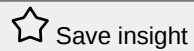
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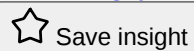
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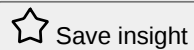
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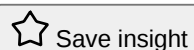
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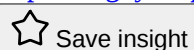
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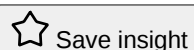
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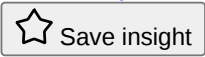
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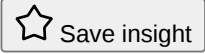
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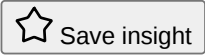
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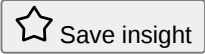
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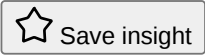
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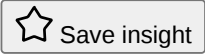
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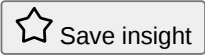
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