

The History of Girls Athletics in Carmel

By Andrew Wright

The female athletes of this city are exceptional. This was evident when swimmer Emily Ayers won her 14th state title in 1995, or when Julie Hamm won state in cross country as a freshman the following year, or when the girls soccer team put together 5 state wins beginning in 2000. This past February our girls swim team set a national record by winning its 30th consecutive state championship. There are countless stories of trial and triumph in the last 45 years. There was a time, though, when Carmel girls did not have competitive sports teams. There was a time when female athletes all over the country were barred from organizing and participating in state athletic associations. The adamancy of those who took a position against female athletes was such that it took an Education Amendment enacted by Congress in 1972 to change the state of girls high school athletics.

Around the turn of the 20th century, gender roles were much more strictly defined. Baseball, football, basketball and track were offered in many high schools across America for boys, but girls had little opportunity to participate in organized sports. Basketball was especially popular in Indiana because it did not require much in the way of equipment and uniforms; even the smallest schools could field a team. For these reasons, it was also a relatively accessible sport for girls. Many of the early Girls Athletic Associations (GAAs) centered on basketball. GAAs were after school rec clubs that met once or twice a week and cycled through a variety of seasonal sports. They were predominantly intramural until the 70s but often included several "sports days" with other schools. Girls were encouraged to be active, but play was favored over competition. Rules

changes were implemented for many sports to slow down the pace of the game because there was a real concern that school administrators would cancel GAA programs if girls were thought to be exerting themselves too much.

In the earliest years, permission to exist was the extent of support schools gave their GAAs. Girls had to fund the programs on their own. Schools would not hire coaches, instead relying on faculty sponsors who they could pay less. GAAs were also given little to no access to facilities. This was the case when Noblesville formed a GAA in 1903. The school would not allow the girls to use the gym, so they outfitted the school's basement just in time to participate in what may have been the earliest competitive season in Indiana high school girls basketball. According to articles published at the time, the ambition and vigor with which the girls played in 1903 drew a loyal fan base of their peers. In a game between Shortridge High School and an alumni team, the Indianapolis Star reported that "flying tackles and 'straight arms' were the favorite plays, and as a result of their employment many a fair head hit the floor with a resounding whack" (December 9, 1903). Only a month later, Shortridge's star forward dislocated her shoulder after a hard fall in the game against Columbus. Despite the loss of their star, Shortridge defeated all opponents and claimed the first girls basketball state championship.

However, society was not ready for female athletes who played aggressively like the boys, and a crackdown followed the remarkable season. The Shortridge GAA petitioned the school for permission to create a track team the following spring, but were denied the opportunity. And though the girls generously donated all of the proceeds earned during their

undefeated season, including their coach's salary, to the schools general athletic fund, which only funded boys sports, the athletic committee composed of the captains of the boys teams voted not to give the girls an athletic letter for their championship season. As a sincere conciliatory gesture, the junior class voted to allow them to wear the class year. The same year Shortridge girls were playing with abandon, the faculty of the Indiana State Normal School (now Indiana State University) voted to cancel the remainder of the women's basketball season after the university's president overheard rude remarks made by men in the stands regarding the athletes' uniforms. The faculty determined public games "were not conducive to womanliness" (Indianapolis Star, October 29, 1903).

Despite the obstacles, the allure of sports motivated girls all over the state to organize GAAs at their schools. In 1926, delegates from 24 schools met to discuss the formation of a state organization to oversee girls athletics. The result was the formation of the Indiana League of High School Girls Athletic Association in 1931. The state GAA was run by volunteers and lacked the resources and support to effectively change the nature of girls athletics or organize state tournament series. GAA volunteers at the state level repeatedly petitioned the IHSAA for membership to no avail.

CARMEL GAA

Athletic opportunities for girls in Carmel were limited to the physical education class offered girls in grades 7 – 10 until the 1940s. The class included intramural baseball games, a class basketball tournament between the freshmen and sophomores and volleyball games with other county schools. When the GAA was organized in 1945, it was very popular among

female students who continued to hold GAA meetings over the summer. The GAA disbanded after 1948 until 1952, most likely because it was without a faculty sponsor. In 1952, a physical education teacher, Eva Williamson, revived the GAA. Intramural basketball and dodgeball were the only sports offered the girls. The GAA disbanded again during the 1958-1959 school year.



In 1961, Faye Stokes sponsored a third iteration of the GAA, which met once a week and played a different sport for six week periods. For the first time, girls were awarded on a points system for their level of participation. Girls accumulating 50 points earned a pin, 150 a chevron, 250 a letter, and for 350 points, they earned a trophy. The girls traveled for "play days" where several sports would be played against other schools and hosted two at Carmel each year.



Carmel girls were also encouraged to participate in sports on their own outside of the weekly GAA meetings. These individual pursuits are where Carmel's first female athletic stars began to shine. Before Carmel had a girls golf team, Claudia Mayhew won the Indiana Junior title 3 times as well as the 1964 Indiana Women's title and the USGA national title in 1966. Two years later, Judy Teater won two state championships in archery. That same year Debbi Brouhard trained with the boys track team throughout the spring. She competed in one qualifying tournament before heading to the state track meet where she won state in the 440 meter dash, setting a new state record in the process.



Debbi Brouhard in the set position

Patricia

Donovan took the reins of the Carmel GAA during the 1969-1970 season. Carmel had its first competitive teams, gymnastics, swimming,



Pam Campbell won state in 1972

tennis and volleyball, the following year. One would think that success would follow years or decades of program-building. Carmel's girls were, however, an untapped well of talent.

Remarkably, the Greyhounds burst on the state scene in their first year of competition with an individual state champion in gymnast Elaine Totten and place winners Pam Campbell (2nd in diving), Kathy Foxworthy (3rd in the 200yd intermediate medley and 5th place in the 200yd freestyle), and Chris Baughman (3rd in tennis). Carmel would continue to place teams and individuals in state tournaments throughout the duration of the GAA, which was phased out after 1977.

Attitudes towards girls sports had begun to change across the country around this time. Title IX went into effect in 1972, disallowing exclusion based on gender. The IHSAA, forced to absorb the girls program, hired Patricia Roy, who had headed the state GAA in the 60s and early 70s. Under Roy's direction, the IHSAA brought on two sports a year starting with volleyball and gymnastics in the 1972-1973 season, golf and track in 1973-1974, tennis and swimming in 1974-1975, and basketball in 1975-1976.

Girls athletics won another victory in 1972 when the IN Supreme Court ruled that girls must be allowed to join the boys team if their school did not have an equivalent girls team for non-contact sports. The rule would again change in the 90s when girls were allowed to join the boys team regardless of the nature of the sport. Carmel had its first girl wrestler in 1998. Lesley Harvey joined the team her freshmen year. Since then, at least a dozen of girls have wrestled for Carmel middle schools.

In recognition of what the girls of Carmel's GAA accomplished, we have posted a list of state place winners in the Local History section of our website. The list includes 27 individual and 4 team top-5 finishes with 10 individual

champions. These girls paved the way for decades of Carmel champions. Special mention is also due Judi Warren who coached Carmel's girls basketball team for more than a decade. Warren was Indiana's first Miss Basketball. Her performance in leading Warsaw to the first basketball state championship generated a lot of attention for Indiana girls high school sports. Carmel is honored to appear on her resume.

It is unfortunate that something as natural and innocuous as sports was withheld from girls for so long. It should be particularly troubling for our city where the girls program is so strong. Our girls outnumber our boys 164 to 90 for individual state championships and 77 to 59 for team championships. Our girls have more team state wins than any other school in the state has total. Carmel girls have from their first opportunity epitomized the argument that athleticism is a human trait and sports should be offered equally to both genders. As we celebrate the 30th consecutive state championship of the Carmel girls swim team, let us also remember the girls of the GAA, many of whom continue to wonder what could have been had they been given a chance to play.

Year	Name	Sport	Event
1968	Debbie Brouhard	Track	1st - 440 meter
1968	Judy Teater	Archery	1st - Indoor, Outdoor
1963-1965	Claudia Mayhew	Golf	1st
1971	Elaine Totten	Gymnastics	1st
1971	TEAM	Swimming	7th
1971	Pam Campbell	Swimming	2nd - 1 Meter Diving
1971	Kathy Foxworthy	Swimming	3 rd - 200 medley, 5 th - 200 free
1971	Chris Baughman	Tennis	3rd - Singles
1972	Pam Campbell	Swimming	1st - 1 Meter Diving
1972	Chris Kinney	Gymnastics	3rd - Vault
1973	TEAM	Golf	3rd
1973	Debbie Hall	Golf	4th
1973	TEAM	Swimming	4th
1973	Pat Campbell	Swimming	1st - 1 Meter Diving
1973	Neysa Harer	Swimming	3rd - 50 Backstroke, 100 Backstroke
1973	Debbie Koss	Swimming	6th - 50 Butterfly, 10th - 50 Free
1973	Lynn Aurelius	Swimming	10th - 100 Free
1973	N. Harner, C. Saba, D. Koss, L. Aurelius	Swimming	4th - Medley Relay
1973	P. Foxworthy, N. Harner, D. Koss, L. Aurelius	Swimming	3rd - Free Relay
1973	Lisa Farnsworth	Gymnastics	2nd - Floor Exercise
1973	Jane Causey	Gymnastics	5th - Vault
1973	Susan Kirn	Gymnastics	5th - Beam
1974	TEAM	Swimming	4th
1974	Judy Miko	Swimming	7th - 200 Free, 8th - 400 Free
1974	LeAnn Harner	Swimming	2nd - 200 Medley, 5th - 100 Breaststroke
1974	L. Aurelius, N. Harner, L. Harner, J. Miko	Swimming	2nd - 400 Free
1974	N. Polley, P. Burke, D. Barnes, B. Robins	Swimming	9th - 200 Medley Relay
1974	Carla Bertuzzi	Swimming	9th - 200 Free, 400 Free
1974	Neysa Harer	Swimming	10th - 50 Backstroke, 100 Backstroke
1974	Lynn Aurelius	Swimming	7th - 50 Breaststroke
1974	Pam Burke	Swimming	8th - 50 Fly
1975	TEAM	Swimming	7th
1975	Kathy Schaefer	Swimming	1st - 200 Free, 2nd - 400 Free
1975	Lynn Aurelius	Swimming	5th - Diving
1976	TEAM	Golf	7th
1977	TEAM	Golf	6th