



# Call for Papers Women in Sport



## Saturday, 6 November 2021

University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester, WR2 6AJ

The Conference is organised by: The Women's History Network, Midlands Region in conjunction with the British Society of Sports History

The University of Worcester's annual Women's History Conference seeks papers for this year's event under the heading of: 'Women in Sport'.



Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias

Allsport/Hulton Archive, Associated Press, Hulton Archive/Getty Images

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/obituaries/archives/babe-didrikson-zaharias>

The last decade has seen an upsurge in female participation in sport, with girls and women becoming more visible as participants at grassroots level and celebrated for their competitive achievements at elite level. The postponed 2020, now 2021, Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo will incorporate 33 and 22 sports respectively; all - with the exception of Paralympic football - will be open to male and female competitors.

Whilst these are positive facts, it is true to say that female equality in sport has not yet been achieved. It is also well known that girls and women have not always found it easy to pursue their sporting aspirations. For example, female participation in track and field events has been contested throughout the twentieth century and, in the UK, women have struggled to find funding from national governing bodies to facilitate professional playing careers in team sports such as football, cricket and rugby. Historically all of these pursuits have evolved as the preserves of men: deemed 'fit' for the development of manly character and physique, yet pronounced unsuitable for females due to societal demands for the development of feminine attributes.

Even though there is much historical evidence to suggest that girls and women were prohibited, restricted and marginalized in the sporting realm, a swell of recent research suggests that as attitudes changed during the twentieth century, females from all walks of life determined to avail themselves of opportunities to play - at school, through the workplace or independently during their leisure time.

"Mega events" like the Olympic Games always command much public and academic attention, however, this conference seeks to take a more rounded view of women's sporting experiences historically. We welcome submissions about all aspects of female participation, whether focused on elite or recreational concerns, Olympic or otherwise.

Please send an abstract of 300 words to Dr Wendy Toon [w.toon@worc.ac.uk](mailto:w.toon@worc.ac.uk) by 01 May 2021.