



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FINAL EXAM - ENGLISH 100  
FALL 2004- 2005

Purse Snatching  
by  
Donna Lopiano

It appears that we are at a crossroads in women's sports. As **Jesse Jackson** said of the civil rights movement, "We have moved from the battlefield of access to opportunity to the battlefield of access to capital." Through government legislation like Title IX and the pressure of societal sanction and criticism, we have removed the participation barriers that once confronted women in the world of sport, especially sport at government-supported educational institutions. The right to play has been established. However, the issue that has not yet been confronted is the barrier to being treated equally when it comes to money.

1

Few see the fairness, for example, in our 1999 U.S.A. Women's World Cup soccer champions being promised \$12,500 if they won compared to the approximately \$300,000 received by male World Cup champs. Now the U.S. women will receive almost \$50,000 as a result of the public outcry over how the event's huge profits (estimates hover at \$2 to \$5 million) would be spent. And few would argue against the position that the women's pro tennis tour is more appealing and interesting to the public than the men's tour and should command equal if not higher salaries for its players. Yet women's professional tennis purses are 25 percent smaller than those of men.

2

The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) players had trouble negotiating minimum salary guarantees of \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year- a tiny fraction of what most NBA players make. Meanwhile, it took almost 30 years for the NBA to average 10,000 spectators a game and only two years for the WNBA to reach that mark.

3

Where are the women in auto racing at Indy, NASCAR, or CART events- truly the most **lucrative** of all professional sports- when it comes to endorsements, winnings, and the profits of team ownership? The answer is nowhere, since virtually no women regularly participate in auto racing. With regard to salaries, profit sharing, or access to significant dollars to begin professional leagues or gain entry into high-stakes sports competition, women are still behind the eight ball.

4

Instead of paying women athletes what they're worth, there seems to be a concerted effort to sexualize them. By commenting on the looks of the U.S. women's soccer team, the media blatantly suggest that these athletes' physical appearance is more important and of greater interest than their athletic achievements. When Brandi Chastain took her shirt off following the winning goal, displaying considerable muscle as well as a sports bra that more than covered the territory, the media acted like they were looking at a **Victoria's Secret** catalog as opposed to a world championship soccer match. How many women jog on city streets and work out in health clubs everyday wearing less?

5

The media and the medical establishment, despite evidence to the contrary, are quick to posit that the reason for a **spate of anterior cruciate knee injuries** in women is

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because women are physically inferior to men (our knees are ill-constructed and our hormones **wreak havoc** on our bodies). Are these predominantly male professionals maybe too eager to reinforce the strength and dominance of males and dismiss women in sport?

I travel all over the country as a public speaker. I love talking to high school boys because they reflect the male view before the veil of **political correctness** disguises their true feelings. Young boys believe that it's terribly important for me to acknowledge that males are better athletes than females. Males jump higher, throw farther, run faster, dunk basketballs better, and are more interesting to watch than female athletes. They listen intently as I ask, "Who is the better athlete, Mike Tyson or Sugar Ray Leonard?" Initially struck silent by the question, they then respond with considerable chargin, "That's not a fair question! Those are boxers in different weight classes. They don't compete against each other. They are both great boxers." To which I quietly respond, "Exactly." Why the need to affirm male dominance? Why the need to hog the marbles?

Women's sport has proved it has a market. What the marketplace needs is people who are willing to risk and share capital to exploit that market. One would think that sex discrimination would take a backseat to making money and good business decisions. How many more widely successful events need to occur before people talk positively about an investment in the women's sports market and act to take advantage of this opportunity? When will questioning the physical ability of female athletes go away? When will efforts to undermine the women's sports industry cease? Ultimately, it comes down to a matter of will and being gender blind when exploiting business opportunities. We're not there yet.

### **Glossary:**

**Jesse Jackson (p.1):** An African American figure who calls for equal rights to all citizens.

**NBA (p.3):** National Basketball Association (Men)

**Lucrative (p.4):** money making

**Victoria's Secret (p.5):** A brand of ladies' accessories and clothing.

**A spate of anterior cruciate knee injuries (p.6):** One kind of physical damage to the knee

**Wreak havoc (p.6):** cause disturbance

**Political Correctness (p.7):** Not offending or hurting any group of people. Being "polite" towards everybody.

**American University of Beirut**  
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Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Section #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Time allowed: 90 minutes**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions. Fill in the given space or select a,b,c, or d. Remember that ¼ of the grade goes to assessing grammar and language.

1. In paragraph 1, the author compares women's sports and the civil rights movement. Explain how the two are similar. **(10 pts.)**

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2. If the thesis is stated, quote the thesis statement. If it is implied, supply a thesis statement. **(10 pts.)**

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3. The author uses support to illustrate her main idea. What kind of support does she use in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4? Give one example from each paragraph. **(8pts.)**

**Kind of support:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph 2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph 3:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph 4:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What image of women athletes do the media reflect? Explain, quoting proof from the text. (10 pts.)

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5. The medical and media professionals have a certain attitude towards women athletes. Why do they have this particular attitude, according to the author? (10 pts.)

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6. The author implies that the media and medical professionals' judgments about women athletes (6pts.)

- a. are based on solid scientific evidence
- b. are wild and unfounded
- c. are backed up by real life examples
- d. are valid and commonly accepted

7. Do you think the title is suitable for the text? Why or why not? How does it relate to the content of the text? Explain. (10 pts.)

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8. According to paragraph 7, what can you infer about the writer's attitude towards women athletes? (10 pts.)

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9. Is the writer optimistic or pessimistic about the future of women's sports? Explain and provide evidence from the text. (10 pts.)

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10. In Paragraph 2, the author implies that: (6 pts.)

- a. Statistics show that more people are expected to watch WNBA games in the coming years.
- b. The number of spectators in WNBA will probably not go beyond 10000.
- c. The WNBA only started two years ago and that is why less people watch it.
- d. The WNBA will take 30 years to reach the number of spectators that the NBA has.

11. True or false? Correct if false and give paragraph reference. (10 pts.)

According to the author

- a. Men's professional tennis tour is more interesting than women's.

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- b. Women playing basketball earn the same salaries as men playing basketball.

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- c. Women do not participate in high paying sports.

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- d. Women's sports are doomed because they do not have a market.

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**Time allowed:** 90 minutes

**Directions:** Write an essay on one of the following topics.

1. Many factors cause the child labor syndrome that is common in some developing countries. What are the causes and/or effects of children going to work?  
Write an essay in which you provide two or three causes and/or effects, supported and developed by specific examples.
2. Sometimes teenagers blame their parents for being too strict; and sometimes they claim their parents just don't care. Write an essay in which you compare and/or contrast two methods of parenting: the too strict and the too permissive. Support and develop your ideas with specific examples.
3. Surely at one time in your life you've resorted to lying (a true lie or a white lie). Did this help you out, or did it get you into more trouble?

Write a well-organized essay stating **possible** reasons for lying. Give specific examples to support your reasons.