

# Face-Off in Minnesota

## A Pilot Study of Girls' Ice Hockey Experience during the First Year of State High School League-Sanctioned Play

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### Abstract

*The 1994-'95 high school ice hockey season marked the first season of girls' ice hockey play sanctioned by the Minnesota State High School League. Melpomene Institute observed this historic season by distributing and analyzing a survey that documented girls' experiences as they established hockey as a competitive girls' sport. Survey questions were designed to obtain information on the social, psychological and skill aspects of the girls' hockey experience.*

*Participating in the study were 236 girls who played on 15 ice hockey teams registered with the Minnesota State High School Hockey League. The girls' ages ranged from 13 to 19, with a mean age of 15.7. The girls in the sample provided a rich and generally positive view of their experience, with 80% of the sample indicating that they definitely planned to continue playing ice hockey.*

### Introduction

As the first in the nation to compete at the high school varsity level, Minnesota girls are blazing the trail for females in ice hockey. Even though women have been playing ice hockey in Minnesota for at least two generations, until the 1994-'95 season, high school ice hockey had remained a male-only sport.

Since 1970, female ice hockey players and their advocates have been developing successful ice hockey programs and tournaments for girls in Minnesota. Girls' ice hockey began with peewee (ages 13 and under) and bantam (ages 13 to 15) categories and has been growing steadily in popularity. Many communities in the Twin Cities area have participated in peewee and bantam state tournaments and have continued to expand their programs to other age levels.

In the 1993-'94 season, when there was great interest in developing squirt (ages 12 and under) and midget (ages 16 to 19) teams, seven high schools formed girls' ice hockey teams. In 1994-'95, girls' ice hockey became a high school sport sanctioned by the Minnesota State High School League, with 24 registered teams.

The purpose of Melpomene's study was to examine the following topics: past hockey experience, gender issues in past coaching and team experiences, influences on girls' interest in playing ice hockey, the rate and nature of injuries and girls' attitudes about and goals for the 1994-'95 season.

### Methods

#### Subjects

Members of 15 of the 24 registered girls' ice hockey teams who played during the 1994-'95 season filled out a 24-question

survey created by Melpomene staff researchers. The results reported are based on 236 completed surveys. Nine teams did not respond or were unable to return the surveys within the time specified. Seven of the 24 teams were combined school teams. Schools that participated in the survey are listed below. The girls surveyed attended grades seven through 12; ages ranged from 13 to 19, with a mean age of 15.7 years.

#### Minnesota High School Girls' Varsity Ice Hockey Teams Participating in Melpomene's Hockey Survey

- Academy of Holy Angels
- Apple Valley High School
- Anoka High School/Champlin Park High School
- Benilde-St. Margaret's High School
- Blaine High School/Coon Rapids High School
- Breck School
- Burnsville High School
- Forest Lake High School
- Henry Sibley High School
- Irondale High School, New Brighton/Mounds View High School
- Osseo High School
- Minnehaha Academy
- Richfield High School
- The St. Paul Blades
  - St. Paul Central High School
  - St. Paul Como Park High School
  - St. Paul Harding High School
  - St. Paul Highland Park High School
  - St. Paul Humboldt High School
  - St. Paul Johnson High School
- Stillwater High School

## Procedures

Melpomene contacted sponsoring schools of the 24 girls' ice hockey teams registered with the Minnesota State High School League in December of 1994 to invite them to participate in the study. The surveys were distributed to the schools' athletic directors at a meeting early in the 1994-'95 season. Athletic directors then gave the surveys to coaches, who asked team members to complete them anonymously. Fifteen of the 24 teams had returned the surveys to Melpomene by the end of January 1995.

Responses to the 25 quantitative and qualitative survey questions were then analyzed. For the 11 qualitative questions, categories were generated by tallying individual responses and then grouping these into mutually exclusive categories. The researchers defined the categories independently, rated a sampling of the questions independently, compared categories and then redefined them as needed.

Numerical codes were devised and assigned for both qualitative and quantitative categories. All questions were then coded and entered into the JMP Statistics Program from SAS Institute, Inc. Simple frequency distributions for each variable were examined, and chi-square tests of significance were calculated using selected variables.

## Results

### Past Hockey Experience

The previous ice hockey experience of the girls sampled had been limited. Only 27% (n=64) of girls had played ice hockey previously, either as part of the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association or on park or community education teams. Table 1 gives the range of early hockey experience of the 64 girls who had played before the 1994-'95 season.

Only 21% (n=50) of the entire sample reported working with a female hockey coach or assistant coach in the past. In

Table 1  
Girls Reporting Previous  
Ice Hockey Experience

| Years of Hockey Experience | # of Girls with Previous Experience | % of Girls with Previous Experience |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Less than 1 year           | 17                                  | 27%                                 |
| 1-3 years                  | 20                                  | 31%                                 |
| 4-6 years                  | 5                                   | 8%                                  |
| 7 or more years            | 22                                  | 34%                                 |

*n=64, 27% of 236 girls sampled*

response to the question, "How did this coach/assistant coach influence your interest in playing hockey?" 73% of the responses were left blank. Of the 27% of comments remaining, 23% described a range of positive influences attributed to female coaches, from being inspirational as good players to being empowering teachers. Four percent of the comments described female coaches as having little or no influence.

Just 16% of girls (n=38) in the sample had played on a boys' team. When asked, "How is playing on a girls' team different from playing on a boys team?" 73% of the responses were left blank. The 27% of "other" responses touched on a variety of issues. Included were comments describing girls' teams as less competitive, demanding and physical than boys' teams.

Women's hockey, from the Olympic level down, prohibits body checking. It should be noted that rules recently adopted by the State High School League prohibit body checking in girls' but not boys' ice hockey. There were also comments describing girls' teams as a more positive social experience than boys', as well as comments describing little or no

difference between playing on girls' and boys' teams.

### Girls' Reasons for Playing Ice Hockey

When asked to check the three main reasons they played, girls in the sample chose "fun," "the chance to compete" and "for the exercise." Ninety-seven percent cited "fun" as the rationale, 58% welcomed the chance to compete and 54% cited the exercise value of the game. When asked what first interested them in hockey, 35% cited the influence of family and friends. Spectator appeal was the second most often-cited reason for the initial attraction to hockey (13%), and the third most popular was "fun," mentioned in 10% of the comments.

### Injuries

Of the 236 girls surveyed, 69 (30%) reported having been injured. When asked how long they were out of play, nine left the question blank, 37 were out one day or less, eight were out two to seven days, six were out eight to 24 days and two were out 25 days or longer. In general, the injuries

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reported appeared to be minor: when asked how the injuries were treated, 57% reported "self-care at home."

When asked to characterize their concern about the possibility of physical injury while playing, girls' responses seemed to fit with the rate and seriousness of the injuries they reported. Seventy-six percent of the sample indicated they were "not worried" about injury, 23% checked "somewhat worried" and 1% (n=3) described themselves as "very worried."

### Girls' Attitudes and Goals During the 1994-'95 Season

The study participants projected a generally upbeat attitude about their new opportunity to play ice hockey. When asked "How do you feel about participating in a sport that was previously only available to boys?" the highest percentage of the girls' comments (40%) described this initial experience as "fun/good." The second most popular response reflected

girls' enthusiasm about making history and being among the first to break the ice hockey gender barrier (33%).

When asked what they would like to accomplish for the season, the greatest number of girls' remarks were related to the improvement of skills (51%). The second and third most common responses involved winning the state tournament (18%) and learning to play more effectively as a team (7%).

The participants perceived their inexperience with ice hockey as the main obstacle to their participation. When given a 12-item checklist of obstacles related to playing ice hockey and asked to check all that apply, 61% of the sample checked "Lack of experience" and 42% checked "Fear that I wouldn't do well." Table 2 lists the five most frequently cited obstacles.

Despite the obstacles described above, most of the girls planned to continue playing ice hockey. When asked whether they intended to continue playing, 80% of the girls (n=189) chose "definitely yes,"

15% (n=15) chose "probably yes," and 4% (n=9) chose "probably not." None chose "definitely not."

Sportsmanship was important to these girls. In response to the question "How important do you think it is to be a good sport?" 67% (n=158) chose "really important," 32% (75) chose "somewhat important" and .4% (1) chose "not important."

When asked what advice they had for other girls considering ice hockey, the highest percentage of responses (34%) urged other girls to "Go for it!" Twenty-four percent described their hockey experience as "fun," 9% alluded to the "hard work" of initiating the sport for girls and 6% urged other girls to persist through intimidation and discouragement. When asked if they had any additional comments on their hockey experience, the most frequent response was to leave the question blank (39%), and the second most frequent response (36%) again referred to the "fun" of the ice hockey experience.

### Positive/Negative Feedback Directed toward Female Ice Hockey Players

The questionnaire included two open-ended questions about positive/negative comments heard, as well as an open-ended question about the sources of such comments.

Girls reported a wide range of positive comments from a variety of sources. The highest percentage — 52% — of positive comments fell into the category of "positive comments on individual and team play." Examples of such comments included, "If someone who's never played can accomplish what you have with hockey, you can do anything!" and "You've made a smooth transition from ringette to hockey."

The second most popular category of positive comment (21%) was that of "Support for girls' entry into ice hockey." Comments in this category included

Table 2  
Main Obstacles to Girls Playing Ice Hockey

| Obstacle Checked   | # of Girls Who Checked the Obstacle | % of Girls Who Checked the Obstacle |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Lack of experience with this sport   | 143                                 | 61%                                 |
| Fear I wouldn't do well  | 100                                 | 42%                                 |
| Inconvenient practice times  | 79                                  | 34%                                 |
| People believing I shouldn't play hockey (that it wasn't appropriate because I'm female) | 74                                  | 32%                                 |
| Teasing  | 72                                  | 31%                                 |

statements such as "What a great chance; girls deserve to play too!" and "You're opening doors for younger kids!" Family members were cited as the main source of positive comments about girls' hockey participation (32% of comments), followed by friends, both male and female (27% of comments).

Fifty-four percent of the negative comments that girls heard were from males; this group included males in general, male peers, male hockey players, brothers and fathers. Examples of typical comments that girls heard from males included "The guys say that chick hockey sucks, even though they've never seen me play," "The girls make us lose by taking our ice time" and "Girl hockey players are dykes!"

Thirteen percent of the respondents answering this question reported receiving no negative feedback and 12% mentioned boys' complaints about girls taking "their" ice time. When asked a general open-ended question about the sources of negative comments, 32% of the respondents named "male peers" as the source, 20% identified "male hockey players" and 2% named "brothers." Nineteen percent of the responses to the question about sources of negative feedback were left blank and 12% simply identified "peers" as a source, without specifying the gender of those peers. Four percent of responses to the question of sources of negative feedback mentioned parents.

### Family Members' Support and Hockey Experience

The questionnaire asked girls to describe family members' hockey experience and to indicate the importance of various family members' support. Girls indicated which family members had played or were currently playing hockey; these results appear in Table 3. Girls in the sample also rated the importance of different family members' support by choosing the category "very important," "important,"

**Table 3**  
**Immediate Family Members Who Play Hockey**

| Family Member | # of Girls Reporting Family Members Who Play | % of Girls Reporting Family Members Who Play |
|---------------|--|--|
| Brother       | 124  | 54%  |
| Father        | 63   | 28%  |
| Sister        | 27   | 12%  |
| Mother        | 7  | 3%   |

"somewhat important," "not important" or "doesn't apply." Those results are summarized in Table 4.

### Chi-Square Analyses

Because we were interested in the possible relationship between immediate family members' playing hockey and girls' identifying those family members as important sources of support (see Tables 3 and 4), we ran chi-square analyses on those two variables. Although only 3% of the girls (n=7) indicated their mothers played ice hockey, 54% (n=124) said they had brothers who played, 28% (n=63) said their fathers played and 12% (n=27) said their sisters played. Girls who had a father, brother or sister who played were significantly more likely to define their support as important to their continued play than the other girls in the sample (p < .001).

We also compared girls' previous hockey experience or lack of it with their perceptions of what constituted an obstacle to their own hockey play. Significant chi-square relationships resulted for three of 12 possible obstacles. Girls who had no previous hockey experience were significantly more likely to perceive "lack of experience with this sport" and "fear that I

wouldn't do well" as obstacles than girls who had early playing experience (p < .001). Also, girls who had played on a boys' team were significantly less likely (p < .005) to perceive being female as an obstacle to play than girls who had never played on boys' teams.

### Discussion

This initial survey of girls' experiences playing ice hockey reveals an enthusiasm, a determination and a focus on skill improvement that will serve Minnesota high school girls well.

The girls in our sample were very clear about the main motivator for playing ice hockey — 97% of them indicated they play for fun. "Fun" was mentioned again when they were asked how they felt about participating in a sport previously open only to boys: 40% described their pioneering experience as "fun," while 33% expressed delight at being among the first to break the hockey gender barrier. "Fun" was again alluded to when the girls were asked what advice they might give to other girls considering ice hockey as a sport: 34% of responses urged other girls to "go for it," and 24% advised that hockey would be "fun!" In this age of widespread

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early adolescent dropout from physical activity and the adult quest for mega-motivation, it may be productive to examine more closely the motivating power of "fun" in physical activity for people of all ages.

Playing experience — both the girls' and their immediate family members' — was a salient factor for our sample. The girls perceived their lack of playing experience as the main obstacle to their participation. In addition, their perceptions of obstacles to play were related to whether or not they had played previously. Ninety-three percent of the girls who had no previous playing experience perceived that lack as an obstacle and 85% of that same group perceived fear of not doing well as an obstacle. Similarly, 95% of the girls who had not played on a boys' team perceived being female as an obstacle to play.

Congruent with the respondents' perception that inexperience was their greatest barrier to play, the greatest

number of girls' comments about personal goals mentioned skill improvement. The relationship between playing experience and perceptions of competence may be worth tracking as girls gain ice experience.

Family members were also an important source of support and encouragement for this group, with the support of family members who play hockey being perceived by these girls as particularly important. With increasing numbers of girls playing, what might be the extent and direction of that effect on encouraging other girls to play?

The study raises questions about the nature of girls' perceptions of "support" as they venture into a new sport. The girls sampled had relatively few female ice hockey role models. Just 3% (n=7) indicated their mothers played, and 50 of the girls who had previous hockey experience had worked with a female coach or assistant coach. And yet, the highest

percentage — 92% — rated the support of their mothers as important (see Table 4). It might be useful to examine the specifics of girls' definitions and perceptions of "support" for their continuing involvement in hockey.

Amounts and sources of feedback about female sport involvement were interesting as well as alarming. While the girls are feeling positive about their presence on the ice, the boys are not. The greatest number of negative comments (54%) the girls heard came from males: male peers, male hockey players, brothers and fathers were mentioned. One father commented, "Women can tape sticks and carry water bottles, but they shouldn't be on the ice!" Several girls commented that "even little boys" made disparaging remarks about girls playing hockey. It is important to confront this negativity and to address it with education in our schools, families, work sites, communities and sports arenas. Physical activity is the birthright of our daughters as well as our sons. ●

Sally Ehlinger is the research coordinator at Melpomene Institute.

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**Table 4**  
**People Whose Support to Play Ice Hockey Girls Rated as Important**

| Important Person | # of Girls Reporting Support as Important | % of Girls Reporting Support as Important |
|------------------|---|---|
| Mother           | 218                                       | 92%                                       |
| Father           | 214                                       | 91%                                       |
| Female coach     | 204                                       | 87%                                       |
| Female friend(s) | 204                                       | 87%                                       |
| Male friend(s)   | 186                                       | 79%                                       |
| Male coach       | 179                                       | 77%                                       |
| Male teacher     | 140                                       | 59%                                       |
| Female teacher   | 125                                       | 53%                                       |
| Brother          | 144                                       | 61%                                       |
| Sister           | 104                                       | 44%                                       |

# Media Coverage of Boys' and Girls' High School Ice Hockey in Minnesota

Amy Terhaar Woodcock

## Introduction

Girls' high school hockey is something new in Minnesota. To create this new sport for girls, many parents and athletes had to defend Title IX and ask their local school boards to stand up for equality in athletics.

Another area of athletics that needs equality is media coverage of sports. Girls and boys deserve equal coverage by the media. This paper will compare the newspaper coverage of girls' and boys' high school hockey teams in Minnesota from November 1994 to March 1995.

## Girls' and Women's Hockey History

Women's hockey has a long history in Minnesota. The University of Minnesota has recently recovered a trophy from the University of Minnesota Women's Athletic Association Ice Hockey Cup. The dates on the cup go back to February 27, 1917, when the class of 1919 won the first Women's Ice Hockey Cup. The Department of Recreational Sports has sponsored a women's ice hockey team at the University since 1974.

Minnesota girls' hockey started in 1970 with pee wee (13 and under) and bantam (15 and under) age groups. Senior women's hockey (19 and over) started in 1971 and eventually formed three divisions: A, B and C, A being the highest skill level. In 1986, there were 28 teams separated into four divisions for girls' and women's hockey: Girls' pee wee and senior women's A, B and C teams. In 1992, the girls' midget classification (18 and under) was added to the other divisions to create 40 girls' and women's teams. This past 1994-'95 season, there were 130 girls' and women's teams in Minnesota.

1993-'94 marked the first time that Minnesota girls played ice hockey for their high schools. The eight pioneer teams were not sanctioned by the Minnesota State High School League, but they definitely started a trend that led to other Minnesota high schools adding girls' hockey as a varsity sport.

In March 1994, the Minnesota State High School League voted to sanction girls high school hockey, and in the fall of 1994, 24 teams stepped out on the ice. Those girls' high school teams were the first in the nation to be sanctioned by a state high school league.

Girls' and women's hockey has not been easily accepted into ice arenas. The media focuses a lot of attention on the fighting and violence in men's hockey, but women's hockey, from the Olympic level down, does not allow checking. That does not mean that women's hockey is not a full contact sport. It does have contact, but many people believe that without checking, the game has a better flow and emphasizes the players' skills and teamwork.

## Current Research

The media has tried to find a way for female athletes to continue to fit into our society's feminine ideals by reassuring the public that they are too frail for contact sports (Lenskyj, 1986). The media watches to see female weaknesses and then exploits them through pictures and articles (Lenskyj, 1986). Lenskyj also notes that the media focuses on "sex specific rather than sport specific conditions or injuries" (p. 53). An injury to a female athlete is blamed on female weakness, while the same injury to a male athlete is attributed to the sport or activity.

Historically, women's sports have been underrepresented in television and newspaper coverage (Crossman, Hysop & Guthrie, 1994; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Duncan, Messner & Williams, 1991; Kane & Greendorfer, 1992). Duncan, et al. examined four daily newspapers to find how much coverage was given to women's sports. The women were subjects of only 3.5% of all sports articles; the men garnered 81%. The male athletes also were the subjects of 92.3% of all sports photos.

Female athletes are not getting equal coverage on television either. In 1993, men's professional golf was shown 70 times on national television; women's professional golf appeared only 13 times (Russell, 1993).

Considerable research has focused on the coverage of female athletes in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. Salwen and Wood (1990) focused their research on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* from 1957 to 1989. They found that, overall, the number of pictures of female athletes in action had declined over the 22 years of coverage. They noted that from 1957 to 1989, men were on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* 782 times, while women only appeared 55 times. Of the 55 times women were featured on the cover, only two of the photos showed women in an active pose.

Photographs and images of female athletes participating in their sport or in action are highly underrepresented in the media (Kane, 1989; Messner, 1988). A study done by Duncan (1990) that examined pictures taken of female Olympic athletes found they were often suggestive, emotional, or portraits of the athletes away from their sport. The suggestive pictures focused directly on the female athlete's body. The emotional pictures showed the

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female athletes crying and being comforted by male coaches and family members. The portraits shown of the female Olympic athletes were often pictures taken by a professional photographer, similar to a yearbook photograph.

Duncan also studied the captions accompanying the pictures of female Olympic athletes. Most of the captions mentioned the athlete's small stature or feminine attributes, rather than her athletic competence.

Sadker and Sadker (1994) identify both perceived incompetence in sports and lack of female role models in sports as two of the psychological barriers for girls in relation to physical activity. A study of children's sports picture books shows that the most common activity participated in by the girls in the books is watching boys in action (Yu, 1993). Yu also found that out of 105 children's books with sport themes, only 11% showed female role models.

## Methods

The newspaper coverage of girls' and boys' high school ice hockey in the Twin Cities area was covered from November 1994 to March 1995. The newspapers monitored were the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. This season was chosen because it was the first girls' sanctioned high school season in Minnesota.

During the 1994-'95 season, there were 149 boys' hockey teams in Minnesota and 24 girls' hockey teams. Of those, 65 of the boys' teams and all 24 of the girls' hockey teams played in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

Each article was coded for sex and separated into one of two groups: articles with photos and articles without photos. The photos of the female athletes were then coded as either active or nonactive poses. The athletes' photos would be considered active if they were in uniform and in action on the ice. The photos were coded non-active if the athlete was shown in a noncompetitive setting, such as sitting

in class or on the bench or if the photos were head shots.

The articles were measured for length, and the average column inches per story were calculated. Total column inches for articles about males and females were also calculated.

## Results

There were 104 articles about high school boys' hockey and 49 articles about high school girls' hockey. Of the 104 articles

about boys' hockey, there were 32 articles with photos and 72 articles without photos. Of the 49 articles about girls' hockey, there were 15 articles with photos and 35 articles without photos (see Table 1).

The articles were measured for total column length. Articles about boys' high school hockey occupied 2,258.75 total column inches, and articles about girls' high school hockey occupied 456.25 total column inches (see Table 2). The column inches devoted to articles about boys' hockey were 83% of the total column inches given to boys and girls combined. The articles about boys' hockey with pictures comprised 61% of the total column inches, and 61% of the column inches about girls' hockey was in articles with no pictures. An average of one more photograph per article was published with articles about boys than with articles about girls.

Table 3 shows the average column inches per article. Articles about boys with photographs had an average of 43 inches of print; articles about girls with photographs received only 11.8 inches of print per article.

Both newspapers presented end-of-the-season athlete awards for both boys' and girls' high school hockey. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* Boys' All State Team was

**Table 1**  
**Number of Articles about Boys' and Girls' Hockey**

|                                      | Boys     | Girls    |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Total number of articles             | 104      | 49       |
| Articles without photos              | 72 (70%) | 34 (69%) |
| Articles with photos                 | 32 (30%) | 15 (31%) |
| Total number of photos               | 99       | 35       |
| Average number of photos per article | 3        | 2        |

**Table 2**  
**Total Column Inches for Boys' and Girls' Hockey**

|               | Total Column Inches | Total Inches with Pictures | Total Inches without Pictures |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Boys' Hockey  | 2,258.75 (83%)      | 1,378.75 (89%)             | 880                           |
| Girls' Hockey | 456.25 (17%)        | 177.00 (11%)               | 279.25                        |
| Total         | 2,715               | 1,555.75                   | 1,159.25                      |

**Table 3**  
**Average Column Inches**  
**Per Article**

|                           | Boys | Girls |
|---------------------------|------|-------|
| Articles with Pictures    | 43   | 11.8  |
| Articles without Pictures | 12.2 | 8.2   |
| Total                     | 22   | 9.3   |

displayed on a full page with 19 photographs. The Girls' All State Team was given one-quarter page with 12 photographs. The *Star Tribune* gave one-third page with 16 photos to its All Metro Boys' Team. The All Metro Girls' Team was given one-sixth of a page with seven photos. The boys also had a 20-page pull-out state high school tournament section in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

The newspapers published very few action photos of girls' hockey. A photo of a female hockey player, who was athlete of the week, shows her holding her stick and gloves while sitting on the bench. An article in the *Star Tribune* headlines "Small Stature, Big Talent." The article was accompanied by a photo emphasizing the athlete's size by cutting off her teammates' heads. The article also calls her the state high school's "tournament darling." Earlier in the season, the *Pioneer Press* published an article about the same athlete. It mentioned her size once and then continued on to focus on her athletic talent. The photo that accompanied this article in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* shows the athlete on the ice, in uniform, shooting a puck.

## Discussion

Boys' high school hockey received a much greater amount of newspaper coverage than girls' high school hockey. It is interesting to note that there were only 35

photographs of girls' high school hockey in the newspapers, and only four of those photos showed them playing hockey.

The pictures need to reflect the skills of the athletes and the action in the game. The photographs that are chosen reflect attitudes in society and how the media regard girls playing a traditionally male sport.

The newspapers had more to say about boys' hockey — approximately five times as much space was given to articles about boys than to those about girls. Billie Jean King once asked, "Does the coverage [of women's sports] lead to greater attendance, or does greater attendance lead to better coverage?" (Salguero 1987). In the context of girls' high school hockey, does better media coverage lead to more girls' hockey teams or do more girls' hockey teams lead to better coverage? Girls' and women's hockey did exist before 1995, but not many people knew that. If the media had decided to follow the growth of girls' hockey years ago, would we have equal coverage of boys and girls high school hockey today?

Continued research is needed to see if the media coverage improves as girls' high school hockey grows. We can appreciate the progress that we have made, but girls' and women's hockey deserves better media coverage with more newspaper articles and action photos. ●

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