

Gender inequalities in Football

‘Is all sport a level playing field?’

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Introduction

In my Personal Interest Project (PIP) I want to make it more known about how significant the gender inequalities in Australia are. In my PIP I will talk about how the Matildas specifically addressed the unfairness leading up to the 2023 Women's World Cup. Gender inequalities in men's and women's football is a topic that is not talked about much. There are many questions that have been asked like 'Is all sport a level playing field'. This is not only in Australia but all over the world, and it is not until recent years that people are starting to talk about it and make a change.

The focus of my PIP is to bring awareness of the gender inequalities in football and how people now are wanting to change this and how women of today want the same things as men. For example the same pay, facilities and access just to name a few. The central hypothesis of this topic is to look into the societal and cultural factors contributing to gender inequality in football and proposed solutions to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion.

The topic of gender inequality between women's and men's football should be assessed because only just now in society we are starting to make changes in women's football, from the facilities that are being used all the way to the boots that female football players wear to reduce an ACL injury (anterior cruciate ligament) and how they different equipment and facilities help with just the smallest things. Gender pay gap has been seen but never really dealt with, only now some women football players are reaching out saying that this is not fair. A more specific answer is the Matildas and how they reached out to the head of FIFA about the difference in the winning money compared to men and women. After the women's world cup in 2023, we will hopefully see more girls and boys wanting to play football at a younger age, and wanting to do it more serious when older.

I selected this topic because football is a big passion of mine and after the women's world cup in 2023 people are only just now being interested in how women have significantly less than men, and how not having the right things can affect their careers.

The topic of gender inequalities contributes to a better understanding of Society & Culture by

developing an understanding of gender inequalities in football and other things like gender pay gaps, gender stereotypes which is only a small amount of what is relates to in Society and Culture.

Log

When researching into gender inequalities in women's football I looked at many websites, articles, past interviews and many more. I looked at whether professional players receive salaries or individual prize money from competitions, male athletes in basketball, golf, football, baseball and tennis make anywhere from 15% to nearly 100% more than female athletes. I am interested in looking at the different pay gap and gender equality between all different sports. I spent around 1 hour reading this article and gathering information.¹ There were many different strengths throughout this article like has many different sources, talking about the FIFA women's world cup, tennis, basketball etc, but I wanted to only look at football. I got a lot of information out of this sight and showing the difference between different sports. Although there was many successful pieces of information there were some problems like doesn't have a lot of information about football just a few statistics and talks about other sports as well. Through another article I spent around 30 mins researching the disparity in pay and the part-time nature of the women's league in Australia which means that female football players can't focus on football full time. Sarah Langman stated "In my first season in the A-League, I didn't get paid. In the second season, it was about \$1,200".² Interviews female A-league players, telling the reader what it is like for females in sport, and how they may have to work more than one job. Talks specifically about football in Australia (the A-League) and how they pay is significantly different for both men and women and how women may have to work 2 jobs. And started looking at secondary research. I got a lot of information about the pay gap in football specifically in the A-league. Helping me define my topic making it more specific on what I want to write about. In my third article that I was researching I looked at the research that has proven that women's and men's football does indeed differ in several physical aspects – for example, male football players cover more ground and run faster during games.³ Through this article it let me start looking at secondary research and started thinking about primary research. Although there were some problems

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<https://online.adelphi.edu/articles/male-female-sports-salary/#:~:text=Average%20Athlete%20Compensation%20by%20Gender&text=Whether%20professional%20players%20receive%20salaries,100%25%20more%20than%20female%20athletes>.

² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-17/matildas-football-pay-gap-men-women-a-league-730/102743172>

3

<https://theconversation.com/we-blurred-the-gender-of-soccer-players-and-had-people-rate-their-performances-with-surprising-results-213837#:~:text=Research%20has%20proven%20that%20women's,make%20the%20game%20less%20entertaining>.

regarding this article, it talks about the physical aspects that are different in mens and womens football. Not really talking about the equality and the gender pay gap.

Starting my secondary research I spent 1 hour researching gender inequalities in football as i knew that is what i want my PIP to be about. I looked at how some improvements have been made, women's salaries are still significantly lower than those of their male counterparts.⁴ Looking on how they can change/improve the training facilities. This was showing me that people want to make improvements on womens facilities in soccer. I lookes at the issues arising for cis-gendered women 2022 has also been a year in which many sports have grappled with how to balance inclusivity with fair competition in the context of transgender participation in sport.⁵ Showing the inclusivity that the sporting industry is improving, and making more female sports more common and more equal. Showing how people want to make a change in womens sport Given me a lot of inspiration for my PIP.

⁴ <https://www.euronews.com/2023/07/27/gender-inequality-in-sport-the-challenges-facing-female-athletes>

⁵ <https://www.lawinsport.com/topics/item/sport-equality-and-discrimination-the-year-in-review-2022>

Chapter 1 - Gender pay gap between women and mens football

Throughout time, gender pay gap in womens football has not been talked about, until recently people are only just now beginning to have a conversation regarding the topic. Since the 2022 World Cup for the mens and the 2023 World Cup for the womens, The winning teams prize money has only recently been released publicly due to the pressure the Matilda's placed on FIFA. Defender Alanna Kennedy says the Matildas released a collective statement calling out FIFA's World Cup prizemoney gender gap because they "wanted to have a voice in something bigger than football".⁶

In Australia's past, women's football has received less funding and recognition than men's football. created in 2005, the Men's A-League has consistently benefited from more financial backing, improved facilities, and increased publicity compared to the Women's A-League (formerly known as the W-League), which was created in 2008. Gender prejudices and cultural standards that have long reduced women's sports to a secondary position are the primary cause of this inequality.

Female football players are experiencing social exclusion at all levels of society. The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 should limit social exclusion however females still experience exclusion through prejudice and discrimination in sport. A few of the Matildas that wanted to have a voice in something bigger than football and they had published a video the night before the womens World Cup addressing both how far women's football has come and how far it still has to go. Throught the video the Matildas stood up for women that are still denied basic rights. "Seven hundred and thirty-six footballers have the honour of representing their countries on the biggest stage this tournament, yet many are still denied the basic right to organise and collectively bargain,"⁷ the players say. Collectively bargaining has allowed the Matildas to ensure that they get the same conditions as the soccerroos with one exception,

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<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/soccer/matildas-call-out-fifa-federations-over-prizemoney-pay-bargaini-ng-20230716-p5don5.html>

⁷

<https://www.smh.com.au/sport/soccer/matildas-call-out-fifa-federations-over-prizemoney-pay-bargaini-ng-20230716-p5don5.html>

FIFA will still only offer one quarter of the prizemoney to the women even though the men and women have reached the same achievements.

Societal views indicate that the public perceive the gender pay gap as distinctly unfair. Part of this is due to the lack of media sponsorship of female sports. When asking people about their thoughts on the pay gap, through a questionnaire many responded with the same data however the questionnaire looks into more detail about their thoughts. One of the questions state 'do you believe that the gender pay gap between women and mens football is fair' 84.4%⁸ of responders think that it is unfair and 15.6% of responder think that it is fair. A follow up question was asked, asking respondents 'why do you think this' in relation to question 6. Majority of the respondents believe that women are being paid less due to their games not being watched, this is due to women's sporting teams not receiving the sponsors and advertisements they need to promote the game. Many of the responses that had been written say that women should be treated the same as men when it comes to the pay, a responses to this question 'I don't think it's fair as both genders put the same amount of work ethic into their sport and should be treated professionally equally'. Many of the responses where very similar to this response, this shows that majority of the people that answered the questionnaire think very strongly about how women put in the same amount of effort as the men do and have a weaker outcome.

In a article written by a W-league player the author states that the best female players in the W-league run by the Football Federation Australia earn an average of \$17,400 a season which is not much more than the unemployment benefits, forcing some players to have a second job. Whereas the men dont have to worry about that at all, as they have an average wage of \$182,159 which is significantly different compared to the women in Australia. As it is clearly shown this pay gap is huge, considering that the cost of living in Sydney is around A\$6,111.80 for a Average Monthly Net Salary (After Tax). As it is clearly shown this is not enough pay for the women so some of the women that are less known in the sport have to work multiple jobs just to help pay the cost of living.⁹

⁸ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1iOlc4fcmXn8IF-0PymgoenOOpR6WqA2L5JwazWVl4/edit>

⁹ <https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/What-Matters-5-6-Runner-Up.pdf>

In the interviews that were conducted with relation to gender pay gap in womens football. In the question, many of the responses stated that women are paid less in football due to the historical disparities, lower revenue generations compared to the mens football, there are fewer sponsorships and opportunities that the women face.¹⁰ Many of the responses talk about the lack in sponsorship which is one of the leading reasons why women are not being paid equal to men, each interviewee had very strong emotions toward the lack of sponsorship and opportunities for the women.

Male football players in the A-League usually make a lot more money than their female counterparts in the Women's A-League. A Women's A-League player's minimum income is far lower, though it has improved, than that of an A-League player, which as of recent seasons is around AUD 61,000. For example, prior to the most recent collective bargaining agreements, the minimum pay for a player in the Women's A-League was around AUD 16,344. The glaring disparity between the two leagues' finances is shown by this.

Matildas' captain Sam Kerr is likely to become the first Australian female footballer to earn more than \$1 million a year by playing for her country, which is very good but still is unfair, as Sam Kerr has played in various countries like representing perth glory, as well as American club Chicago Red Stars and now she plays in England playing with Chelsea fc, when Sam Kerr played at perth glory the coaches that coached her said that Sam Kerr reminds them of former mens Australian captain Tim Cahill. This was in the years from 2008–2011 before Sam moved to the United states states for the 2013–14 season. When Tim Cahill played in Australia for Melbourne City apparently they Melbourne City paid Cahill \$3.5 million just to play in the 2016-17 A-League season this is more than 181 professional female players in Australia at that time combined.

Football in Australia has always been known of but not till resent years that certain players form the Matildas squad had said something about it. Many people that may not even be a fan of the sport still believe that it is unfair that women are putting in the same and if not more effort than what then men do and have a weaker outcome, for example forcing some players to work multiple jobs just to help pay the cost of living in sydney. However, the gender pay gap is still an issue in the world or football, but actions have been made to make the gap

¹⁰ Primary research - Interview

between men and women a smaller pay gap making it more equal, and women getting the recognition they deserve for putting in the same amount of effort in.

A major part of football's financial picture is media coverage and sponsorship. Men's football often generates more income since it draws bigger media attention and more attractive sponsorship deals. Female football players have a harder time coming by media coverage and sponsorship.

Through out the years there has been adjustments trying to reduce the gender pay gap in Australia, and Australian football despite the many hurdles that are in the way. When the matildas negotiated the pay gap between the Socceroos and the Matildas, the matildas were guaranteed the same pay as the Socceroos.

The A-league women's football teams created a collective bargaining agreement in 2020, trying to make further advancements in the fairness of the wages. The CBA has given support to female players allover, some examples of this are better working condition, and higher minimum earnings. It also makes note of the difficulties the female athletes have to encounter and incorporates provisions for the leave of maternity and other perks.

In summary the A-League has started to make a change when it comes to the unfairness of the women and men in Australian football. But that was not until many of the female athletes had made it known that they were being paid significantly less.

Chapter 2 - Gender stereotypes between womens and mens Football

The gender stereotypes in Australian football relates to both the men and women. Both genders have had a very long history where they had been reflecting on larger cultural beliefs and societal standards. These mistakes have effect how the players are treated and viewed, and they also have an impact on how the sport is developed and later have advancements. This chapter explores the many different aspects of gender stereotypes in the football in Australia.

After 40 plus years of silence, gender stereotypes in women's football have not been widely discussed however, the conversation has gained significant momentum since a couple weeks before the womens World cup in 2023, when the Matildas touched on gender stereotypes in football. The issue of gender bias in football has come to the forefront. The Matildas' vocal stance on this issue pressured FIFA to address and publicly acknowledge the disparities, shining a light on the pervasive stereotypes that affect everything from media coverage to resource allocation in women's football. The world of football, often celebrated for its unifying power and global appeal, has long been a copy of broader societal dynamics, including the pervasive issue of gender stereotypes. By completing a combination of interviews, surveys, and primary research, this chapter aims to provide shape and understanding of how gender stereotypes influence perceptions, opportunities, and behaviors within the soccer community. The research focuses on various stakeholders, including players, coaches, fans, and media professionals, to paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of gender bias in football.¹¹

“Women’s participation in sport has historically been stigmatised and associated with unfavourable stereotypes that they are athletically inferior to men”. This statement provides the reader with insight through how people of today society view womens football. Looking into gender stereotypes in football many websites fail to investigate womens professional sport, particularly in an Australian context.

Like in many other parts of the world, men used to dominate football in Australia. Football was pushed as a male-dominated activity in the early 20th century, and women's involvement

¹¹ <https://www.kipsta.com/womens-football-4-stereotypes-about-womens-football>

was discouraged and kept to a minimum. During this period, sports were perceived as a sphere exclusively for men, and rigid gender roles were enforced by society norms. When a woman expressed interest in football, she frequently encountered opposition and cynicism.¹²

Gender stereotypes in football have been shaped and reinforced in large part by media depiction. In the past, male football players were heavily covered and frequently exalted for their physical attributes and fierce competition. Conversely, female football players were either given little attention or had their femininity overemphasised in relation to their athleticism. The idea that football is a male-dominated sport and that female players are the exception rather than the rule was influenced by this unequal representation.

In the questionnaire that was conducted on of the many questions that were asked “Do you think that gender stereotypes play a big roll in women's soccer?” 84.4% of people said yes to this statement, while 15.6% of people said no. Throught this information it showses that gender stereotypes are becomeing less of an impact for the womens game. Although gender strerotypes will never be gone this is a start at making the sport less male dominant.¹³

The idea that female football players are naturally less athletic and talented than their male counterparts is one of the most widespread clichés regarding the sport. This prejudice is a result of the general social perception that women are less competent athletes and have weaker bodies. Because of this, female football players frequently experience self-doubt and unfair comparisons to male players. The female football players seem to be very concerned as there is another mistake. Society explects females to sustain the usual notions of beauty and femininity. The female football players who choose to make note of and priorities their athleticism over the attractiveness drigarding of the societal agreement usually come under fire and scrutiny. However, the athletes that have meet the essential requirements could be honoured more, being honoured for their appearance and their ability to show their athlectic background and their accomplishments that come form the hard work.¹⁴

In womens football, the gender stereotypes acknowlaging the sexual orientation and equally pervasive. A female football player always has the gender stereotypes of being a lesbian, this

¹² <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01963/full>

¹³ Primary research - Questionnaire

¹⁴ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-023-02132-9>

is a world wide known fact that it false. Because of this false accusation the athletes may be exposed to discrimination, this is because of the real or perceived sexual orientation. It also is in the service to support the idea that female athletes and football players are historically a male dominated sport.

The gender stereotypes of the male athletes, specially male football players place an emphasis on hyper masculinity and more manliness are very common. It expects the male athletes to be aggressive, resilient, and to be more physically stronger than the female athletes. These essential qualities are ment to be fundamental to who they are as athletes, specifically football players. This stereotype desires thoes who may not fit the shape and puts significant pressure on the male athletes, to stick to the ideal idea of masculinity for a male athlete. Male footballers that show their emotions, is known as cliché, and not very masculine. It is usually occurs for the sport that the male athlete dose, to display the discourage of vulnerability or exhibiting the negative emotions like fear or grief. The way male athletes see themselves is strong and emotionless but if they were to show their emotion it could be seen as a weakness, unprofessional and it could have a negative effect on the athletes mental heath.¹⁵

Players may have significant psychological effects form different gender asumptions. The players that constantly doubt their skill are females and they may expericene in the future self-doubt, or they do already have self doubt. However, male athletes and or football players can and most likely will face pressure that they have to live up to the male dominance and what it means to be a man, in this case this could lead to mental health problems in the near futur. There is a good chance that the abcence of the general well-being and this can effect the general performance of both females and males football players. Female football players and or athletes have a significantly less media visibility, sponsorship and professional growth, compared to the male athletes. Their financial stability and professional advancement are restricted by this gender gap. Even if they have greater possibilities, male gamers could still encounter obstacles if they don't fit the stereotypical male mould, which could impede their advancement.¹⁶

¹⁵

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/society/spectators-found-to-have-biased-view-of-women-s-football/48663418>

¹⁶ <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/gender-and-europe/gendered-body/gender-football>

The difference in interest between the popularity of the male and female football players are mainly due to the gender stereotypes of football. People seeing women as less entertaining and not worth while watching it and does not get the same media attention compared to the male game. The game for the female s has been held up due to the lack of support. On a second note male football players still lack the inclusivity and diversity even with the fundings increasing. The gender stereotypes are how society view the athletes. The perception of female footballers as a margin activity rather than a sport that is popular, restricts the impact and popularity of the game.¹⁷

Media and marketing shapes the way people view football. It is vitally important that more coverage is done for female football players as athletes, so then the female game of football can be widen and can be covered on media to promote it, therefore getting more fans and more popularity. Women have created a public campaign that questions conventional on gender standars.

The Australian national football team, aka the Mathildas have taken charge to gender stereotypes in womens football. The matildas went on strike in 2015, this was to make it known that women are being paid significantly less, they did this to seek better wages and better working conditions, this story made headlines globally. This act had made the world discuss about gender inequalaities in the female game, and i brought attention of many other teams to start to make it known. Up until 2020 the female soccer league was called W-League, eversince 2020 it had now been changed to the A-League Women, which was a new collective bargaining agreement. This resolved some of the inequities in womens football in australia. These adjustments were a direct result of the increasing awareness of the need to dispel gender norms and advance equality in the sport.

Australian football gender damage has a long term affects and still affects both male and female players. These mistakes block up equity and diversity by having an effect on how the sport is seen, treated, and perceived opportunities. In spite of that, a great deal of forward movement has been acheived recently because of lobbying, legislative modifications, and cultural transformations. A much more equal and welcoming atmosphere for all football

¹⁷

<https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/12158836/the-womens-football-show-gender-stereotyping-within-football-still-an-issue-says-sue-smith>

players depends on efforts to confront and dispel gender prejudices. The Australian football community can attempt to make changes towards removing the hurdles forced by gender stereotypes and creating a more dynamic and varied sport for future generations by continuing to advocate equality, grow representation, and educate the public.¹⁸

Conclusion

Australia's gender imbalance between the men's and women's football game have their roots in structural, historical, and cultural issues. The gap between male and female football players tends to keep going despite notable advancements in recent times. The main ideas covered will be summarised in this conclusion, which will also stress the significance of further efforts to bring about gender equality in Australian football.

The background of gender imbalance in football shows a long-standing influence that has given preference to men. Football has been corresponding with men from its inception, according to assumptions that have been reinforced by media representation and society conventions since then. The likelihood and resources approachable to female football players have also been impacted by these preconceptions, in addition to their impact on public opinion.

There are many, many ways that gender inequality in football manifests itself. Compared to their male equivalent, female football players sometimes earn less money, receive less media attention, and have fewer sponsorship options. The contrast in payment and acknowledgement is a reflection of cultural views that undervalue the achievements made by women in sports. Male footballers and or athletes experience pressure to stick fast to strict

¹⁸ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16184742.2023.2270566>

standards of masculinity, which can negatively impact their mental health and general wellbeing, even if they also benefit from higher financial benefits and more prominence.

In spite of these obstacles, notable strides have been made toward addressing gender inequalities in Australian football. Prominent female athletes and or football players have the approval of groups that have played a crucial role in raising awareness and pushing for change. The establishment of the collective bargaining agreements that promote equal pay and improved working conditions for female players is a testament to the progress being made. Additionally, the rebranding of the W-League to A-League Women and increased investment in women's football reflect a growing recognition of the need for gender equality in the sport.

Encouraging progress towards gender equality requires cultural challenges as well as popular perception adjustments. Well established assumptions have been challenged and women's participation in football is normalised as more female players are featured in the media. More interchanges in society point of view can be achieved via education and awareness programmes that tackle unconscious prejudice and encourage diversity. Encouraging coaches, parents, and community members to participate in these discussions guarantees that the equality message is propagated across the sport at all levels.

In order to achieve gender equality in football, all groups involved in power over authorities, clubs, sponsors, media, and supporters must work together. Making the gender gap smaller will need assistance funding for women's football, equitable media coverage, and laws that support diversity and inclusiveness. Encouraging an inclusive sports culture in Australia also requires grassroots development initiatives that challenge gender stereotypes and inspire both boys and girls to play football.

In summary, in spite of established gender disparities in Australian men's and women's football, notable advancements have been achieved recently. The Australian football community can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable future by supporting women's football and continuing to campaign for gender equality. Football's road towards gender equality is still ongoing, but it is feasible to build a sport that supports and celebrates all athletes, regardless of gender, with perseverance and dedication.

Resource list

Adelphi University. “Male vs Female Professional Sports Salary Comparison.” Adelphi University Online (Adelphi University, October 2023).

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<https://doi.org/10.1080//16184742.2023.2270566>.

Annotated Bibliography

Title: Male vs Female Professional Sports Salary Comparison

Author: N/A

Summary: It examined Male athletes in basketball, golf, soccer, baseball, and tennis make anywhere from 15% to almost 100% more than female athletes, depending on whether they are professional players who receive salaries or individual prize money from tournaments. Examining the disparities in compensation and gender parity across all sports interests me.

Title: The Matildas have been pushing to close the football pay gap. It would make a difference for A-League players like Sarah

Author: Emily Jane Smith and Jason Om

Summary: It examines the salary gap and part-time structure of Australia's women's league, which prevents female soccer players from committing their full time attention to the game.

Title: We blurred the gender of soccer players and had people rate their performances – with surprising results

Author: Carlos Gómez González, and Cornel Nesseler

Summary: It examined the studies that demonstrated the physical differences between men's and women's soccer, such as the fact that male players run faster and cover more ground during matches.

Title: The Matilda Effect

Author: Fiona Crawford

Summary: The Matilda Effect is the thrilling, motivational, occasionally enraged, and consistently colourful tale of the Australian women's football (soccer) team, the Matildas, and their eventually victorious battle to participate in World Cup football alongside other women from all across the world. The voices of significant personalities are heard from the 1980s, when women had to pay to compete in the inaugural Women's World Cup, until 2019, when the idea of equal compensation for female athletes was ultimately embraced amid a surge in interest in their sport. The Matilda Effect is a book that explores gender equality and human

rights history while taking the reader inside the team's boardrooms, hotels, buses, and social media accounts. It is simultaneously about and not about sport.

Title: Gender inequality in sport: The challenges facing female athletes

Author: Ilaria Federico, Mario Bowden, Stéphane Hamalian

Summary: Despite certain advancements, women's pay remains notably less than that of males.

Title: Sport, Equality And Discrimination

Author: Lydia Banerjee

Summary: It examines the problems that cisgender women face. In addition, a lot of sports have struggled in 2022 to find a way to include transgender athletes while maintaining fair competition.

Title: GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA

Author: N/A

Summary: It examines how the media, on the one hand, objectifies women and, on the other, fails to recognise women as "real athletes."