

# Opinion Statement

## Strong Student Model

### High School Teams Should Be Coed

In the years since the ground breaking feminism of the 1960s, women have gained equality with men in many areas of life in the United States. We have women judges and women governors, near-equal pay between the sexes, and such an acceptance of women's equality among young people like myself that the chauvinism of my parents' generation seems quite offensive. The one place where men and women are still treated unequally is in the arena of high school athletics. As a woman and an athlete, I believe this last frontier should be broken through. High school sports teams should be made up of players of both sexes.

2. States opinion clearly at close of introductory paragraph.

Throughout their school careers, girls and boys compete in everything equally. They take the same tests, attend the same classes, vie for the same academic awards and scholarships. Why not compete in sports? An athlete is driven to be the best-not just in terms of his or her gender but in terms of all athletes. That drive to be the best is the nature of the athletic desire, and because of it we have championship games and school rivalries and all of those things that allow an athlete to declare "I am the best." However, a woman athlete will never know if she can beat everyone; she'll know only that she can beat her own gender.

4. Rhetorical question helps direct argument and introduces opposing View.

Could there actually be a reason for this separation of male and female athletes? Opponents to coed teams point to old-fashioned ideas about what boys can do and what girls cannot. Yet women have shown they are athletically equal to men in many sports. Both Cynthia Cooper and Sheryl Swoopes of the WNBA Houston Comets are as fast and talented as just about any male player in the NBA. Florence Griffith-Joiner and Wilma Rudolph are considered to be among the all-time greatest runners of *either* sex. Martina Navratilova changed the way an entire generation plays tennis, male or female. These athletes are as good as anyone, regardless of their gender.

6. Challenges opposing argument with well-chosen examples.

Still, opponents to coed athletics say that girls are just too frail to compete against boys. But where is that "frailty" a problem? Most sports are not violent contact sports. Baseball, basketball, soccer, and track are more about skills

1. Establishes issue clearly in introduction.

3. Uses comparison and contrast to begin argument.

5. Specific examples challenge opposing view and support writer's opinion.

## Strong Student Model continued

than they are about physical contact. Even a sport as violent as football has sometimes admitted women. We have all heard of the girl high school quarterback (a television movie was even made of her story), as well as girl kickers. These girls were picked for the team because they were the best at what they did. If there had been better players available, the girls would not have been given the positions. Team selection should always be that way.

No one has a problem with girls and boys competing with and against each other in physical education classes. Throughout middle school, boys and girls form up teams during gym class, and there are no cries from concerned parents about "frail" girls. Even intramural softball teams have girl players. My parents play on the same softball team on weekends, and my mom usually hits more home runs than my dad does.

8. *Investigates another opposing argument to determine its validity.*

Boys who hear about possible coed teams claim the girls will weaken the team. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, they say, and they point to the girls who are terrible at sports. This is not fair. Nonathletic girls won't go out for teams with boys on them; they don't go out for teams with girls on them, so why would they change their behavior? This is true of boys, too. The nonathletic boys don't go out for football unless they really want to play.

If they want to play, they *can* try out. Girls should have the same opportunity.

Saying a team is only as strong as its weakest player and then pointing to a girl is offensive. Women have higher endurance, are lighter, and can maneuver on their feet more easily than men. Many play as well as or better than the average male athlete. So what valid reason is there to continue sexism in sports? None that makes sense. Isn't it time to be a good sport so that all athletes can compete fairly?

10. *Restates opinion strongly in the conclusion.*

7. *Makes comparison to similar situation to bolster argument.*

9. *Facts about women's physical capabilities support opinion.*

# Opinion Statement

## Average Student Model

### Make High School Teams Coed

These days women have gained equality with men in most areas of life. Think about it! We have women judges and women governors, near-equal pay between the sexes, and women commanding big box office at the movies. Men can no longer make sexist remarks without everybody finding them offensive. But there is still one place where men and women are not equal. That's right: high school athletics. I am a woman and an athlete, and I think this last frontier needs to be torn down. High school sports teams should be made up of players of both sexes.

*2. States opinion at the close of introductory paragraph.*

All through school, girls and boys compete in everything equally. We take the same tests, attend the same classes, stand in the same cafeteria lines. Why not compete in sports? What does it mean to be an athlete? It means to give your all to be the best. But if you're a girl, and you're the best in your division, you still don't know whether you're better than the boys. Just because boys and girls have separate locker rooms, it doesn't mean that they can't be on the same team. The way things are-it's just not fair play.

*4. Informal tone is wrong for audience.*

Some opponents to coed teams spout a lot of old-fashioned nonsense about how boys can do this and how girls cannot. It's just not true. Women have shown they are athletically equal to men in many sports. There are players in the WNBA who could easily take on NBA players if given the chance. And some of the best runners of all time have been women. And you can't think of tennis without thinking of the women who have won Wimbledon over the years. These women are as good as anyone, male or female.

*6. Begins sentences with and or but too often throughout essay.*

Some people say that girls are just too frail to compete against boys. That doesn't really apply to anything but football. Most sports are not violent contact sports. Baseball, basketball, soccer, and track are more about skills than they are about how frail or burly a player is. Even football sometimes has women players. Some years ago there was a girl high school quarterback (I saw a TV movie about her), and girls have played as kickers. These girls made the team because they were the best. If there had been better players, the girls would not have been given the positions.

*1. Establishes issue clearly-if a bit informally in introduction.*

*3. Begins argument with comparison and contrast.*

*5. Examples support argument but should include specific names and/or statistics.*

*7. Specific examples challenge opposing view and supports opinion.*

## Average Student Model continued

Why does team make-up change in high school? No one has a problem with girls and boys competing with and against each other in physical education classes. In middle school boys and girls form up teams during gym class, and no one complains about "frail" girls. Even intramural softball teams have girl players. My mom and dad play on the same softball team on weekends, and she usually hits more home runs than he does. But it is different in high school. I ask you, why?

Some vocal boys complain that girls will weaken the team. They point to the girls who are terrible at sports and say, "How can we win with *her* on the team?" This is totally unfair. Wimpy girls won't go out for teams with boys on them; they don't go out for teams with girls on them, so why would they suddenly act differently? This is true of wimpy boys, too. The wimpy boys don't go out for football unless they really want to play. If they want to play, they can try out. Girls should have the same opportunity.

When you stop and think about it, all of this talk about how weak girls are is offensive. Basically, they are saying that girls are losers. But if they are so certain girls are losers, then they should let the girls have a chance and play with and against them. What are they afraid of? Are they afraid that girls might win? Are they afraid that girls might become the most valuable players on their teams? Isn't it time to make high school teams coed so that we can find out?

*8. Example points out flaw in opposing argument.*

*9. Argument is good, but tone is far too informal.*

*10. Informal language is inappropriate for audience.*

*11. Series of questions is a strong way to end statement, but informal tone weakens argument.*

# Opinion statement

## Weak Student Model

### Male Sports Coed!

7. *The writer establishes issue somewhat informally*

These days women are equal with men in most areas of life. We have women judges and women governors. Women get almost equal pay for the same jobs men do. Like men, women also get to star in movies. Men don't make as many sexist remarks as they use to do. But there is still one issue which men and women are not equal high school athletics. I am a woman and an athlete. I think having different teams for boys and girls is bogus.

3. *Uses comparison and contrast, but informal tone is not persuasive.*

Why should sports be different than everything else at school? We have the same tests, go to the same classes, and eat in the same cafeteria. Why not have the same sports? Shouldn't girls be allowed to be their best? Isn't that what it is all about? If we are going to have to sit in classes with boys, we should be able to throw footballs with them and tag them out at first. Because boys and girls have separate locker rooms, doesn't mean that they can't play sports together. It's not fair.

5. *Reasoning makes opposition sound silly and can easily be countered.*

Some people say girls are too "frail" to go against boys. They make you think that girls go out on the field in dresses, and worry about every smudge on their uniform. Or that if they get pushed down that the girls would break down and cry or something. Get real. Girls are tough when they compete. Anyone who has watched a WNBA game can see that these women are dead serious about their sport. The only thing that is girlish about them is the thing that they can't get away from: they're women.

7. *Needs to supply more facts to strengthen support.*

How many sports are very physical, anyway? Not baseball or track. And basketball is only when the players push each other around. Football is physical and sometimes even violent. But there have been girl quarterbacks-at least on TV movies. So why not in real life? Are girls bones harder to break? Sure, boys are bigger and stockier. But women are smaller and faster. These different physical attributes balance out, I think.

Those who are against coed teams like to repeat a lot of old-fashioned nonsense about how boys can do this and how girls can't. It's just not true. Women have proved they are the equal to any man in sports. There have been women basketball players, women tennis players, women runners, and more. They have all done as well as a man

2. *States opinion, but tone makes opinion sound like a complaint.*

4. *Contractions are written incorrectly throughout essay*

6. *The writer expresses good ideas, but they are vague.*

*Another Option:*

- *Use well-chosen examples to support opinion.*

8. *Specific names or statistics would strengthen support.*

## Weak Student Model continued

might. These women are as good as anyone, male or female.

Why does team make-up change in high school? No one raises a stink when girls and boys compete with each other in physical education classes. In middle school boys and girls form up teams during gym class, and no one complains about "frail" girls. Even intramural softball teams have girl players. My mom and dad play on the same softball team on weekends. And my mom usually hits more home runs than he does. But it is different in high school. I ask you, why?

Some boys complain that girls will make their teams weak. They point to the wimpy girls and say, "How can we win with *her* on the team?" This is so unfair. Wimpy girls won't go out for teams with boys on them; they don't go out for teams with girls on them, so why would they suddenly act different? This is true of wimpy boys, too. The wimpy boys don't go out for football unless they really want to play. If they want to play, they can try out. And if they are good enough they make the grade. Girls should have the same opportunity.

When you stop and think, all of this talk about how weak girls are is silly. Basically, they are saying that girls are losers. But I believe they should let the girls have a chance and play with and against them.

70. *Informal language is inappropriate for audience.*

9. *Argument is good, but tone is still too informal.*

11. *Conclusion is incomplete.*

*Other Options:*

- *Summarize supporting arguments.*
- *Clearly restate opinion.*