

**Christella JeanJuste**

1000 W Austin Blvd  
Nevada, Mo 64772

November 12, 2020

**Editors of Sports Illustrated**

P.O. Box 30602

Tampa, FL 33630-0602

[Christella.jeanjuste@student.cottey.edu](mailto:Christella.jeanjuste@student.cottey.edu)

Dear Editors of Sports Illustrated:

My name is Christella Jean Juste and I am a student athlete at Cottey College majoring in Psychology. The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the growing evidence found of female athletes being misrepresented and discriminated against in terms of media coverage, advertisement, and recognition in your Sports Illustrated (SI) covers.

Sports and physical activities have always been associated with male and masculinity. Prior to Title IX passage, majority of sports were off limits to women because society believes that engaging in physical contact sports and activities were unladylike and that their body was too weak and delicate.

However, research have found that after the evolution of women's sport in the 19th century and Title IX passage, female athletes participation in sports has increased from 15 percent in 1972 to 43 percent in 2001 but female athletes are still limited in terms of how much media coverage their respective sports should receive and recognition compare to their male counterpart.

Even though female athletes have received substantial benefits of participation in sports and protection from Title IX against sex discrimination. The playing field is still not level. Female athletes are still experiencing sex discrimination and misrepresentation in the sports media coverages especially in SI covers.

It has been found that when SI covers female athletes it is more about their aesthetic, physical appearance, and personal life than their actual talents and athleticism. SI have sexualized and objectified women athletes in their covers. Other research also stated that sometimes the SI even give the female athletes' husband or partner credit for their recognition in the media with the saying that it is because of her husband status in the community.

For instance, Russian's tennis players Maria Sharapova and Anna Kournikova are always seen in SI covers for their attractiveness and often portrayed as being seductive into the camera instead of talking about their performances in the United States Tennis Association (USTA). These types of actions affect female athletes their mental state negatively and overshadow their accomplishment and recognition in the media.

Like male athletes, female athletes should get the same amount of media attention, representation, and coverage. About 40 percent of athletes are females, yet they receive just 2 to 4 percent of the media coverage compare to their male counterpart.

As a female athletes, I am also affected emotionally by how other female athletes are misrepresented and discriminated against in SI covers. I would like to offer a suggestion on how to eliminate the misrepresentation of female athletes in your covers and how SI could benefit from it. To eliminate any forms of discrimination against female athletes in the covers, SI's should hire and put more women from all background in charge of advertisements. This would encourage more female athletes to participate in your ads as they see a representative of their own sex or race which could also bring more profit to the company and be seen as promoting diversity through the covers.

Sincerely,

**Christella JeanJuste**

