Gender Equality Changed In British Tennis

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Abstract

This essay talks about how gender equality changed in British women tennis by comparing and contrasts the differences between the past and the present. It compares and contrasts from three different parts: the money they earn, the outfits they wear, and the schedule of the playground they play. In the past, women players have experienced unfair treatment in many places, for example, they earn less money than the man did, they were stricter in what to wear during the match, and they could only play on the secondary playground, and in a less important time even they are a great player. Although today some inequality for women players in British has already changed, some are still existing. This essay will show the changing of women gender equality in British tennis history by comparing and contrasting the past and the present.

*Keywords:* women tennis, gender equality

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Sexism is one of the most serious inequalities in social inequality, especially in the sports area. Female athletes have treated unfairly in some area. Tennis is one of the sports that women suffered a lot of gender inequality. In payment, ground and time women player used and their wearing, women player has always been treated differently. In the past, women get less prize money, play at the second playground and need to wear clothing that is ponderous and tight. With formers’ hard work and fight, they helped to win equal rights for women in the tennis tournament. Unlike in the past, female tennis players in British today have a better treatment in the amount of prize money and wearing, but today, women players are still facing the inequality of playground scheduling. So although women players now won their equal rights in some areas, there still some inequality exists and need to fight.

Compare to the past, women players now earn the same amount of money as men players. According to Ben Rothenberg(2019) said, in 2007, Wimbledon, for the first time, pays the same amount of the prize money to women athletes. In Rothenberg’s(2019) article, it mentioned that back to the year 1968, Wimbledon for the first time allowed to provide prize money to professional players in Grand Slam. However, in that year, men and women champions were awarded different amounts of prize money, in Rothenberg’s(2019) articals, it points out that men champions awarded £1250 more than women champions. Not like British, after 1973 Billie Jean King won in the “Battle of the Sexes,” America started to offer equal prize money. Although Wimbledon slowly cut down the disparity, it still exists and maintained at 90% to men’s prize. Women players in the British started to boycott this inequality and wrote a petition. However, officers in the British treated it like a threat and even hurt. Like John Curry, the chairman of The Club said in 1999,“[The women] have every right to request, but to demand it I think is hurtful and damaging to Wimbledon. It implies that we treat them unfairly, and that is not true from the evidence.” People like Billie Jean King and Venus Williams kept fighting for equal prize money. Finally, with the pressure from the House of Commons, in 2007, equal pay was afforded to both men and women by Wimbledon. After that, both women and men players start to win the same money. Except for the equal prize money, there is one thing changed even earlier, the outfits.

Different from the past, women players today have a wider choice in their wearing. In the past, female players must wear layers of heavy and stiff clothing which covered their wrist and ankles during the competition. For today, except athletes must wear mostly in white, women players can choose whatever they want to wear. Actually, during the 70s, women players’ outfit started became shorter and tighter. In 2019, on Wimbledon’s website, it only has requirements for the color of the dressing. On Wimbledon’s website (2019), the only mention for the wearing is that “Competitors must be dressed in suitable tennis attire that is almost entirely white and this applies from the point at which the player enters the court surround.” The other nine requirements are all about color. Women players today can choose to wear skirts or shorts, t-shirts or shirts or even underweights. There are more outfits choices than before. Although women tennis athletes won a better treatment in some area now, there is still a lot of the inequality exists.

Gender equality did change over times in some area, but one thing that has fairly changed was the schedule of the playground. Wimbledon usually scheduled more gentlemen’s match on the Centre Court and No. 1 Court than ladies’ match. Thus, for women players, even they are great players, sometimes they will be relegated to auxiliary courts. After equal payment put into practice, the match ground inequality for women players still exists. In 2008, Venus and Serena played their fourth-round singles matches on No. 2 Court. In 2016, Venus relegated to Court 18 for a second-round match. At this time, she has already won five champions. For women players who are esteemed, or have won many champions, still, they will be relegated to the second playground when it comes to choosing between gentlemen’s and ladies’ match. Thus, there is still some gender inequality that needs to fight.

Gender equality changed in British tennis history in some parts, like in payment and outfits. Women players have won equal rights in money and a wider choice in outfits. Still, there some inequality that needs to be solved, and women in British tennis are waiting. To keep the equality now successes and to solve the inequality, there is still much work that needs to do. Women players need to stand out like Billie Jean King and Venus, seek equality in British tennis.

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