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Journal article

A history of transgender women in Australian Sports, 1976–2017

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TITLE: A History of Transgender Women in Australian Sports, 1976-2017

ABSTRACT: Although debates about transgender women in sport have been prominent in recent years, there is a much longer history of transgender participation in sport. This article uses oral history interviews and media to examine Australia's history of transgender women's participation in sport since the late 1970s. It explores the public debates around gender, sex, the body, and 'fair play discourse' as expressed around specific transgender athletes. It also examines the lived experience of those transgender sportswomen and analyses how they used gender presentation to affirm their femininity. Indeed, gender presentation and transgender (in)visibility heavily influenced whether teammates, opponents, sporting associations, and the media accepted transgender athletes in their affirmed gender. The presence of transgender women in sport consistently exposed anxieties around gender, sex, and the body because they exposed rigid understandings of gender binarism. Examining the long history of transgender women in Australian sport reveals how longstanding debates have played out in a variety of settings, with transgender athletes regularly searching for ways to affirm their gender and navigate sporting communities.

BIOGRAPHY: Noah Riseman is a Professor of History at Australian Catholic University, where he specialises in histories of gender, sexuality, and race. This article derives from an Australian Research Council Discovery project exploring the history of transgender people in Australia.

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A History of Transgender Women in Australian Sports, 1976-2017

In August 2019 Cricket Australia announced new policies to support the inclusion of trans and gender diverse people. These guidelines were the outcome of extensive consultation with professional and community cricketers, transgender athletes, transgender organisations, and state and federal human rights commissions. Cricket Australia framed the guidelines as striking a balance between encouraging trans and diverse people to play, while also ensuring principles of fairness. The former Australian women's cricket captain said, 'I benefited so much from sport in elite teams [and] I don't think trans and gender diverse people should be excluded from that.'¹ Although the policies were new, the presence of transgender competitors in Australian cricket was not. As early as November 1995, the national president of Women's Cricket in Australia, Ann Mitchell, proudly declared: 'Women's cricket is a game for everybody and we don't care about shape, size, religion or sexual preference – we even have transsexuals playing.'² That proclamation was extraordinary and came at the end of significant internal and public debates about gender and sexuality in Australian women's cricket.³ During the 1990s opponents of transgender rights often used sport as a justification *not* to extend anti-discrimination protections to transgender Australians.⁴ Yet, Mitchell highlighted another, quieter trend happening on the ground: transgender athletes being embraced by their teammates and competitors.

Transgender inclusion in Australian sport has been in the public spotlight since October 2017 when the Australian Football League (AFL) refused to let trans woman Hannah Mouncey nominate for the draft for the new professional women's league (AFLW).⁵ Yet, as the above examples show, there is a much longer history of transgender participation in Australian sport. That history is chequered with examples of inclusion and exclusion; community and elite athletes; and persistent debates about science, sex, gender, and ability.

Just as progress narratives about women's sport have repeatedly 'discovered' the popularity of women's sport,⁶ so too have the discourse and debates around transgender participation in Australian sport been repetitive. Oral histories and press coverage from the late 1970s until 2017, just before the Hannah Mouncey case, highlight the ways that transgender participation in sport consistently exposed anxieties around gender, sex, and the body. Opponents of transgender inclusion have continuously argued that trans women have unfair advantages because of their biological sex.⁷ Transgender athletes, in response, have used dress, voice, mannerisms, and their bodies to amplify their gender presentation to express their femininity (or masculinity in rarer public examples of trans men).⁸ Their gender performances were not just strategic: they reflect the athletes' deeply held views about sex and gender. This history of trans women in Australian sport reveals the ways transgender people have reinforced ideas about gender binaries, and their inclusion or exclusion has generally depended on how other sportspeople and the media have read their gender performances.

Terminology and Binarism

Language around transgender and gender diversity is constantly evolving, and many of the terms used in the past are now considered inappropriate. This article adopts Kelly Rawson and Cristan Williams' succinct but effective definition of transgender as referring to people 'whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.'⁹ Historian Susan Stryker describes transgender as representing 'the movement across a socially imposed boundary away from an unchosen starting place, rather than any particular destination or mode of transition.'¹⁰ This article uses terminology as recommended by ACON's TransHub, which presents a comprehensive glossary of terms and definitions relevant to Australian cultural contexts.¹¹ However, many transgender people, including

some interviewed for this article, still self-identify with earlier terminology which reflects their personal views about sex, gender, and the body.

There are many expressions associated with transgender studies,¹² and two are of particular relevance to this article. The first is ‘sex’ – an embodied, biological term which is based on a person’s genetic make-up and reproductive organs. This is different from gender, which refers to the socially constructed meanings and behaviours attached to, or associated with, a person’s presumed sex. Since the 1970s, the word gender has increased in usage among humanities and social science scholars and has overtaken ‘sex’ as a site of analysis *because* scholars recognise that so many assumptions about ‘sex’ are socially constructed.¹³ Yet, because so many aspects of physical performance link to an athlete’s physiology, the category of ‘sex’ has continued to be important in sport. Indeed, it is the tension between sex and gender which has underpinned so many of the debates around transgender inclusion in sport. Opponents of transgender inclusion have regularly argued about unfair advantages or the safety of female players, and underlying their arguments have been anxieties around the authenticity of sex.

In recent years social scientists have shifted away from reading gender in binary terms and instead conceive it as a fluid spectrum.¹⁴ This poses a challenge to sport because competitions are framed by a logic of differentiation: e.g. winners versus losers. Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole argue that dividing sporting competitions between male and female is part of this logic of differentiation; consequently, sport reproduces ideologies around gender and sex differences.¹⁵ This is not to say that such divisions are inappropriate or unnecessary (that is another debate); rather, it is to point out that gender binarism underpins debates around transgender participation in sport. Numerous scholars have argued that the ‘fair play discourse’ expresses a constant assumption that all males have physical advantages over females, while concurrently ignoring the other biological and genetic factors that may

advantage particular athletes.¹⁶ Transgender inclusion threatens to expose the myth of sport being egalitarian: sporting associations, athletes and fans choose to see natural ability as ‘fair’, but only within certain boundaries, and supposed sex-linked physical advantages have been framed as ‘unfair’.

The second important term is ‘gender presentation’, which Stryker defines as ‘looking and acting like what your culture expects a man or a woman to look or act like (or alternatively, to present yourself in such a way that you make your gender nonconformity visible).’¹⁷ Gender presentation builds on the canonical work of Judith Butler, who argues that gender is not just socially constructed but something people perform through learned behaviours and societal norms.¹⁸ Gender presentation reflects both how a person performs masculinity or femininity, as well as how individuals read a person’s gender. Gender presentation, gender expression (e.g. dress) along with physical attributes influence whether someone is visibly transgender. One key argument of this article is that those whose gender presentation was more conventional – or to put it bluntly, those whose transgender identity was less visible – were more likely to be accepted by fellow players, officials, and the media. For this very reason, transgender athletes have historically aimed to reinforce gender binaries, subverting the very arguments against transgender inclusion in sport.

1970s-80s: Framing the Debate

Transgender women regularly featured in Australian media in the 1970s. While headlines tended to shock and mock, often the contents of the articles were sympathetic portrayals with transgender women telling their own stories.¹⁹ The big transgender sports story of the 1970s was American tennis player Renée Richards. She was first outed as transgender in 1976, sparking global media attention. The Renée Richards story has been covered extensively,²⁰ and her example set several global precedents. First, the arguments around her participation

in women's tennis framed the next four decades of discourse around transgender people in sport: whether she really was a woman and/or if it was fair for her to compete as a woman.²¹ Second, Renée consciously used dress, cosmetics, mannerisms, and behaviour to perform femininity. This was because she subscribed to those gender norms and also to ensure that the public and women's tennis circuit read her as female.²² Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole argue that Renée was so effective at being accepted as female that she reinforced binary understandings of gender.²³

Renée Richards' case had resonance in Australia when the Lawn Tennis Association of Australasia declared that they would require female players to produce a sex certificate. The organisation applied the sex test which had been in place by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) since 1966 and for the Olympics since 1968.²⁴ Any other possibility of Renée playing in Australia was quashed when local women (including Margaret Court) indicated that they would not play against her.²⁵ This final point, while minor in the coverage, set an important precedent for future debates around transgender inclusion in Australian sports: the attitude of cisgender players proved a potent, influential factor in governing bodies' decisions.²⁶

Capitalising on the Renée Richards story, the tabloid *Truth* ran a cover story headlined 'Aussie's Bizarre Life in Country Town: Sex Swap Sports Girl Tells All'. The story was about Leigh Varis, a transgender sportswoman living in rural Western Australia. The article described Leigh as 'an Australian Renee Richards who's made it,' having been a finalist for the first Pilbara Sportsperson of the Year. The article portrayed Leigh as having a decadent past working as a drag queen and stripper in Perth. Now, Leigh was living a respectable lifestyle working as a cleaner and, in line with white middle class ideas of femininity, 'Like any ordinary woman, what she wants more than anything else now is a guy who will love her and a couple of adopted kids.'²⁷

The 1976 article indicated that Leigh was playing basketball, softball and netball and had ‘won complete acceptance as a top player.’ It was the local basketball association that recruited Leigh, and after a meeting they determined that she could play women’s basketball once she could produce medical evidence that she was female. At that time there was no legal recognition of gender transition in any Australian states or territories, but somehow Leigh managed to produce sufficient evidence because she did join the team. Leigh noted that early on some teammates and spectators sniggered, but this changed in part because of her feminine appearance: ‘The other girls were still a bit reserved. But once I’d stripped in the shower I never looked back.’²⁹ The local community thus accepted Leigh as a woman because she was able to fit dominant embodied and social constructs of femininity, and this acceptance extended to the sporting arena.

Perhaps the first Australian case which tested the debates about transgender participation in sport was in November 1982 at a lawn bowls club in Sydney. Noelena Tame, who transitioned in 1978, was outed as transgender when she ran for social secretary of Moore Park Bowls Club. At that time there was no legal recognition of transgender people’s affirmed gender, so under New South Wales (NSW) law she was still male. The bowls club deemed Noelena ineligible to join as a female and ordered her to hand back her subscription to NSW Women’s Bowling Association.³⁰ Given lawn bowls does not rely on physical strength or endurance, questions about Noelena having an unfair advantage were muted. Any media references to fairness referred to Noelena’s rights, with one article describing her as feeling ‘cheated’ (a sharp contrast to contemporary arguments that transgender athletes are cheats).³¹ This case was entirely about whether Noelena Tame was female.

Noelena effectively portrayed the image of a respectable woman, simultaneously emphasising her affirmed gender while also challenging stereotypical media depictions of transgender women as deviants, perverts, and sex workers.³² She explained: ‘I’m a normal

heterosexual woman and just want to live my life in peace. I have a boyfriend who certainly doesn't think of me as a man. I'm making a big issue of this for the sake of all transsexuals.'³³ Noelena adeptly used body language, dress, and the presentation of her home to play up her femininity. An article in the magazine *Woman's Day* portrayed how Noelena aligned with dominant constructs of femininity, commenting on the clothes, flower arrangements, home-made doilies, and Noelena's gestures.³⁴ Reports also emphasised the charitable work Noelena undertook, helping blind women bowlers and supporting disabled children through picnic days.³⁵

Noelena also wrote letters to both state and federal politicians asking for intervention at the lawn bowls club, as well as calling for legal changes to recognise her affirmed gender. She regularly described herself as a respectable woman, with letters including sentences like 'I am a good mother with love for children as I brought up my own and they all have good respected jobs and [are] proud of me and my grandchildren too', and 'I am a heterosexual transsexual. My life as a woman extends over 30 odd years and I ask for your humane and kind help to allow us to lead normal life and to allow me to play my bowls and to be allowed to help the blind bowlers again'. The politicians generally responded with expressions of sympathy for Noelena's situation, but said they could not comment on matters before courts and that discussions about change of gender were under consideration and needed support of all states and territories.³⁶

Noelena lost her legal battle to be recognised as a woman, upholding the Moore Park Lawn Bowls Club's right to exclude her. There was always scope for the NSW Women's Bowling Association to come up with its own policy or approach around gender and eligibility. Yet, the association chose to fall back on the law because they had no compelling reason to support Noelena. Club members were quick to make her hand back the club badge, and Noelena did not even feel safe to watch matches because groups would point and laugh at

her.³⁷ Thus Noelena may have effectively won over the media with her effective performance of femininity, but it did not matter in the absence of any legal protections or the support of her sporting community.

Ricki Coughlan: Transgender Invisibility

A pattern that began with Renée Richards and Noelena Tame continued well into the 1990s and 2000s: most transgender athletes were not open about their gender identity and preferred to live quietly in their affirmed genders. This is not surprising. First, the dominant medical model of ‘transsexualism’ suggested that ‘true transsexuals’ would live in their affirmed gender for two years, undergo hormone therapy, then have gender affirmation surgery and disappear quietly into society. It would not be until the mid-1990s that a new wave of transgender activists challenged this model. They argued that transgender people should be visible and need not adhere to conventional, binary gender presentations.³⁸ Second, there was the athletes’ personal comfort, safety, and health. Even today, athletes fear how teammates, friends, opposition, and spectators will treat them if they are open about their transgender identity.³⁹ Therefore, in the 1990s cases of transgender participation in sport rarely came to the attention of sporting bodies or the media because someone came forward; instead, it usually became an issue when someone was outed.

Ricki Coughlan (previously Carne) was one such individual, and her experience with NSW Athletics marked the first time Australian sporting bodies had to grapple publicly with transgender participation in competitive sport. In 1990 Ricki won the NSW novice 4km championships and was subsequently selected for the NSW team at the Australian championships. She was never public about being transgender because, as she explains, it was her ‘intention to live my life and not have to be this transsexual person; I was just now a regular woman going about her life.’ Someone who attended the same gym as Ricki worked

for the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and, in breach of privacy law, snooped in her file and discovered that she was transgender. By April 1991 word reached members of the athletics community.⁴⁰

Media coverage began with a report about other female athletes threatening to lodge a protest about an anonymous transgender athlete. This happened at the same time as an important global moment in sport: the IAAF was in the process of changing its rules to discard the controversial chromosomal sex test and replace it with a physical examination.⁴¹ Athletics NSW took two approaches in its response: 1. They focused on Ricki's femininity and transgender invisibility, and 2. Played down any idea that she had an unfair advantage. On the former point, the general manager of Athletics NSW said, 'I've been told who it is, which surprises me, frankly...in my younger days, I could pick out the one who wasn't a female in a strip show without question. You go by the knees. The person is very feminine looking.'⁴² This statement was almost a backhanded way of supporting Ricki while still expressing discomfort with transgender people. One option was to exclude all transgender people, while the other was virtually to pretend that some were not transgender. This attitude suggested that the gender of a transgender person only came down to their (in)visibility. Only those whose gender presentation and bodies were effectively read as female should be recognised in their affirmed gender.

As coverage continued, the questions about physical ability/unfair advantage and how to read transgender athletes' gender were becoming conflated. The general manager of Athletics Australia said, 'The girl is not that good an athlete and the only likeliness of it becoming a problem is after she finishes a cross country race in about 20th place, which is about the standard she's at.' The media also gauged other athletes, who had mixed opinions. Some were quoted as having no problem with a transgender runner competing, particularly because this was not the elite level, but others were concerned about the possibility of weaker

male runners transitioning to compete in women's races.⁴³ One opinion piece reinforced this argument: 'Female athletes at any level can't be blamed for worrying about the prospect of facing a stronger, bigger, more masculine opponent.'⁴⁴ These arguments relied on rigid, binary readings of gender and the body to create a hierarchy of transgender presentation: those read as female on top, and men impersonating women on the bottom. Nobody ever clearly articulated how to classify one or the other (showing how untenable such readings of gender were).

Even though Ricki's identity was still a secret, she was devastated to be the subject of a media firestorm.⁴⁵ A director at Athletics NSW assured Ricki that they did not intend to throw her out of the sport, and Ricki agreed to undergo lung, heart, and other physical tests to assess where she fit within the normal female physiological range.⁴⁶ In August 1991, Athletics Australia confirmed that Ricki (still anonymous) would be accepted as a woman, with the general manager justifying it on the grounds that 'This person has a doctor's certificate stating she is a woman, and emotionally, psychologically, and even physically, she looks like a woman. It is wrong to say she is an elite athlete because although she trains very hard she is still basically in the middle of the field.' In response, the Women in Sport Foundation vowed to lobby both the NSW Sport Minister and Women's Advisory Council to end transgender participation in women's sport. Its president Kay de Bry remarked, 'The bottom line is that someone has to look after the 99.9 per cent of women, not the one or two transsexuals who are masquerading as women.'⁴⁷ The use of the word 'masquerade' revealed that this was not about an unfair advantage, but rather about the authenticity of sex. Whereas Athletics NSW relied on gender presentation, for opponents this strictly came down to biological sex.

In December 1991 the tabloid *Truth* learned Ricki's identity, so to front-foot the story she outed herself to the media. As television cameras swarmed one race, other competitors

also learned that Ricki was transgender. She recalls their reaction: ‘They thought it was fantastic and they said basically words to the effect of, “We know who you are. We race with you every week. There’s nothing unfair or wrong here. We’re with you. And don’t worry about it.”’⁴⁸ The national open 1500m champion, Suzy Walsham, commented: ‘I would still race against her. I have told her I hope she continues, to run.’⁴⁹ Ricki’s strategy of emphasising the support of other competitors set another important precedent. Whereas commentators were debating transgender inclusion with theoretical arguments about unfair advantages, the sport communities could judge the cases on their merits. Such an approach did not lend to formulating a broad policy to support transgender inclusion, but it did alleviate challenges facing specific athletes.

Opponents continued to contest Ricki’s participation in women’s athletics on biological grounds. Joanne Jones invoked what would become a common trope in later years: the doping/cheating analogy.⁵⁰ She said, ‘it is akin to drugs in sport and therefore cheating so we simply want a more detailed ruling from Athletics Australia.’⁵¹ Jones also sent a transphobic-ridden letter to the editor: ‘females have the capacity to menstruate, gestate and lactate. Males impregnate. A male transsexual who is unable to impregnate and has some artificial female features does not constitute a female.’⁵² An opinion piece in *The Australian* said: ‘Ricki has a much more womanly (if you are allowed to say that) figure and claims that hormone treatments have taken away any masculine advantage.’⁵³ All of this commentary shows how both proponents and opponents of transgender inclusion in women’s sport could draw on embodied interpretations of femininity to support their arguments.

Ricki’s story returned to the spotlight in 1992 and 1993. Ricki framed the narrative around the hurt that the media storm and Joanne Jones had caused, while continuing to emphasise that other runners were comfortable with her. She even invoked her own weakness as a runner as proof that she was a woman.⁵⁴ Ricki also reinforced her femininity through

doing interviews with two women's interest magazines: *Woman's Day* and *Ita*. The cover story in *Ita* described Ricki's appearance, physique, and dress to emphasise her femininity. The author explicitly noted that Ricki's gender presentation and invisibility as a trans woman were why so many people supported her.⁵⁵

Importantly, at that time Ricki too subscribed to embodied ideas about gender. She thinks that people were right to question potential advantages owing to her biological sex, so long as they were raised in a respectful manner (which they normally were not). Ricki never saw her case as being about all transgender athletes: 'This was not about transsexual people, this was about me, and our media people were very clear they wanted that to be, because otherwise the argument will become complicated, and because people would ask me all kinds of scenarios.' For Ricki it was clear-cut that she was female because she aligned with both social and embodied constructs of femininity. As she explains: 'Their big problem was they could stand there and have a line-up, and they would say, "Pick the transgender athlete," and they wouldn't because I looked the same as all the other athletes because I fit into all of the athletic norms, and they wouldn't be able to tell from the time because I'm a good runner, I'm not a world-beater.'⁵⁶ Ricki's case, therefore, reinforced gender binaries and, by being treated as a one-off example, there were no efforts to develop a clear policy within Athletics Australia or other Australian sporting bodies.

Opening Doors

The next Australian sport with a transgender competitor attracting media attention was golf. A magazine feature about Lana Barlow described the mixed treatment she received when she came out as transgender in 1995 at her local South Australian golf club. At the time Women's Golf Australia would consider trans women on a case-by-case basis and allow them to compete in amateur competitions if they were convinced that the player was not advantaged

by their 'male past'. Lana's club welcomed her to continue participating in women's golf, and those who knew her were supportive. Yet, the club also made it clear that this was because they already knew and liked Lana and may not support other trans women golfers. Lana also noted that members and competitors who never met her would make comments behind her back, especially the usual arguments about trans women having an unfair advantage. She explained: 'There were so many people in the club who had an opinion about me but they had never met me. Most of them have never really sat down and talked to me.' Lana, too, used dress, mannerisms and accessories to emphasise her femininity. The journalist wrote that as she was eyeing Lana and judging her femininity, Lana 'sees my glance, perhaps reading my mind, and fiddles with her gold bracelet and refolds her long cotton skirt.'⁵⁷

Lana was not the only transgender golfer who came to the attention of Women's Golf Australia. In December 1997, Women's Golf Australia (WGA) announced that five trans women had come into national contention and the organisation was preparing a policy on transgender inclusion. WGA was the peak body for amateur golf while Australian Ladies Professional Golf governed the professional sport. WGA's proposed policy would permit trans women to compete if they had gender affirmation surgery and were legally recognised as female. Sports lawyer Lisa Comben, who drafted the policy, concisely debunked the mythology that men would masquerade as women to win competitions: 'To go through the entire transgender procedure is not something you would do just for a competitive edge in sport.'⁵⁸ WGA did not adopt that policy until early 1999, suggesting it generated significant debate within the association and golf community.

In June 1999 the *Adelaide Advertiser* reported that trans woman Mianne Bagger had won an amateur golf title. Mianne's gender identity was not news to people who knew her because she had always been open about being transgender. As Mianne explains: 'So I let

them ask [questions]...go on, there's nothing that's taboo, just ask away...And once I'd had that conversation with people then, oh, now I'm a known quantity, there's nothing to fear anymore.'⁵⁹ Under WGA's transgender policy, amateurs like Mianne could compete in their affirmed gender if they had identity documents confirming they were female – which at that time meant having gender affirmation surgery – but under Australian Ladies Professional Golf's policies they would be still be excluded at the professional level.⁶⁰

When the *Advertiser* story broke, Mianne saw this as an opportunity to educate people about transgender issues. Mianne framed her participation in sport around two key points: 1. That she did not have any advantages because of the effects of hormones and surgery,⁶¹ and 2. That other competitors accepted her. She explained, 'I don't want to be out there competing if I'm hitting two clubs longer than others...If there are numerous complaints from other players and they are not comfortable with this situation then I wouldn't play.'⁶² WGA supported Mianne, emphasising that other amateur athletes knew her.⁶³ This narrative would prove important: because the people who played against Mianne did not see her as having any unfair advantage, it was a moot argument.

For the next five years Mianne continued to play around Australia as an amateur, even representing the South Australian state squad. Whereas others in her position would turn professional, Mianne was not allowed to because international rules since the late 1980s stipulated that a player must be 'female at birth'. In late 2003 Mianne had a conversation with the president of Women's Golf Australia about her predicament. The president offered to invite Mianne to compete in the 2004 Women's Australian Open. Mianne contacted a friendly journalist at the *Sydney Morning Herald* and shaped the narrative to great effect.⁶⁴ She focused on the importance of dialogue to end misunderstandings, acceptance from other players, and the fact that she did not have any unfair advantages: 'There is a lot of misunderstanding about transsexual women in society. I can't blame people for that. Why

would people know anything about it? There is not much else I can expect, really. But if they want to talk about it, I am pretty open about my situation, explaining what goes on and what changes happen to the body.’⁶⁵ Mianne set up a website where people could ask questions and she could share information about the effects of hormones and gender affirmation surgery.⁶⁶ Mianne consistently spoke clearly about: the physiological changes from hormones (‘We lose muscle and overall strength. After surgery, those effects are permanent’⁶⁷), the agonising decision around gender transition (‘You certainly don’t go through surgery lightly’⁶⁸), the ridiculous arguments around men masquerading as women (‘The notion that some bloke who didn’t succeed on the men’s tour would reappear a few year’s [sic] later on the women’s tour is preposterous...It’s a life decision and going through hardship, surgery and so much more’⁶⁹), the support of other players (‘To most people, I am just another one of the girls out there playing’⁷⁰) and the myth of unfair advantage (‘I would not feel comfortable competing if I felt I had an advantage’⁷¹).

Mianne’s strategy effectively disarmed opponents. Other players regularly expressed support for her, such as English golfer Laura Davies: ‘She’s a girl now and good luck to her. Life is too short to be worrying about [her previously being a man]. She doesn’t hit the ball 300 yards, why not give her a chance?’⁷² Renée Richards advocated for Mianne and even flipped the doping argument around: hormones made Mianne weaker, whereas doping was meant to make people stronger.⁷³ These affirming responses contrast sharply with the hyperbole that surrounded abstract arguments about transgender inclusion in sport. Here was a transgender person whose gender presentation was easily read as female and who counteracted the speculative arguments against trans women competing.

After the Australian Open, Mianne wrote to organisers of professional tours in Europe and the United States, requesting that they amend their rules so that she could compete. When journalists asked how things were going, she would say that she still had no response from

some of the larger tours, so the reporters contacted the tours for comment.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) changed its rules before the 2004 Athens Games, introducing the Stockholm Consensus. Transgender women could now compete if they were legally recognised in their affirmed gender, had gender affirmation surgery, and at least two years had passed since surgery.⁷⁵ Mianne credits this reform as being instrumental in convincing the Ladies European Tour (LET) to change its eligibility rules in September 2004 to align with the IOC. In November 2004 Mianne qualified to play in the Ladies European Golf Tour, and later that month she was granted permission to apply for membership of the Australian Ladies Professional Golf tour.⁷⁶ In February 2005 the Women's British Open allowed transgender competitors for the first time under similar rules.⁷⁷

Public statements and media commentary centred the revised transgender inclusion policies around Mianne specifically, rather than abstract or speculative arguments. LET spokesperson Martin Park declared: 'those who freely comment about the whys and wherefores as to whether Mianne should be playing are more often than not ill-informed or just purely speculate.'⁷⁸ It was not just Mianne's knowledge and demeanour that effectively disarmed opponents, but also her gender presentation. A report in Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* commented on Mianne's femininity to debunk myths about trans women as men in skirts: 'THERE was no crushing, hairy-armed handshake on the first tee, a sly wink and a thumping 270m drive from transsexual woman golfer Mianne Bagger at Club Pelican yesterday.' The same article quoted Mianne as saying, 'Some people are expecting a burly bloke in a dress on the first tee.'⁷⁹ Lisa Dawn Bavington argues that given the surveillance Mianne was under, 'it is not surprising that she is inclined towards behaviour that accentuates (and confirms) her femininity, avoiding anything to tip her physical appearance over to the masculine side.'⁸⁰ Presenting and competing as a woman meant that Mianne *could not* appear too strong or else she would feed the myth of an unfair advantage or really being a man.

Mianne continued to play professional golf until 2016, though she never won a tournament. Since retiring, as there has been more public debate around transgender inclusion in sport, Mianne has been outspoken. She believes that people should be allowed to express themselves as they see fit, but she also subscribes to a binary, embodied interpretation of sex which needs to be treated separately from gender. Just as the science has evolved since Mianne began competing on tour, so too have her views changed over time. She believes that any policy must be guided by science and that different sports may require different policies depending on the level of physical contact or strength. She believes gender affirmation surgery must be a prerequisite for trans women to participate in any professional sport and that there needs to be a delay of at least two years (possibly even longer) post-surgery. That would ensure that residual effects on reduction of muscle mass and strength can occur and, by virtue of having the male reproductive organs removed, there would be no risk of competitors intentionally or unintentionally ‘doping’ by going off androgen suppressors and consequently re-producing testosterone.⁸¹ Transgender athletes, past and present, have a diversity of views about what should be the requirements for transgender people to compete in women’s sport. Mianne is not alone in this particular view; Renée Richards, too, believes that trans women who have not had gender affirmation surgery should be barred from women’s sport.⁸² Their positions reflect their own transition journeys: they had surgery and gender presentations which aligned with dominant constructs of femininity. Mianne’s lived experience thus challenges popular myths about unfair advantage, but given the physical nature of sport, she also believes that the body and science should determine eligibility rather than gender identity alone.

2000s: More Diversity, Same Debates

For Lana Barlow and Mianne Bagger the change in rules to allow trans women to compete in golf worked from the bottom up – starting with the local club, then the state, then Australia, and eventually internationally. As the 2000s rolled on, the reverse happened: international changes influenced Australian sporting bodies and local competitions to reassess transgender inclusion. The first international influence was the Gay Games. Internationally the LGBT sporting community had been facing calls for transgender inclusion since a group called Transsexual Menace protested against the 1994 New York Gay Games rules requiring transgender athletes to prove they had undergone gender affirmation surgery or been on hormones for at least two years.⁸³ In February 1995 the Sydney Mardi Gras Sports Festival changed its rules to allow a trans woman to compete in a tennis competition.⁸⁴

At the 2002 Gay Games in Sydney, for the first time transgender people did not require medical interventions to compete in their affirmed gender. Under new policies adopted in consultation with Sydney's transgender community – including representatives from Pasifika and Indigenous Australian groups – competitors only needed to provide evidence that they had been living in their affirmed gender for two years. What constituted evidence was intentionally broad so that participants from diverse cultures or countries with strict gender recognition laws would have more scope to be recognised in their affirmed gender. Netball proved a popular sport for gender diverse athletes, as it had divisions for men, women, mixed *and* one for transgender women. There were seven transgender teams – five in the transgender women's division, one in the men's division and all seven in the mixed division. Individual transgender players also competed on teams in all divisions, though there were rules restricting the number of trans women allowed on women's or mixed teams because of safety concerns over body size and to ensure 'fairness'. These restrictions did not, however, generate any significant debates among competitors or organisers.⁸⁵

The Sydney Gay Games adopted a definition of transgender that shifted away from medical models: ‘A transgender person is someone who was born anatomically male or female, but has a strong and persistent, bona fide identification with the gender role other than that assigned at birth. A transgender person may or may not have had medical treatment to transition to their chosen or self-identified gender.’⁸⁶ The definition was intentionally broad to reflect an inclusive understanding of gender diversity, and also to recognise diverse genders from Indigenous Australian and other non-European cultures. The Sydney Gay Games hosted athletes who identified as Sistergirl (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian), fa’fafine (from Tonga and Samoa), Waria (from Indonesia), Hijra (from South Asia) and Kathoey (from Thailand).⁸⁷ One hundred fifty-eight transgender athletes from twenty-eight countries registered for the Sydney Gay Games.⁸⁸ Of course, there were divisions within Sydney’s transgender community over whether the policy was too open, particularly from advocates of gender binarism. Sydney’s Gender Centre welcomed the policy, and the manager responded to criticism: ‘I understand that those responsible for the policy have already met with flak from some sections of the transgender community. I leave it to you to be the judges.’⁸⁹

The IOC’s release of the Stockholm Consensus in 2004 was the other major international development which resonated within Australia. As the IOC deliberations were oriented around science and hormone levels, so too did the high-level discussions within Australia focus more on science and less on gender presentation. In March 2004, Debbie Sims, Manager Ethics and Women, Sport Development Group at the Australian Sports Commission wrote: ‘It is not something someone decides overnight nor something someone would do in order to play women's sport...If transgenders are prohibited from playing sport because of a presumed genetic advantage, this raises the question of whether people born with genetic advantages for sport should similarly be prohibited from playing.’⁹⁰ Transgender

activists assumed the Stockholm Consensus would have little impact on professional sport, but it would have ripple effects on grassroots sport. Elizabeth Riley, manager of Sydney's Gender Centre, believed that more transgender participation in local sport would bring 'benefits [that] will include improved fitness, social inclusion and enjoyment of one's chosen sport/s. Importantly, it will also bring about the gradual breaking down of those barriers, generated by prejudice and ignorance, that have effectively contributed to the marginalisation of our community both in the sporting context and beyond.'⁹¹

The first invocation of the IOC rules came a year later in Tasmania. At least three soccer clubs queried Martine Delaney's eligibility to play in the local women's league. Martine had gender affirmation surgery the previous year and had extensive soccer experience pre-transition. Martine retorted, 'Legally, if I was good enough and young enough, I would be eligible to play women's sport for Australia at the Olympic Games...So if I'm eligible for the Olympics, why is there a problem with me playing women's soccer in Hobart?'⁹² What first brought Martine to officials' attention was her gender presentation: some managers and spectators from rival clubs recognised Martine. She was almost a counter-example to Ricki Coughlan: Martine was visibly transgender, which fuelled the arguments about trans women not being real women. That she was successful at goal-scoring only supported the argument about trans women having an unfair advantage. Teammates supported Martine, and she rebutted unfair advantage claims by pointing to other players with large frames: 'Some of the girls who've taken out chunks of my legs with their boots in past months have much bigger frames than me.' Football Federation Australia's anti-discrimination policy protected transgender people, so Martine was cleared to play.⁹³

A 2009 case from Cairns in far north Queensland moved away from the idea of trans women's participation being something to debate, but rather something to celebrate. The local newspaper reported on trans woman Robyn Stott being welcomed into the Edge Hill

Ladies Bowls Club. Being accepted as a woman was important for Robyn's affirmation while she was transitioning. Like other athletes in the public spotlight, Robyn emphasised how club members welcomed her: 'They [club] have been terrific and have a code of conduct which means members cannot discriminate. But I've never had to use that protection... There have been no problems, I'm just one of the girls.' In almost a mirror of Noelena Tame, Robyn played up her femininity through dress, behaviour, and extracurricular activities like helping with morning teas.⁹⁴ Trans women like Robyn were not making different arguments from earlier sportswomen. The difference was that now, club members were shifting away from rigid ideas about sex and the body to embrace a transgender player as one of their own.

Confounding Binaries: Caroline Layt

Caroline Layt's experience highlights how participation in sports traditionally associated with masculinity made trans women more vulnerable to accusations of unfair advantage or not being real women. From a young age Caroline had been attracted to rugby (both league and union) because the sports' hypermasculine environments helped her repress and deflect attention from her gender identity.⁹⁵ After high school she played first grade for several rugby union and league clubs. She was even selected to the training squad for the professional South Sydney Rabbitohs. But all the attempts to repress her gender identity were in vain and, in 1995 at age twenty-nine, Caroline began her transition.⁹⁶

For much of her post-transition life, gender presentation and being read as female was important to Caroline.⁹⁷ What brought Caroline back to sport was the 2002 Sydney Gay Games. Seeing that trans women were allowed to participate, Caroline registered with Team Sydney and competed in track and field (she won four gold, one silver and one bronze). Caroline then wanted to re-join local athletics competitions. She did a VO2 test with sports scientists which proved that her blood oxygen levels were in the normal female range.

Caroline wrote to Athletics Australia and Athletics NSW and obtained permission to compete.⁹⁸ Nobody challenged Caroline's success as being about any unfair advantage because they did not read her as transgender.

Caroline's return to rugby began in 2003 at a match at her twenty-year high school reunion. She was the only female player because it had been an all-boys' school. Former Wallaby turned journalist Peter FitzSimons even wrote about the moment in a short column titled 'First try to Martha': 'she was warmly welcomed back the night before by the 100 former classmates who attended the reunion, with not one stray bit of bigoted nastiness. It was admirable.'⁹⁹ Some of Caroline's classmates suggested that she return to rugby, so in 2004 Caroline joined a team in the Sydney women's rugby union competition. That same year she was a finalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* rugby awards, won her club's best and fairest for first grade, and won the Ralph Stephenson Memorial Shield for leading try scorer at the club. She also played outside centre for the national championship winning Sydney Representative First XV.¹⁰⁰ Caroline was not openly transgender to her team, and nobody questioned her gender.

In 2005 things turned for Caroline. Tensions with a coach culminated in him saying Caroline was not a good player because she only had one year's experience. She replied in an email: "'By the way, I don't have just one year's experience. I played against you in 1986 one Eastern Suburbs versus West Harbour in a reserve grade game out at Concord Oval.'" I hit send and went, oh shit, I shouldn't have sent that.' Word spread quickly that Caroline was transgender. Awards were rescinded. Caroline was benched for most games. Opposition players taunted her on and off the field. Teammates joked behind her back. Across the competition players adopted embodied views about sex and completely reread Caroline's gender: 'I heard back from certain people saying, no wonder Caroline is so good; because she's really a man, and things like that. So I knew the dynamics had changed and I knew I

was no longer seen as a female.’¹⁰¹ Caroline contradicted two of the cardinal rules for being accepted as a transgender athlete: she was winning, and she played in a manner that could be read as masculine. By being *too* good, critics questioned how her gender history affected performance.¹⁰²

Caroline transferred clubs and continued playing, though in 2006 she was demoted to Sydney ‘A’ – the second tier of Sydney’s representative team. While the women in her new club were more accepting, still opposition players – including from her former club – harassed Caroline and even rough-housed her. Generally speaking, Caroline’s situation has improved since then: Caroline played for NSW in the 2007 Women’s Interstate Challenge (renamed Women’s State of Origin in 2018). She won another national championship for Sydney First XV in rugby union that same year, and ‘people were talking me up again and saying what a wonderful player I am.’ This is not to say that everything was smooth for Caroline. In one match in 2010, an opposition player who had been slandering Caroline made remarks to the effect of: “‘What are you doing playing women’s sport? You should be playing bloody bloke’s sport.” And that just crushed me and I went off to the sideline and I started cursing and swearing.’ Caroline continued to compete in lower divisions of rugby as well athletics, even winning six medals at world level in Masters athletics. In 2014 a combination of age (she was forty-eight) and excessively *low* levels of testosterone led her to retire.¹⁰³ Caroline’s experiences, positive and negative, reinforce the importance of club support and how trans women needed to fit into binary readings of gender and behaviour to be accepted.

Country Sport: Two Tales of Change

The 2010s represented a marked shift in attitudes towards transgender people within Australia. Global publicity in 2015 surrounding Caitlyn Jenner’s transition brought mass

exposure to transgender issues,¹⁰⁴ while in Australia the story of Army Lieutenant Colonel (later Air Force Group Captain) Catherine McGregor thrust transgender issues into the spotlight in 2013.¹⁰⁵ A plethora of other transgender organisations, celebrities, artists, professionals, and allies have advocated for expanded rights for trans and gender diverse people. Governments have amended rules to make it easier for trans and gender diverse people to be legally recognised in their affirmed genders, and many organisations have adopted diversity and inclusion policies.

The 2010s also witnessed increased scholarly attention to the experiences of sexually and gender diverse people within sport. Although much of the research focused on sexuality and homophobia, transgender people's experiences were included in research studies which covered the entire LGBT acronym. An early example was the May 2010 report 'Come Out to Play: The Sports experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in Victoria'. Fourteen of the participants in the study were transgender, and this was the first Australian research to examine transgender experiences in sport. While acknowledging the small sample size, the report concluded that the binary-gendered nature of sport proved challenging for transgender sportspeople to navigate. 58.3 per cent of transgender participants reported that there were sports they would like to play but did not (though there was no qualitative data explaining why). Although 29.4 percent of transgender respondents from mainstream sporting clubs reported that the environment was unwelcoming to them, that number was significantly lower – only 4.7 percent – for members of queer-identifying clubs. The qualitative responses also highlighted examples of transphobia, sometimes borne out of prejudice and other times out of ignorance. In line with the public examples discussed in this article, respondent Alice succinctly noted: 'As a TGirl unless you're very, very passable – you're not accepted.'¹⁰⁶ Thus even as the 2010s rolled in, the challenge of visibility still had a significant impact on trans women's acceptance within a club and wider competition. Two

examples from country Australia in the 2010s highlight the rapidly evolving experiences of transgender inclusion in sport.

Kirsti Miller had been playing sport her entire life: rugby league, swimming, AFL and cross country. In her teenage years she even competed for the NSW state swim team, and at age fourteen she competed in World Aquathon (run 5km, swim 800m) in Wellington, New Zealand, winning the under-19 world championship. At fifteen Kirsti represented Australia in her second sport when she went to Madrid with the Australian under-21 modern pentathlon team. Kirsti always knew she was female, and at age thirty-five in 1999 she came out as transgender and began her medical transition. By 2013 Kirsti was living and working in Broken Hill in far western NSW, where she joined a women's AFL and soccer team.¹⁰⁷ The local media reported on Kirsti because she was the first openly transgender woman to play in the Broken Hill Women's AFL Competition (and possibly the first openly trans woman nationally). Yet, from the start, local residents responded with transphobic comments like 'I think it's disgusting' and 'I think she should be playing in the male's league. Show a bit of respect for the ladies and get her to play for the men.'¹⁰⁸ What subsequently happened to Kirsti in Broken Hill was not about unfair advantages: it was transphobia and a sporting association ill-equipped to deal with it.

In June 2013 Kirsti reported that opposition fans and players had been taunting her with comments like 'show me your cock', being referred to as 'it', and being described as carrying HIV/AIDS. Kirsti initially had the support of her teammates; she recalls: 'the girls in my team clapped me and said, "you're more of a woman than any of those sluts."' ¹⁰⁹ Kirsti filed a vilification complaint, but for six weeks the Broken Hill Football League did not address the ongoing problems. A frustrated Kirsti then took to social media, which drew the ire of her teammates, coach, and AFL ACT-NSW. The compounding problems sparked a mediation with AFL ACT-NSW, and Kirsti was quoted as saying: 'I want to get back to a

football family again because I felt happy in it. Now I feel alienated and ostracised.’¹¹⁰ The outcome of the mediation affirmed that Kirsti had done nothing wrong and the local league had mismanaged her complaint.¹¹¹

It was not just the football community that turned on Kirsti. She explained in 2018: ‘What people don’t understand about small country towns is that if you’re outed from sport, you’re outed from the community.’¹¹² Kirsti’s house was burgled and vandalised; trolls set up fake Facebook accounts and threatened to mutilate her genitals. The AFL promised to help find Kirsti a different football club, but no club would accept her. To evade claims of discrimination the clubs claimed that their squads were full, but Kirsti knew this not to be the case. Kirsti fronted the national media again in 2016 to tell her life story and express her disappointment that she was still the subject of discrimination. There were no discussions or debates about unfair advantages, but still Kirsti had to affirm her female gender identity: ‘I am a woman...I cannot play as a male — that’s illegal. If I go to jail, I have to go to a female jail. If I marry, it has to be a man. I’m not the biggest or strongest woman in the Broken Hill comp.’¹¹³

Kirsti received sympathetic media coverage, which contributed to ongoing attitudinal shifts about transgender people in Australia. There also had been clear changes on the ground in Broken Hill. Locals defended Kirsti the taxi driver and, as she explains it: ‘where[as] at the start it was like 99.9% with the AFL hated us in the whole town, by 2016 it was like 90% of the community loved Nikki [Kirsti’s partner] and Kirsti.’ The president of the Central Football Club approached Kirsti and offered her a spot in the women’s master’s division team starting in 2017. Both on and off the field Kirsti felt total acceptance.¹¹⁴ Other clubs in Broken Hill have also adopted stronger inclusion policies,¹¹⁵ and as Kirsti’s experience testifies, they have had a real impact for transgender players.

Holly Conroy's experience in a soccer club in the country town of Wagga Wagga, NSW, in 2017 also highlights how much has changed in grassroots sports. Holly started playing women's sport to rebuild her self-esteem while she was transitioning. What she found was a welcoming family. There were no public debates about whether she was really a woman, nor were there questions about unfair advantage. Holly credited this to the nature of soccer, which she argued was more about skill than physicality.¹¹⁶ Community comments in the local newspaper reinforced support for Holly:

- My daughter has played against her and we see no problem. Great stuff Holly, keep on playing, haters will hate no matter what.
- Great stuff again Holly Conroy. You are an inspiration to so many people.¹¹⁷

The soccer club wanted to spread the message that this was not just about Holly, but about welcoming all transgender people in sport. In July 2017 it was announced that Holly was organising the final round of the soccer tournament to be, in an Australian first, a transgender inclusion round. Holly explained the importance of visibility: 'When transgender people know they can be part of a team sport, that goes a long way in helping them with their transition and getting on in society.'¹¹⁸ The transgender pride round went ahead in August 2017. Numerous teams wore transgender coloured socks, ribbons, painted faces, flags, and the round was a great success. Holly remarked: 'People were coming to watch dressed in trans and rainbow colours and the teams we played against took it upon themselves to wear rainbow bands around their arms...There were people I'd never met before congratulating me on being true to who I am. It was a great community event.'¹¹⁹ What Holly put together thirty-five years after Noelena Tame was expelled from her local lawn bowls club showed the great strides that transgender people have made in Australia: certainly there was still prejudice and the debates over unfair advantage wage on, especially in relation to

professional competitions. But on the ground there are more opportunities for trans women to be out, proud and included in sport.

Conclusion: The Limits of Inclusion

Since 2015 there has been significant activity in Australia around transgender people in sport. To give just some highlights: in 2015 the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission published the country's first 'Guidelines: Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion in Sport' (updated in 2017); in 2017 the AFLW's decision to exclude Hannah Mouncey from its inaugural draft prompted public debates and sent sporting bodies to re-evaluate their policies; in June 2019 the Australian Human Rights Commission, Sport Australia, and the Coalition of Major Professional and Participation Sports published detailed 'Guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in sport'; in August 2019 Cricket Australia announced its trans and gender diverse inclusion guidelines, and in October 2020 eight other peak sporting bodies announced their respective guidelines around trans and gender diverse inclusion.¹²⁰ All of these guidelines not only address trans women, but also trans men and non-binary people in sport. Given the amount of media attention and the growing number of sporting groups and human rights bodies making these announcements, it certainly seems like support for transgender inclusion in Australian sport has reached a tipping point. Yet, as this article has shown, transgender people have been participating in sport in Australia for decades. The debates have changed little, and both proponents and opponents of transgender inclusion have consistently returned to the same competing ideas about sex, gender, and the body. These are, of course, complex debates, and transgender athletes, too, have diverse opinions which draw on their own transition journeys.

The historical examples of transgender participation in Australian sport highlight the ways that gender presentation and (in)visibility have consistently influenced opinion.

Transgender athletes generally could participate with little criticism if they presented and were read in their affirmed gender. Only when they were visibly transgender or defied constructs of femininity did competitors, officials, and commentators even realise that transgender people were in their midst. Several transgender athletes received support *because* they aligned with dominant constructs of femininity and, in the sports context, of not being ‘too’ good. Perhaps it is fitting to let Ricki Coughlan have the final word about the limits of transgender inclusion: ‘I could see I was welcome, and I was welcome to be good; I was not welcome to be very, very good. I could be as good as I could be, and that was fine, and I’m a good runner. But I could see that there were caveats still hidden in there, and that there always would be, there’d always be question marks.’¹²¹

¹ Chloe Hart, ‘Cricket Australia reveals guidelines for inclusion of transgender players in community and elite cricket’, ABC News, 8 August 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-08/ca-reveals-rules-transgender-players-in-elite-community-cricket/11393860>, accessed 28 May 2020. The full announcement and guidelines are available from <https://www.cricketvictoria.com.au/cricket-australia-takes-action-include-transgender-gender-diverse-people/>.

² ‘Fresh code for women’s cricket’, *Canberra Times*, 18 November 1995, 68.

³ Angela Burroughs, Liz Ashburn, and Leonie Seebohm, ‘“Add Sex and Stir”: Homophobic Coverage of Women’s Cricket in Australia’, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 19, no. 3 (1995): 266-84; Angela Burroughs, Leonie Seebohm, and Liz Ashburn, ‘“A Leso Story”: A Case Study of Australian Women’s Cricket and its Media Experience’, *Sporting Traditions* 12, no. 1 (1995): 27-46.

⁴ Noah Riseman, ‘Transgender Inclusion and Australia’s Failed *Sexuality Discrimination Bill*’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 271-75.

⁵ Chip Le Grand, ‘AFL right to ban Mouncey, says transgender advocate’, *The Australian*, 18 October 2017, 3; Caden Helmers, Steven Trask and Eamonn Tiernan, ‘Transgender player to kick on in ACT Australian Football Athletes, lobbyists rally round Hannah Mouncey’, *Canberra Times*, 19 October 2017, 40.

⁶ Fiona McLachlan, ‘It’s Boom Time! (Again): Progress Narratives and Women’s Sport in Australia’, *Journal of Australian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2019): 7-21.

⁷ It is not the purpose of this article to engage with the science or contemporary debates around trans women in sport, particularly as the science is unsettled. A few articles which address these topics are: Andria Bianchi, ‘Transgender Women in Sport’, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 44, no. 2 (2017): 229-42; Jon Pike, ‘Safety, fairness, and inclusion: transgender athletes and the essence of Rugby’, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* (20 December 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00948705.2020.1863814>; Joanna Harper et al., ‘How does hormone transition in transgender women change body composition, muscle strength and haemoglobin? Systematic review with a focus on the implications for sport participation’, *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (4 February 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2020-103106>.

⁸ This article does not address trans men, whose stories have been less frequent in the media. Three Australian examples are: Jill Stark, ‘I’m just an ordinary guy who wants to play footy’, *Sunday Age*, 7 June 2009: 3; Eryk Bagshaw, ‘Once a woman, now a transsexual rugby-playing carpenter’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 2014: 16; Monique Schafter, ‘Transgender: one man’s journey of becoming his true self’, *ABC Transcripts*, 22 January 2016.

⁹ Kelly Jacob Rawson and Cristan Williams, ‘Transgender*: The Rhetorical Landscape of a Term’, *Present Tense* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1.

- ¹⁰ Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Seal Press, 2017), 1.
- ¹¹ TransHub, <https://www.transhub.org.au/language>, accessed 19 October 2020.
- ¹² See Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, 12-40. See also *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (2014), which presents several short essays exploring key concepts and terminology around transgender studies.
- ¹³ See David Haig, "The Inexorable Rise of Gender and the Decline of Sex: Social Change in Academic Titles, 1945–2001," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 33, no. 2 (April 2004): 87-96; Charlene L. Muchlenhard and Zoe D. Peterson, "Distinguishing Between Sex and Gender: History, Current Conceptualizations, and Implications," *Sex Roles* 64, no. 11 (2011): 791-803.
- ¹⁴ Surya Monro, *Gender Politics: Citizenship, Activism and Sexual Diversity* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2015).
- ¹⁵ Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole, "Double Fault: Renee Richards and the Construction and Naturalization of Difference," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 7, no. 1 (1990): 18.
- ¹⁶ Claire F. Sullivan, "Gender Verification and Gender Policies in Elite Sport: Eligibility and 'Fair Play'," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 35, no. 4 (2011): 402; Andrew Sharpe, "Naturalising sex difference through sport: An examination of the New South Wales transgender legislation," *Alternative Law Journal* 22, no. 1 (1997): 40; Heather Sykes, "Transsexual and Transgender Policies in Sport," *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal* 15, no. 1 (2006): 8.
- ¹⁷ Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, 25.
- ¹⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).
- ¹⁹ Noah Riseman, "Representing Transgender in the 1970s Australian Media," *Gender and History* 33, no. 1 (2021): 227-48; Dave King, *The Transvestite and the Transsexual: Public Categories and Private Identities* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1993), 101-09.
- ²⁰ Lindsay Parks Pieper, "Gender Regulation: Renée Richards Revisited," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 5 (2012): 675-90; Birrell and Cole, "Double Fault: Renee Richards and the Construction and Naturalization of Difference," 1-21; Renée Richards, *No Way Renée* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007); Renée Richards and John Ames, *Second Serve: The Renée Richards story* (New York: Stein and Day, 1983).
- ²¹ Birrell and Cole, "Double Fault: Renee Richards and the Construction and Naturalization of Difference," 7.
- ²² Pieper, "Gender Regulation: Renée Richards Revisited," 680-81.
- ²³ Birrell and Cole, "Double Fault: Renee Richards and the Construction and Naturalization of Difference," 18.
- ²⁴ 'Sex tests: LTAA decides', *The Age* (Melbourne), 7 October 1976, 30. On the history of the sex test, see James L. Rupert, "Genitals to genes: the history and biology of gender verification in the Olympics," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 28 (2011): 339-65; Ian Ritchie, "Sex Tested, Gender Verified: Controlling Female Sexuality in the Age of Containment," *Sport History Review* 34 (2003): 80-98.
- ²⁵ 'Ban on Renee', *Sunday Sun* (Brisbane), 28 November 1976; 'I just want to prove I'm human' and 'Margaret too busy for challenge from Renee', unknown dates and newspapers, c. 1976, John Hewson Collection, notebook 2, Australian Queer Archives (hereafter AQuA).
- ²⁶ Cisgender refers to people whose gender identity is the same as that presumed at birth.
- ²⁷ 'Sex-change Leigh's the talk of the town', *Truth* (Melbourne), unknown date, c. 1976, John Hewson Collection, notebook 3, AQuA. Interestingly, later in life Leigh would return to sex work. She owned a brothel in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, and made global headlines when she was the first person in the world to offer tours of a working brothel. In 1999 Leigh was the first transgender woman elected to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder City Council. Leigh passed away in early 2020 before she could be interviewed for this project.
- ²⁹ "Sex-change Leigh's the talk of the town," *Truth* (Melbourne), unknown date, c. 1976, John Hewson Collection, notebook 3, AQuA.
- ³⁰ 'They won't bowl me out', *Herald* (Melbourne), unknown date, November 1982; 'Barred bowler to challenge sex ruling', *News* (Perth), 26 November 1982.
- ³¹ 'Sex-change row: Noelina [sic] asks: is it bias...', *Sun* (Melbourne), 26 November 1982, 17.
- ³² On the popular stereotypes perpetuated in media, see Riseman, "Representing Transgender in the 1970s Australian Media," 234-35; King, *The Transvestite and the Transsexual: Public Categories and Private Identities*, 104-09; 23-24; Joelle Ryan, "Reel gender: Examining the politics of trans images in film and media" (Doctor of Philosophy Bowling Green State University, 2009), 65.
- ³³ 'They won't bowl me out'; 'Barred bowler to challenge sex ruling'; Liz Hickson, 'Sex change grandma – "I was born into a male body"', *Woman's Day*, 17 January 1983, 29, John Hewson Collection, notebook 5, AQuA.
- ³⁴ Hickson, 'Sex change grandma,' 29-30.

- ³⁵ 'Sex Change Row,' 17; 'Women bowlers bar transexual [sic] from rink', *The Age*, 26 November 1982; Notes for the Attorney General: Re: Mrs. Noelena Tame and Transsexualism', 23 November 1983, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA) A432, 1983/005019/01.
- ³⁶ Noelena Tame to Gareth Evans, Commonwealth Attorney General, 9 March 1983 and Noelena Tame to Prime Minister Bob Hawke, 28 July 1983, NAA A463, 1987/G1019.
- ³⁷ Hickson, 'Sex change grandma', 29.
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- ³⁹ Tamar Z. Semerjian and Jodi H. Cohen, "FTM means female to me': Transgender Athletes Performing Gender," *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal* 15, no. 2 (2006): 28-43; Cathryn Lucas-Carr and Vikki Krane, "Troubling Sport or Troubled by Sport," *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education* 6, no. 1 (2012): 21-44; Jodi H. Cohen and Tamar Z. Semerjian, "The Collision of Trans-Experience and the Politics of Women's Ice Hockey," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 10, no. 3-4 (2008): 139-40.
- ⁴⁰ Ricki Coughlan, interview with author, 26 April 2019, Sydney.
- ⁴¹ See Amanda Nicole Schweinbenz and Alexandria Cronk, "Femininity Control at the Olympic Games," *Thirdspace: A Journal of Feminist Theory & Culture* 9, no. 2 (2010), <http://journals.sfu.ca/thirdspace/index.php/journal/article/view/schweinbenzcronk>; Sullivan, "Gender Verification and Gender Policies in Elite Sport: Eligibility and 'Fair Play'," 406; M.A. Ferguson-Smith and Elizabeth A. Ferris, "Gender verification in sport: the need for change?," *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 25, no. 1 (1991): 19.
- ⁴² Ron Carter, 'Women runners threaten protest over an athlete who changed sex', *The Age*, 16 April 1991: 16.
- ⁴³ Nick Bideau, 'Sex change uproar', *Herald-Sun* (Melbourne), 17 April 1991: 98.
- ⁴⁴ Mark Harding, 'Sport's new sex hurdle', *Herald-Sun*, 17 April 1991: 12.
- ⁴⁵ Adele Horn, 'Sex change athlete out of the race', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 April 1991: 2; Bideau, 'Sex change uproar', 98.
- ⁴⁶ Ricki Coughlan interview.
- ⁴⁷ Michael Cockerill, 'Sex row athlete allowed to run', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1991: 42.
- ⁴⁸ Ricki Coughlan interview.
- ⁴⁹ Mike Hurst, 'Sex changing the face of sport', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 December 1991.
- ⁵⁰ Sarah Teetzel, "On Transgendered Athletes, Fairness and Doping: An International Challenge," *Sport in Society* 9, no. 2 (2006): 229.
- ⁵¹ Ric Chapman, 'Petition on sex change runner', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 December 1991: 3.
- ⁵² Joanne Jones, 'Ballerina FitzSimons', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 1991: 18.
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