Twitter Thread by Kirsti Miller



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I jumped in my time-machine & landed in the middle of the 2035 World Athletics Championships in Paris.

It was 800 metres finals day, but to my surprise, there were 5 races scheduled, not two.

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On inquiring, I learnt there had been a shake-up: the "men's" and "women's" classifications were no more; instead the classification system changed to one that was based on functional ability.

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Rather than labelling athletes as male or female , they were placed in a racing category based on the movements their body can perform, related to the sport they compete in.

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Finding the balance between sex, gender, human rights, & the sciences and fairness in sport is without a doubt sports greatest challenge.

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There are many factors that significantly affect the competitive edge in sport such as nutrition, age, height, weight, coaching & training facilities, & other genetic and biological variations like oxygen-carrying capacity.

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Sports need to be working towards a system of individuality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility and embracing the human ability no matter of one sex or body type.

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The IPC movement has taught great lessons, and shown what inclusion looks like when embracing human difference and appreciating human individuality and ones ability.

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https://t.co/CwHZN5fHF0

We know there are 9 different known chromosome types; like our society reinforcing the 2 binary system, sport mirrors it in terms of sport participation. This has to change sport needs to be segregated on abilities and physical attributes.
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We see this already within the IPC sports, we see weight divisions in many sports such as boxing and weight lifting etc this is taking things a large step further. Each sport requires different physical traits to excel at ie height in basketball or flexibility in gymnastics.
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I am not suggesting that women would be outed from sport or lose opportunity in sport what I suggest would enable every human on this planet to be able to ride a bike, swim a lap, kick a ball with competition that is fairer and far more inclusive then what we have now.
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This is going to take a paradigm shift in attitudes but I suggest duty of care especially in full contact sports will demand that sports are segregated on abilities and physical attributes and not an arbitrary T level in the future.
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Sport should never have the right to question anyones legal sex if my county legally recognises me as a woman or a man the @iocmedia or any other sport should never have the right to say otherwise this should be the start point in all of this.
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No young person and or athlete should ever have to prove their identity or change their bodies for anyone to play sport – to ride their bike, kick a ball or run around a track, the impact is to enormous.
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Segregation in sports, is harmful to gender relations and society. We worry that women might twist an ankle or break a leg if they were to play mixed sports, when in fact, the consequences of segregation are much, much more costly to women.
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Social politics have hugely affected women’s sporting performance over the last century but what if sports could affect change in social politics?
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All-male sports teams exist largely within a system run by men who went through the system themselves — men who end up as coaches, officials, and members of boards.
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It’s a system that teaches men that a version of masculinity, that is both toxic and hierarchical, is among the most important traits to have.
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Eric Anderson, professor of sports, masculinities, and sexualities at the University of Winchester, defines this as “orthodox masculinity” in a 2008 study. He argues that it’s responsible for men’s team sports cultivating a culture of misogynistic and homophobic attitudes.
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“It is a resilient system that reproduces a more conservative form of gender expression among men, helping make sport a more powerful gender regime,” he explains.
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Ultimately, an athlete’s own choices matter less and less, as they’re encouraged to see everyone else through the lens of orthodox masculinity.
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More often than not,men who play to a high level in an all-male sports team also socialize mainly with their teammates, meaning that the bonds they form with people outside of that sporting universe & especially women are colored by the masculinity they have to live everyday
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This means there is a higher chance of men having negative attitudes about women objectifying them, for example.
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Anderson explains: “Male athletes (in general) and team sport athletes (in particular) have been shown to objectify women often viewing them as sexual objects to be conquered.”
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The statistics on campus rape in America are pretty terrifying; a three-year study by researchers Jeff Benedict and Todd Crosset in the mid-1990s showed that while male student-athletes comprise 3.3 percent of student populations in the United States., ...
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they made up 19 percent of sexual assault perpetrators and 35 percent of domestic violence perpetrators. Integrating team sports could do a significant amount to change this.
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In his study, Anderson followed heterosexual male university cheerleaders, who had all previously played high school football. Before they started cheerleading almost all of them reported that they....
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viewed the world through the prism of orthodox masculinity — they held misogynistic views, both about women as athletes, and also in a more general sense.
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Overwhelmingly,the men who participated in sports with women had their minds changed.They perceived women as good athletes;one participant in Anderson’s study,said “I used to think women were weak, but now I know that’s not true. I never

thought women were so athletic before.
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Another said I hated women's sports. But these women are athletes. They do stuff I'd never be able to do and I bet there are a lot of sports women can do better in."
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It didn't stop there. "All but a handful reported that they had learned to see women as more than sex objects," Anderson explains. "All the athletes reported having learned to respect and value women as friends, teammates, and competent leaders.
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Thus in the sex-integrated sport of collegiate cheerleading, once sexist & misogynistic men were able to witness the athleticism of women, befriend them in ways that they were previously unable to, & to learn of their gendered narratives, it humanized them in the process."
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Segregation in sports, it turns out, is harmful to gender relations and society. We worry that women might twist an ankle or break a leg if they were to play mixed sports, when in fact, the consequences of segregation are much, much more costly to women.
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I hope that one day we see a Marta & a Messi who play on the same team and gender segregation in team sports will end, and humanity will be better for it.
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