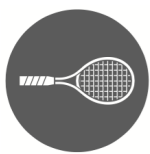




GIRLS & SPORTS

A GIRLS' INDEX™ IMPACT REPORT



INTRODUCTION

THE GIRLS' INDEX IS A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND, LARGE-SCALE, NATIONAL SURVEY designed to develop a deeper understanding of the thoughts, experiences, perceptions, beliefs, behaviors and attitudes of girls throughout the United States. This complete national report, released in late 2017, provides insights from a large sample of 10,678 girls about their thoughts, experiences and perceptions on key issues, such as: confidence, body image, friendships, pressure, leadership, career aspirations, school, academics, technology and social media. This companion report, the 'Girls & Sports Impact Report' is the first in a series of additional data releases from 'The Girls' Index' designed to provide a deeper analysis into the robust data while providing insights into the relationships and correlations among specific subsets of girls. This analysis examined the relationship between sports participation and many other factors in girls' lives and provides new insights into the world of adolescent girls, and in particular, the world of female athletes. The complete Girls' Index report, including survey methodology and participant demographics, can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/TheGirlsIndexReport>.

This research was executed by Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to equipping girls with the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy, independent, productive and violence-free lives. ROX provides education, programming, resources and research to help create generations of confident girls who can control their own relationships, experiences and decisions.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING ...

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS FARE BETTER ON NEARLY EVERY GIRLS' INDEX METRIC WHEN COMPARED TO THEIR NON-SPORT-PLAYING PEERS. When girls who are on sports teams are contrasted with girls who do not play sports, their responses vary in a positive direction on most items in The Girls' Index. While not all of the observed variance is statistically significant, there are clearly overall benefits that girls enjoy as a result of being involved with a sports team.

THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM SPORTS PARTICIPATION ARE MOST NOTABLE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL. While the percentage of girls who play sports stays relatively consistent as girls age (Elementary 43%, Middle 49%, High 44%), the strongest positive impacts of athletic participation are observed when girls are in high school, perhaps due to their lengthier involvement in athletics and increased exposure to sport culture.

THE GROUNDBREAKING
GIRLS' INDEX REPORT
PROVIDES AN
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE THOUGHTS,
EXPERIENCES,
PERCEPTIONS,
BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS
AND ATTITUDES OF
10,678
GIRLS IN THE UNITED
STATES.

THE GIRLS & SPORTS
IMPACT REPORT WAS
DEVELOPED TO
PROVIDE A DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING OF
HOW GIRLS'
PARTICIPATION IN
SPORTS IS RELATED TO
KEY PERSONAL,
SOCIAL, ACADEMIC
AND RELATIONSHIP
OUTCOMES.

GIRLS & CONFIDENCE

Just the facts

WHEN COMPARED TO GIRLS WHO DO NOT PLAY SPORTS, FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES ARE:

14% ↑

MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE THEY ARE SMART ENOUGH FOR THEIR DREAM CAREER

11% ↑

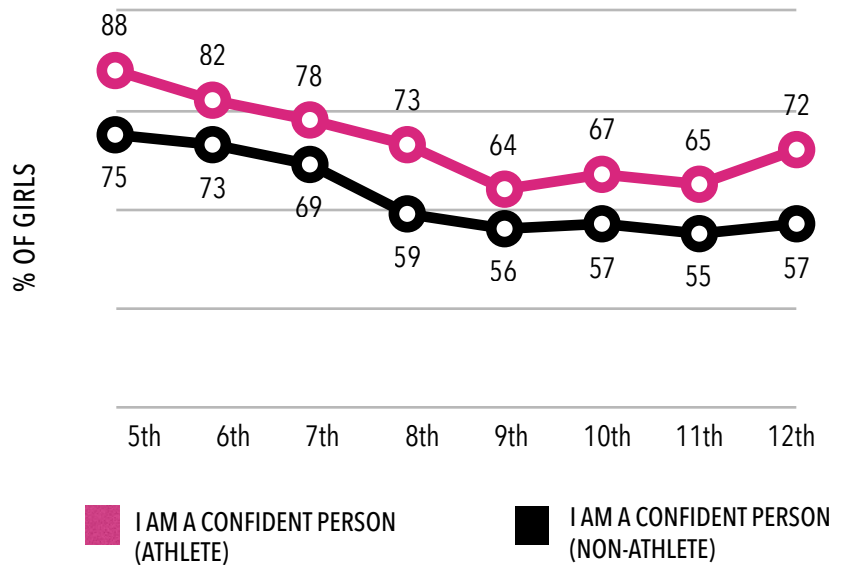
MORE LIKELY TO SAY THAT THEY ARE HAPPY THE WAY THEY ARE

16% ↓

LESS LIKELY TO WANT TO CHANGE THEIR APPEARANCE

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS REPORT HIGHER LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE AT ALL AGES.

Girls experience a significant drop in confidence throughout middle school, however, girls who play sports report confidence at consistently higher rates. In the 12th grade year, athletes experience a substantial increase not observed in their peer group.



GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS



HAVE HIGHER OPINIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES & COMPETENCIES

Among girls who say they are:

	NOT GOOD AT MATH & SCIENCE	NOT GOOD AT LOTS OF THINGS
% GIRLS WHO DO NOT PLAY SPORTS	64%	69%
% OF GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS	36%	31%
<i>% difference</i>	28%	38%

SOCIAL MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

Just the facts

31%

OF GIRLS REPORT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN **BULLIED OR MADE FUN OF ON SOCIAL MEDIA**. BOTH ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES REPORT SIMILAR RATES

(ATHLETE: 30% VS NON-ATHLETE: 33%)

GIRLS WHO REPORT THE **HIGHEST LEVELS OF SADNESS AND DEPRESSION** ARE

27%

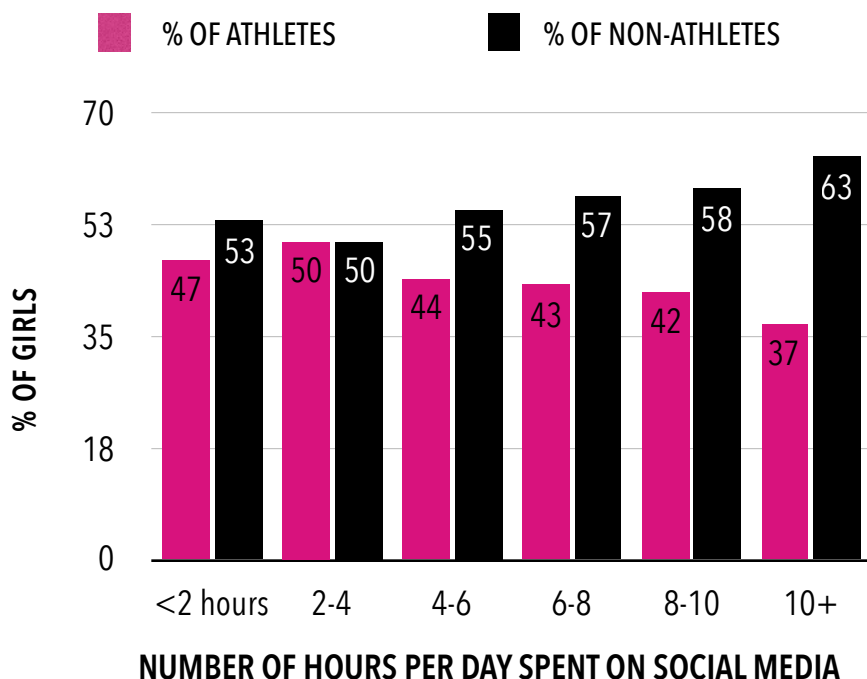
LESS LIKELY TO BE ON A SPORTS TEAM

30%

OF GIRLS HAVE HAD AN ARGUMENT AT SCHOOL DUE TO SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED ON SOCIAL MEDIA (ATHLETE: 30% VS NON-ATHLETE: 31%)

GIRLS WHO SPEND THE MOST TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

are significantly less likely TO BE ON A SPORTS TEAM.



GIRLS WHO SPEND THE MOST TIME USING SOCIAL MEDIA ARE

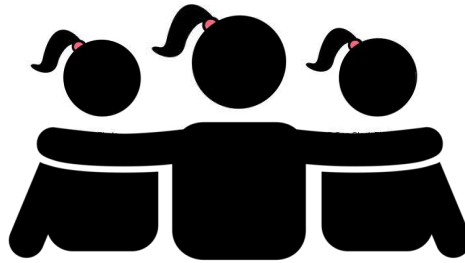
5 TIMES

MORE LIKELY TO REPORT THAT THEY ARE SAD OR DEPRESSED NEARLY EVERY DAY.

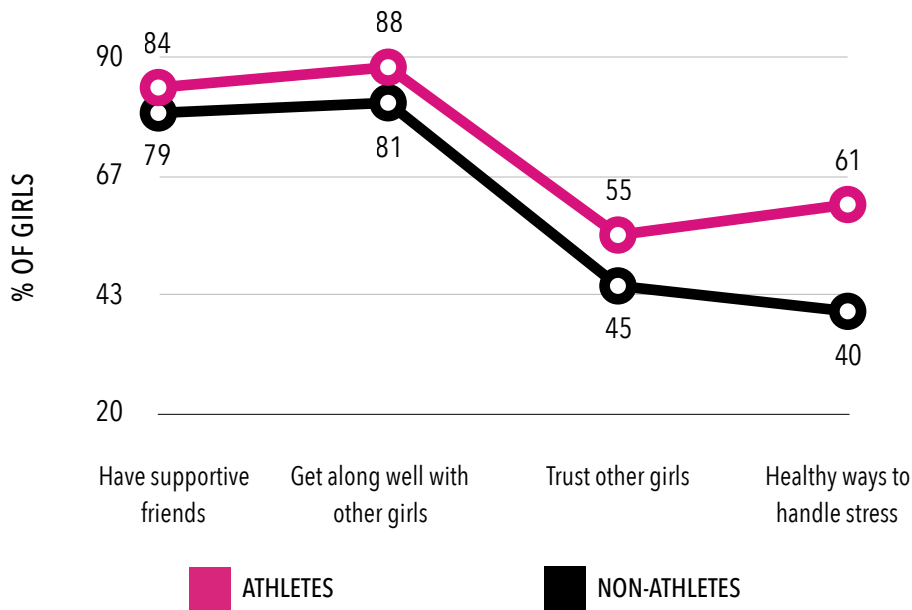
FRIENDSHIPS & RELATIONSHIPS

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS REPORT STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GIRLS AS WELL AS LOWER LEVELS OF SADNESS AND DEPRESSION.

Data from The Girls' Index revealed a correlation between girls' relationships with one another and their reports of sadness and depression. In this analysis, sports participation is related to **both effective relationships and better mental health.**



HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' PERCEPTIONS: ATHLETE VS. NON-ATHLETE



1 IN 3 HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SAY THEY ARE HAPPIER WHEN THEY ARE IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP (ATHLETE 31% VS NON-ATHLETE 32%)

Just the facts

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO:

HAVE SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS TO TALK TO ABOUT SERIOUS ISSUES

GET ALONG WELL WITH OTHER GIRLS

TRUST OTHER GIRLS

HAVE HEALTHY WAYS TO HANDLE STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

30%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SAY THEIR PARENTS PRESSURE THEM TO BE PERFECT

BOTH ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES REPORT SIMILAR RATES

(ATHLETE: 30% VS NON-ATHLETE: 31%)

SCHOOL & LEADERSHIP

Just the facts

61%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WHO HAVE A GRADE POINT AVERAGE ABOVE 4.0 PLAY ON A SPORTS TEAM

OVERALL,

40%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SAY THAT THEY **DON'T LIKE COMING TO SCHOOL**

AND

GIRLS WHO **DO NOT PLAY SPORTS** ARE

21%

LESS LIKELY TO ENJOY COMING TO SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS ARE:

LESS LIKELY TO SAY THAT **TEACHERS CALL ON BOYS MORE THAN GIRLS**

20%

MORE LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERING A **CAREER IN MATH AND/OR SCIENCE**

13%

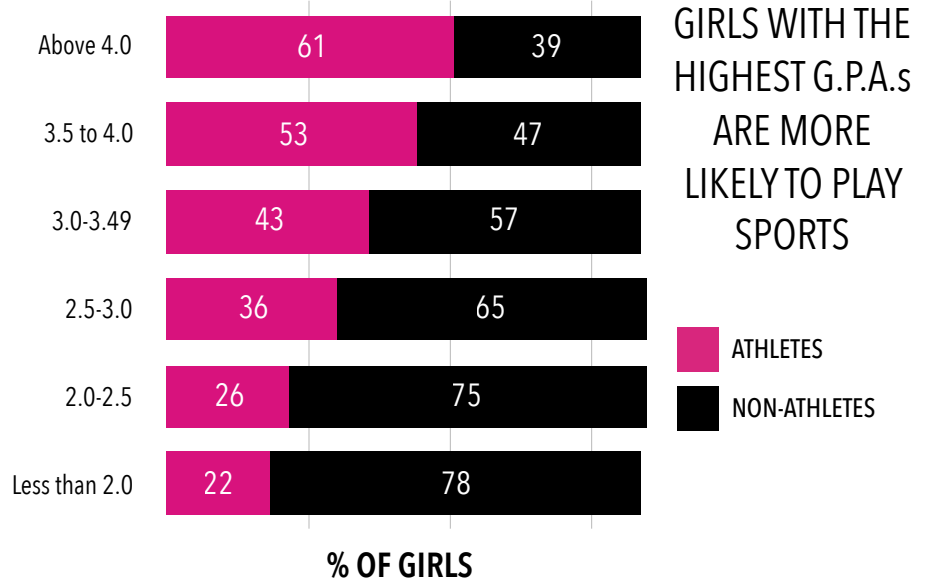
LESS LIKELY TO **PREFER A MALE SUPERVISOR/BOSS OVER A FEMALE**

16%

LESS LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT **MEN ARE BETTER LEADERS THAN WOMEN**

17%

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS HAVE MORE POSITIVE AND EXPANSIVE VIEWS ON **GIRLS' ROLES AND OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO CAREERS AND LEADERSHIP.** THEY ALSO HAVE **HIGHER GRADE POINT AVERAGES.**



KEY INSIGHTS & ACTION ITEMS

GIRLS' LIVES ARE COMPLICATED AND THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS ARE PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING. The Girls' Index found that the **percentage of girls who would describe themselves as confident declines nearly 25% throughout the middle school years, and girls who are on a sports team experience a similar drop during this time.** Overall, girls who play sports describe themselves as more confident than other girls, but are not immune from the downward trend noted in this research. Helping girls build and maintain their confidence is critical during the 5th-9th grade years as there are fewer changes in confidence levels during high school.

SPORTS PARTICIPATION IS RELATED TO MORE EFFECTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE FRIENDSHIPS FOR GIRLS. Girls who are on a sports team reported stronger and more effective relationships with other girls compared to girls who do not play sports. Despite the inherent competitive nature of sports, **female athletes are 11% less likely to believe that most girls are in competition with one another** and are more likely to get along well with other girls. The Girls' Index research has demonstrated the positive impacts of girls' relationships related to both social media use and levels of reported sadness and depression. Therefore, helping girls develop effective and supportive friendships should be a key focus in promoting increased happiness, connectedness and well-being.

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORTS HAVE INCREASED CAREER AND LEADERSHIP ASPIRATIONS AND LESS RESTRICTIVE VIEWS ON THE ROLES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN. Female athletes had higher levels of endorsement of key career and leadership indicators (i.e. believe they are smart enough for their dream job, do not believe men are better leaders than women). They are also **14% less likely to report difficulties speaking up or disagreeing with others out of fear of not being liked.** Supporting girls to develop a strong sense of self and an expansive view of their career and leadership opportunities can help promote future aspirations that are not limited in any way by gender.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY OUTCOMES AND ACTION ITEMS, ACCESS THE FULL GIRLS INDEX REPORT AT [HTTP://BIT.LY/THEGIRLSINDEXREPORT](http://bit.ly/thegirlsindexreport)

GIRLS EXPERIENCE TREMENDOUS CHALLENGES WITH CONFIDENCE, RELATIONSHIPS AND ASPIRATIONS DURING THEIR ADOLESCENT YEARS.

GIRLS WHO PARTICIPATE ON A SPORTS TEAM ENJOY HIGHER LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE, MORE EFFECTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHER GIRLS AND INCREASED CAREER AND LEADERSHIP ASPIRATIONS.



COLUMBUS 2018
Legacy



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Hinkelman, L. (2018). The Girls' Index: Girls and Sports Impact Report. Columbus, OH: Ruling Our eXperiences, Inc.

METHODOLOGY: This report examines the thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and perceptions of 10,678 girls in 5th-12th grade in the United States using data from school-based surveys. It was developed by ROX and administered by school administrators throughout 2016-17. Learn more at www.rulingourexperiences.org and download the complete Girls' Index Report at <http://bit.ly/TheGirlsIndexReport>.



ROX is a national non-profit leader in programming, research and education focused on girls.

We are committed to creating generations of confident girls who can control their own relationships, decisions, safety, experiences and futures.

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