

Billie Jean King

The Fight for Equality in Sports for Women



Essential Questions

- How do the achievements of women in sports compare with their achievements in other areas?
- What was the relationship between the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s and other civil rights movements of that era?
- How have the stereotypes about women's abilities changed in the last century and how have these changes affected women's roles in sports?



King in Ireland for the Irish Open
in the early 1960s

- 1943—Billie Jean Moffitt born in Long Beach, CA
- 1961—At 17, she won the women's doubles tournament at Wimbledon with Karen Hantze
- 1965—Married Larry King
- 1966—Won first of six singles titles at Wimbledon
- 1966-1975—Won 12 Grand Slam Singles titles, nine Grand Slams Women's Doubles titles, ten Grand Slam Mixed Doubles titles

The Women's Movement



Betty Friedan

- 1963—Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. The book became a bestseller and helped start the modern women's liberation movement.

- Girls and women began to protest for equal rights in education and employment, as well as reproductive rights



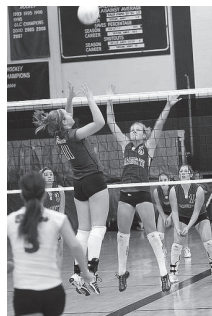


Billie Jean King
at Wimbledon



- 1967—Pushed for tennis to become a professional sport
- 1968—The "open" era in tennis began, with tennis players competing for prize money
- 1968—Argued that men and women should receive equal prize money
- 1970—Helped organize the first professional women's Tennis tour, sponsored by Virginia Slims
- 1971—Became the first woman athlete to win over \$100,000 in prize money
- 1972—Won the U. S. Open, but earned \$15,000 less than men's champion Ilie Nastase
- 1973—U. S. Open instituted equal prize money for men and women

- 1971—Testifies before Congress in support of Title IX, which would give girls more opportunities to play sports in school
- 1972—Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- 1975—Department of Health, Education, and Welfare published final regulations for institutions to follow in carrying out Title IX
- 2006—The number of women in college sports had increased by 450%



The Battle of the Sexes

1973—King played against Bobby Riggs in the “Battle of the Sexes.” Riggs, a 55-year-old former champion, claimed that he could beat any of the top women players in the world, yet King defeated him in straight sets.



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Bobby Riggs

- 1974—Started the Women’s Sports Foundation
- 1982—Became commissioner of World Team Tennis, started by her husband and others in 1974
- 1987—Inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame
- 1990—Received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award
- 2000—Recognized by GLAAD for her work in education and service on the boards of several AIDS organizations
- 2006—National Tennis Center in NY renamed the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center



King (center) in the commentators’ box at the 2007 U.S. Open



Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY



2009—President Barack Obama awarded Billie Jean King with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the U.S. government
