



25th Annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day Brings Champion Women Athletes to Capitol Hill

Donna de Varona, Lillian Greene-Chamberlain, Nancy Hogshead-Makar, Jessica Mendoza and Heather O'Reilly among athletes scheduled to appear, support achievements and participation of female athletes

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 2011 -- In celebration of the 25th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NGWSD), organizations and leaders from the National Girls and Women in Sport coalition, including two-time Olympic soccer gold medalist and Women's Sports Foundation spokeswoman Heather O'Reilly and Olympic and champion athletes Donna de Varona (swimming), Lillian Greene-Chamberlain (track & field), Nancy Hogshead-Makar (swimming) and Jessica Mendoza (softball), will join together in the nation's capital to honor the achievements of and encourage continued support for female athletes.

A briefing on Capitol Hill today will commemorate NGWSD by recognizing girls' and women's participation and excellence in sports and highlighting the need for continued expansion of opportunities for girls and women to play sports and lead physically active lives. Despite the stunning advances made since Title IX was enacted in 1972, high school girls still receive 1.3 million fewer participation opportunities than boys, and evidence suggests that the money spent on girls' sports programs lags significantly behind the money spent on boys' programs.

"As we celebrate the 25th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day, we are struck not only by the incredible advancements in girls' participation in sports over the past quarter century, but by the opportunities athletics have offered women in the United States and around the world," said Women's Sports Foundation Founder Billie Jean King. "Now, more than ever, sports, health and education programs are needed to lay the foundation to empower active, healthy and confident young women for generations to come."

At the briefing, O'Reilly, of the Women's Sports Foundation, Neena Chaudhry, Senior Counsel, National Women's Law Center, April Osajima, Public Policy Director, Girls Inc, and Peg Pennepacker, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director of the Susquehanna Township School District (PA) will discuss the importance of current legislation that would continue to ensure gender equity in high school sports. Women's sports advocates will press for continued funding of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program that dedicates Congressional dollars solely to physical education programming, and the re-introduction and passage of the High School Data Bill (S. 471 and H.R. 2882 in the 111th Congress), requiring the disclosure and examination of high school athletic participation statistics and further advancing opportunities for girls' participation in sports under Title IX.

"I am honored to be in Washington, DC today representing the Women's Sports Foundation, the Coalition and all female athletes," O'Reilly said. "We are proud to celebrate the participation, success and accomplishments of girls and women in sports, and are committed to encouraging the continued enforcement of Title IX and other governmental legislation designed to close the gender equity gap in sports."

The National Girls and Women in Sport coalition is comprised of five partner organizations including the National Women's Law Center, National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, Girls Inc., Girl Scouts and the Women's Sports Foundation. Groups comprised of representatives from Coalition organizations and including champion female athletes will visit approximately twenty-five Congressional offices in support of these two bills, essential to the development and enhancement of athletic opportunities for high school girls across the country.

The celebration of the 25th annual NGWSD will also be marked with events across the country commemorating the achievements of girls and women in athletics, with thousands of sports educators, coaches, athletic directors, recreation directors, association members, sponsors, students and parents gathering to show their support of the 2011 NGWSD theme, "Play, Believe, Achieve."

Women's Sports Foundation Founder Billie Jean King and Past Presidents Donna de Varona, Nancy Hogshead-Makar, Jessica Mendoza, Aimee Mullins and Dominique Dawes are among the champion women athletes that have contributed to annual NGWSD activities alongside the Coalition organizations.

About National Girls and Women in Sports Day

Since its inception in 1987, NGWSD has been celebrated annually in all 50 states with events ranging from sports clinics to awards ceremonies to triathlons to recognize the achievements, and encourage participation, of girls and women in sports. NGWSD is organized by the members of the National Girls and Women in Sport Coalition. For more information, please visit: www.NGWSDCentral.com

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