

GIRLS CAN SKATE

REALITY CHECKING THE SKATEBOARD WORLD

When I was 13 years old, I was spending almost every day at my local skatepark, learning advanced tricks and making skate videos to send out to companies. I competed, had sponsors, and started to become as good as the local guys at my park. But I noticed that there was still a difference between me and these guys. Anytime I fell off my board, I was laughed at while anytime one of them fell, they were giving each other a hand to get back up. When I landed a new trick after hours of attempts, it was silent but as soon as one of them landed something, there were hoots and hollers across the park. When I went to competitions, I'd win a shirt, some stickers, and a giftcard if I was lucky. The guys division always had cash prizes. And while I was lucky to get sponsored by small companies or female founded brands, I never even considered the possibility of the bigger name brands as I never saw a single female rider on their teams.



But I kept on riding and in a way, I found motivation in the looks on guys faces when I impressed them or in the little wins I had in my skateboarding career. I took pride in my position in the skateboarding world because I found a group of other girls who were experiencing the same highs and lows as me. It became a mutual experience and a mutual battle. We would create all girl events and videos and would hype up other female skateboard athletes and soon, we had our own powerful little girl skateboarding community. And we were ready to make a change.

"If I'm trying a trick on one ramp in the park that no one is using, suddenly guys will come skate the ramp and try to show me up with other tricks"



USA SKATEBOARDING TEAM

Larissa Salazar, a local skater and friend of mine, explains in an interview how there is constant competition in the eyes of every guy who she skates with at any park. She reports that "(her) guy friends always talk about how skateboarding is so free and non-competitive yet anytime (she) is just trying to chill and skate on (her) own (she) feels bombarded". Larissa continued to explain how guys would always challenge her in SKATE, a common game in the skateboarding world similar to HORSE in basketball. She explained it as "guys just searching for validation" and chuckled at how they would quit anytime she got ahead.

Skateboarding is not an easy sport, and especially not for any female rider. Just by being a girl, you have to constantly be proving yourself and your skills but in return, you still do not get as much acknowledgement.

24% OF ALL SKATEBOARDERS ARE FEMALE



While things have changed in the skateboarding world today and women are gaining more and more recognition, a divide and a stigma continue to exist. Female riders put in an equal amount of effort and training, if not more, but we continue to fall short in recognition. But why is there such a divide? Why has there ever been? What prevents a board from being put in the hands of a young girl? Why would two people who can do the same tricks receive different monetary prizes because of their sex? It does not make sense and all of these questions should not even exist. Yet here we are in 2021 and this sexist divide continues to exist.

"The only way we will actually make a change is by standing by each other and doing it ourselves"

Arianna continues to explain the importance of girls supporting girls in the skateboarding world. There wouldn't be a girl skate community if we didn't support each other. But by lifting each other up and back each other, we can show guys how we are no different and that we have the skill and passion of any other skater. We just won't be able to do it without each other

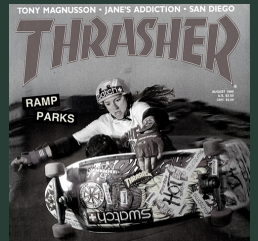
Team USA Skateboarding Athlete and longtime friend of mine, Arianna Carmona, explains how to really make a shift in the skateboarding world. She said that "the guys won't ignite any change for us" and that maybe they'll help push with us but what it all boils down to is us making it loud it clear what we want.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN IN SKATEBOARDING

1989

Professional skateboarder and snowboarder, Cara Beth Burnside is the first female rider to be featured on the cover of a magazine, specifically one of skateboarding's most popular magazines, Thrasher.



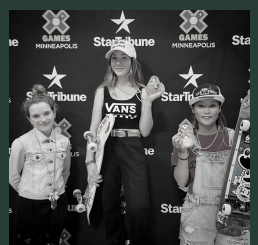
2002

Cara Beth Burnside, Jen O'Brien, and Mimi Knop confronted X-Games about the lack of a female division in their major skateboarding competition. X-Games Women's pro skateboarding event aired on national television that year.



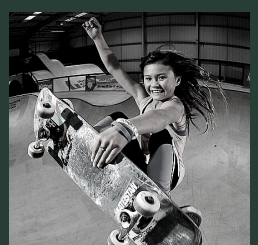
2006

Cara Beth Burnside threatened ESPN to not compete unless the women's division received equal prize money as the men's divisions.



2021

Skateboarding will be included in the Olympics for the first time in history, giving both men and women equal competitions, equal reward, equal air time, and equal promotion.



CASH PRIZE STILL ISN'T EQUAL



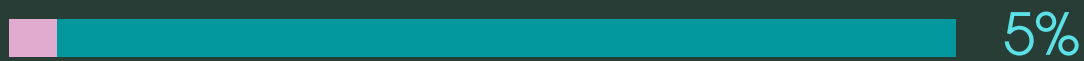
AUSTRALIAN BOWL RIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Compared to the \$15,000 cash prize men were offered, the women's division received a mere \$2000 this past year. The female riders were nevertheless excited as they had \$0 prize money the year before.



STREET LEAGUE SERIES (USA)

In the most high-priced skateboarding event, the women's division had a high cash prize of \$30,000 but that was nothing compared to the men's division that had a cash prize of \$200,000.



ALL MAJOR COMPETITIONS WORLDWIDE

According to The Boardr, a skateboarding competition database, women earned only \$89,000, or 5%, across all major skateboarding competitions worldwide while men took home \$1.7 million, or 95%.

TOP TEN SKATE COMPANIES AND THEIR TEAMS

1. **ELEMENT** - 0 / 9 team riders are female
2. **PLAN B** - 0 / 11 team riders are female
3. **GIRL** - 0 / 12 team riders are female
4. **ZERO** - 0 / 12 team riders are female
5. **CREATURE** - 0 / 12 team riders are female
6. **BLIND** - 0 / 8 team riders are female
7. **SANTA CRUZ** - 2 / 16 team riders are female
8. **ALMOST** - 1 / 10 team riders are female
9. **CHOCOLATE** - 0 / 10 team riders are female
10. **FLIP** - 0 / 15 team riders are female

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LET'S MAKE IT KNOWN

So from what we've seen here, it's time to finish off all these discrepancies once and for all. We need to erase that stigma of giving boys skateboards and instead, promote getting young girls on board. We may not get to 50/50 male to female, but we can at least encourage enough girls to join the community to make it more welcoming for anyone in the future.



The next big step is important in maintaining the positive and equal environment for women in the skate community. It's equal opportunity. We need equal cash prizes for women as there are for men at EVERY competition. In 2019, the state of California passed AB 467 the "Equal Pay for Equal Play" law that requires equal



monetary value of any prize for athletic events between male and female athletes. This bill was a huge step forward for women but only affected the state of California. This law should continue to be nationwide and adopted worldwide. There should no longer be events where women get paid a couple hundred in compared to the men that get paid thousands of dollars. This change would not only give female riders more motivation to stay in the skate community, but also would make them feel more valued as an athlete. While some men can skate as their career, it has infamously never been like that for women. But if women were able to win thousands of dollars too, then they could give more time to focus on making this passion their career.

Furthermore, we need leading brands and companies in the skateboarding world to step up their support for female riders. Their sponsored team riders are always filled with men with the occasional token female. There are women who have time after time proven their skill and ability to shred harder than most guys. If these big name companies become more willing to support these girls and include them on the team, other companies will follow along. It should not be harder for a girl to get a sponsorship and no girl should even think that there are brands that are for men just because all their riders are male.

Overall, by having women on advertisements and skate teams, by having equal prize opportunity, and by creating a more accepting environment for women, female riders would have more reason to want to be apart of the skateboarding community. Young girls would have role models to look up to and would have goals that they would dream of achieving. It would no longer seem like a dead-end or just a hobby, but it could give women the potential to make their passions their career.

This infographic should not have to exist. But nevertheless, it must. Women's rights have made huge advances in the last century but in small specific ways they just need more of a boost. The skateboarding world is one small example of the continued social acceptance of sexism in the world and we must continue to fight against it. If we can change one community, we can impact the others and help change the world in general. So if we erase any inequalities between girl and guy skaters, then we really are taking a step forward for the rest of the world and women-kind specifically.

"This is the dumbest conversation I have to have and I have it too often. Women deserve equality, period. We deserve to have the same events and prize money and treatment and everything in between. We're slamming our bodies on the concrete just as much as the guys so what is the difference?"

"I'm over it. We're over it. Change needs to happen today."

Arianna Carmona, Pro Skater



BE ON THE LOOKOUT

To push forward the change, here is what we should be talking about in the girl skate community. First of all, the Olympics. Equal stakes, equal air time, equal care of athletes, equal number and types of competition - equal. Female riders are going to experience full equality for the first time, maybe ever. Companies will even consider sponsoring them just as equally as the guys and bigger companies are sponsoring the entirety of the US team or representatives. This is a huge step for women in skateboarding and hopefully this will set a standard for all future competition.

The Women's Skateboarding Alliance, run by one of the historic female leaders who fought for change at the X-Games in the early 2000s, Mimi Knoop, is going to be a huge player in the fight against sexism in skateboarding. In fact, I have a feeling they're going to be solving many of the big issues discussed in this article. After their involvement in California's AB 467, I wouldn't put it past them if they took this to a national level or created some sort of new status quo agreement with the managers of major skateboarding competitions.

Also, we should be watching upcoming talent in the female skateboarding community. At just 12 years old, Sky Brown is absolutely crushing the game and appearing all over the news as she prepares to compete in the Olympics for Great Britain. Jordyn Barratt is one of Toyota's leading team riders and has been published in advertisements in Times Square and beyond. There's so many more female riders I could promote but I'll suggest to you to look them up and give them the support they need!

