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Examining the Complex History: Evolution of Journalism Coverage of Cal Women's Sports

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150 Years of Women in Sports

Examining the Complex History, Evolution of Journalism Coverage of Cal Women's Athletics

By Benjamin



Dr. Luella Lilly, the only Cal Women's Athletics Director from

Cal Women's Athletics has had notable impacts on Berkeley and the greater collegiate athletic community throughout its storied history. The first intercollegiate women's basketball game was played between Cal and Stanford in 1896, and some 125 years later the Cal Women's Athletics teams continue to be trailblazers in the field. For as long as Cal Women's Athletics has existed, there has been journalism coverage alongside it, and much like Cal Women's Athletics has evolved rapidly since its inception, so too has journalism coverage. However, while the progression of intercollegiate athletics is a well-researched topic, the evolution of

reported on. There is a direct correlation between journalism coverage and viewership/interest in a sport, meaning that examining the progression of journalism regarding Cal Women's Athletics provides a valuable lens through which to study this topic. This can be amplified by drawing comparisons between different sports, genders, and levels of play. Thus, through studying both past successes and notable flaws that need to be addressed, this research project will highlight this ongoing evolution of journalism concerning Cal Women's Athletics and what that can tell us about the very nature of the teams being covered and the

Thanks to insights from three key contributors who were interviewed, this project can provide an original perspective on the history and development of journalism coverage regarding Cal Women's Athletics. The first contributor is Herb Benenson, current Associate Athletic Director of Cal Athletics, who has worked with Cal Athletics since 1990, aiding with athletic communications. A second key contributor to this story is Joan Parker who worked with Cal Athletics until 2001 in a variety of roles including as a coach, faculty member, and athletic administrator. The third contributor is Dr. Luella Lilly who served as the only Cal Women's Athletics Director from 1976-1992. Their collective experience spans across eras and roles, helping to construct a broad picture as to how far Cal Women's Athletics and the

The evolution of journalism coverage regarding Cal Women's Athletics can first be seen through considering how far coverage and even the sports themselves have progressed in visibility, spectatorship and successes. Title IX Legislation in 1972 marked a key turning point for Women's Athletics at Cal, mandating equal opportunities for women in sports, but even after this legislation, there was still much progress to be made. The Department of Women's Athletics was established in 1976 with Lilly but it dealt with serious issues. "We had at the time the worst facilities and smallest budget of any of the Division I schools," Lilly remarked. Parker noted that "The women's program started out with hardly any money and no paid coaches, just physical education instructors. At that point, we were not getting any scholarships. We were the last Division I program to give scholarships to women." Lilly described that while most schools gave scholarships to women after Title IX in 1972, it took until 1977 for Cal to give its first scholarships to women. With the women's athletic department struggling, journalism coverage struggled too. Lilly explained that "When our women won the national championship in 1980...it was on page five and it was a one sentence report that Cal Women's Crew had won the national championship. It didn't give any other details or peoples' names or

when Benenson arrived in 1990, journalism coverage of Cal Women's Athletics had a long way to go. "When I first got here, we struggled to get any real kind of coverage back then even though there was some good level of success. We didn't have the means to push those stories. The Sports Information Office had only one full-time staff member and one intern." Overall, it is clear historically that the Cal Women's Athletic department and women's collegiate athletics as a whole dealt with significant challenges. As a result, journalism coverage regarding these stories was sparse.

However, contrasting these historical struggles with current progress

Due to rapid improvement and expansion of teams within the department, as well as notable performances from various individual athletes and teams, journalism coverage has increased, propelling Cal Women's Athletics to more national relevancy and growth. Parker explained how under Lilly the program improved rapidly, leading to increased coverage. "Within the fifteen years since Lue Lilly came in between 1976-1991, we moved up to become ranked as the 4th most successful women's program in the nation. And I thought, boy, is that ever an accomplishment to go from nothing up to number four in the nation." Benenson explained how the growth of women's athletics has led to increased coverage overall. "The popularity has certainly grown. There is more media that cover it whether it be the Pac-12 Network or ESPN or local coverage with the Bay Area News Group and the San Francisco Chronicle," he said. "There's also a lot more televised events than we've ever had before. I think that's really helped get more exposure overall," he continued. What's grown coverage of women's athletics the most though, is likely the individual impact of transcendent superstars. Parker, Lilly, and Benenson each highlighted how various notable athletes brought increased coverage and growth for their respective programs at Cal. All three pointed out successful members of the Women's Swim and Dive team such as

Lilly contrasted the attention they received with how overlooked Cal Women's Swim's recruitment of Mary T. Meagher was. Meagher set world records for the 100 and 200-meter butterfly in 1981 that stood for 18 and 19 years respectively. "When she signed at Cal it was barely mentioned in the papers," Lilly explained. Comparing the lack of attention she received with the publicity given to many of Cal's more recent standout swimmers shows how much progress has been made. Lilly and Parker also singled out Michele Granger, who was "our softball pitcher who was the starting pitcher in the

fact, Benenson explained how in 1993 after the San Francisco Chronicle published a feature on Granger, a crowd of around 1,500 attended the next Cal softball game

Contrasting that with the typically small crowd sizes of the era (generally around 200 people) shows firsthand the impact journalism coverage can have on interest in a sport. Finally, they cited individuals on the Cal women's basketball team. Parker suggested that "In recent years some of our women's basketball players have gone on to the WNBA and become accomplished there, receiving good publicity and acknowledgement. Players like Layshia Clarendon who is now broadcasting for the Pac-12." Still, Cal Women's Basketball alumni graduating to the WNBA is not a new phenomenon, though only recently have they received increased coverage. "There were seven others before the public became aware of current players like Layshia Clarendon," Lilly said. Benenson recalled the impact of Kristine Anigwe who graduated in 2019 after earning All-America honors

The effect of individual female athletic superstars extends much beyond Cal as well. Perhaps the most impactful recent example is the influence of Sabrina Ionescu, Oregon's transcendent women's basketball star who was recently selected first overall in the WNBA draft and took the entire sports world by storm. Lilly explained how "Now we have outstanding athletes like Sabrina Ionescu where everybody is talking about her all the time. In the old days those weren't even covered at all," while Parker stated that "with Ionescu, they covered Oregon locally more than they covered us." When Ionescu's Ducks came to Berkeley in early 2020 to play Cal Women's Basketball, a crowd larger than most Cal Men's Basketball games appeared. The same phenomenon occurred two years earlier in 2018 when a near sellout crowd packed Haas Pavilion to see the star-studded UConn Huskies, demonstrating how impactful elite players and teams can be on interest and attendance. It is clear that due to the impact of individual superstars and an overall growth of the game, journalistic coverage has

While journalism coverage surrounding Cal Women's Athletics has seen notable improvement over the years, there are still disheartening challenges that pose setbacks to growing the women's game. This makes it crucial to examine the nature of these challenges, the reasons behind them, and what can be done to address them.

Perhaps the most critical aspect to consider is the potential gap in coverage between men's and women's athletics. "There is still a huge difference of coverage between men's sports and women's sports. Unless we have

are still way behind the curve in getting equal coverage,” said Parker. “If the women’s team is doing much better than the men’s team, they still cover the men’s team no matter what and put them on the front page with all their results. We’re lucky if we get in the very end of the paper,” she continued. Lilly offered a similar viewpoint. “Even today they give more coverage to games coming up for men than they do for championships for women. It’s very very inequitable,” she stated. This divide seems to extend beyond simply gender to include differences between sports as well. For example, when discussing impactful Cal athletes, Benenson explained that “I think you can go right down the line. Every sport has somebody that is so special to them whether they become a hall of famer, an Olympic gold medalist or a national champion.” However, for many of these sports, these powerful stories are completely overlooked. Parker stated that “we excel in the Olympic sports and they don’t get near as much publicity as they

While it is clear that a divide exists, uncovering the reasons behind this divide is much more difficult. One likely factor is simply due to Berkeley’s location within the Bay Area, a hub for professional sports. Being in a pro market naturally means that viewership and readership is more drawn towards pro teams and less on collegiate athletics. “While there are occasional pieces on college athletics, I think that there are a lot of great stories that people are missing out on,” said Benenson. Lilly also supported the location theory, describing how coverage is different in Oregon (the state that she is from that has significantly fewer pro sports teams): “We actually got pictures on the front page and all that, so I was so shocked when I came to California and those kinds of things didn’t happen.” Additionally, while coverage of collegiate women’s athletics had been steadily increasing, recently it has experienced setbacks. “It increased a lot with Sports Illustrated and so forth covering things really well. But then it kind of seems like it slid backwards rather than continuing and we need another upsurge to really let people know what’s going on,” said Lilly. “Mainstream traditional media in the Bay Area has changed its focus in recent years,” said Benenson. “Part of the reason is interest, such as how many hits an online story receives, and part of it is financial as we’ve seen sports departments forced to shrink their staffs,” he finished. Benenson explained that this means “Most of our coverage now is by the Daily Cal or

While these smaller outlets and Cal Athletics themselves have worked hard to share the stories of these sports, gaining the attention of larger media outlets is

women's athletics has improved, Lilly and Parker think it could improve a lot more. "We get a little bit more. But you could say we've gone from the fifth page up to the digest. General coverage, I have not seen it advance as much as I felt that it would or should," said Lilly. Parker agreed, stating that "generally speaking it has improved a

With traditional newspapers shrinking in size, social media and online sources increasingly seems to be the future of consuming news. Capitalizing on these newer sources in the age of the internet could be critical to building interest in women's collegiate athletics. Some might argue that low interest in women's collegiate athletics is a reason for the decreased journalistic coverage. While logically, the smaller viewership and attendance of Cal Women's Athletic events would lead to less coverage, Parker explained how it's much more complicated than that. "Until they start covering us more, we aren't going to get the attendance at our events. It is a two-way street," she said. Better, increased coverage of Cal Women's Athletics would certainly heighten interest in these sports, but currently that is not happening. Benenson, Parker, and Lilly had several ideas for how this could be improved. All three agree that the compelling stories are there, now they just need to be told. "We have very good stories that could be put right on into the main papers, but that doesn't occur. Human interest stories as well as accomplishments could definitely be presented to the people." said Lilly. There is still a stark contrast in how

While this coverage generally is helpful for growing the game, the main drawback is that it is not consistent, something that is crucial for generating interest in these sports. Parker explained, "There is no continuous coverage like there is for the men. The men could lose and we'd win and set a record, and they'd be on the front page and we'd be on the back. I don't think that's changed and I'm not sure if that will ever change." To start that change, generating consistent coverage is critical. "There is not those daily updates on what's going on. They need to cover not only the very special moments but create a more ongoing dialogue," Parker said. "I know it can still be improved. If we can get more consistent coverage to keep people interested rather than just drop something, then forget them for a couple weeks. That's what I would like to see," she

Overall, the history of journalism coverage surrounding Cal Women's Athletics is a complicated one. Conversations with Herb Benenson, Joan Parker, and Luella Lilly were critical to shining a light on its evolution. Their contributions showed how much

a national spotlight and serving instrumental roles in growing their programs. The most daunting part of this research though was uncovering how much more work is left to be done. Whether it be from the impact of professional sports, divides between different sports, or even inequalities between men's and women's athletics, it is clear that reporting regarding Cal Women's Athletics is still lacking and as a result public interest in these sports is hurt as well. However, with a concerted effort that implements ideas like generating consistent coverage, capitalizing on new forms of digital media, and gaining the attention of larger outlets, there is still hope

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Carli Lloyd: From California's Powerhouse to Global Playmaker

By Maddy



Carli Lloyd is one of UC Berkeley's most recognized indoor volleyball players, having led Cal to the NCAA championship finals in 2010 and later representing Team USA in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games as Cal's first indoor volleyball Olympian. This setter continues making plays overseas in the professional world

Carli started playing volleyball when she was 11 years old. Her father passed away when she was very young, so her uncle became a mentor and father figure to her. Her mother was a middle school PE teacher and had coached Carli's older siblings in volleyball. Originally a track athlete, she tried out for volleyball in 6th grade and she fell in love with being a part of a team.

Being an Olympian was always Carli's dream, but it wasn't always clear which sport she wanted to pursue. She imagined herself playing beach volleyball, inspired by her idols Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh playing at the Olympics. Her vision started changing when she began playing indoor volleyball, and for a while she even wanted to be a multi-sport athlete and ran track too. Even becoming a setter wasn't an easy decision; Carli chose to sacrifice her attacker position and commit to becoming a full-time setter who could make it to a Division I college. Before attending Fallbrook Union High School, she had her

starting as a freshman on the school's varsity team. As she played, her sights shifted to earning a full ride to college as a starting freshman. Once she got to Cal, the Olympics were finally in her sights.

Choosing to play at Cal was not a difficult decision for Carli. She did not have a particular school in mind but was motivated to earn a scholarship to help her family. She visited the UC Berkeley campus in her junior year. "I loved it from the minute I walked on campus, I loved the vibe, it was super calming and it was beautiful. I felt really good there," the Bonsall, California, native recalls. "With a volleyball standpoint, [I] could potentially start right away and help the program make history... I think that competitor in me was looking for that challenge, to do something that hadn't been done yet." Carli stayed true to her word and led Cal

She and her uncle also met coach Rich Feller, Cal's most successful volleyball coach in program history. Right away, she had a good feeling about him. Rich had that same warm, welcoming feeling her uncle did.

"From the first year, I felt very comfortable with having someone that cared about me not just as a volleyball player. I needed that since I was used to having a family member as a coach for a very long time," Carli comments. "Rich was a super positive guy and [had] a lot of positive energy. He loved his job and it

As a student-athlete, Carli faced the challenge of balancing early morning practices, late study sessions, and taking tests on the road. "I felt that I needed to put more of my effort into volleyball. I needed to perform and help this program and almost wanted to set academics to the side, but I couldn't, it had to

Rich describes Carli as "one of the hardest working, pure athletes, and a very good setter. She got better and better each year and rose to the occasion and took us to the precipice of the final four and then the actual finals."

During her senior year, she led the team as captain. It occasionally made her nervous because she was a great leader by action, but not as confident with her words. Carli reflects on her growth as a leader saying, "Rich trusting that [position] in me gave me more confidence to be more of what I could be, speaking my mind more. It was challenging, but I learned how to trust myself more. I had great leaders before me. Angie Pressey was one of the coolest players and captains and I was really lucky to have her my freshman year as a

Carli was also grateful to have Meagan Schmitt, her best friend and roommate for 3 years, leading by her side. "We would speak one-on-one together and then face the team," Carli says, explaining their leadership dynamic. "We're all equals and have to invest in the team--learning how to get everyone to have a

success.

“Coordination between players is so important because they are so close on the court--having a team that understands each other and has leaders is really important,” Rich adds.

During Carli’s time at Cal, the team advanced farther and farther in the NCAA tournament each year. They were told that it would be difficult to repeat their success, but they always had a drive to improve. “I believed so much on what we had built there, the base of our team, we were so united and so motivated to do great things every year, so by that final four, the ride was so cool.” It was heartbreaking to lose to Penn State for the 4th year in a row, but “both teams are putting in everything they got, but at the end of the day someone has to lose.” In 2010, Cal saw its best season with a 30-4 record, finishing first in the

The game that stands out to her the most, though, was the semifinal win against USC and her last win with her Cal team. “We wanted so badly to face USC again because we had lost both times in conference, and when we got matched up against them in the semis, we were so ready--we knew it was coming, we had prepared for them. That moment, that’s what we were going for.”

By her senior year, Carli finished second on Cal’s all-time assists list. She was also named the 2010 AVCA Player of the Year and is Cal’s only recipient to this day. This recognition was impactful for Carli on a personal level. “I really wasn’t expecting to get that award. I didn't know that I was receiving that award and I wasn't prepared for that moment, but it was something that has impacted my family so much, like my uncle. I remember his face at the awards banquet and that [award] reflects the work that my family put into me becoming that player

Shortly after graduating in 2011, Carli joined the US national team and was an alternate for the 2012 London Olympics. In 2015, she was on the US Women’s Volleyball Team that claimed gold in both the Pan American Games and Pan American Cup and was named the Most Valuable Player and Best Setter for both tournaments. She stayed with the team to compete at the 2016 Rio

Carli spoke about her experience moving from an alternate to a player on the final roster. “You can make the [team] roster, but you really want to get on the final roster to start. Before that summer, I had been told that ‘we won't be having you back in the gym, we needed to cut the roster down.’ I went into that year knowing that I probably wasn't going to be back in the national gym.”

Nevertheless, Carli got a call in the middle of April informing her she had an open tryout. On June 30th, 2016, the head coach told her she was going to the

Team USA's first match was against Puerto Rico on August 6, Carli's birthday. Being Carli's first match, it was a really memorable experience. "I remember looking up into the stands and seeing my family and I cried. Literally, the match was about to start, and I was super emotional."

Team USA had an impressive performance and claimed the bronze medal that year. "I remember looking at my uncle at the ceremony and looking at him with this crazy, all-consuming sensation of 'I did it. We did this.' It was so hard and took so long, and four months before that I would have said my chances? Maybe 5%," Carli

Alongside playing for Team USA for nine summers, Carli has also spent the last nine winter seasons playing professional volleyball overseas. "I didn't really know about [playing professionally] until late in college," Carli says. "When I found out about the professional leagues, I wanted to play in Italy, in Brazil. I had heard about the tradition of volleyball over there."

Carli played professionally in Italy her first three years after college, having been scouted by an Italian agent during one of her matches. The agent contacted her parents and wanted to fly her out to Italy to show her the professional leagues. She and her uncle attended a semifinals match, and she immediately knew that she wanted to play there. "One of the things that drew me there was the passion for volleyball in Italy; you can't even compare what it's like in the US to in Italy," Carli describes. "It's a great atmosphere to play in; by far the coolest atmosphere

One of the most influential teams during Carli's professional experience was her first season in Italy, where her team did something never done before: it won three championships in one season. It was also really exciting for Carli because she had never played for a foreign team before--she even had a Czech teammate translating for her during training, but quickly "fell in love with playing

"You have to sacrifice a lot being away and there aren't a ton of girls here playing for ten years and making it. That season was really amazing and a great group of foreign girls together, this beautiful family, [the] culture of

Since, Carli has also played in Azerbaijan, Brazil, and Turkey. The incredible experiences of being part of a team is why Carli keeps playing volleyball. "[The] camaraderie of a successful team is hard to come by, it's really powerful," the setter explains. "Volleyball is super technical and there's so many intricacies of how it works, so when you have success over a long period of time with a team or program, you just know there was a lot of hard work that went into that."

Playing around the globe has also expanded Carli's perspective on life. Growing up in a small town, Carli's family would often take kids in, so she was constantly surrounded with different ethnicities and foods. In Italy, she fell in love with the culture and became fluent studying Italian on her own. "One thing I love about Italy is that it brings families together; they take time away from work to sit down at the table for an hour and a half to eat lunch together," Carli says.

Part of her love for culture includes getting to know people and hearing their stories. At Berkeley, she studied Social Welfare with a minor in Education because she wanted to become a teacher and loved working with people. Now, she is really interested in the psychology that goes into being an athlete, from mindset to self-love, to self-growth. These topics weren't discussed when she was younger, leading her to create her new website showupwithme.com. Her motto is about "showing up" regardless of any circumstances and giving it her

When faced with people who didn't believe that she or her team could do great things, she immediately responds, "Who do [they] think [they] are, to tell me what we're capable of? It's interesting that a lot of my successes with teams... are typically 'underdog,' or 'not supposed to' [teams]. There's some good in that, there's some freedom because you don't have as much pressure, but there's also a lot of uncertainty--if someone's like, 'if you look at the roster,

Carli has built this mentality over the years to help navigate the pressures of being a successful volleyball player. Thinking of how negative comments affect many athletes, Carli reflects how "it can affect us, but then we learn from it, we grow, and at some point, we're choosing the story we want to believe instead of

"I was lucky with my mom and uncle, they believed in me and instilled that in me, and taught me about goal-setting and if you want something, then you need to be able to make the right choices for it. They were great for me, but I definitely have worked on my mindset and every day I work on it still," Carli says. "Our minds are just incredible things that can constantly change, and when we're young, we don't realize what you're choosing to think about, and as

If she could only be remembered for one thing, it would be "that I encourage the people around me to be who they want to be," Carli answers. "Looking back, I just wish that everyone would understand that we all have choices and we won't be perfect all the time, but life gives you opportunities to overcome, and those moments usually spike you up and you become better afterwards, but sometimes we get paralyzed by fear by this anxiety of not being perfect."

"I feel like there's so much beauty in showing up fully and embracing who you are, and it took me a long time to get there and to see that and believe in myself

can be paralyzing with the pressure of 'you need to be this,' 'you should be this,' and then we lose the truth of who we think we truly should be. I love when someone can just be who they are, and it's hard as athletes sometimes. You can be yourself and you should be encouraged to be all that you are and not what

Carli Lloyd's tough journey to success is inspiring to those around her, and she continues to bring her positive attitude to the court. Her hard work and dedication brought her incredible success at Cal and then at the Olympics. Best of luck to Carli as she plays for the Italian club Pomí Casalmaggiore in Italy this

Profiles from Cal Lacrosse

By Susie Ropp and Catherine



Denise Wescott joined Cal Lacrosse coaching staff before the 2019 season as the Assistant Coach. Despite only being part of the program for a short period, Denise has been integral in the program's upward trajectory with Head Coach Brooke Eubanks. Not only has Wescott added 30 years of experience to a relatively young west coast program, but she was also part of history in her own college experience. A decorated player herself, Denise was a three-sport athlete at the University of Maryland playing field hockey, basketball, and lacrosse. Wescott was one of the first females to sign a National Letter of Intent in 1976. A four-year starting goalie, Denise experienced a successful college career ranking 5th in all-

Denise went on to coaching immediately out of college and landed her first job as the Assistant Coach for the Michigan State field hockey team. Since then, Denise has held coaching jobs at both Division I and III programs such as Penn State, Drew University, Rutgers University, University of Delaware, Mount Saint Mary's,

In an interview conducted with Denise, she recalls her first coaching job to be

grade coaching for a local basketball team. While in her undergraduate studies at Maryland, Denise taught Physical Education classes when she wasn't studying or in practice. At the University of Delaware, where Denise coached for 11 years, she taught during the day before practices at night.

Beyond her years of coaching collegiately, Denise is widely known at the international level. From 1996-2006 Wescott served as the head coach for the

Since leaving Monmouth as the head coach in 2014, Denise has served as the Director of Lacrosse for the Capital Lacrosse Club in Alexandria, Virginia.

In 2018, Denise was inducted into the Lacrosse Hall of Fame for her excellence and contribution to the sport. From the moment she stepped on campus in the summer of 2018, Denise has been extremely dedicated to her athletes and the betterment of the program. Her main goal while at Cal is to make the program as productive as can be – guiding her student-athletes in the right direction on the field, in the classroom, and in life to

Gaby and Eliza Christman - The Christman sisters were two of the most notable student-athletes to graduate from Cal, each during their own time in Berkeley. The sisters from Simsbury, Connecticut, were four years apart, and just missed playing with each other in college. Nevertheless, Eliza followed in Gaby's footsteps and attended Cal to play lacrosse.

Despite never having the chance to play alongside each other, both Gaby and

Despite a season-ending injury during her freshman year, Eliza ended her four years at Cal extremely decorated. Eliza was a midfielder for Cal from 2015-2019. In just her senior year alone, Eliza was chosen First Team All-Pac 12, named to the Pac-12 All-Tournament Team, Pac-12 All-Academic Honorable Mention, selected to compete in the IWLCA Senior All-Star Game, set the school single-season record for draw controls (81), was the third-leading scorer and was named team captain. In her junior year, Eliza was the team's second-leading scorer and was named to the Pac-12 All-Tournament Team after the inaugural Pac-12 Tournament in 2018

A midfielder for the Golden Bears from 2011-2015, Gaby Christman entered her freshman year as the Cal lacrosse program had just been reinstated. Gaby garnered impressive statistics and accolades during her time at Cal, including being named to the All-MPSF Second Team both her junior and senior year, and was named to the All-MPSF First Team as a sophomore. Her senior year, she led the team in caused turnovers (18), tied first for ground balls (20), second in both points (37) and goals (28) and second in draw controls (32). Her 97 career caused turnovers are ranked number one in the Cal record book. Her name also falls in the top 8 in Cal lacrosse history for most career draw controls (118) and in the top

Brooke Eubanks - Brooke Eubanks is the current head coach of the Cal Women's Lacrosse team. Hired to lead the program in 2015, Eubanks was the Assistant Coach across the bay at Stanford University from 2009-2014. Before her time in California, Brooke spent a year as the assistant coach at George Mason University from 2007-2008. Eubanks graduated from James Madison University in 2006 and immediately pursued a career in coaching. While at JMU, Eubanks was a three-year starter for the Dukes, leading her team to 3 CAA-Conference Championships

Beyond a successful college career, Eubanks was a member of the Canadian Senior National Team from 2003 to 2013. Her team made 3 World Cup appearances, earning a silver medal in 2013 with Eubanks as a captain and

In 2015, Brooke Eubanks brought her knowledge to the Cal Women's lacrosse team for her inaugural season in Berkeley. Right off the bat, she faced financial challenges as the team only had two out of the twelve permitted scholarships and was still recovering from being cut in 2010. Despite the obstacles, Eubanks mentioned in an interview that coming to Cal was a "no brainer." Her coaching style reflects some of the great coaches she has played for both abroad and in college. When asked to reflect on the impact Cal has had on her life, she answered, "A huge impact. One of the biggest impacts of my life. I became a mother and a head coach all within three months of each other." Since being on the West Coast, Eubanks has started a family of her own. Integrating her family life at home with her athletes at Cal has been one of the many highlights of her career, Eubanks recalled. Her tight-knit relationship with her players has translated to the program's steady progress on the field. Before the cancellation of

Cal Lacrosse History - The lacrosse program at the University of California, Berkeley has been around since 1999, making 2020 the 22nd season. Announced to be cut in the fall of 2010, new funding allowed the team to resume as a full

Missy Franklin

By Devanshi Rathi



My mother is my role-model and my best friend in my life,” says Missy Franklin, six-time Olympic swimming medalist, five-time Olympic Champion, and fellow Cal Bear. In her career, she has won a total of twenty seven international medals across the Olympics, World Championships, Pan Pacifics, and short-course World

Missy was born in California, but relocated to Colorado in her childhood. She was introduced to the sport when she was just six months old by her mother, who had never learned how to swim well and still fears the water. Almost instantly, Franklin fell in love with the water. She kept at it and swimming became a part of her daily life, like a home away from home. Missy exclaims, “I’ve dreamed of being an Olympian since I was a little girl! I think that’s when we have our most desires and aspirations. So, I imagined myself, at five years old, being on the Olympic podium. Just like a young artist thinks of winning a Grammy or a science wizard wants to achieve the Nobel Prize, our dreams at the very early stages in

An athlete has to always manage a dual life - one on the field, in this case in the water, and the other as a normal “human” living the usual humdrum of daily chores. Franklin mentions that it was definitely hard, and she did face challenges dealing with juggling the two acts.

However, the support of her parents, who loved her for who she truly was, gave her the

strength to keep going along in her journey to the top. Right from when she entered the Colorado Stars club swimming team with Coach Todd Schimtz at just seven years old, Franklin had to balance her academics and her time in the water. She had a naturally built talent for the sport with a frame that gave her the right edge to swim fast at great speeds. At just twelve years of age, she was locking heads with those who were much older than she. A year later, she was

Despite not qualifying for the '08 Games, Franklin was already a star in her hometown. When asked about her grounded demeanor, she said that she maintained a largely "normal" life like anyone else in her grade at that time, or at least what seemed usual for her in her own terms. She would get up in the morning for her first practice, finish up and start her school work, and then she would be back into the pool for her evening round of training. She says, "It might not have been anyone else's normal, but it was normal for me. I didn't know

The breakthrough moment for Missy came at the 2011 World Championships in Shanghai, as was pointed out in her documentary film "Touch the Wall." In what was supposed to be a long ride from the US to the Eastern part of the world for just a 2 minute race, the 200m backstroke event to be precise, turned out to be a remarkable journey as she returned a hero with five medals. She says, "This was the first time that I actually realized that all those goals I had made for myself were some things that I could achieve not five or six years down the line but right at that moment. It all felt like a dream, and I couldn't believe that it was happening." All this occurred when Franklin was still in high school, something

Post Shanghai, Missy had quite a run in her competitions leading up to the 2012 London Olympics. She went into the 2012 U.S. Olympic Trials with some prior experience from 2008. This time around, she was the one to reckon with, the most hopeful medallion for the eventual Games far from her 13 year old underdog self. When she made the team, she says that it was all a mental game from then onwards. She proclaimed that competing at the Olympics was really no easy task at all, and visualization was a key factor in her training. Besides this, trust was another important aspect, both in herself as well as in her coach. Sticking to her usual game plan, which worked the best for her, was what she did during this period leading up to the Games. At London, she finally achieved her not so long

With such an astonishing victory, one is bound to be wandering in another world. Missy was an exception. She went straight back to her high school in Colorado and was still inspiring all her friends, even dancing at her prom! She rejected endorsement offers worth millions and turned her eyes onto her passion for college, as she always wanted to pay close attention to her academics along with her athletics. However, she didn't shy away from appearing in Hollywood in a cameo for the film *The Internship* and in an episode of the show *Pretty Little Liars*

“Being a part of a team was always the best part about swimming, and there was no other place than collegiate athletics where I could gain such a thrilling experience. No matter how much money I was going to give up, I would be creating friends for life, which was exactly what happened as five of my bridesmaids at my wedding were my teammates from Cal in 2019!”

When choosing colleges, Cal was at the very top of Franklin’s list because of its rich swim program history for both women and men’s teams. She also added that the rigor of academics at Cal made it all the more beneficial for her to join the Bears squad. Berkeley’s unique atmosphere, the diverse class options, and the entire Cal family were the factors that led her to become a Golden Bear for the rest of her life. In fact, she says that she wasn’t feeling strange about being an Olympian as she was far from the only one in the school, let alone in the swim team. Drawing from the influences of other Cal legends like Dana Vollmer and Natalie Coughlin, Missy felt as if everyone on the roster had the same goals and determination to work as hard as she, so it seemed all the more the kind of

On asking her about her journey at Cal academically with the rigors of swimming competitively, Missy couldn’t stop giggling and said, “Managing the academics at Cal-Berkeley with swimming is by far, to-date, the hardest thing that I have ever done. It’s not easy at all because you’re held to the same standards as anyone else in the class, and that’s what we want and why we go here. However, at the same time, we are also dedicating 4-6 hours of our day, and every single one, to train as well. So, trying to deal with it all was definitely a challenge. Yet, we were all in it together. My first semester was a struggle, and thereon I was getting more into the groove of being the best student as well as the greatest athlete

Missy spent two years at Cal, training on both the athletic and academic fronts and winning the Honda Sports Award, before she decided to relocate back to her home in Colorado and practice intensely for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, while still continuing with some online courses from Cal. Her expectations weren’t met in Rio as compared to her performance in London, which she had looked to build upon in the Brazilian city. She came back with only one gold medal. Following the event, she returned to Berkeley and started training with the men’s swim team under coach Dave Durden. In regards to this new experience of hers, she was extremely grateful to both Durden and the men on the squad, who she referred to

However, she says that despite the inclusion that she felt in the team, the empty ladies locker room and being the only female on an all-male squad were at times difficult to deal with mentally. So, she decided to make a switch. As hard as it was to leave Cal, it was going to be in her best interest. She transferred to the University of Georgia, whose coach she had known since she was very young, and

felt that it might be her only hope to perform at her greatest strength in the next Games, which as it turns out didn't happen at all as Missy retired from competitive swimming in late 2018 due to a prolonged shoulder injury. To which she replies that "Everything happens for a reason, and I have absolutely no regrets and

As her competitive swim career takes a backseat, Missy's zealous spirit is not one to go away. She managed to complete her degree in religious studies from the University of Georgia in 2019. She is also continuing to work with her sponsored brands as an ambassador as well as signing on with some new ventures. As her life story is so remarkably inspiring, Missy motivates others by engaging in public speaking, adding onto her book *Relentless Spirit*, as well as building on her "philanthropic" side by giving back to the sport that she so dearly loves. She is

Reflecting on her entire journey, when one asks her about her fondest memories at Cal, she exclaims with passion that her favorite class was Abnormal Psychology, her greatest learning experience was under the Finance Professor at the Haas School of Business Steve Etter, and her most exciting place to be in was at Cafe Strada along with relaxing on the lush greens around the campus. To her

Missy Franklin will always be a Golden Bear in the classroom as well as in a place that we can all relate to her with - the swimming pool.

Layshia Clarendon

By Desi Carrasco



In the handwriting of an 11-year-old girl, the back of a dogeared polaroid reads, “Keep this forever. One day you’ll see me on TV playing in the WNBA.” The photo is of Layshia Clarendon, one of the best Cal basketball players of the 21st century. At the time she gave that photo to her mother, professional athletics did not have a place for Black, queer, gender non-conforming women, but that didn’t stop Layshia from envisioning herself being a pioneer of the sport she loved. Few could have foreseen that the career that began on court of Haas Pavilion would

As a high school senior deciding where she wanted to play college basketball, Clarendon was still in the closet and had much of her identity to discover. She knew deciding a school would impact her life greatly and serve as a place through which her identity could be explored.

Beyond Cal’s academic rigor and esteemed faculty, the “dirtiness” of Berkeley drew Clarendon to the UC. After a walk down Telegraph Ave., Clarendon fell in love with Berkeley. Cal’s unique community complimented her misfit nature and style of play. The greatest fit was perhaps with head coach Joanne Boyle. Before

“So I was still in the closet and actually came out to Joanne on one of my recruiting calls. We had talked and built trust... [Boyle] was so loving and affirming... I knew I could go somewhere

where I could really be myself 100% and be fully

Along with Coach Boyle, Clarendon built deep connections with her teammates through long talks after practice about life, basketball, sexuality, and faith. Historically, heteronormativity has been coded in sports. Cal's program, however, gave Clarendon and her teammates space to acknowledge each other's different identities while simultaneously recognizing their shared goal of success on the court. This is not always common in women's basketball programs, unfortunately. Penn State's former head coach notoriously discriminated against LGBTQ athletes even going as far as removing players she thought to be queer. Coach Boyle, on

"[Coach Boyle] really cared about me as a person, and really took the time to foster our relationship and be there for me. It's something that changes your life, having mentors like that affirm you and allow you to be who you are."

The support of Coach Boyle and the team nurtured Clarendon's potential. Clarendon grew as a leader, earning All-Pac-10 Honorable Mentions in her first two years while leading the team in assists her second year.

Big changes came Clarendon's junior year as Coach Boyle left Cal, opening the position to now-Cleveland Cavaliers assistant coach Lindsay Gottlieb. By the time Coach Boyle left, Clarendon's blossoming identity paralleled her burgeoning talent and leadership displayed on and off the court. Clarendon's transformation during these years manifested in a sense of self-expression that included dressing in a gender non-conforming fashion and standing out with a golden mohawk during her senior year. As Clarendon's relationship with Coach Boyle

"More affirmed in who I was as a person, I had more of a professional, adult-type relationship with Gottlieb...a lot like a working relationship, which prepared me to be a professional athlete."

With Gottlieb coaching, Clarendon led the way as the team's leading scorer, earning All-Pac-12 team selections her junior and senior year. Clarendon's leadership role was integral to one of Cal women's basketball's best seasons ever. Aside from scoring, Clarendon's dominant guard play ranked among the team leaders in assists, steals, and 3-pointers. The team had their first 30-win season and a Final Four berth sealed by stellar NCAA tournament performances by Clarendon, scoring 25 against Georgia and earning the Spokane Region Most Outstanding Player. Clarendon's other

Leaving UC Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in American Studies and the record for fourth all-time scorer (1,820 points), Clarendon realized her WNBA

the Indiana Fever in the 2013 WNBA Draft. Bringing the lessons in leadership she learned at Cal to professional women's basketball, Clarendon became a WNBA All-Star in 2017.

Currently playing on the New York Liberty, Clarendon's contributions to the league have extended far beyond the court. Beginning as a team representative, she now serves as Vice President to the WNBA Players Association (WNBPA). Clarendon uses her leadership in the WNBPA as a platform to advance economic justice by advocating for equity in wages, travel, and maternity policies, to name but a few areas of her activism. At the beginning of 2020, Clarendon and other leaders in the WNBPA passed a groundbreaking Collective Bargaining Agreement

Clarendon has also used her positions of influence to transform the conversation about sports, race, and gender. The discussions with her teammates at Cal about positionality became the foundation of dialogues Clarendon led within the league. Furthermore, as an athlete with an intersectional identity, Clarendon understands that her own progress in the WNBA is a form of symbolic activism in itself, inspiring young people across the country that they too have a place on the court. With that said, she still says

"Is it just me showing up a form of activism in itself? Or what things am I pushing for? I want to be more involved in policy and how that affects people."

Clarendon has been an outspoken thoughtleader on the topic of transgender participation in sports, underscoring the importance of sports for all individuals and their identities. Recently, Clarendon raised awareness around a piece of 2020 Idaho legislation, House Bill 500; a proposal to keep trans women out of high school and college athletics. Clarendon took a stand against the proposal, arguing that denying access to trans people was fundamentally unfair. Clarendon has also been an outspoken new voice for more equitable marketing

"We are still pushing and working on marketing [the WNBA] authentically...we're starting to turn the corner and I haven't always felt that...I

In recent marketing campaigns for the league, Clarendon was featured to promote the spectrum of sexuality and race among intersectional athletes. These efforts counter mainstream marketing in sport that focus on western standards of beauty, valuing white, feminine, cis-gendered imagery. As Clarendon sees it, she does not represent a new face in the league. There are many intersectional athletes like her, past and present, resisting marginalization

"That's literally what our league is, it's what our league has

As Clarendon looks back on her time at Cal and the work she's done for women's

future, she recognizes the work that still needs to be done for women of

“It's really sad in a lot of ways that there aren't more Black female head coaches especially because an overwhelming percentage of the players are women of color. How are we giving players opportunities to get into coaching

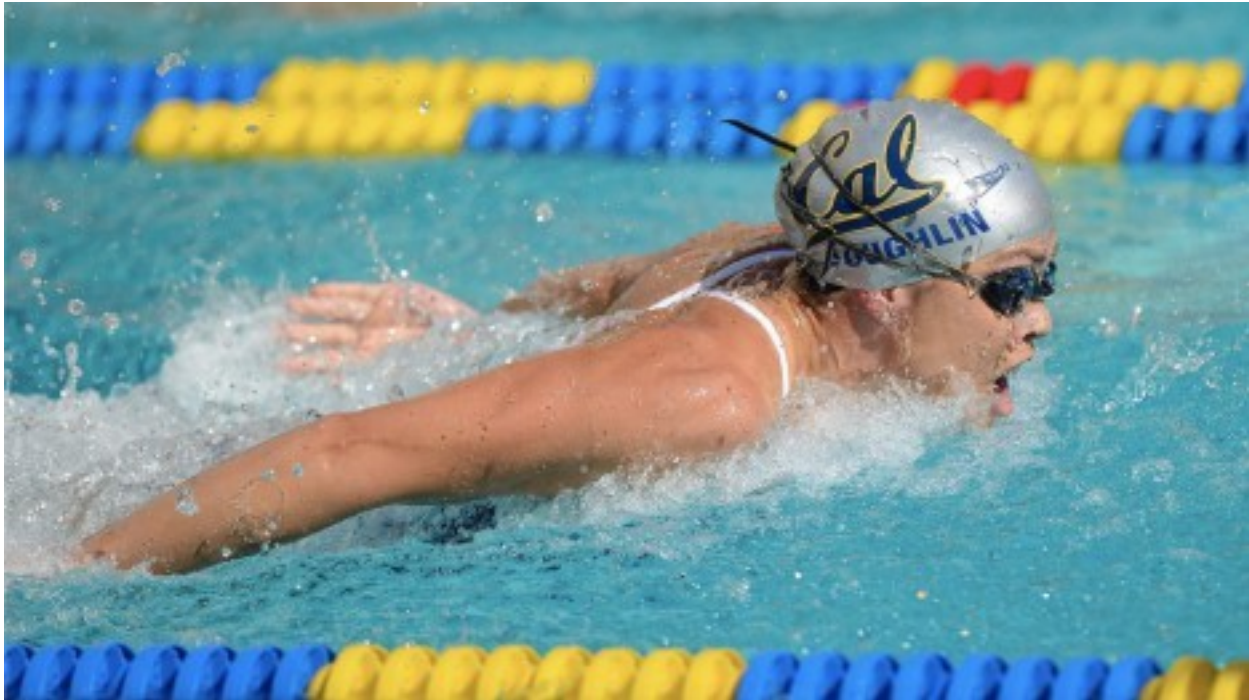
While Clarendon recognizes the significance of Charmin Smith's hiring as Cal's new head coach, the fact remains that Smith is the first woman of color to take this role in the history of the women's basketball program. Progress at Berkeley

“We can't rest on our laurels at UC Berkeley. We're inclusive, but what work are we actually doing to be on the forefront of inclusion and how are we breaking barriers for women of color?”

As Cal celebrates 150 years of Women at Cal and the history of women's Cal athletics, Clarendon stands out for her contributions, both on and off the court, during her time at Cal and beyond in her professional career in the WNBA. Her distinguished career speaks to the importance of embracing and empowering intersectional identities as they continue to transform the game of basketball and the endless possibilities that UC Berkeley offers all of the dreamers,

Natalie Coughlin

By Devanshi



Natalie Coughlin was born to swim. Her home had a backyard pool and her parents introduced her to the sport when she was just eight months old, by enrolling her for training lessons at the YMCA. She took her first step in competitive swimming by joining a swim club team when she was six years old. Today, she holds the tied-American record for the greatest number of medals won by a female US swimmer at the Olympic Games with a staggering 12 medals, including six at a single Olympics! Her silverware also showcases sixty medals achieved at different international events spread across the Olympics, the World Championships, the

Natalie had been trained in time management ever since she was a young girl. She had to balance the rigors of her academics as well as her sport. As she entered her teenage years, it was time for her to make “the big leap” in swimming. According to her, “That is when I realized that becoming an Olympian was a real possibility, and I began doing double practices (twice in a day).” Despite being the champion amongst all High Schools, recording the highest times for fourteen different events, which was a record never seen before, Natalie’s focus was set

Being an Olympian is one of the biggest accomplishments in an athlete's life. For Natalie, her drive to perform well across all the four strokes and her intense competitiveness were what made her succeed at such a huge platform. Now, when the time came to choose colleges, as Natalie was concentrating on also gaining a strong academic education, she narrowed down her options to three Californian schools - Cal, UCLA, and Stanford, which were all in her home state. She mentions, "After visiting all the schools and meeting their respective swim

Natalie arrived at the "Blue and Golden" Bear campus in 2000. When talking about her experience at the university, she speaks a lot about the women's swim team coach Teri McKeever's influence on her. She says, "Teri McKeever was always making us think 'out of the box' with our practice. She repeatedly said that we were training 24 hours a day whether we like it or not. The way we walk, our posture throughout the day, the nutritional choices that we make, our sleep... it all affects our training and performance." Besides, this coaching methodology

Natalie says that her time as a student-athlete started out in an extremely challenging manner, but then she got used to the demands as time progressed. "I had a rude awakening my Freshman year! Academics always came easily to me in high school, and it wasn't until I attended Berkeley that I really had to work for my grades. I remember crying after each of my 3 midterms in Psych 1 because it was so difficult. By my sophomore year, I figured out how to balance my studies and my athletics, but it took much more work than I was used to." She recounts that her favorite class and professor were Abnormal Psychology and Mary Kelsey,

While she was attending Cal, Natalie competed in many prestigious tournaments worldwide. In 2002, she became the first woman to ever swim the 100 meter backstroke in under a minute. This is something unimaginable to the average female, but Natalie recounts, "I had been so close to that mark for years, and knew that I could do it. More than anything, I just took my training day by day and tried to maximize my opportunities in practice, while keeping my goals in mind." On preparing for these competitions at Cal, Coughlin explains, "The World Championships and Pan Pacifics were held in July and August, respectively. As soon as the NCAAs were over in the spring, my focus shifted from short course yards racing to long course meters sprinting. We always had smaller training

The year 2004 marked the beginning of Natalie's golden dream of competing for the United States at the Olympic Games. Talking about her emotions during this time, she says, "It's difficult to describe that experience in a few sentences. I began dreaming of becoming an Olympian when I was six years old. When I was actually at my first Olympics, it was difficult to be present in the moment. When you dream of something like that for 15 years, it can be very overwhelming when you're actually there." Nevertheless, Natalie returned from Athens with five

from her regular training regime that always focused on long-course swimming, only to return as a post-graduate swimmer, leaving behind her collegiate career. Natalie graduated from Cal with a degree in Psychology in 2005.

As the years between the next Olympics in Beijing flew past, Natalie saw her greatness in the sport reach the peak. In the 2008 Olympics, she became the first U.S. female athlete in the modern history to win six medals in a single Games. She mentions, "I never thought I would actually compete in all six events. I added the 200 Individual Medley (IM) (where a swimmer has to do all the four strokes in a single race) to my Olympic Trials program at the last minute and didn't have much experience in that event. After I qualified for that event along with the 100 back and 100 free (and the relays), I strongly considered dropping one, but the Head Olympic Coach Mark Schubert and Teri McKeever urged me not to. I'm

After these 2008 Olympics, Natalie continued striving in the sport. However, in 2012, she faced a set-back when she went to the London Games. She talks about this experience as a time when she knew that she wasn't swimming to the best of her ability. Although she did manage to win a bronze medal in a relay, which was her twelfth one, she mentioned that she could have done much better.

The so-called disappointment of the 2012 Olympics made Natalie shift gears. "I actually didn't take much of a break after London. Because I didn't swim that well that year, I returned to training pretty soon afterward but switched coaches and my training focus. I was really fortunate to have the opportunity to train with Dave Durden (the Cal Men's Coach), while having Teri's blessing to do so. I needed a change, and training with Dave was exactly what I needed."

This alternation provided her with the new direction to continue aspiring for more medals in the Rio Games in 2016, which, unfortunately, didn't happen for her. However, Natalie's career as a swimmer stays as one of the most inspirational journeys witnessed in female sporting history in the recent past.

Natalie mentioned how important it is for her to keep up with her nutrition along with her physical training, which has made it possible for her to continue swimming for so long. Her passion for food and cooking is quite evident as she writes in her bio on Instagram that she is "an urban farmer and co-founder of Gaderian vines." She explains, "I have a huge edible garden in my backyard along with hens that I raise for eggs. I also started Gaderian Wines in 2017 with my winemaker/business partner. We are a boutique winery in St. Helena that produces Napa Valley Chenin Blanc, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Rosé of Pinot Noir, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon." Besides, her favored book to read is "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" and she loves to relax by gardening and cooking. In fact, she recounts that she always

The Top Dog and Gather restaurant fan also says, “I volunteered for the Edible Schoolyard in 2012 as part of their ‘Wednesday Weeders’ crew. I absolutely loved volunteering there because Alice Waters was a hero of mine, and I believed in her mission. Unfortunately, it wasn’t the best use of my time when I wasn’t training. I should have been resting when I wasn’t training instead of doing intense garden work. I began cooking my sophomore year in college and taught myself through watching Food Network and reading cookbooks and magazines. Gardening was the next step. I began with a small container garden on my fire

With her diverse interests, Natalie has already many hats to shuffle as she turns from being that fire spirited Olympian to a mother and a businesswoman with her own passion projects like her vineyard and other activities. On multi-tasking, she explains, “It’s difficult but my life has always been hectic, and I’ve

Natalie also doesn’t shy away from talking about gender equity in sports, though she does mention that she was lucky as a female swimmer. She says, “I was fortunate enough to be in a sport that is very equal. Prize money was always the same for men and women. Women had just as many opportunities as the men, if

Now, Coughlin proves to the world that she is a one-of-a-kind history-maker. She advises everyone to be open and flexible to new possibilities. She never thought that she would own her own winery, but here she was because an opportunity presented itself, and she took a leap of faith.

“It takes a lot of hard work and scrappiness, but that’s something that I learned during my time at Cal.” Well, what more can one say - Natalie Coughlin, a Golden