

# GIRLS WHO PLAY CHANGE THE GAME

e.l.f. **EMPOWERING.  
LEGENDARY.  
FEMALES.**

 **PARITY**

***“Pressure is a privilege. Sports teach you what a privilege it is to have pressure. It teaches you how to cope with pressure in real life. You learn and you embrace it.”*** **BILLIE JEAN KING**

**Growing up in South Africa, sports were everything to me and tennis became my ultimate passion.** At the time, college sports scholarships were not available to women and we certainly couldn’t make a living playing sports. This was also a time when women were defined more by their looks than their performance.

Meeting Billie Jean King changed my life forever, both personally and professionally.

She inspired me to pursue my dream and thanks to her work, I was able to become a professional tennis player.

I went on to become the youngest No. 1 ranked player in South Africa, where I had the great honor of representing my country in the Federation Cup (now the Billie Jean King Cup). In 1976, I became the No. 1 doubles player in the world and a US Open doubles champion.

The skills I developed and relationships I formed as an athlete evolved into a career in sports business, where I have a seat at the table and a voice in decision-making.

Today I serve as the CEO of Billie Jean King Enterprises and hold ownership stakes in sports teams and leagues. I also serve on various boards.

I’ve gained a wealth of knowledge along the way. From my experiences as an athlete and a business executive, I can put myself in others’ shoes and see multiple points of view.

I have had the opportunity to leverage my platform and build relationships that deliver on my north star – to help advance access and equality for women in sports and in life.

That’s why I’m thrilled about this new data. 95% of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say they learned at least one professional skill through sports. The most common skills learned through sports align with my experience: teamwork, performing under pressure, communication, discipline, perseverance and adaptability. These key attributes are core to advancing in one’s professional career.

This report reinforces my life’s work in proving that girls who play sports from a young age gain the leadership skills they need to successfully drive change in the workplace.

Everyone deserves that opportunity.

The work continues and as Billie Jean always says, “Pressure is a Privilege.”



*Ilana Kloss*

**ILANA KLOSS**  
**CEO, BILLIE JEAN KING ENTERPRISES**

## **WHY WE GIVE AN E.L.F. ABOUT WOMEN IN SPORTS**

At e.l.f. Beauty, we’ve spent years working to **CHANGE THE BOARD GAME**, our commitment to boardroom equity built on a simple premise: boards that reflect the world make better decisions for it.

With **EMPOWERING.LEGENDARY.FEMALES.**, we have also gone to the court, the pitch, the ice, the mat, the track and the stage. We were the first beauty brand on the ice with the PWHL, the first at the Indy 500 and the first to go to the mat for high school girls’ wrestling.

**Meanwhile, Parity exists to close the gender income and opportunity gap in sports.** We’ve connected brand partners to countless Olympians, Paralympians and other elite women athletes across 85 sports. They’re hungry for more ways to earn and we’ve seen the excellence they deliver.

This research sits at the intersection of our shared purpose and it starts with **EVERYDAY ATHLETES:** women who are now working full-time and played sports for at least three years before the end of high/secondary school. We analyzed their perspectives, alongside **PRO ATHLETES, BOARD MEMBERS** and women with less or no sports experience, resulting in **one of the largest and broadest studies of its kind.**

In total, the data reflects **more than 9,500 respondents** across the **United States, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom.**

We posed key questions nobody has asked at this scale: what did sports actually give her (spoiler alert: so much) and is she still using it? She is.

Even better: what she learned through sports is hyper-relevant all the way to the top.

Quick sidequest: Let’s be clear. Sports aren’t the only place a girl learns these skills. Art. Choir. Robotics club. Her first job. They all help shape girls, too.

But sports are worth studying as one of the earliest available leadership labs on earth, and they are still not equally accessible for girls.

That’s why we wrote this report: to uncover the real benefits, help level the playing field and widen the pipeline into every room where decisions are made.



*Patrick O’Keefe*  
**PATRICK O’KEEFE**  
**CHIEF INTEGRATED MARKETING OFFICER, E.L.F. BRANDS**



*Leela Srinivasan*  
**LEELA SRINIVASAN**  
**CEO, PARITY**

OUR RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

WE SET OUT TO UNDERSTAND HOW SPORTS CAN HELP CHANGE THE BOARD GAME AND THE BROADER POPULATION OF WORKPLACE LEADERS.

**69%** OF EVERYDAY ATHLETES WHO HAVE WORKED AT LEAST FIVE YEARS SAY THE LESSONS THEY LEARNED IN SPORTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER IN TODAY’S WORKPLACE.

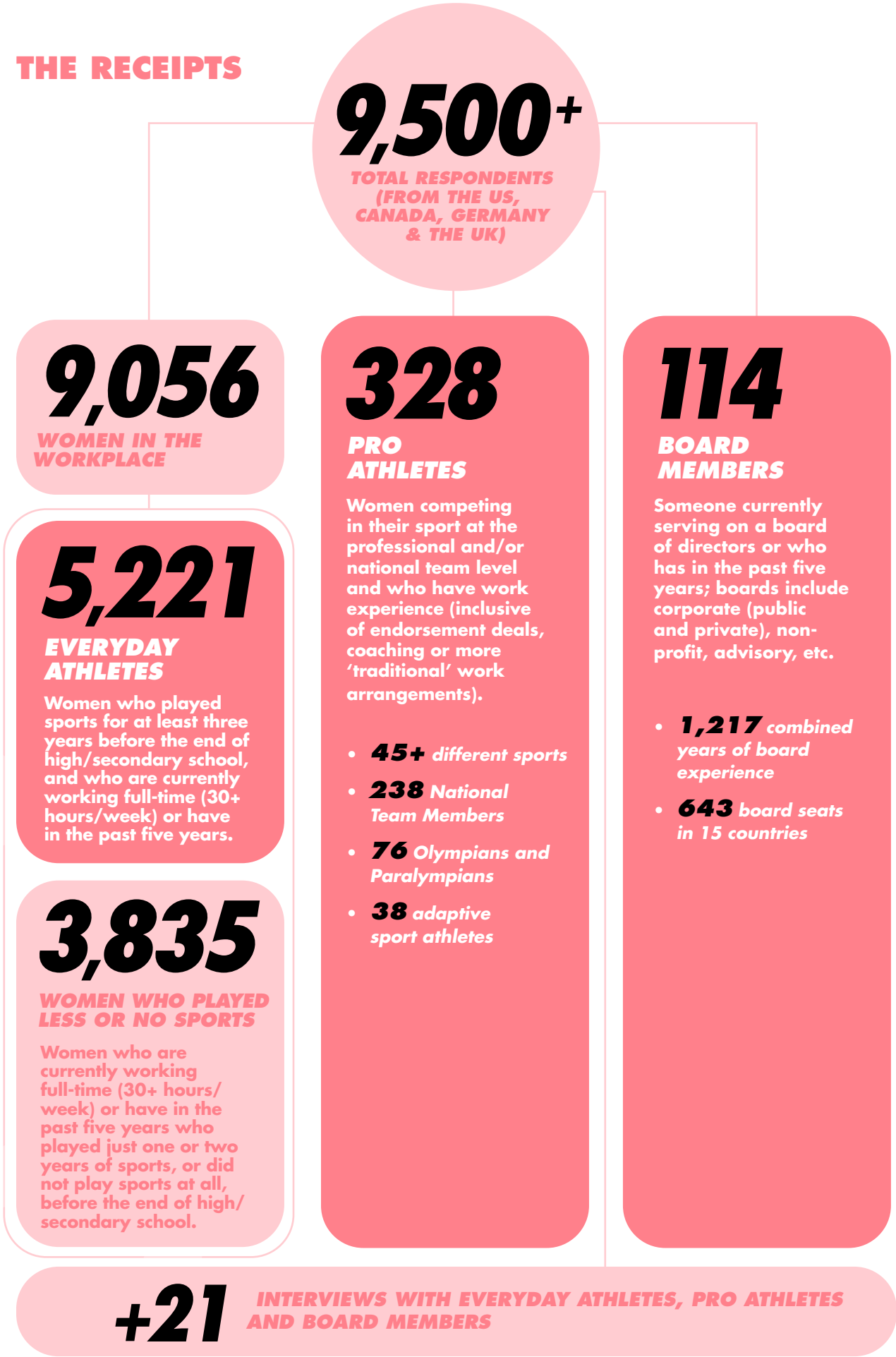
NEARLY **90%** OF EVERYDAY ATHLETES WHO HAVE BEEN PROMOTED SAY A SKILL THEY LEARNED IN SPORTS HELPED THEM MOVE UP.

**37%** EVERYDAY ATHLETES ARE 37% MORE LIKELY TO ASPIRE TO SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND NEARLY 25% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE NEGOTIATED THEIR SALARY.

**80%** OF WOMEN LEADERS WHO WERE EVERYDAY ATHLETES SAY SPORTS WERE AN IMPORTANT PART OF GROWING UP.

NEARLY **50%** EVERYDAY ATHLETES ARE NEARLY 50% MORE LIKELY TO HOLD LEADERSHIP ROLES AT WORK THAN WOMEN WHO PLAYED LESS OR NO SPORTS.

THE RECEIPTS



WINNING AT WORK

SPORTS EQUIP WOMEN FOR WORK.

It's leadership training before women enter the workforce.

95% of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say they learned at least one professional skill through sports.

The most common skills learned that support them in their careers:

- **Teamwork\***
- **Performing under pressure\***
- **Communication\***
- Discipline
- Perseverance
- **Adaptability\***

98% of the **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed say sports helped prepare them to compete in life beyond their playing career.

**\* ACCORDING TO THE BOARD**

The qualities women say they learned in sports align closely with the qualities **BOARD MEMBERS** say they value at work.

**Communication, teamwork, adaptability** and **performing under pressure** are also among the top skills **BOARD MEMBERS** say they value in other board or executive team members.

92% of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say they learned at least one key characteristic from sports.

Most commonly:

- **Confidence\***
- **Resilience\***
- **Trust in self\***
- Mental strength

**Confidence** is the top characteristic **BOARD MEMBERS** say helps them be successful in the boardroom, followed by **trust in self** and **resilience**.

THOSE SKILLS CHANGE HOW WOMEN MOVE THROUGH THEIR CAREERS.

They don't just learn confidence. They act on it.

**58%** OF **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** WHO HAVE BEEN PROMOTED PROACTIVELY REQUESTED THEIR MANAGER CONSIDER THEIR ADVANCEMENT. THAT MAKES **EVERYDAY ATHLETES 16% MORE LIKELY TO DO SO THAN THOSE WHO PLAYED LESS OR NO SPORTS.**

NEARLY **30%** **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** ARE NEARLY **30% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN PROMOTED MULTIPLE TIMES.**

NEARLY **25%** **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** ARE NEARLY **25% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE EVER NEGOTIATED THEIR SALARIES.**



*"I would hop on two separate trains, taking over an hour each way, just to get to volleyball practice. It gave me great determination and discipline at a young age."*  
JANE, BUSINESS PLANNING SPECIALIST & EVERYDAY ATHLETE, CANADA

# LESSONS FROM SPORTS HELP WOMEN DREAM BIG.

For **EVERYDAY ATHLETES**, it's not just about the now.

Nearly half (47%)\* of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who do not yet hold senior leadership or board-level roles aspire to do so, making them 37% more likely than those who played less or no sports.

\*This number jumps to 70% of the **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed.

That leadership ambition is no accident. 81% of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say they learned advocacy through sports, turning competition into a training ground for speaking up.

## EVERYDAY ATHLETES = E.L.F.ING ADVOCATES



*"Competitive sports growing up just made me tougher and that 100% translated to the toughness required of being a woman in my field."*  
JANINE, SPACECRAFT THERMAL ENGINEER & EVERYDAY ATHLETE, US

# SPORTS GIVE HER A HEAD START.

Before she even starts her career, she learned to handle setbacks and come back stronger. Those skills won't expire.

**94%** OF **EVERYDAY ATHLETES JUST BEGINNING THEIR CAREERS SAY THAT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS THEY LEARNED THROUGH SPORTS HAVE HELPED THEM NAVIGATE WORKPLACE CHALLENGES.**

**73%** OF **EVERYDAY ATHLETES JUST BEGINNING THEIR CAREERS SAY THAT OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN SPORTS HAS HELPED PREPARE THEM TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN THEIR CAREER.**



# THE LESSONS LAST ALL THE WAY TO LEADERSHIP – INCLUDING THE BOARDROOM.

Learning leadership early through sports pays dividends well into women’s careers.

**77%** OF WOMEN LEADERS WHO WERE EVERYDAY ATHLETES SAY SPORTS HELPED THEM GAIN CONFIDENCE THAT HAS HELPED THEM SUCCEED IN THEIR CAREERS.

**72%** OF WOMEN LEADERS WHO WERE EVERYDAY ATHLETES ATTRIBUTE THEIR CURRENT SUCCESS TO PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS GROWING UP.

**85%** OF THE BOARD MEMBERS WE SURVEYED SAY THE LESSONS LEARNED IN SPORTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR FUTURE BOARD MEMBERS.



*“The biggest sport lesson I carry as a board member is helping the team balance between focus and flexibility. Focus on the next shot in the game you’re playing, but flex to your environment.”*

ROLI SAXENA, BOARD MEMBER, US

## AROUND THE WORLD

# ONE GLOBAL STORY. FOUR WAYS TO TELL IT.

Across all four countries, the pattern is clear: women who played sports carry those lessons into their careers. Here’s what stands out.



UNITED STATES: ADVOCACY



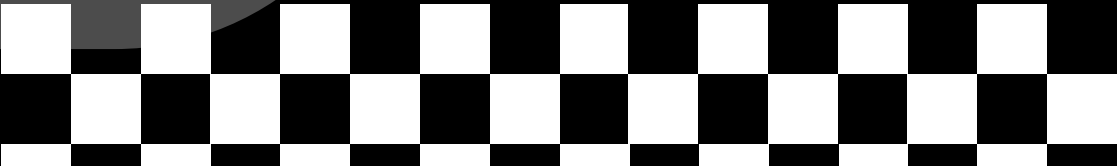
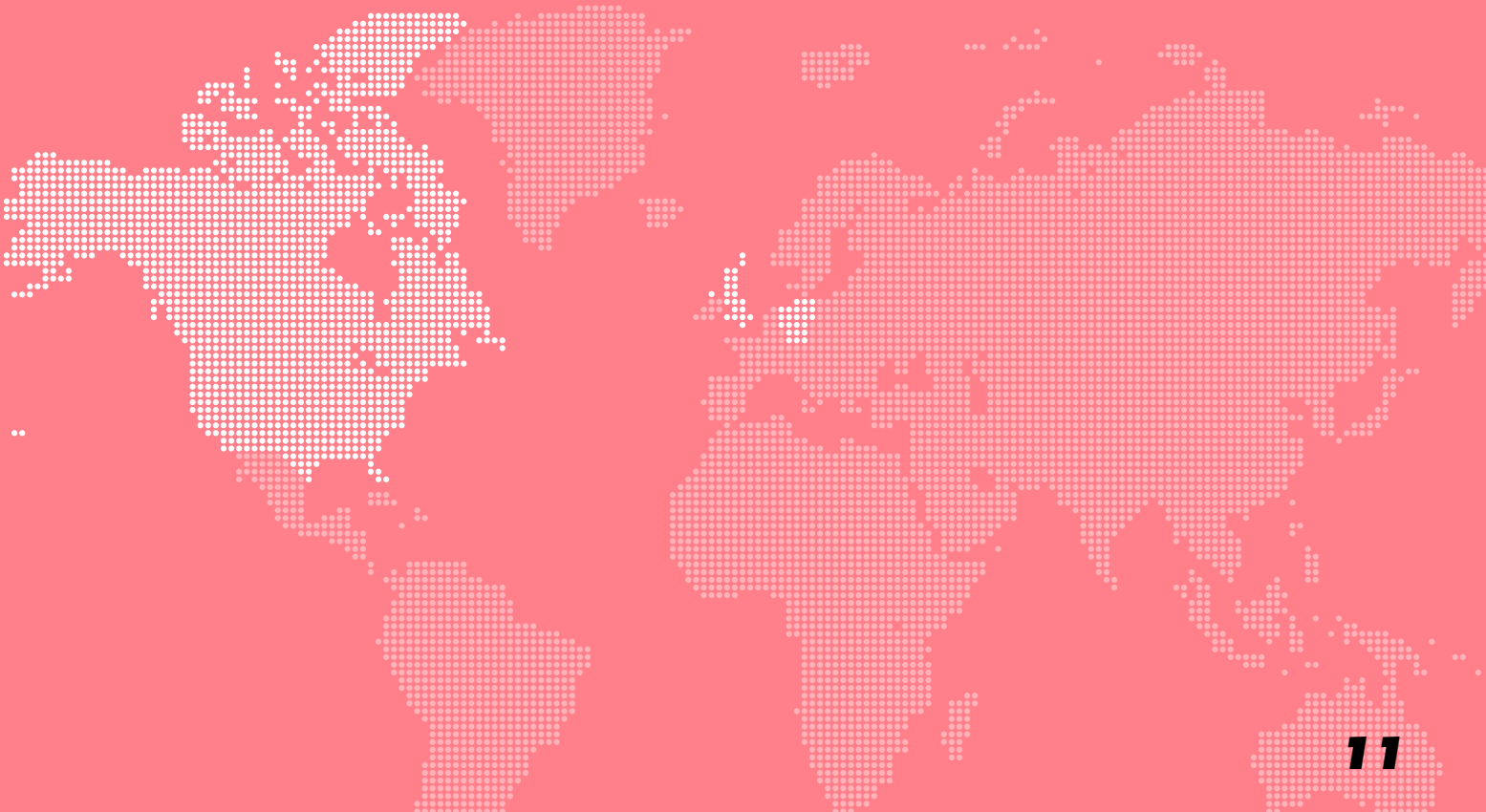
CANADA: AMBITION



GERMANY: ADVANCEMENT



UNITED KINGDOM: NEGOTIATION





UNITED STATES

## UNITED STATES AT A GLANCE

**90%** of full-time working women believe sports are an important leadership-building activity for girls.

**70%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** attribute at least part of their success today to playing sports growing up.

**93%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** learned at least one key characteristic through sports. Top 3:

Resilience

Confidence

Mental strength

**EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who learned professional skills in sports learned at least **7** capabilities on average. Top 3:

Teamwork

Performing under pressure

Communication

# SPORTS TEACH WOMEN TO ADVOCATE.

In the US, the standout story is advocacy: **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** are especially likely to say those experiences taught them to speak up for themselves and for others.

**76%**

of US **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say sports taught them to advocate for themselves. This is the highest rate across the four countries.

**84%**

of US **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** say they are committed to opening doors for women at work, compared to 74% of US women who played less or no sports.

**97%**

of US **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed say they learned advocacy through sports.



## FELIZIA EVERYDAY ATHLETE

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, HR | VOLLEYBALL, BASKETBALL, SOCCER, TRACK & FIELD

Playing sports shaped Felizia's commitment to advancing opportunities for women at work. She wants to be a great teammate—a mindset learned playing soccer and running track. As an HR leader, Felizia advocates in powerful ways, striving to address historical pay imbalances between men and women. She also models giving and receiving feedback as a positive thing, suggesting specific ways to improve like her coaches did.

*"I made sure we have policies in place for pay equity. That's a big thing for me."*



## JAEDYN SHAW PRO ATHLETE

OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST AND NWSL CHAMPION | SOCCER

Jaedyn grew up during a rapidly evolving era for women's soccer, turning pro at 17 soon after the NWSL's first collective bargaining agreement. She recognizes that the advocacy of prior generations helped create the opportunities that launched her own career. That perspective shapes how she views leadership today: not as a title, but as a responsibility to keep pushing for progress.

*"I'm grateful for the women before me who moved our game forward. I want to create even more opportunities for the next generation."*



## BRITTON MASON PRO ATHLETE

PARALYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST AND WORLD RECORD HOLDER | PARA TRACK & FIELD

Brittini is a five-time Paralympic medalist in the T47 class and an entrepreneur. Sports taught her that advocacy starts with communication: listening to feedback, articulating what she needs and knowing when to speak up. She carries those skills in her professional life and uses them to advocate beyond herself, pushing for increased visibility, equal treatment and opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

*"Sports and the Paralympic circuit really taught me to speak up about what you believe in."*



## GAYLE TAIT BOARD MEMBER

E.L.F. BEAUTY AND JAMIESON WELLNESS | BALLET

Gayle started ballet young, surrounded by women who taught her resilience and grit. For much of her career, she continued to work almost exclusively with women, thriving as an executive. Later, in different settings, she felt a responsibility to offer other women the kind of supportive environments she'd taken for granted. Today she mentors startup CEOs and advocates for women's representation on boards.

*"I'm very outspoken about advocacy, including in the boardroom."*

**CANADA  
AT A GLANCE**

**93%** of full-time working women believe sports are an important leadership-building activity for girls.

**68%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** attribute at least part of their success today to playing sports growing up.

**92%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** learned at least one key characteristic through sports. Top 3:

Resilience

Confidence

Mental strength/  
Trust in self (tied)

**EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who learned professional skills in sports learned at least **6** capabilities on average. Top 3:

Teamwork

Performing under pressure

Communication

# SPORTS FUEL AMBITION.

In Canada, the standout story is ambition: **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who have not reached senior leadership yet are more likely than others, and their counterparts in the other countries surveyed, to want to get there.

**53%** of Canadian **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who are not yet in senior leadership **aspire to be in leadership or on a board one day.** This makes them **46% more likely** to do so compared to Canadian women who played less or no sports.

**72%** of Canadian **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** learned confidence in sports that has helped them in their careers.

**98%** of Canadian **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed say **sports prepared them to compete beyond their playing careers.**



**JULIE** **EVERYDAY ATHLETE**

**SR. MANAGER, SALES | BASKETBALL, TENNIS, RUGBY, FLAG FOOTBALL, SOCCER**  
Rugby taught Julie that drive is about more than just winning each game. It's also about continuous improvement. Like she used to break down tape after a game, in sales, she uses postmortems to analyze even the smallest learnings to advance to the next level. Julie appreciates the challenges that make her adapt in order to prepare for what's next. She aspires to be a VP, viewing her career trajectory similarly to that of an athlete, moving from player to coach to general manager.

***"I don't want to be stagnant. I'm curious how anyone can be so okay with the status quo."***



**NATALIE ALLPORT** **PRO ATHLETE**

**FREERIDE CHAMPION OF THE AMERICAS | SNOWBOARDING**

A lifelong multi-sport athlete, Natalie was drawn to snowboarding precisely because it did not come naturally. The challenge made her curious about how far she could push herself. Now a professional snowboarder, she is effectively the CEO of her own business, overseeing everything from coordinating coaches to securing sponsors. Unsurprisingly, sports shaped how she approaches it all: breaking big ambitions into daily actions while grounding them in a larger purpose, a framework she applies across athletics, creative work, speaking and her Olympic dream.

***"I've always had this process of setting the goal and then breaking it down until it becomes a daily habit."***



**ROBYN SCOTT** **BOARD MEMBER**

**PGA CANADA & CANADA SNOWBOARD | VOLLEYBALL, BASKETBALL, SKI RACING, TENNIS**

Robyn credits sports with instilling an inner confidence that helped her rise to chief legal officer and board member. As an executive, she draws on multiple lessons learned through sports, including leaning on teammates to accomplish hard things. In volleyball, Robyn had to trust that her setter would show up for her so she could do her own part well. In the boardroom, she trusts in the skills that her peers bring to the table, making room for them to contribute in a way that complements her strengths.

***"Sports taught me true confidence. I know what I'm doing, I know what I'm good at and I'm able to articulate it."***



GERMANY  
AT A GLANCE

88% of full-time working women believe sports are an important leadership-building activity for girls.

63% of EVERYDAY ATHLETES attribute at least part of their success today to playing sports growing up.

93% of EVERYDAY ATHLETES learned at least one key characteristic through sports. Top 3:

Confidence

Trust in self

Resilience

EVERYDAY ATHLETES who learned professional skills in sports learned at least 5 capabilities on average. Top 3:

Teamwork

Discipline

Perseverance

# SPORTS ACCELERATE ADVANCEMENT.

In Germany, the standout story is advancement: **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** show the strongest lift in promotion, and many say the skills they learned through sports helped them move up.

45%  
MORE LIKELY

German **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** are 45% more likely to have been promoted multiple times compared to German women who played less or no sports. This is the largest lift in multiple promotions across the countries surveyed.

88%

of German **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who have been promoted say they learned a professional skill through sports that helped them move up.

100%

of German **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed learned at least one professional skill through sports that they use regularly in their non-playing career.



**ANGELA** EVERYDAY ATHLETE

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING | TENNIS, CROSS COUNTRY

Growing up playing tennis, Angela realized that missing is inevitable. She learned that the best players are not perfect. Instead, what sets them apart is that they know how to recover faster. That lesson is Angela's superpower at work as she regularly pushes herself to try new things and avoid getting stuck. Even when it is uncomfortable, she experiments, like testing a totally new way of presenting. Tennis helped train her to bounce back quickly when she has a miss – something she believes helps her get ahead.

*"You've got to be willing to leave your comfort zone."*



**SOFIE FELLA** PRO ATHLETE

GERMAN NATIONAL TEAM MEMBER | RUGBY

When Sofie discovered rugby at 15, the strength and muscularity she had once been told made her "too big" as a dancer became an advantage. That physical confidence grew into the confidence to speak up, pursue ambitious goals and take professional risks. Whether as a member of the Germany women's rugby team or when leading off the field in finding sponsorships, Sofie has carried those lessons into her career. Even when she is the youngest person in the room, she can often be found leading meetings, driving projects forward and taking on responsibility.

*"It's about having a big voice. Showing up in any room, taking up space and having the confidence to say exactly what we think."*



**MARTINA SAMWER** BOARD MEMBER

21DX & NUMEROUS START-UPS | FIELD HOCKEY

Martina believes that her journey to high-impact leadership was accelerated by her knack for cultivating strong relationships. She started developing her networking and leadership skills when she played field hockey. As team captain, she strengthened her ability to build culture and lasting bonds. As a business leader, Martina still fosters camaraderie to create a supportive environment where everyone's impact is recognized. Truly getting to know people and treating them with respect continues to contribute to her success.

*"Sports taught me to really connect with people, which mattered when it came to taking on more responsibility."*



## UNITED KINGDOM

### UNITED KINGDOM AT A GLANCE

**91%** of full-time working women believe sports are an important leadership-building activity for girls.

**64%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** attribute at least part of their success today to playing sports growing up.

**89%** of **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** learned at least one key characteristic through sports. Top 3:

Confidence

Resilience

Mental strength/  
Trust in self (tied)

**EVERYDAY ATHLETES** who learned professional skills in sports learned at least **5** capabilities on average. Top 3:

Teamwork

Performing under  
pressure

Communication

# SPORTS EMPOWER WOMEN TO NEGOTIATE.

In the UK, the standout story is negotiation: **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** are especially likely to ask for more, from salary to flexibility to the terms that shape how they work.

**36%**  
MORE LIKELY

UK **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** are 36% more likely to have ever **negotiated their salary** compared to UK women who played less or no sports. This is the greatest percentage lift across the countries surveyed.

**61%**

of UK **EVERYDAY ATHLETES** have **negotiated for flexibility** in their schedule or work location, the most common term requested.

**69%**

of UK **PRO ATHLETES** we surveyed have **negotiated work terms** in their non-playing careers.



### **SALLY** EVERYDAY ATHLETE

**BUSINESS OWNER, YOGA TEACHER, RETREAT LEADER | GYMNASTICS, BALLET, SWIMMING, TENNIS, BADMINTON, FIELD HOCKEY**

Sports taught Sally about setting boundaries and negotiating to honor them. In her thirties, she injured herself overtraining for an Ironman after following her coach's program rather than listening to her body. Since then, she trusts her instincts and speaks up for herself with kindness and compassion. She has confidently negotiated for herself and her business on many occasions, whether asking for a raise or more challenging work in her corporate career or working with a retreat venue so her students have the experience she intended.

***"Negotiation is really about knowing your self-worth and about setting boundaries."***



### **KATHERINE LEGGE** PRO ATHLETE

**FASTEST WOMAN TO QUALIFY FOR THE INDIANAPOLIS 500 | MOTORSPORT**

Katherine's motorsport career required her to become both an athlete and a businesswoman, learning from a young age to secure funding, negotiate sponsorships, and communicate her value in order to create opportunities to compete. That meant pushing through the discomfort of self-promotion, something that didn't come naturally. Racing taught her that courage doesn't require confidence: when the desire to achieve something outweighs the uncertainty surrounding it, you find a way forward. This mindset has shaped not only how Katherine competes, but how she advocates for herself, negotiates her value and continues creating opportunities throughout her career.

***"If you want something badly enough, then that want and need to achieve supersedes your fear."***



### **SHANICE BECKFORD-NORTON** BOARD MEMBER

**SPORTSAID, BASKETBALL4ALL, SBN FOR THE KIDS | BASKETBALL (PRO), VOLLEYBALL, ATHLETICS, HANDBALL, GYMNASTICS**

Sports give Shanice a platform to use her voice and shift people's perspectives. As a professional athlete and coach, she inspires and unites, drawing from her own experiences to teach players about reaching a common goal no matter what their personal "why" is. As a board member, she reminds herself she was invited for a reason; people want to learn from her. By sharing what she deeply believes in, she can positively and meaningfully influence resources available to athletes.

***"I can impact policy that changes the opportunities athletes are given."***

CONCLUSIONS & PATH FORWARD

MORE GIRLS  
IN SPORTS.  
MORE WOMEN  
READY TO LEAD.

The future is bright. It's easy to see why 90% of women currently or recently working full-time believe sports are an important leadership-building activity for girls.

More girls than ever before are staying in the game. While 62% of Baby Boomer women who started in sports played through the end of high/secondary school, that number has risen to 70% of Gen Z women.\*

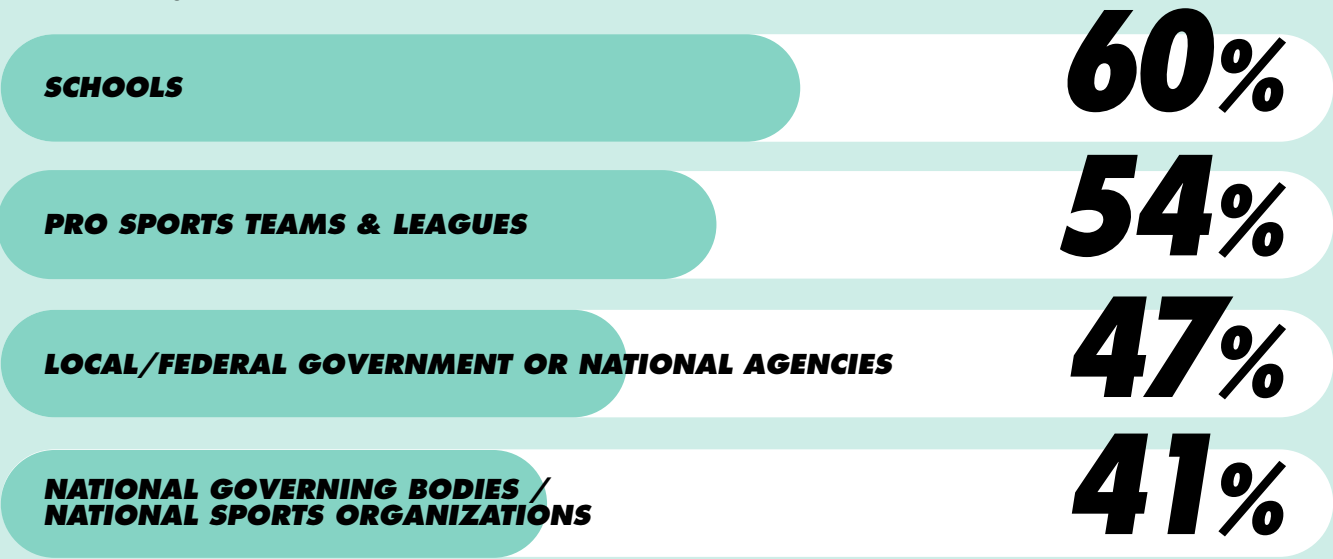
69% OF EVERYDAY ATHLETES WHO HAVE WORKED AT LEAST FIVE YEARS SAY THE LESSONS THEY LEARNED IN SPORTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE.

Even so, girls across the US<sup>1</sup>, Canada<sup>2</sup>, Germany<sup>3</sup> and the UK<sup>4</sup> all participate in sports at lower rates than boys in their countries. And our research shows 49% of women who have played sports experienced gender discrimination in it.

\*Ages 18+

SO, WHO NEEDS TO STEP UP TO INCREASE ACCESS?

According to women in the workforce



WHAT WOULD KEEP MORE GIRLS IN SPORTS?

According to those who quit before the end of high/secondary school

- Greater comfort in their bodies
- Fewer competing demands on their time
- More encouragement
- More exposure to women's sports, role models and brand support \*

EVERY LEGENDARY FEMALE WAS ONCE A GIRL DECIDING WHETHER TO SIGN UP. KEEP HER IN THE GAME AND YOU CHANGE WHO'S IN THE ROOM.

\* See what we're e.l.f.ing doing about it →

# E.L.F.'S ROSTER OF EMPOWERED.LEGENDARY.FEMALES.



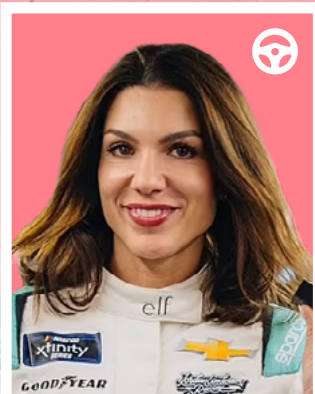
**BILLIE JEAN KING**  
Tennis Legend  
Billie Jean King Cup



**KENDALL COYNE SCHOFIELD**  
Professional Women's  
Hockey League (PWHL)



**FLAU'JAE JOHNSON**  
Women's National  
Basketball Association



**KATHERINE LEGGE**  
Professional Racer  
Indy 500 & NASCAR



**ALLY SENTNOR**  
National Women's  
Soccer League (NWSL)



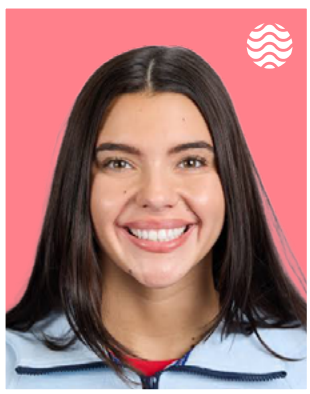
**JAEDYN SHAW**  
National Women's  
Soccer League (NWSL)



**JESS CARTER**  
National Women's  
Soccer League (NWSL)



**LO'EAU LABONTA**  
National Women's  
Soccer League (NWSL)



**ANASTASIA PAGONIS**  
Paralympic Swimmer



**INTERNATIONAL DANCE LEAGUE (IDL)**



**WONDER WOMEN OF WRESTLING FOUNDATION**



**BILLIE JEAN KING CUP**

# HOW WE GIVE AN E.L.F. ABOUT WOMEN'S SPORTS



**FULL COURT. FULL HEART.**  
e.l.f. bets on the whole woman, not just the jersey, putting \$75,000 behind basketball star, rapper and philanthropist Flau'jae Johnson's More to 4 Foundation.



**BACKING THE BEAT.**  
e.l.f. empowers the next generation of dancers as a founding partner of the world's first pro International Dance League.



**BROAD STROKES. BOLD MOVES.**  
e.l.f. supports world champion blind para swimmer Anastasia "Tas" Pagonis, partnering with her to create Beauty For Every Eye, making beauty more accessible.



**EYES. LIPS. FUEL.**  
e.l.f. backs legendary females like barrier-breaking Katherine Legge, the only female driver on the track this year and one of nine in 109 years.



**NO SITTING ON THE SIDELINES.**  
e.l.f. champions Tottenham Hotspur WSL and the National Women's Soccer League helping grow visibility and opportunity across women's soccer.



**GAME. SET. CHANGE.**  
e.l.f. stands with Billie Jean King to advance equality in sports at the Billie Jean King Cup and the Power of Women's Sports Summit.



**FIRST ON THE ICE.**  
e.l.f. shows up for the Professional Women's Hockey League as its first beauty brand partner, supporting the league since its inaugural season.



**POWER GRIP. POWER GRIT.**  
e.l.f. goes to the mat for girls wrestling, sponsoring the Wonder Women of Wrestling, and funding scholarships for 16 college-bound seniors.

# METHODOLOGY

## Data collection and participants:

This research report is born out of a partnership between e.l.f. Beauty and Parity. As described below, the report aggregates multiple original data collections from three key populations across four countries, making it one of the largest and broadest studies to date to explore the role of sports in influencing women’s careers.

The primary data collection was an online survey (N=9,056) among women in Canada (n=2,024), Germany (n=2,002), the United Kingdom (n=2,017) and the United States (n=3,013) fielded June 6-23, 2026. Participants were recruited through a survey panel provider and surveys were provided in each countries’ national language(s). When the survey was provided in English, each country’s survey followed localized spelling conventions and other dialect norms. To be eligible, participants had to be between 18 and 65 years old and either be currently working full-time (30+ hours/week) or have experience doing so in the past five years (since June 2021). All data is self-reported based on respondents’ survey answers. The data collection employed preliminary quotas and data were subsequently weighted by race/ethnicity and age (US) or age (CAN, GER, UK) to reflect the demographic composition for women in each country, using the most recently available Census data for each market. No weighting was applied at the country level in reporting on the full sample. The margin of error for this survey is  $\pm < 1\%$  for all countries (CAN:  $\pm .86\%$ , GER:  $\pm .85\%$ , UK:  $\pm .86\%$ , US:  $\pm .97\%$ ).

In addition, between June 4-July 12, 2026, Parity fielded an online survey of women athletes (N=328) who have competed as a professional athlete and/or national team member and are affiliated with the United States, Canada, Germany and/or the United Kingdom. To be eligible, participants had to be age 18+, have work experience, and have at least one of the following affiliations with at least one of the aforementioned countries: currently or previously hold citizenship, have grown up in country, have trained or competed in country for at least five years, and/or have a national identity that includes a country in question. Where athletes had multiple affiliations, to conduct country-specific analysis, researchers determined a primary affiliation based on the following hierarchy of criteria: i) national identity, ii) representation on a national team, iii) citizenship. All but three athletes were categorized into a primary affiliation by this classification framework; the remaining three athletes who had equal US and CAN affiliations were counted in both countries during country-specific analysis. In total, the athlete sample was categorized as follows: Canada (n=53), Germany (n=42), the United Kingdom (n=52) and the United States (n=184). All data is self-reported based on respondents’ survey answers. Data are not weighted.

Subsequently, between July 15-August 5, 2026, Parity fielded an online survey of board members (N=114) who are affiliated with Canada (n=16), Germany (n=3), the United Kingdom (n=16) and the United States (n=110). To be eligible, participants had to be age 18+, be currently serving on a board of directors or have board experience from the past five years, and have at least one of the following affiliations with at least one of the aforementioned countries: currently or previously hold citizenship, have grown up in country, have lived in country for at least five years, and/or serve on a board headquartered in country. The survey used purposive, convenience and snowball sampling strategies. The above reported numbers represent the number of participants who had at least one affiliation to each country, thus it sums to greater than 114 given multiple respondents who had multiple country affiliations. No primary affiliation was determined because the analysis for the report remained at the full sample level. All data is self-reported based on respondents’ survey answers. Respondent board experience was varied: 92 had experience on nonprofit boards, 70 had experience on private corporate boards, 31 had experience on public corporate boards, and 12 had experience serving on other forms of boards, including advisory, education, city/country, and association. By gender: 86 were women, and 27 were men; one declined to specify.

Finally, Parity interviewed a total of 21 women, representing Everyday Athletes, Pro Athletes, and Board Members for the development of report profiles and soundbites.

## Key Definitions

**EVERYDAY ATHLETE:** Women who played sports for at least three years before the end of high/secondary school and who are currently working full-time (30+ hours/week) or have in the past five years. Three or more years reflects at least a moderately sustained commitment to sports during someone’s youth beyond simply trying sports once – or even trying it and coming back a second time. For example, an Everyday Athlete could have played sports from the ages of 6-9 and then not played again during their childhood or teenage years. Alternatively, an Everyday Athlete could have picked up a sport a year into high/secondary school and played for the rest of their pre-adult life. In aggregate, 58% of women currently or recently working full-time are Everyday Athletes, compared to 42% who played less or no sports. \* By country: Canada (54% Everyday Athlete vs 46% less or no sports); Germany (62% Everyday Athlete vs 38% less or no sports); United Kingdom (66% Everyday Athlete vs 34% less or no sports); United States (51% Everyday Athlete vs 49% less or no sports).

\*Less or no sports refers to women who played just one or

two years of sports, or did not play sports at all, before the end of high/secondary school, among women who are currently working full-time or have in the past five years.

**FULL-TIME WORK:** As this report considers multiple countries, where there are different work norms and cultures, we set a consistent definition for full-time work at 30+ hours/week. This is the lowest common denominator across the countries in this report. This threshold corresponds with the number of hours at which employees become legally benefits eligible in the United States and aligns with how the government of Canada officially defines full-time work, too.

**JUST BEGINNING THEIR CAREERS:** Refers to women who reported having fewer than five years of full-time work experience.

**LEADERS:** Leaders refers to women in middle, senior or executive-level roles or those who are self-employed, who reported that they currently or in the past have held one of the following roles: serve on a board of directors, lead the organization they work for, sit on the leadership team at their organization, lead a department in their organization, manage a team of employees or found a company or nonprofit organization. This list represents the language offered in the United States; surveys were localized to refer to work levels and leadership roles by their more common terms in each country, where differences apply.

**PROMOTION:** This refers to moving up within the same company and was specified as such in the survey.

**SPORTS:** Sports is defined broadly and inclusively. The question we asked to determine if someone played sports included a list of possible sports as well as an option to specify a sport we did not list. As there are various formats of sports (e.g. beach volleyball, sitting volleyball), the question asked participants to select the overarching sport (e.g., volleyball) that corresponded to their experience. The list of sports provided included: Baseball / Basketball / Cricket / Cross Country / Curling / Cheerleading/Stunt/Spirit / Dance / Football (American) / Field Hockey / Golf / Gymnastics / Handball / Ice Hockey / Lacrosse / Netball / Rugby / Skateboarding / Soccer / Softball / Swimming/ Diving / Tennis / Track and Field / Volleyball / Wrestling. This list represents the answers offered in the United States; surveys were localized to refer to sports (e.g., soccer/football) by their more common names in each country, where differences apply.

## Limitations

We are proud to celebrate that this study is one of the largest and broadest explorations about how sports participation influences women’s careers. As is the case with all research, this study also has limitations. Though we’ve taken steps to ensure that our data reflects the demographic composition of women in each country and we’ve examined our data for possible underlying differences between Everyday Athletes and those who played less or no sports, the comparisons between these groups are descriptive in nature and reflect statistical correlation, not definitive causation. Elsewhere in the report, statistics reflect participants’ attribution to sports, for example, in learning confidence and advocacy, among other skills and lessons. Notably, these learnings are consistent with the career outcomes where we report correlational differences. Thus, we believe the findings to be both sound and important.

## Author & Contributors

Risa Isard, Ph.D., is the Director of Research & Insights for Parity. Her research has resulted in industry-leading and peer-reviewed publications, as well as coverage in global media outlets (New York Times, SBJ, The Atlantic, CNN, etc.) and on stage at both SXSW and the ESPYs. She holds degrees from the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts and Duke University. With 10 seasons of high school sports under her belt, she’s proud to be an Everyday Athlete.

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## Citations

- <sup>1</sup>Women’s Sports Foundation (n.d.). *Our Research*.
- <sup>2</sup>Canadian Women & Sport. (2024). *Rally Report*.
- <sup>3</sup>Demetriou, Y. et al. (2024). Germany’s 2022 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents. *German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research*, 54, 260-275.
- <sup>4</sup>Sky Sports. (2025). *Game Changing: How Sport Gives Every Girl a Better Chance*

## ABOUT E.L.F. BEAUTY

**e.l.f. Beauty (NYSE: ELF) is a bold disruptor with a kind heart**, fueled by a mission to make the best of beauty accessible and a purpose to make the world a better place for every eye, lip and face. Purpose led and results driven, e.l.f. Beauty is a different kind of company that disrupts norms, shapes culture and connects communities through positivity, inclusivity and accessibility. e.l.f. Beauty's global portfolio of brands includes e.l.f. Cosmetics, e.l.f. SKIN, e.l.f. Hair, Naturium, rhode and Well People. e.l.f. Brands products are vegan, e.l.f. clean and double-certified by Leaping Bunny and PETA as cruelty-free. e.l.f. Brands are proud to have products made in Fair Trade Certified™ facilities. Learn more at [www.elfbeauty.com](http://www.elfbeauty.com).

## ABOUT PARITY

**Parity is a women's sports consultancy specializing in professional athlete partnerships.** With a mission to close the gender income and opportunity gap in sports, Parity connects brands with a diverse network of more than 1,600 pro women athletes across 85+ sports, including 300+ Olympians and Paralympians. Through athlete-led engagements, official community partnerships, women's sports consulting, and custom research, Parity helps brands authentically engage the most trusted voices in sports today. For more information, visit [www.paritynow.com](http://www.paritynow.com).

