

The other side of the world comes to NMU



USOEC boxing coach Al Mitchell, left, watches as Australian boxer Todd Kidd punches a ball held by U.S. boxer Jesse Carradine at practice at the USOEC. Center and right, women's freestyle wrestlers and male weightlifters compete at the China vs. USOEC event at the Berry.

Athletes from China and Australia came to NMU in October to test their strength and skills against United States Olympic Education Center athletes. Chinese boxers, female freestyle wrestlers and male Greco-Roman wrestlers attended a 10-day training camp followed by a China vs. USOEC competition in NMU's Berry Events Center. In addition, the Chinese athletes visited local schools and NMU classes, met with community members at various events and enjoyed shopping. Their time in the community offered Upper Peninsula residents a rare glimpse of the Chinese culture as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games approach.

The China vs. USOEC competition marked the first time China had three teams in the United States competing in the same facility at the same time.

Boxers from Australia came to campus for a two-week training camp before competing at the World Championships in Chicago. The athletes also visited local schools and explored the Marquette area.

"This is another example of the unique role the USOEC plays in Northern Michigan University's goal of internationalization," says USOEC director Jeff Kleinschmidt. "More than 200 countries field Olympic teams and the USOEC provides a unique connection to those countries. In addition, we hope the coaches can develop and maintain international relationships and learn from each other. Overall we want to further the Olympic ideals and international relationships."

Sports Hall of Fame



Seven alums were inducted into the NMU Sports Hall of Fame during Homecoming. Pictured left to right are 2007 inductees: Tom Bertoldi (football), Jun Liu (volleyball), Dennis Porter (football), Anne Goodman James (coach), Kendall Shorkey (swimming). Not pictured: Bill Pye (hockey) and Jim Hiller (hockey).

Title IX turns 35

Former associate athletic director Barb Patrick, who worked at Northern Michigan University from 1965 until her retirement in 1991, is never sure of the reaction she will receive from women athletes when she is asked to speak to them on the history of Title IX and the effect it has had on the women's athletic program at NMU.

"The young women are polite and courteous, but they have that look that says, 'What's the big deal?'" says Patrick.

The longtime Wildcat coach and administrator says it is good that the female student-athletes assume that they have a right to compete at this level, have team uniforms, receive scholarships, travel in safe vehicles, receive varsity letters, be mentored by individuals who were hired specifically to coach their teams, have access to qualified athletic trainers and doctors, have quality lodging/meals when on trips, have a place to practice at decent hours and have their own locker rooms. It wasn't always that way.

Boxing photo by Kurt Mensching, courtesy of The Mining Journal

Like many colleges and universities, she point out that it's taken most of the 35 years of the existence of Title IX for Northern Michigan University to comply with its requirements.

Technically, Title IX isn't just about athletics. The law intends that equal opportunity be provided for both genders for any type of educational programming being offered at a publicly funded school, whether that is art, music, science or any other learning opportunity. But few would argue that Title IX has had the most impact on the field of competition. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, about 3 million girls participated in high school athletics and 170,000 women on intercollegiate teams in 2005-06. These numbers represent an increase in participation at the prep level of about 800 percent and at the college level of about 400 percent since the law's inception.

To women involved in sports prior to Title IX, they see the law as the foundation for the equality that exists today for girls and women in competitive sports in educational institutions across this country.

Despite the gains, many say there hasn't been enough progress. They point out that the 2005-06 high school rate of female participation is 41 percent of all high school athletes, but that girls represent 49 percent of the high school population. At the college level, the number is 43 percent of all collegiate athletic opportunities, but that women make up 55 percent of the college student population. They also point out that women make up more than 50 percent of the collective student body of all Division I colleges and universities, but women's athletics

receive only 32 percent of athletic recruiting dollars and 37 percent of athletic operating budgets.

Of even more concern to some is the March 17, 2005 action taken by the U.S. Department of Education to change the procedure for indicating interest in participation by females in the formal document called, "Additional Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy: Three-Part Test—Part Three." The clarification, simply put, allows schools to rely exclusively on the results of an e-mail survey to comply with the requirement to document female interest in athletics at a school. What really fired up the discussion about this change was that it was issued with little notice or opportunity for public discussion and input.

Does the clarification mean the

This photo from the 1959 NMU Peninsular yearbook is captioned: "Northern beauties preparing themselves for a dip in the pool. Note the beautifully proportioned lines in this photograph. (We mean the tile, of course)." It demonstrates the difficulty women athletes had in being taken seriously and treated equally before the advent of Title IX.



demise of athletic opportunities for female athletes? Most Title IX experts say no, but that the change does leave an incredibly large loophole for schools to slow or even stop progress toward true equality.

Patrick is proud of NMU's gender-equity efforts, past and present. "I think Northern Michigan University has been one of the best schools in the country in trying to comply with Title IX. There was a bit of a slowdown in the '80s and NMU was one of the schools chosen for an audit by the Office of Civil Rights in the 1990s, but those times taught us about what more could be done. I

have to believe that NMU is in better shape than a whole lot of institutions in the country. It's something to take pride in."

Today, there are 193 Wildcat women (55 percent) and 161 Wildcat men (45 percent) on NMU's 13 team rosters (8 women's teams and 5 men's teams). The overall NMU student body is made up of 54 percent women and 46 percent men. Scholarships for women are at the NCAA maximum in each sport. According to NMU Athletic Director Ken Godfrey, "Our gender percentages have to be within 2 percentage points, so we are in excellent shape and one of the better schools nationwide."

No matter what the Title IX national statistics are today, Patrick knows two things for certain:

intercollegiate athletic opportunities for girls and women are a whole lot better now than they were 35 years ago; and today there are still many young girls and women who are being denied the opportunities that they are entitled to under the law, perhaps because of ignorance of the law or outright defiance of it.

"We've come a long way, baby" is a phrase uttered many times by girls and women in sports throughout the country. But there's still a ways to go.

— Cindy Paavola '84 BS