

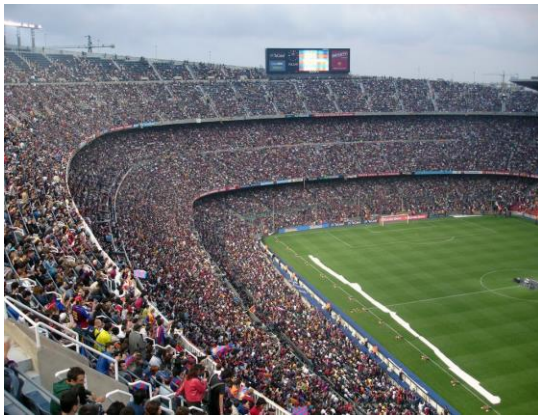
The MeToo Movement & The Women's World Cup

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The 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup was held in Paris, France, marking the eighth addition of the Women's World Cup. The soccer world is primarily dominated by powerful, rich men. Female soccer players are unfortunately accustomed to working a world where their pay is often low, their accommodations are sub-par, and the institution itself dramatically limits their involvement in the sport. (This is the first year FIFA allowed 24 teams to play).

The 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup will be the first since the inception of the #MeToo movement. This movement supports survivors of sexual violence and seeks to empower survivors in an effort to build a community of advocates. The movement supports survivors by providing resources and a platform for speaking out. It also works to "reframe and expand" the sexual violence conversation.

Reflective of the #MeToo movement during the Women's World Cup are the countless efforts to make women's national teams equal to those of men, including equal treatment and equal financial compensation. Soccer is becoming more visible and powerful. It is becoming a new platform for women and activism. The #MeToo movement has inspired women to come forward in the soccer



world in order to make the institution more equal and safer.

Detracting more the incredible sport itself are the accusations of sexual harassment by men who influence the sport and the players. It is commonplace for men to use their positions of power to harass or abuse women. In 2019 alone, coaches in five countries were accused by players for sexual misconduct (Panja, 2019). Currently, the FIFA vice president is being internally investigated after he was accused of dismissing an

employee after she rejected his romantic advances. Ahmad Ahmad, the president of Africa's soccer confederation, was accused of sexual harassment of several women. He has denied these accusations. Although the framework of soccer organizations lacks a proper and safe reporting mechanism, the MeToo movement has inspired women to vocalize the harassment and bring it to the public's attention. In a sport embodying strength and power, the male-dominated arena nevertheless highlights the vulnerability of these women. FIFA's policies for reporting and for support are weak and women lack a sufficient way to report sexual misconduct.

On June 7, 2019, the FIFA president Gianni Infantino and the executive director of the Empowerment of Women (United Nations) Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, signed the first memorandum of understanding between the two institutions at the Women's Football Convention FIFA. They are joining forces to achieve gender equality. Mlambo-Ngcuka discussed how soccer is a widely played and watched sport. She believes that if the governing body promotes women's

empowerment, it can greatly impact the advancement of gender equality. The memorandum symbolizes the first step in transforming the gender balance in soccer in a battle for social transformation.

FIFA's first ever Women's Football Convention was held on June 6 and 7, 2019. Leaders from the world of soccer attended an event designed to discuss the development of women's soccer, including the social benefits of the sport for women and girls, and the positive impact that soccer can have on female empowerment. The goal of the convention was to develop the sport for females. One step is to increase female participation, with a goal of increasing female players to 60 million by 2026. A second goal that the convention discussed is the ways in which FIFA can increase exposure for women's soccer and increase its commercial value. Women's soccer is notoriously underrepresented in the news, with men's soccer receiving substantially more coverage and as a result, more money. The Convention also looked at ways in which female voices within the soccer community can be amplified, specifically by ensuring female representation in decision making and females holding higher positions of power. By creating a gender-balanced leadership, the sport itself will become more equal.

Learn more about the MeToo Movement: <https://metoomvmt.org/>