



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on September 3, 2025

## Attack on Manliness: The Left Is Coming for Football — Again

Ah, pigskins and padding, crashing and bashing, it's that time of the year again: It's attack-on-football season.

For many years now, legions of critics have sought to sack one of America's favorite pastimes. It's too violent, they say — and what of the head injuries? Lions and tigers and concussions, oh my!

What really drives this "concern," though, aver observers such as late radio great Rush Limbaugh, is that it's part of an antipathy for all things masculine. A good example, too, may be a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*. It's penned by Michael A. Messner, professor emeritus of sociology and "gender studies" at USC Dornsife and noted male feminist.



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### Messner's Messy Musings

Now, for the record, I've neither ever played nor watched tackle football; I've never been a fan. So I have no related emotional vested interest in this matter. We all, however, should be fans of Truth.

Speaking of which, or the lack of which, Messner opens his piece stating that girls are flocking to football now. That is, flag football — "the next emerging sport" for girls. Yet, he wonders, "If tackle football isn't safe for girls, why do we let boys play?" Moreover, the professor [writes](#):

But it's not just girls' football that gets special treatment: There is a long history whereby the rules of girls' and women's sports have been adapted and constrained to accommodate girls' and women's supposed physical limitations. Boys play baseball; girls play softball (despite a deep history of girls' and women's baseball). And as the game of lacrosse has expanded in American high schools in recent years, the boys' full-contact game requires players to don helmets and protective equipment on their hands, arms and shoulders, while girls, shielded by rules that limit contact, wear only eye guards and protective mouthpieces.

Messner then says that all this is predicated on the supposition that females are "the weaker sex." And, of course, his assumption is that this assumption is a bad thing.

Now, one can be tempted to say to Messner here: The '90s called, and they want their feminist theory back. For the standard dogma back then stated that the sexes must be considered identical, except for the superficial physical differences. Furthermore, they must be viewed as identical in terms of abilities. Why, these theorists even went so far as claiming that women could equal men in sports. They just needed more time to develop themselves and "catch up."



## The Professor's Fumble

Of course, this fanciful claim was undermined by another leftist agenda. That is, the halfway demasculinized males called “transgenders” began taking away females’ sporting opportunities. When many women then cried foul, pleading unfairness, it was a tacit admission that feminist physical-equality dogma was bunk.

Besides, if females aren’t the “weaker sex” in athletics, why would Messner accept having separate sporting categories limited to women? What is more of an admission of weaker status than this segregation itself?

In reality, Messner’s question is silly. You can argue about whether boys should play football — but not, rationally, based on a sameness-of-the-sexes argument. And this argument isn’t invalid just for the aforementioned reason, either.

Rather, girls are, in fact, more likely to suffer athletic injuries, despite generally playing less dangerous sports than boys do. For instance, girls are 2.5 times more likely to suffer concussions in high school soccer than boys are. They also require more than 2.5 times as long to recover from them. Why, as *Forbes* [related](#) in 2019:

A new study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that girls who play high school soccer are at nearly the same risk for traumatic brain injuries as boys who play high school football.

So a risk-related question then arises: If boys shouldn’t have football as an option, should girls have soccer?

Or should everyone just play tennis — or better yet golf?

The point is, where do you draw the line? We risk our lives just by living, and everyone decides to assume a certain level of risk. Heck, I do that with the ice cream and other sweets I scarf down daily.

## Sugar and Spice vs. Snips and Snails and Puppy Dog Tails

The reality is that there’s a good reason why females’ sports are more “gentle.” Their bodies’ greater fragility is the least of it, too. To introduce this, consider the human norm of having rites symbolizing transition from boyhood to manhood. Examples:

- The Vanuatu, of the Southwestern Pacific Ocean, had boys dive from wooden towers. They’d reach speeds up to 45 mph. This helps explain why the Vanuatu tribe was always 99 percent female. (Yes, that’s a joke.)
- Boys of the Sateré-Mawé tribe in Brazil wear gloves filled with bullet ants for more than 10 minutes.
- Aboriginal Australian adolescent boys would undergo the “Walkabout,” in which they’d live in the wilderness for up to six months, testing their survival skills.

Football now sounds a little tame, doesn’t it?

## The Bottom Line

The point is this, however: The sexes are inherently different. These differences relate to their roles,

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which also are different (whether moderns like it or not). For this reason, we treat them differently. While boys don't have to be Spartan hoplites, wise people do want to cultivate their masculine toughness to a degree. Manly virtue matters — especially for civilization's survival.

On the other hand, cultivating girls' inherent virtues means, in part, encouraging a motherly gentleness. This doesn't mean they should be snowflakes, but we don't want snips and snails and puppy dog tails, either. If we're honest with ourselves, we'll acknowledge that we don't value effeminacy in boys or a masculinized attitude in girls.

As for Messner, he is right on one matter: Head trauma, endured in football, can be dangerous. But the solution may be within reach. Advancing technology should ultimately provide helmets that dissipate virtually all of a blow's energy before it can be transferred into a player's brain. This is where the focus should be, not on banning football.

Besides, as far too many pencil-necked academics prove, head trauma isn't necessary for diminished intellectual function.



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