

FROM TITLE IX TO BIG TEN TITLES

*Highlighting the women
who help achieve
victory for MSU*

DODGEBALL



Photo courtesy of the National Collegiate Dodgeball Association

POMPON

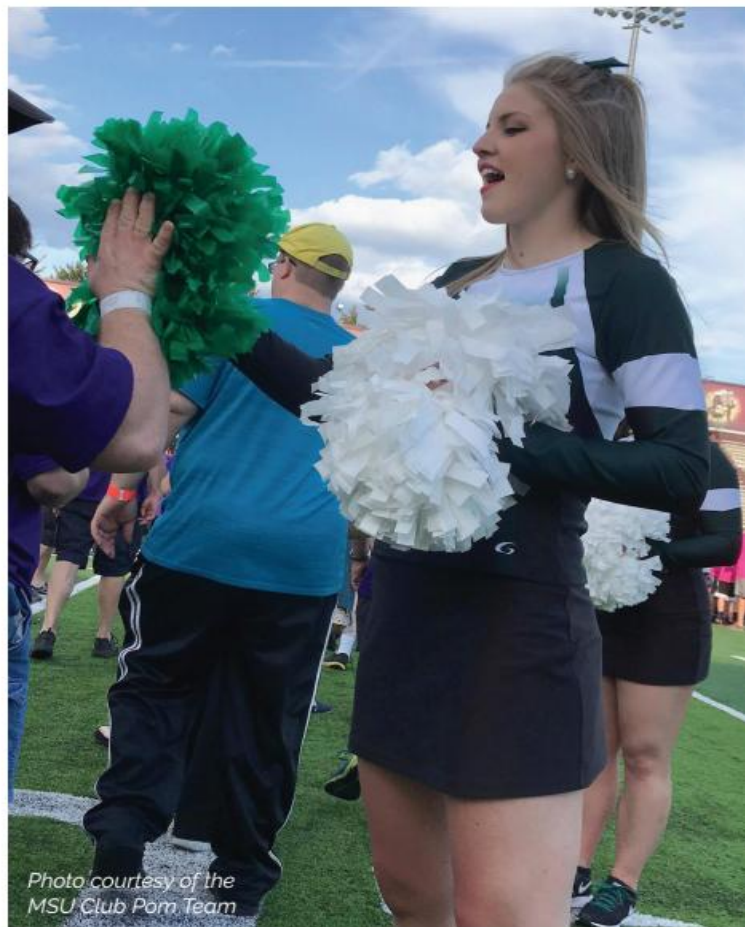


Photo courtesy of the MSU Club Pom Team



Photo courtesy of the MSU Club Pom Team

ROWING



Photo by Alyssa Malak

From 2010 to now, women have won more Big Ten titles across all varsity sports than men (13-8). Since we are in the midst of Women's History Month, it is time we recognize these female Spartans and their contributions to sports.

At MSU, there are a dozen varsity sports that women compete in, as well as hundreds of club sports. Of course, this was not always the case. It was not until the implementation of Title IX that many of the women's sports were created, such as the women's rowing team in 1997, which has produced Olympic talent and continues to provide women with the opportunity to compete at the highest level of the sport.

"You feel like you're almost a special part of the school," senior rowing team member and kinesiology major Madison Glatz said of being a varsity athlete.

However, when the women's rowing team was established, it got some flack as its creation meant funding was cut for some of the men's sports, such as lacrosse.

"The original [team], back in 1997, had to deal with a lot — no one really liked them," Glatz said. "They used to be called the 'fundies' because they were funded by the school. We actually sometimes still get that."

Aside from the varsity sports, there are hundreds of female athletes who take pride in representing MSU through their club sports. Senior human biology major Rebecca Shappell is one of just two women on MSU's club dodgeball team.

"It's made me work that much harder, being one of the only girls," Shappell said. "Because I want to be one of the people who stands out regardless of whether I'm a guy or a girl."

Shappell is the president and co-captain of MSU's club dodgeball team, which is consistently one of the top programs in the nation. Since she joined during her freshman year, Shappell has been one of only a handful of women who play collegiate dodgeball in the country.

"They're very accepting of women in dodgeball," Shappell said. "I personally love it because it gives me the opportunity to stand out."

Female athletes are also heavily involved in the community, with many athletes using their off-seasons to give back.

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"It's a lot more than just our competitions," junior elementary education major and club pompon team member Allison O'Brien said. "We do a lot of donations and performances at [charity] events."

Whether it be rowing, dodging, dancing, diving or any other sport, female athletes are out there making an impact for the green and white. While they have enjoyed seizing the opportunity to play sports, many feel that there is more that could be done to recognize the contributions of the women's sports programs.

"I do feel that women's sports at Michigan State could be expanded upon," Shappell said. "There's a lot more that obviously goes into men's basketball [and] football."

Glatz echoed a similar sentiment of the rowing team: "We're not a revenue-producing sport, so we do get overlooked in that regard."

Women's sports are often less attended than their male equivalents. According to statistics from the MSU Athletics website, nearly 10,000 more people on average attend men's basketball games as compared to women's.

"If you are an avid sports fan you should support either team, men or women," Glatz said, adding, "I feel like women definitely should support other women's teams more."

Women's sports teams at MSU have made a lot of progress since the implementation of Title IX, but the contributions they have made, for both their university and community, are still underappreciated. So, go out and see what the female Spartans are doing and go watch a game — they are free to students after all.



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