

Pitt's New Athletic Director

Once again Pittsburgh is setting the trend of trailblazer compared to the rest of the country. WHY???

Is that glass I hear breaking? Could it be? For the first time in school history and for one of the rare times in Division I Athletics a woman has been named as the Athletic Director. The University of Pittsburgh has named its first female Athletic Director. Heather Lyke from Eastern Michigan University. This is an exceptional pick by an exceptional institution. Although you all know I cheer for another great institution 6 hours to our west, I applaud the forward thinking and innovative mindset taken by not only the search committee but by the search firm who led the search. I'm not sure who's idea it was, but this assignment is even more rare than females taking on CEO roles in corporate America. I wish her great success - as this is an unforgiving sports town - but even more so as a trailblazer she will be scrutinized much closer than her male counterparts. I hope that the institution allows her to surround herself with a team that is as strong as she is. Her accomplishments are already renowned. Now she'll get to showcase them on an even larger stage!

As I was watching the announcement I couldn't help but wonder what would have happened to Penn State if a female was in the Athletic Director's role when the Jerry Sandusky case came to her desk. As the President there is about to go to trial and his cohorts having already pled guilty, I'd bet that the original complaint would have garnered much more attention and been resolved in a much more expeditious and resolute manner.

Back during the U.S. women's soccer team had just won the World Cup again and was coming to our fair city on their victory tour I wrote an article about the inequity between their compensation and that of the losing men's team. If there was ever a team that inspired girls to consider sports the women's soccer team is one. Although you can certainly make the same case for the Connecticut Women's record shattering Basketball team, but then they are amateurs.

Once again we've witnessed a significant inequality between men and women. The U.S. Women's National Hockey Team is in a major dispute with their bosses about their pay, and, as of this writing, have decided to boycott the Women's Hockey World Cup that is soon to be starting. I'm certain that I know what the leadership is saying. Well, the crowds and sponsorship monies that we get for the women's games are much less than those of their male counterparts. I get it and there is definitely a business case to be made to support that side. But if there wasn't such a huge disparity between the two then the difference would be a little more palatable. After all, even in corporate America female professionals and managers are finally over the 80% parity mark. That's still a travesty, but I commend both PITT and the players of the Women's National Hockey Team for pushing the envelope.