

The Rise of China's Women's Basketball Team: An Exploration of Gender Equality in Professional Basketball

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Abstract: This article explores the rise of the Chinese women's basketball team in professional basketball and its relationship to gender equality issues. In view of the gender differences in salary, market value, social status, and other aspects, the article proposes a series of strategies to promote the realization of gender equality for female basketball players in professional basketball. This article points out that the rise of the Chinese women's basketball team will lead the process of gender equality and lay the foundation for a more equitable and inclusive future. To achieve this goal, this article highlights the importance of improving the competitive level of female athletes, improving basic education, promoting basketball culture, and promoting gender equality.

Keywords: Chinese women's basketball; Professional basketball; Gender equality; Salary; Market value; Social status; Competitive level; Female athletes

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1. Introduction

As the second largest basketball market in the world, China has long been troubled by poor performance in the international competition market. However, in recent years, the performance of the Chinese women's basketball team has attracted attention. With their excellent skills and perseverance, the members of the Chinese National Women's Basketball Team have successfully raised the ranking of the Chinese women's basketball team in the international basketball arena to the world's No. 1 and Asia's No. 1 status (data as of February 28, 2023 from FIBA official website). As the competitive level of the Chinese women's basketball team soars, the field of professional basketball has once again attracted widespread attention. In today's society, although gender differences are gradually decreasing with the continuous progress of society and the improvement of the legal system, they still exist in the field of professional basketball. This article will deeply explore the gender differences in salary, market value, and social status between male and female professional basketball players in China, and propose strategies to solve these problems in order to promote the gender equality demands of more

female basketball players. In competitive sports, instead of gender, performance should be used as the basis for athletes to be paid.

2. Gender differences in salary and benefits

The rise of the Chinese women's basketball team represents significant progress in China's professional basketball field, and also highlights the urgency of gender equality issues. We must realize that female athletes have also made outstanding contributions in the field of professional basketball, hence they should enjoy equal treatment as male athletes. In the professional basketball market of China, it is obvious that there is a significant difference in salary and benefits between male and female athletes ^[1]. This widespread inequality is mainly due to the larger market size of the men's professional basketball league, which attracts more business opportunities such as sponsorship, advertising, and endorsements. Therefore, male athletes can usually enjoy higher salary. With the outstanding performance of Chinese national women's basketball team in international competitions, the share of men's and women's basketball in Chinese basketball market will be redistributed based on the sports performance of the national women's basketball team. Therefore, in order to better encourage female basketball players in China and to solve this inequality, we can consider introducing a more transparent salary structure to ensure that the distribution of salary is more reasonable ^[2]. To achieve gender equality, we need to take multi-level measures, including formulating fair salary policies, increasing the market value of female athletes, promoting equality in social status, and strengthening gender equality education.

Professional basketball should pursue true gender equality, not just superficiality. Only through the joint efforts of all sectors of society can we achieve gender equality, make the professional basketball field fairer and just, and at the same time inspire more female athletes to keep moving forward and create more glorious history. This effort aims to ensure that the gender gap in basketball is gradually narrowed and smoothed out, so that every athlete, regardless of gender, can receive fair treatment based on the merits of their efforts and competitive performance.

3. Gender differences in market value

In recent years, Chinese women have not only made great progress in various fields of society, but have also emerged rapidly in competitive sports and made outstanding contributions to the realization of gender equality. In professional basketball, however, the gender gap in market value remains a concern. The men's basketball professional league is highly sought after for its fierce competition, the physiological advantages of male athletes, and the ability to complete difficult technical movements. This feature makes it easier for male athletes to become sports idols and obtain numerous commercial contracts and endorsement opportunities, thus further strengthening the market position of men's basketball ^[3]. However, in recent years, Chinese female basketball players have worked hard to narrow the natural physiological gap between male and female athletes through scientific training and tenacity. They have also gradually changed this situation through the superb use of technical tactics and basketball skills. The Chinese women's basketball team has continuously proven its strength in domestic and foreign competitions, significantly improved its international ranking, and through its own efforts has become the basketball idol of many Chinese people.

In order to further promote the development of the professional field of women's basketball, the brand promotion of women's basketball can be strengthened, its exposure in the media can be increased, and the visibility of female athletes can be increased. This will help to attract more sponsors and provide more business opportunities for female athletes. In competitive sports, gender differences should not be used as a limitation

to measure the value of athletes, but equal opportunities should be provided for every athlete based on their competitive skills and performance.

To sum up, the rise of the Chinese women's basketball team not only attracts more and more people to pay attention to the field of professional basketball in our country, but also sets an example for the realization of gender equality. Through the joint efforts of the entire society, we can create a more equitable and inclusive professional basketball field, allowing every athlete to have the opportunity to chase their dreams and achieve excellence in competitive sports ^[4].

4. Gender differences in social status

In terms of social status in professional basketball, gender differences have always been an issue ignored by many scholars. From the perspective of the history of competitive sports, this phenomenon mainly stems from the history and commercialization of the men's basketball league, as well as the fact that male athletes have been dominant in the field of competitive sports for a long time, thus male athletes usually enjoy a higher social status with more media coverage, fan support, and social media following. However, in recent years, the outstanding performance of Chinese women's basketball team has provided an opportunity for change in the social status of female athletes.

The outstanding performance of the Chinese women's basketball team in international competitions has attracted widespread attention in our country and provided a positive example for improving the social status of female athletes. The women's basketball team in China has emerged globally, elevating China's women's basketball to the global stage, and turning female athletes into respected idols and role models. This not only promotes the development of women's professional basketball, but also sets an example of gender equality in society. However, the gender gap in social status still exists, and bridging the gap requires the joint efforts of all sports people in society. In order to achieve this goal, firstly, it is necessary to improve the overall level of women's professional basketball in our country, rather than just improving the treatment of the Chinese women's basketball team. This includes improving the training conditions of each provincial and municipal team, and providing more competitive opportunities and resources to ensure that female athletes can demonstrate better skills and competitive levels in competitions. This move will also help to increase their visibility in terms of media coverage and sponsor attention, thereby improving their social status. In addition, China can promote and strengthen gender equality education in schools, society, and sports institutions, and gradually change people's ideas. Although China has vigorously improved the status of women in recent years, gender discrimination and stereotypes still exist, which not only hinders the development of female athletes, but also the development of our country ^[5]. To change or improve this situation, we can only gradually eliminate these obstacles through bottom-up education and publicity; enable more women to participate in professional basketball, so that they can obtain a higher social status in the field of competitive sports. Lastly, the rise of social media and digital technology has given female athletes more opportunities to showcase themselves. They can interact with fans through social media, share their professional and personal lives, and establish a positive and healthy personal image, which will help to expand their social influence and promote the realization of gender equality.

Although men have always dominated the history of competitive sports, the gap between male and female athletes has gradually narrowed due to generations of outstanding female sports; but the status gap still exists, and eliminating this gap cannot rely solely on one generation of female basketball players, but it requires the joint efforts of all female athletes in our country. The rise of Chinese women's basketball has provided

an important impetus for the social status of female athletes. By improving the overall level of professional basketball, strengthening gender equality education, and using social media, we can gradually narrow the gender gap, enable female athletes to gain their due status in society, and further promote gender equality ^[6]. This will not only have a positive impact on the sports world, but also set an example of gender equality in society.

5. Maintaining competitive level of female basketball players

To ensure that the social status of female basketball players steadily rises, the most important thing is to ensure that their competitive level can be maintained and that the training of reserve talents can be kept up. This is a comprehensive challenge that requires the coordinated efforts of all levels of society. First of all, a stable talent selection mechanism should be ensured; it is very critical to ensure the stability and consistency of talent selection. In the talent selection mechanism, the sports department and the education department should cooperate from the three aspects of talent selection, training, and development. Establishing a stable selection and development system can ensure that athletes can grow and compete in a consistent environment. The second strategy is to strengthen the support of provincial and municipal teams; from the perspective of a sports power, professional women's basketball teams in various provinces and municipalities should receive more support and resources, which can be achieved by increasing investment in funds, facilities, professional coaches, and overseas exchange opportunities. The economic foundation determines the superstructure. The women's basketball teams of each provincial and municipal representative team are the economic foundation of China's national women's basketball team. Therefore, this move can not only help the grassroots teams to obtain better resources, but also fundamentally improve our country's national women's basketball team of reserve talent supply, thereby improving the level of women's basketball in the entire country. The third strategy is to actively improve the quality of basic physical education; cultivate and encourage more female students to participate in basketball from the nine-year compulsory education, train students' physique and will, and cultivate students' interest and skills in basketball. In order to prepare for the selection of women's basketball reserve talents in various provincial and municipal teams, schools and the country can provide more basketball training and competition opportunities, better cultivate the basketball atmosphere in society, and strive for the cause of "lifelong sports." Fourthly, the popularization of basketball culture should be promoted; improving the social status of women's basketball also requires actively promoting the popularization of basketball culture. This can be achieved by organizing mass basketball games, enriching basketball programs, and producing documentaries about outstanding basketball players. When basketball becomes a popular cultural phenomenon, the social status of female basketball players also increases. Fifthly, gender equality should be promoted from the perspective of social concepts; promoting gender equality should start from both education and media, emphasize the importance and value of female athletes, publicize the shining points of female sports, and let more people gradually eliminate the stereotypes, thereby recognizing that women can also possess strength, speed, tenacity, and unyielding beauty, and enabling female athletes to gain more respect and support. Lastly, the commercialization process of women's professional basketball should be accelerated; the commercialization of women's professional basketball can provide more resources and opportunities for the players. Promoting the commercialization of women's professional basketball requires strengthening the marketing of games, improving the audience experience, and attracting the support of more fans and sponsors ^[7]. This will provide more business opportunities for athletes and improve the social status and professional identity of female basketball players.

To sum up, to improve the social status of female basketball players, we need to ensure that the competitive level does not decline. This can be done by stabilizing the selection mechanism, strengthening local team support, improving the quality of basic education, promoting basketball culture, advocating gender equality, accelerating the commercialization process, etc. Multi-angle and multi-level measures work together to promote the development of women's basketball, achieve gender equality, and improve social status.

6. Conclusion

The rise of the Chinese women's basketball team is an advancement in the field of professional basketball. All sectors of society should take comprehensive measures to ensure that female basketball players are treated fairly so that gender is no longer a criterion. In terms of salary and benefits, a transparent salary structure is introduced to ensure that each athlete receives compensation consistent with his or her competitive performance. In terms of market value, it will improve the brand promotion, exposure, and market competitiveness of women's basketball and provide more business opportunities for female athletes. In terms of social status, improving the overall level of women's basketball, strengthening gender equality education, promoting basketball culture, and accelerating the commercialization process will help to improve the social status of female athletes. Lastly, ensuring the sustainable development of the competitive level of Chinese female basketball players requires the joint efforts of the entire society, including establishing a stable selection mechanism, increasing support for local teams, improving the quality of basic education, popularizing basketball culture, and accelerating the commercialization process.

The rise of the Chinese women's basketball team has created a historical opportunity for all female competitive sports athletes in China and has become an important opportunity on the road to gender equality in China. With the joint efforts of all sectors of society, we are moving towards a more equal and inclusive future. Gender equality is not only a social mission, but also the key to promoting the sustainable development of professional basketball in China.

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