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OPINION

All four of us lost to trans athletes who took away our victories and opportunities

Trans athletes cost us college and career chances that sports were supposed to provide



OPINION By Selina Soule, Chelsea Mitchell, Alanna Smith, Ashley Nicoletti · Fox News

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Former track athletes fighting for fairness in girls sports

Former high school track athletes Chelsea Mitchell, Selina Soule, Alanna Smith, and Alliance Defending Freedom's Christiana Kiefer on federal appeals court in Connecticut to hear their case on protecting girls sports

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Athletic records matter. [As track athletes, our records serve](#) as an official recognition of our accomplishments and years spent training and competing. Athletic records also matter to scouts and college administrators determining scholarships and admittance. And they matter to future employers and job prospects.

Our records of athletic [achievement during our high school years](#) competing in track and field should have stayed on our resume and with us for life — opening doors for higher education, leadership, employment, and personal fulfillment.

But sadly, for the four of us, our records were tarnished, our accomplishments reduced and our opportunities diminished.

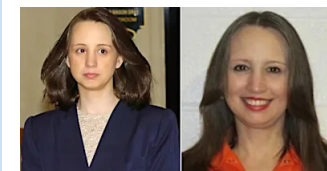
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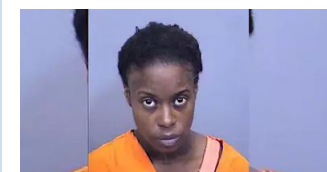
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Selina missed qualifying for the state championship 55-meter final and an opportunity to qualify for the New England Regional Championship by one spot in the 2018-19 season; two spots were taken by males.

Alanna ran a second-place finish in the 200-meter at the New England Regional Championships but was dropped to third behind a male competitor. Ashley missed an opportunity to compete at the 2019 outdoor State Open Championship due to two male competitors.

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So, together, we enlisted the legal help of Alliance Defending Freedom to file a lawsuit against the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference when we were just teenagers, applying for colleges and scholarships. CIAC's policy forced us to compete against – and lose to – biological male competitors, depriving us of our Title IX rights and tarnishing our athletic records.

For girls, athletic records especially matter. It wasn't until 1972 that women were even given an equal shot at playing sports, and we've been working overtime trying to catch up to the boys ever since. That's why Title IX exists: to give girls equal athletic opportunities. Athletic records serve a critical role in not only preserving women's achievements but also boosting the future of women's participation and success in sports.

Dozens of female athletes, many of whom are Olympians and champions in their respective sports, recently filed a brief in support of our case, decrying the unfairness of allowing males to compete in, and dominate, women's sports.

They explain how "the rules and record boards have not been fixed. We are not just haunted by our memories and experiences. We are forced to reckon with a public record that condones and historically celebrates our abuse and marginalization. This cannot be the legacy we leave for women and girls; for millions of human beings who are born female."



Chelsea Mitchell is one of several athletes suing over allowing transgender athletes to compete against girls. Doug, Christy, and Chelsea Mitchell, taken at the NCCC Indoor Track Championship, New Haven, CT on Feb 1, 2020 (senior year). Chelsea's team won the conference championship, and she had three gold medals in the 55m, 300m, and long jump. (Courtesy Christy Mitchell)

Who would have thought girls would have to fight the battle for equality all over again?

[The entire U.S. Court of Appeals](#) for the 2nd Circuit heard our case on June 6. On behalf of women and girls across the country, we are urging the court to protect the future of women's sports. This is so much bigger than the championship titles we should have won or the accomplishments we should be able to list on our resumes.

It's been over three years since we filed suit, and the courts still haven't addressed, let alone redressed, even one of the blatant Title IX violations done to us.

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As it stands, CIAC's policy degrades each of our accomplishments. CIAC must amend its policy to preserve fairness and equality, so no other girl will have to suffer the emotional and psychological distress and anxiety, we experienced from being forced to compete on an unfair playing field. Courts routinely recognize student athletes' ongoing interest in vindicating the records they've earned. And that's what we're asking the 2nd Circuit to do here.

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It pains us to see other women being deprived of medals, high-level opportunities to compete, and the recognition they deserve on the victory podium — all of which are important to scouts and could have harmed our own efforts to obtain college scholarships.

We don't want any other woman to have to try to explain her inaccurate athletic record to a future employer. Hiring managers and corporate executives will tell you that playing sports — and winning — gives an applicant a competitive edge in the job market.

As more than 40 business executives recently wrote in support of our case, "participation in high school athletics is correlated with career success," and also, "records of athletic accomplishment are predictably important to hiring decisions."

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We should be able to count on government officials, policymakers, and sports' governing bodies to properly uphold Title IX protections for female athletes. When a girl plays sports, she deserves a fair, accurate representation of her achievements, not records that have been permanently scarred. Her athletic accomplishments matter to scouts, scholarship committees, future employers, and customers.

But most of all, they matter to her, and her own sense of worth and pride in a job well done.

Chelsea Mitchell, Alanna Smith and Ashley Nicoletti are former Connecticut high school track-and-field athletes, and plaintiffs in Soule v. Connecticut Association of Schools.

Selina Soule is a former Connecticut high school track-and-field athlete, and a plaintiffs in Soule v. Connecticut Association of Schools

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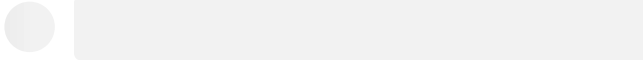
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