



BRAMS UNITED GIRLS SOCCER CLUB

8950 McLaughlin Road South, Building D
Brampton, ON L6Y 5T1
905-452-8169

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to examine the factors that affect the physical and emotional health of girls and women in sports. As an Ontario Soccer sanctioned organization that provides accessible soccer programs for girls and women in the City of Brampton, we have faced several barriers over the years for girls and women in sports. Brams United was founded to ensure that girls and women had equal access and opportunities as boys did to soccer programs, facilities, events, and much more.

Foremost, there is a lack of professional sport opportunities for girls and women in Canada. Girls and women do not see themselves participating in sports long-term as they are not able to see themselves advancing into careers in sports, or participation and competition from youth to adult. As we increase professional sport opportunities such as professional leagues for women, girls and women will be able to aspire competing or working long-term in sport, and it will make a positive impact in society, both the social and economic.

There is a significant gap in the number of female and male coaches and match officials. Females have expressed that they do not feel welcomed or safe to participate in licensing programs as majority of participants are male, and typically the instructors are male. Girls and women feel they are not able to share ideas or thoughts in these environments as they are critiqued or go unheard compared to their male counterparts.

Girls and women face some barriers as well to be able to contribute as a coach, match official, or a player as society has deemed women as caregivers and they feel they should be at home with their children/families. Additionally, we hear from girls that they must focus on their education and unable to participate in sports. There should be educational resources for families to access that better explain the benefits of girls and women participating in sports, and balancing education, family, and sports. Organizations should invest in research on how to make programs that have accessible schedules and options available to avoid these barriers for girls and women.

Harassment and abuse are reported in several forms by females in their roles either as a player, coach, etc. We need to have more access to safe reporting and making sure that organizations have more value for the safety of their athletes ahead of the liability they face if there is a situation of a predator or other forms of abuse have occurred. There needs to be zero tolerance policies in place at organizations (from community/grassroots up to professional) for these behaviours, but also have a safe place to file their concerns such as a third-party investigator.

Finally, we feel it would be important for sport governing bodies to build education to athletes as to what constitutes harm, and how they should expect to be treated. If adults were aware that information and education is being shared with athletes, so they know what athletes are expecting.

We appreciate your committee taking the time to make sport safer and accessible for girls and women.

Regards,

Melanie Bradley
General Manager
Brams United Girls Soccer Club