

# THE WOMEN IN SPORTS REPORT

By Holliss H, Maya G, and Isabel G

In honor of the NFL and WNBA draft last week, we wanted to recognize some amazing women working in football and summarize what we can expect for the WNBA in the upcoming season. More and more women are getting involved in football whether it's coaching, watching, playing, or behind the scenes work which is contributing to the exciting progress in creating a more inclusive sport. Women's basketball is also growing in popularity with this year's WNBA draft viewership rating up by 165% from last year, making it the most watched draft in 16 years.

## WOMEN IN FOOTBALL

The San Francisco 49ers have a growing number of women working to make the team what it is today. **Katie Sowers** is the Niners' Assistant Coach and the first woman to coach in the Superbowl. She is also the first openly gay coach in the NFL. Sowers has loved football her whole life and used to play everyday afterschool with her sister. After college she played professional football as a quarterback



and defensive back in the Women's Football Alliance and from there found her true passion for football and coaching. Since joining the 49ers in 2017, Sowers has worked to be the best coach she can be while also advocating for inclusivity within the NFL and all sports. In an interview with OutSports, Sowers said "No matter what you do in life, one of the most important things is

to be true to who you are. There are so many people who identify as LGBT in the NFL, as in any business, that do not feel comfortable being public about their sexual orientation. The more we can create an environment that welcomes all types of people, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, the more we can help ease the pain and burden that many carry every day." Her advice for everyone is to "have confidence and know that you're valuable." She says that embracing the mindset that "you cannot be replaced" is integral in pursuing your dreams, and encourages everyone to take on careers that represent their passions.

Other women working with the 49ers are **Hannah Gordan** who is the Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel, **Laura Johnson** who is the Senior Manager of Game Presentation and Live Events, **Harpreet Basran** who is the Vice President of Human Resources, and **Keiana Martin** who is a



Senior Team Sports Reporter. The wide presence of women within the 49ers team as well as throughout the fan base has recently led to the creation of the Women Of the Niners organization which is dedicated to supporting, uplifting, and bringing together women football fans.

**Charlotte Jones Anderson** is the Dallas Cowboys Executive Vice President and Chief Brand Officer. In 2012, Anderson was named Chairman of the NFL Foundation and is responsible for leading philanthropic efforts in player care, youth football, and medical research. Anderson is the



first woman Chairman for an NFL charitable institution, and the first woman to represent club ownership as leader of a major professional sports league foundation. Anderson lives and

breathes football and says, “my favorite days are game days!” Not only is Anderson committed to making the Cowboys a winning team, but she is also dedicated to representing the 46% of fans that are women. One of her primary focuses has been to reinvent the team’s branding and message to include the broadening fanbase.

**Lauren Spencer** is the social media supervisor for the New England Patriots. She handles all their day-to-day social media, sponsorships, and content building. Spencer has been inspired by the increasing number of women in sports and is proud to be a part of the 50% of the women in NFL social media, growing from 40% in 2017. Spencer shares that “women are proving, by example, that they not only belong in this space, but that they can succeed in this space.”



**Shireen Mansoori** is the Director of Rehabilitation for the Philadelphia Eagles, pursuing a career that combines her passion for sports and medicine. Mansoori played D1 basketball at The University of Washington, fulfilled her orthopedic residency at USC, and completed her Division 1 Athletics Fellowship at Duke University. Mansoori reminds young women to “never let anyone give you an excuse as to why you can’t do something” and is encouraged by the ongoing involvement of women in sports!



## WNBA DRAFT SUMMARY

On April 17th, the WNBA held a virtual draft, kickstarting what is said to be a pivotal year for the WNBA as they continue to gain fans and raise their profile. This year is also expected to bring a possible seventh straight gold medal for the U.S. women's basketball team at the Olympics in addition to increased promotional and financial investment from the WNBA in its players.

The first four picks of the draft went as many expected. As we briefly mentioned in our last report, The New York Liberty team had the first selection of the draft and chose Sabrina Ionescu. With the 2nd pick in the draft, the Dallas Wings chose Satou Sabally, another Oregon player. The Indiana Fever were next on the clock and chose Lauren Cox from Baylor University. In the 4th slot was the Atlanta Dream who chose Chennedy Carter from Texas A&M. Before the draft, the WNBA also honored the lives of Alyssa Altobelli, Gigi Bryant, and Payton Chester as honorary picks, and the league announced the Kobe and Gigi Bryant WNBA Advocacy Award.



The draft is three rounds long consisting of **36 players**. That's fully 25 percent of what the league can hold at maximum capacity, with rosters capped at 12 players each for 12 teams. For reference the NBA drafts **60** players each year. Recently, however, many teams are having to play with 11 on their roster to stay under the salary cap (which is **\$1.3 million**, while the NBA's is **\$109 million**). And unlike the NBA, the WNBA has no G League in which these players can

play their trade and wait for a call-up, causing a significant loss in the ability to have ever-increasing talent coming into the women's game.



We are super excited to continue sharing stories about incredible women in sports, and we hope you can find some inspiration and joy from it during these tough times.

Stay tuned for more next week's Women In Sports Report!

Find more stories and news with the hashtags **#Footballisfemale** & **#WNBA draft**