

The Role of Sport in society

What role do sports play in your life (as a participant or fan)? Explain in detail.

Why do you think sport is considered so important in society? Olympics, pro teams: NHL,NBA,NFL, etc...)

Why do people participate in sports? List all the reasons as you can.

Write an essay on how sport has helped social change. Try to choose a case where gender, race (ethnic background); or different ability (paralympics/special Olympics). Explain the situation and how it affected sport and the implications it has/had on society. (300+ words)

Ideas: **Jackie Robinson** (watch the movie 42)

Muhammed Ali

Jesse Owens

Arthur Ashe

MHSAA Girls playing boys hockey (human rights appeal)

Paralympics

In May 1991, Brown University demoted its women's gymnastics and volleyball teams from university-funded varsity status to donor-funded varsity status.

1968 Olympics

Special Olympics (EXAMPLE)

Large numbers of British and American disabled people were put away in institutions on the grounds that it was for their own good and the good of society. For example, in 1913, the passing of the Mental Incapacity Act in Britain led to around 40,000 men and women being locked away, having been deemed "feeble-minded" or "morally defective". Many disabled people living in hospitals, special schools and care homes are known to have suffered severe emotional and physical abuse.

Institutions regularly regarded their disabled residents as second-class citizens and showed them little respect. Staff often made little attempt to empathise with disabled people's experiences, denying them autonomy, choice and dignity and at times deliberately causing them pain and discomfort. In care homes and special schools for disabled children, there was sometimes hardly any attempt to meet the children's emotional needs or acknowledge their individual identities.ⁱ

In the early 1960s the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, DC, began to promote international games for individuals who were intellectually challenged. The Kennedy Foundation hired Dr. Frank Hayden, a well-known Canadian researcher in the area of fitness and people with disabilities, and thus the Special Olympic Games were initiated in 1968, primarily with athletes from the United States and Canada. Events were later added for athletes who were physically challenged. Hayden and other more recent investigators have shown that the low fitness levels demonstrated by athletes with intellectual disabilities in the 1960s and 1970s were the result of physical inactivity. Testing has shown that these athletes are among the fitness elite, not only in physical skills for their peer groups, but also, in many cases, when compared with other athletes. Today the Special Olympic Games are the second largest international events, next to the Olympic Games.ⁱⁱ

The Special Olympics is an opportunity for those with intellectual disabilities to be recognized for their physical accomplishments as athletes and not to focus on their disabilities. The popularity of the Special Olympics has given those with intellectual disabilities a venue to show the world their abilities that in many cases compare to all athletes. This gives all people, those with intellectual disabilities and without disabilities the hope of one day participating in the Olympics. This creates increased programs and funding for sports programs for those with disabilities as well. It also shows society that people are capable of great things even when they have a disability. It allows people to be judged for their abilities as opposed to their disabilities.

Today there are many programs for those with intellectual disabilities in today's society. Programs for sports, work and other areas of society are available because people with disabilities are seen for their abilities and how they can contribute. The way that people with intellectual disabilities are viewed and treated in our society today in many ways a result of the Special Olympics. As the Special Olympics has been a venue for 50 years celebrating the capabilities and achievements of those with intellectual disabilities.

ⁱ <http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2010/12/disabled-children-british>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.specialolympics.org/>