

Week 3 Artifact

Inside the Inequality: A 5-Week
Series on Women's Sports

August 11, 2025



Presented by:
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ICM 528: Content Creation
Summer II 2025 | Professor Hastings

Article Outline

Intro – being the #1 draft pick comes with risk

- Women's sports are growing in visibility
- High-profile stalking cases (Paige Bueckers, Caitlin Clark to name a small amount) show the safety gap

Abuse in sports is still widespread and underreported

- Anderson et al. data on prevalence of abuse
- Power imbalances and fear of retaliation or others not believing their stories is what keeps athletes silent

Online harassment

- Yu (2023) on disproportionate abuse toward women athletes
- Impact on mental health and career longevity
- Jacy vs. Caitlin Clark fans

Real-world examples of risk

- Details on Bueckers' and Clark's cases
 - Even top athletes (they were both the number 1 draft pick) lack proactive protection
- Can touch on other cases as well

Culture and leadership gaps

- DeSmith (2024) on male-dominated sports leadership
- How normalization of harassment perpetuates harm

Why current systems fail

- Shortcomings of SafeSport and similar policies
- Lack of trust in existing reporting channels
- Carelessness in the media

Steps forward & safety

- How can we keep athletes safe? Can the league provide security guards?
- Proactive risk assessment for high-profile athletes
- Transparency and accountability
- Digital safety and mental health resources
- Increasing women in leadership roles

Additional Research

Besides using my original bibliography, I conducted research for this article on the specific stalking cases of Paige Bueckers and Caitlin Clark.

Texas man arrested, charged with stalking Fever's Caitlin Clark

ESPN News Services

Jan 13, 2025, 11:33 AM ET

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A 55-year-old Texas man was arrested on a felony stalking charge in Indianapolis on Sunday after he allegedly repeatedly sent threats and sexually violent messages to [Indiana Fever](#) star [Caitlin Clark](#) via social media, according to court documents.

Police records show that Michael Lewis, of Denton, Texas, was charged with a Level 5 felony after he was arrested at a hotel in Indianapolis. He is scheduled to appear in court Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. ET.

Lewis could face up to six years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Man pleads guilty to stalking UConn's Paige Bueckers



Katie Barnes

Dec 18, 2024, 02:08 PM ET

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VERNON, Conn. -- A 40-year-old man arrested for stalking [UConn](#) basketball star [Paige Bueckers](#) pleaded guilty Wednesday to a second-degree charge at Rockville Superior Court.

Robert Cole Parmalee of Grants Pass, Oregon, received a one-year suspended sentence and three years' probation. According to the plea agreement, Parmalee must abide by the protective order that has been in effect since Sept. 16 and will remain in place until Jan. 4, 2064 and comply with treatment recommendations for his mental health.

He is barred from the state of Connecticut during his three-year probation.

In addition, Parmalee is barred from arenas, hotels and practice facilities where the UConn women's basketball team is present. The State's Attorney also added that the WNBA has barred him from all arenas and practice facilities.

Additional Research

I also conducted additional research on the protection of women athletes in general. I plan on referencing these articles in my blog post for this week, and in my final bibliography. I also referenced the hate that Jacy Sheldon received after a scuffle with Caitlin Clark.

CULTURE > FEATURES AND LONG READS

The Troubling Rise of Harassment and Stalking in Women's Sports

We tell female athletes to work hard to be the best in their sport—what we neglect to mention is what else they'll face at the top.

BY KATIE C REILLY PUBLISHED: MAY 15, 2025

SAVE ARTICLE |

Jacy Sheldon slammed with online hate comments following Fever scuffle

HELEN STORMS

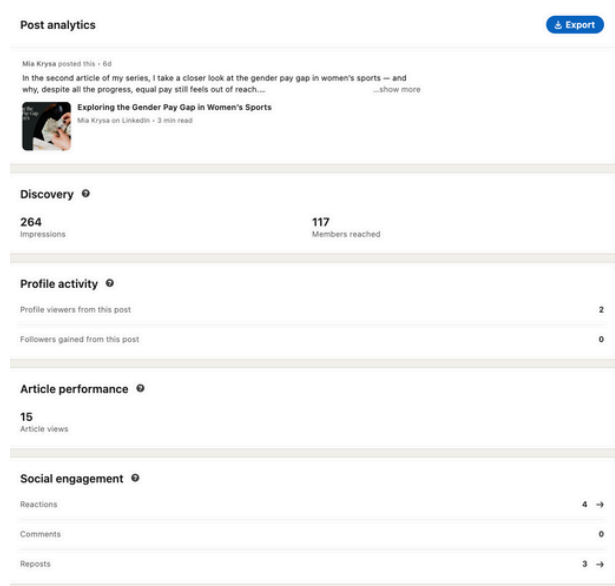
June 21, 2025 · 5:13 pm EDT



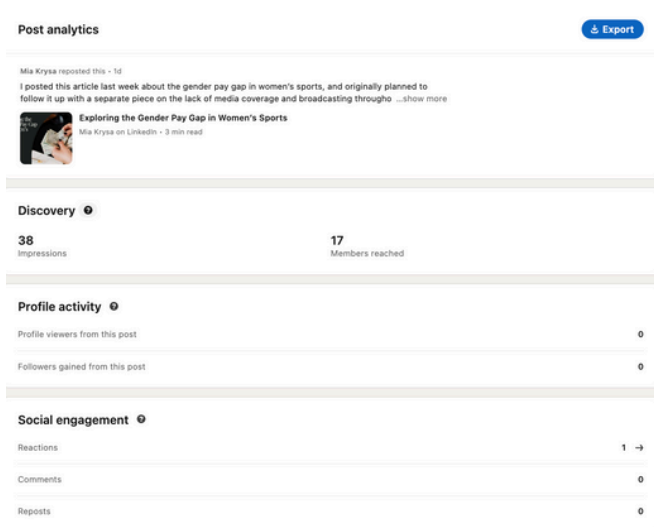
It's the scuffle that had everyone talking. During a game between the Indiana Fever and the Connecticut Sun on Tuesday, June 17, there were several heated moments between Sun guard [Jacy Sheldon](#) and Fever star Caitlin Clark.

Reflection on Last Week's Article

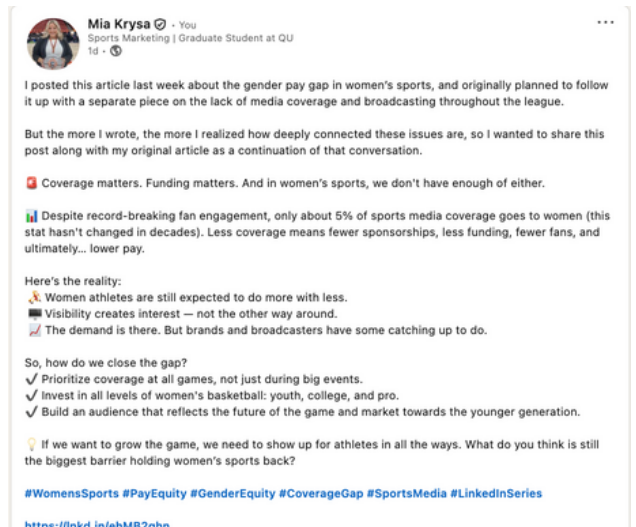
While deciding when to post this week's article, I took data from LinkedIn on last week's article and post. They performed significantly worse than my first article, even with two posts on different days of the week directing to the article. On the plus side, I receive a thoughtful repost.



Article 2, Post 1 Analytics



Article 2, Post 2 Analytics



Post 2

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With women's sports growing faster than ever, there is something we can't ignore -- the safety of pro and college athletes is on the line. Recent incidents with Paige Bueckers and Caitlin Clark have made that painfully clear. Both were stalked, with Clark's stalker now in prison, and both had to change their day-to-day lives because of safety threats. If the number one draft picks are not safe, what does that mean for athletes with less fame and fewer resources?

Abuse in Sports: A Persistent, Underreported Crisis

The reality is, women in sports face abuse at staggering rates. Emotional, physical, and sexual abuse are still far too common in athletic settings, often coming from people in power such as coaches or officials. A lot of these cases never go public because survivors worry about backlash or assume nothing will change. Remember Larry Nassar and the Fierce Five? That's just one example of this type of instance that I still remember vividly.

Even when there are policies in place, they often are not enforced. Without real accountability, abusers can stay in the system, moving between teams or programs without consequences, especially when they are men in high positions.

Online Harassment: The Digital Playing Field Is No Better

Social media has been a game changer for women athletes. It's a place to connect with fans, build a brand, and bring more attention and money to their sport. But it has also opened the door for nonstop gender-based harassment. In *Up to Speed*, Christine Yu talks about how women athletes face far more online abuse than their male counterparts, ranging from sexist comments to violent threats.

Even WNBA rivalries are not safe from online harassment. In June, after a scuffle between Jacy Sheldon and Caitlin Clark, Jacy's social media was filled with hateful and threatening comments from Clark's fans.

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Real-World Examples: When Fame Brings Risk

Bueckers' case got national coverage after her stalker traveled to Connecticut saying he was going to see her. He came across the country claiming he wanted to propose, even though they had never spoken. Clark's situation, on the other hand, got so bad it ended in a criminal sentence. Her stalker sent her messages saying he was outside her house or at her games. These cases prove that even the most famous women in sports often do not get real protection until things get dangerous. Paige's stalker never should have been able to step foot near UConn. That arrest should have happened long before.

If this is what happens to two of the biggest names in sports, imagine the risk for athletes without fame, money, or security teams.

The Role of Culture and Power

This is not just about hiring more security. It's about changing a sports culture that has looked the other way for far too long. In an [article](#) by Christy DeSmith, a Harvard staff writer, she points out how male-dominated leadership is in sports, from coaching benches to executive offices. That imbalance shapes which policies get prioritized and how seriously complaints are handled.

Too often, harassment and abuse are brushed off as "part of the job" for public figures, instead of being treated as serious human rights violations. This mindset keeps the cycle going and silences athletes.

Why Current Policies Are Not Enough

Even with organizations like the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#), there are still huge gaps. Yes, athletes can file reports, but many don't trust the system. Investigations can take a long time, and sometimes it feels like the priority is protecting reputations instead of victims. In *Up to Speed*, Yu points out that without visible and consistent enforcement, policies don't mean much. Real safety takes follow-through and real consequences that actually stop these crimes.

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Steps Toward Real Protection

Athlete Protection with Bodyguards

- Create truly independent organizations, completely separate from leagues, governing bodies, and sponsors, to investigate abuse and harassment claims. This removes conflicts of interest and puts athlete safety first.

Proactive Protection for High-Profile Athletes

- For players in the spotlight, there should be standard safety plans in place before anything happens. This includes monitoring threats, securing venues, and access to legal and mental health support for athletes.

Accountability and Transparency

- Investigations need to lead to real outcomes. Publish results publicly, and punish anyone found guilty of abuse from coaching, sports venues, or administrative jobs permanently.

Mental Health and Digital Safety Support

- Yu calls for better education and resources to fight online abuse, including partnerships with social platforms to monitor, report, and remove harmful content. Mental health care should be part of this as well.

Cultural Change from the Top Down

- Increasing the number of women in leadership positions changes priorities and makes sports safer for everyone.

A Call to Action

Celebrating women's sports is important, but it is not enough. Real equity means athletes should be able to compete, travel, and live without fearing for their safety. Threats, harassment, and abuse are not just part of the game. They are serious violations that require urgent action. If Caitlin Clark has to change her routine because of a stalker, or Paige Bueckers cannot feel safe on her own campus, something is seriously broken. We already have the research. We have the stories. Now we need the will to act, so the next generation of women athletes can focus on playing, not surviving.

Article Graphic & Scheduling Post

For this week's article, I'm using the same article graphic I usually do, with royalty-free images. I want to keep the article covers uniform and consistent. After reading through my article again and double-checking the article graphic I made in Canva, I schedule my post for Monday, August 11th, and begin prep for next week.

Schedule post ×


Mon, Aug 11, 9:45 AM Eastern Daylight Time, based on your location

Date

8/11/2025

Time


9:45 AM 🕒


 **Mia Krysa** ▼
Post to Anyone ×

🌐 Posting Mon, Aug 11 at 9:45 AM [Edit](#)

Paige Bueckers. Caitlin Clark.

Two of the biggest names in women's sports — and both have been stalked, threatened, and forced to change how they live their lives. If this is happening to athletes with massive platforms, imagine what it's like for the ones without security teams, national media attention, or resources. Harassment, abuse, and stalking aren't "part of the game," and the systems in place aren't working. In this week's article, I [dig](#) into the stories, [the](#) research, and [the](#) cultural gaps in sports.

 Let me know what you think! 👍🗨️



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🕒 [Schedule](#)