



116th historical "tidbit."
Dr. John S. Dahlem

**HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION (CIF-SS)**



Phyllis Blatz
Physical Education

PHYLLIS BLATZ
Early Leader in the Girls' Sports Movement

In the early 1970's Phyllis Blatz became one of the foremost leaders in the establishment of girls' sports in the CIF-SS. She went onto to a distinguished career that fought against the antiquated belief that girls should not compete on an equal basis with the boys.



**PHYLLIS BLATZ JOINS
CIF-SS STAFF**

Assuming the newly created post of CIF-SS Administrative Assistant for Girls' Athletics on September 1 was Phyllis Blatz of Chaffey High School in Ontario. Ms. Blatz, Chairman of the Girls' Physical Education Department for the last ten years, is now wearing two hats daily, professionally speaking, with a couple more in reserve. Having relinquished her department head seat to accept the CIF position, she teaches at Chaffey HS until noon, drives to Artesia, and continues her work day at the CIF-SS Office. In addition, chairing such committees as the California Girls and Women's Committee on Girls' Interscholastic Competition and the Girl's Sports Advisory Committee of the CIF Federated Council consume a share of her time.

Professional organizations include the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; California Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; California Coaches Association, Officiating Services Area, CTA, and NEA.

It may be difficult for Phyllis to find time these days for her cabin at Big Bear or to enjoy her leisure time interests of golfing, pool, bicycling, or beachwalking. She faces a tremendous task in coordinating an initial 9-sport interscholastic athletic program for girls throughout the CIF-SS for 1973-74. As she says, "Attempting to organize and implement a new girls' sports program within Southern Section will necessarily be a slow process because individual girls' leagues have developed independently under the direction of women coaches. Many of the schools currently have excellent programs for girls. One of the challenges in coordinating these programs will be to establish better lines of communication among principals, women coaches, and the CIF-SS. We anticipate greatly improved opportunities for highly talented girls as a direct result."

Ms. Blatz, a University of California at Berkeley graduate, is a Southern California product and professional. Born in Pasadena, she has taught in La Puente, Sonoma, and Ontario for the past 17 years with emphasis in Physical Education. In addition she has coached softball, basketball, tennis, and bowling teams. Graduate and teaching assistant work were experienced at Berkeley, UCLA, Washington, and Cal State L.A.

Phyllis as a student at Chaffey
High School
1952



G.A.A. (Girls Athletic Association)
photo from Chaffey High School in the
early 1950's



Championship Play for Girls Sanctioned

BY LARRY LANE

Times Staff Writer

With the new school year, the California Interscholastic Federation is getting down to the business of separating the men from the women.

Score one for the women.

It's a step toward separate equality, if you please, the first move the 447-member Southern Section, the state's largest, has made to establish interschool play for women.

Nine sports in all, including the "major" sports of basketball, softball, tennis and track, will have women's championships sanctioned by the CIF.

In fact, says Phyllis Blatz, coordinator of the girls' program, the CIF will invest \$20,000 during the 1973-74 year to promote and plan women's activities.

Score one here for the men, for it is from money derived from the boys' playoff games that will fund the girls' program.

"The fact that the move was made," says Ms. Blatz, "keeps me from dwelling to long on my belief that action was long overdue. But I must say it once. It was long overdue."

About one of every three CIF-member schools has indicated an interest in fielding at least one girls' team, she says.

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"My biggest problem is telling people what CIF is and what it can do for girls," Ms. Blatz adds. (CIF headquarters is located at Gahr High School in Cerritos.)

One of the big selling points, of course, is tournament play at season's end. Under the traditional Girls Athletic Assn. (GGA), "field days" with neighboring schools were the big women's program events.

"Now we will have legitimate areawide champs, team and individual as the sport dictates," she says.

Ms. Blatz, chairwoman of Chaffey High School's (Ontario) girls physical education and athletic department in addition to her part-time CIF duties, says separate sports away from the boys' program is a move she favors.

"Few women have the ability to compete in a men's program," she notes. "Working it this way allows women with all degrees of ability to compete."

She sees a time, however, when some women's sports may rival the same male sports in popularity.

"I don't think we are looking too many seasons ahead when we think about women's playoffs attracting enough attendance to pay its own way at CIF level," Ms. Blatz notes. "The problem now is to get the program funded at the campus level."

To get funds, she says, the girls' program must rely on the student body—the same source from which the boys' program gets financial aid.

"The boys' program has already proved itself and therefore gets priority for money," she says. "We have to prove the girls' program — but we can't prove anything with the funds that give us the first chance."

Despite roadblocks, Ms. Blatz predicts the girls' program can only head one way: toward improvement in the number of participants and the number of participating schools.

The old stereotype of "a girls place is in the sewing room" only tends to label one a sexist, not a hero of his sex, anymore, she says.



By LINDA ZINK

Staff Writer

Barely a month on the job and already, Phyllis Blatz has her hands full.

No time for get-acquainted conversations or a gradual breaking in...there are schedules to set up, contacts to make, details to work out and always, questions to answer.

Besides, in four hours a day, Ms. Blatz is attempting to accomplish what should probably occupy two employes working full-time.

It's a hectic schedule, this job which requires an hour-and-a-half commute each day, but to Phyllis Blatz, first coordinator of girls' sports for the Southern Section of the California Interscholastic Federation, getting results is important.

"Right now, I suppose the most important thing I'm doing is trying to open the lines of communication between the CIF Southern Section and its member schools.

"Understandably, there's a lot of confusion right now. After all, we're trying to do something new and it's going to take time to get things running smoothly."

Ms. Blatz, who was chairman of the girls' physical education department at Chaffey High School in Ontario for 10 years, was appointed to the newly-created position last spring after the Executive Board of the Southern Section of the CIF (the body which governs high school athletic competition) ruled that girls' interscholastic competition would be brought under the jurisdiction of the CIF. In the past, only boys competition has been affected by CIF rules.

THE DECISION was made, Ms. Blatz explained, in an attempt to upgrade and expand sports programs for girls. Law suits at the state level on

behalf of girls and their parents who felt that girls' competition is inferior to boys' was behind this decision by the all-male Executive Council.

"Naturally, it was difficult for me to give up the department chairmanship in order to take this job," said Ms. Blatz, who still teaches physical education parttime at Chaffey. "But in the end I decided that promoting girls' athletics was more important to me right now."

Ms. Blatz' office in the CIF's Southern Section office in Cerritos reflects the newness of her job. The office isn't really an office at all — it's a desk and a telephone in the foyer of the building.

But the make-shift accommodations didn't seem to affect the Section's first — and only — woman administrator. "I've heard that one of the office's administrative assistants camped out here for a year before they finally found space for him."

In the conference room — which, like Ms. Blatz' foyer office, is lined with photographs of men and boys only — the new girls' coordinator detailed some of the problems she will face in bringing about the participation of member schools.

"The CIF Southern Section is a large, unwieldy area which, except for Los Angeles city and San Diego County, extends south to the Mexican border, north to northern San Luis Obispo County and east to Nevada.

"In it are more than 400 member schools which range in size from the largest urban high school to the tiniest all-girls private academy."

But size alone would not be a problem if Ms. Blatz had the total cooperation of women coaches. Many of these coaches, Ms. Blatz explained, feel threatened by the new ruling.

"BECAUSE THE CIF had so totally ignored girls' sports for so many years, people interested in girls' competition tended to organize their own interscholastic programs. Today, many of these programs are operated separate from even the CIF-designated leagues.

"A lot of these women are very jealous of what they've created. They don't want any interference from the CIF now."

Ms. Blatz understands this possessiveness — and also understands why many other schools are balking at participation because of the massive amount of work that bringing their schools into line with CIF regulations will involve.

"Just the simple matter of checking eligibility is going to mean a whole lot more work for girls' physical education staffs," Ms. Blatz explained. "Boys P.E. departments usually have clerical people who do this sort of thing. Most girls' programs don't."

Scheduling is another problem, Ms. Blatz said. "For years, the various girls leagues have been scheduling their competition wily-nily with no particular regard to established sports seasons. Now the CIF is telling them when a sport must be played, for how long and under what conditions."

Because the new ruling affects only interscholastic competition (competition between schools), Ms. Blatz believes that many schools may try to get around it by denying that they have interscholastic competition. Already, she has had some indication that this is happening. Checking on schools' adher-

ence to the new program will be one of her jobs.

Ms. Blatz is hoping for extensions and, in some cases, a total revision of the rules to make schools more favorable toward bringing their programs in line with the new regulations.

"WHILE WE don't want too many conflicts between the boys rules and the girls rules, we also don't want schools to feel threatened by bringing their programs under CIF jurisdiction.

"We understand the problems member schools are going to have — financially and otherwise. We want to make this transition as painless as possible."

Ms. Blatz believes that in the long run the move will have the effect of improving girls' sports programs in both quality and status. Already, there are tentative plans for sectional championships in the nine CIF-approved sports for girls. Boys have always had sectional championships, Ms. Blatz noted, but in the past, a league title was the highest honor a girls' team could hold.

Also planned is a state championship in track and field, which will be held in conjunction with the boys' championship May 31-June 1. A similar program was tried last year for the first time, though, as Ms. Blatz disappointedly noted, the girls' events were held in an auxiliary stadium and no one saw them.

ANOTHER PART of Ms. Blatz job is keeping track of girls who take advantage of another new CIF ruling which permits girls to try out for boys athletic teams. The decision was reached last spring by the state CIF and approved in June by the Southern Section. Leagues (such as Long Beach's Moore League) were also give the power to accept or reject the resolution. According to Ms. Blatz, most leagues have acted favorably. "I'll be wanting to know how many girls take advantage of this new provision — and how many infractions there are."

Ms. Blatz is hopeful, however, that not all the publicity will be directed toward those girls who compete on boys' teams. "The important thing is the development of girls programs," she said. "While I think a girl who is a fine athlete deserves recognition, I wouldn't want to see all the publicity to go to a girl who plays on a boys' team — especially if it's just because she's a girl."

Ms. Blatz, who has been teaching high school physical education since 1959, comes to her new job well-prepared to handle problems as they arise. For the past two years, she has served as a member of the advisory committee on girls' sports to the CIF Southern Section Executive Committee. Also, as chairman of the state competition committee of the Division for Girls and Women's Sports of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (an affiliate of the National Education Association), she sits on an advisory committee on girls' sports to the state level CIF Federated Council.



THE PICTURE-LINED WALLS of the conference room at CIF Southern Section headquarters in Cerritos provides a sub-

tle reminder to Phyllis Blatz, first coordinator of girls' sports, that the organization was previously all-male.

—Staff photo by RON CARLSON

Phyllis as a student at the University of California



Chaffey High School



Girl's P.E.

Row 1: Noreen Kistner, Nancy Raisbeck, Karen Berry, Sue Davenport
 Row 2: Cherrie Carlisle, Janelle Epperson, Pat French, Susan Boyette
 Row 3: Phyllis Blatz, Marjorie Cummins, Donna Edler.

Chaffey High School 1975 Yearbook

TYPICAL FEMALE ATHLETE



TENNIS RACKET:
Always ready for the serve.

LEFT EYE:
Partially closed due to excessive work on the archery field. (Aim is the name of the game)

JEWELRY:
Notice the brave opposition of wearing jewelry even though it's not allowed. (teachers number one pet peeve)

SOFTBALL GLOVE:
Permanently attached to hand because of constant softball practice.

SHIN GUARDS:
Extremely useful during scramble while fighting for classes.

GENERAL APPEARANCE:
Badminton outfit, baseball glove, hockey stick, track shoes . . . typical female athlete.

G.A.A. SWEATER:
Obviously not worn for fear of getting a dirt smudge before she wears it the hundredth time.



FACE:
Notice the "It's Cool" look on her face.

OUTFIT:
Badminton dress to insure femininity. (note: wardrobe consists of blue jeans, tennis shoes, sweat shirt)

FIELD HOCKEY STICK:
Used to beat off muggers and rapists while walking down the aisle during films.

KNEES:
Badly bruised because of outstanding performance on the Volleyball court's floor.

ODD-LOOKING DOORSTOP:
Notice the dramatic exit of the girl's locker room. (Every one knows its her because she's the only girl in school that opens the door with her foot — regardless of who is on the opposite side)



Phyllis Arline Blatz - August 25, 2007 - Obituary

Phyllis A. Blatz, teacher and mentor to hundreds of students and physical education teachers, passed away August 4, 1957 after a courageous battle with ovarian cancer. Phyllis was born in Pasadena and raised in the Pomona Valley area, graduating from Chaffey High School in 1952. After earning her B.A. degree in Physical Education from UC Berkeley, she began teaching in La Puente, moved on to Sonoma Valley USD, and returned to teach at her alma mater from 1959-88. While at Chaffey she was Department Chair, Girls Athletic Director and served as a master teacher and mentor teacher. During this time, she became an active member of the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD), where, among other positions she served as Chair of the Girls and Women in Sport section and later as CAHPERD President. **In the early 1970's she was instrumental in convincing the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to begin sanctioning sports for high school girls for the first time. The struggle to gain equity for girls and women in sport under Title IX remained a top priority throughout her career.** She was the first high school teacher to be elected President of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, was a founding member of the Calif. Women Coaches Academy, was a charter member of the Women's Sports Foundation and a member of the Western Society for Physical Education of College Women. In 1988, Phyllis left high school teaching to become Executive Director of CAHPERD where she remained until her retirement in 1999. She received numerous professional awards at the local, state and national levels, culminating in a CAHPERD Exemplary Leadership Award named in her honor. Since "retiring," she had been a Lecturer and Field Work (Student Teaching) Supervisor for CSU Dominguez Hills and CSU Long Beach. Phyllis will be remembered by everyone she touched for her warm and caring attitude, her wise and creative professionalism, and her exemplary administrative skills. She is survived by numerous cousins, her longtime partner, Beverly Stunden, and many, many friends.

