The Pay Equity Battle Rages On for U.S. Soccer

BY LYNETTE PACZKOWSKI • JULY 11, 2019

In March, this blog covered how 28 members of the then-reigning world champion United States women's soccer team had filed a gender discrimination lawsuit, focusing on pay equity and working conditions. While there have not been any major developments in that lawsuit, the recent World Cup repeat victory for the U.S. women has brought the pay equity debate raging to the forefront of the national (and international) consciousness.

At the same time the U.S. women were celebrating their World Cup victory, the U.S. men's team was losing the Gold Cup final to Mexico, 1-0. The unparalleled and sustained excellence of the women's team fuels the fire for those who argue the men are getting paid more for achieving less.

It has been reported that in recent weeks, more than 50 members of Congress wrote to the U.S. Soccer Federation to demand it pay the women's team fairly. Members noted that the women receive roughly $30,000 less for a base salary than their male counterparts and less bonus money for making it to the World Cup ($15,000 versus $55,000), yet the women have generated more total revenue than the men's team in the previous three years.

At the international level, although FIFA doubled the prize money for this year's Women's World Cup, making $30 million in prize money available, the 2018 World Cup for men had a prize money pool of $400 million.

In any event, with the next World Cups years away for both the men and the women (2022 and 2023, respectively), the U.S. women will certainly be riding this high tide through the next stages of their legal battle.

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