

Pink-Blue Gender Labelling: An Overview of the Origins of Inequality in Women's Wrestling

H. Karnincic, A. Penjak and M. Cavala

*Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Split, 06, Nikola Tesla Street, 21000 Split,
Republic of Croatia*

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ABSTRACT The objective of this paper involves two related ideas. The first one is to provide a historical overview of women's wrestling from ancient times until the present day. The second one is to determine the influence of historical context on the development of women's wrestling and, more generally, on the position of women in a wider sports sphere. The historical overview provides an example of women's wrestling in Sparta, Rome, Antioch and China. The overview examines women's positions within the institutions that nurtured wrestling in Nubia, Japan, India, Iran, Turkey and Greece. The correlations are then drawn between women's wrestling in the ancient and the modern worlds. Women's roles in wrestling have always been closely related to the position of women within sport, as well as to their position in society in general. With the exception of women's wrestling in Antioch, all other examples presented depict varying states of sexual inequality within this sport.