Sports for All

The Impact of Title IX



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What Is Title IX?

Girls have always enjoyed playing sports. But before Title IX, they did not always have the chance to play on school sports teams. For years, those teams were mainly for boys. It was also rare for a girl to win an athletic **scholarship** to college.

Then, along came Title IX. Passed in 1972, the new law said that if a school received **federal** funding, it had to give girls equal opportunities to play sports. That meant schools had to create teams and provide equipment and uniforms for female athletes.

The benefits to girls under Title IX were clear, but obeying the new law required major social change. How would the country react?

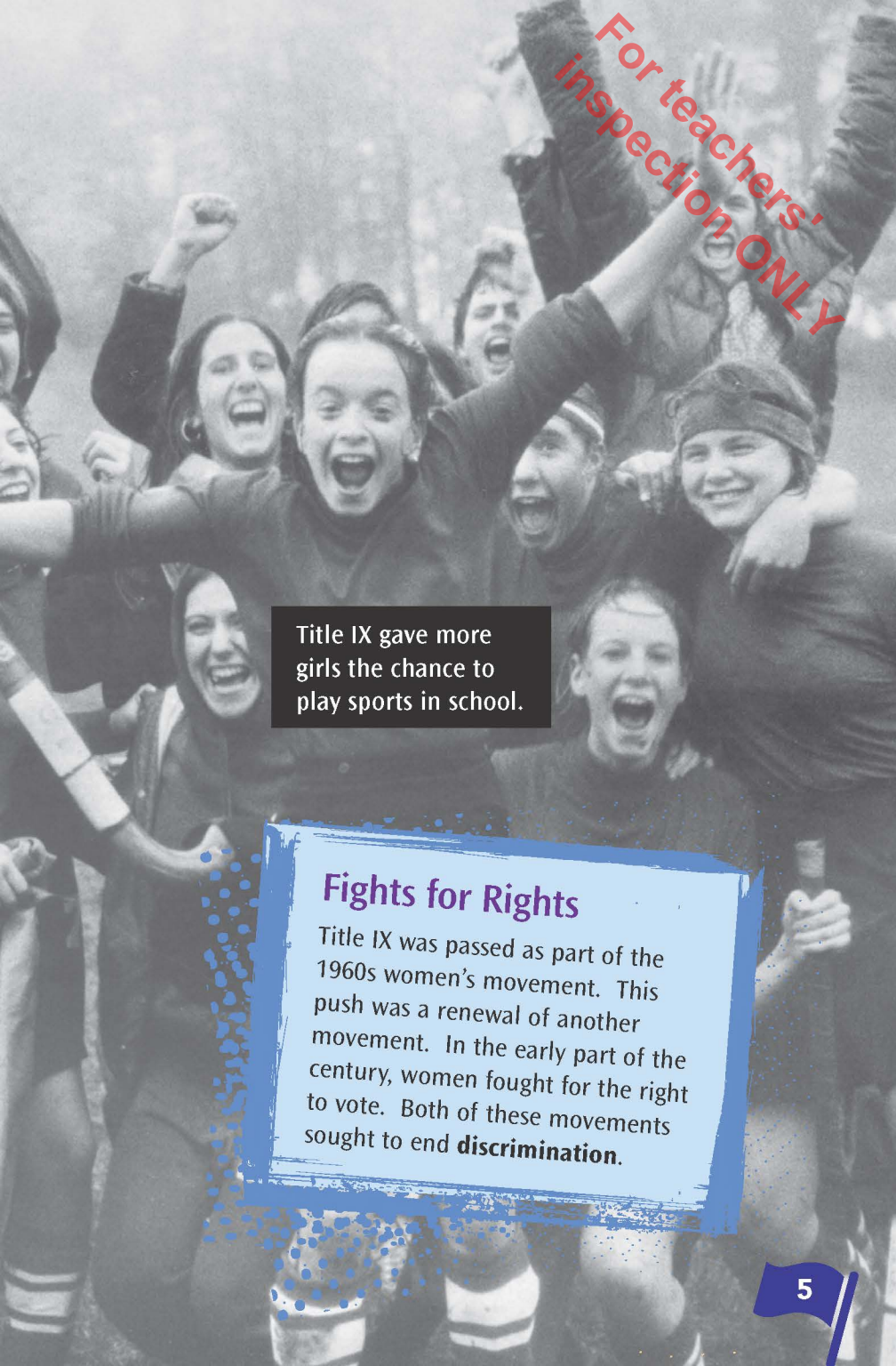




It's the Law!

Title IX states that no one can be stopped from joining "any education program or activity" at a school that receives money from the government. This means it is against the law to stop girls from joining sports teams and other programs just because they are girls.

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Title IX gave more girls the chance to play sports in school.

Fights for Rights

Title IX was passed as part of the 1960s women's movement. This push was a renewal of another movement. In the early part of the century, women fought for the right to vote. Both of these movements sought to end **discrimination**.

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The Backstory

Faulty science was partly to blame for discrimination against girls in sports. In the 1870s, people thought girls were weak. They thought girls could not handle both academic and physical activities.

More false ideas were added over the years. People said girls were not good team players. Some thought women who played sports were not **feminine**. They believed athletic girls would have a hard time getting married.

Many girls were **discouraged** or scared away from playing sports. That helped spread the false idea that girls did not like playing sports.

Now vs. Then

Beliefs about girls in sports have changed a lot since Title IX was passed. Today, people know that girls—just like boys—can handle academics, school activities, sports, and having social lives. Studies actually show that most athletic girls get better grades than girls who do not play sports. Female athletes are also more likely to graduate from high school.





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On Their Own

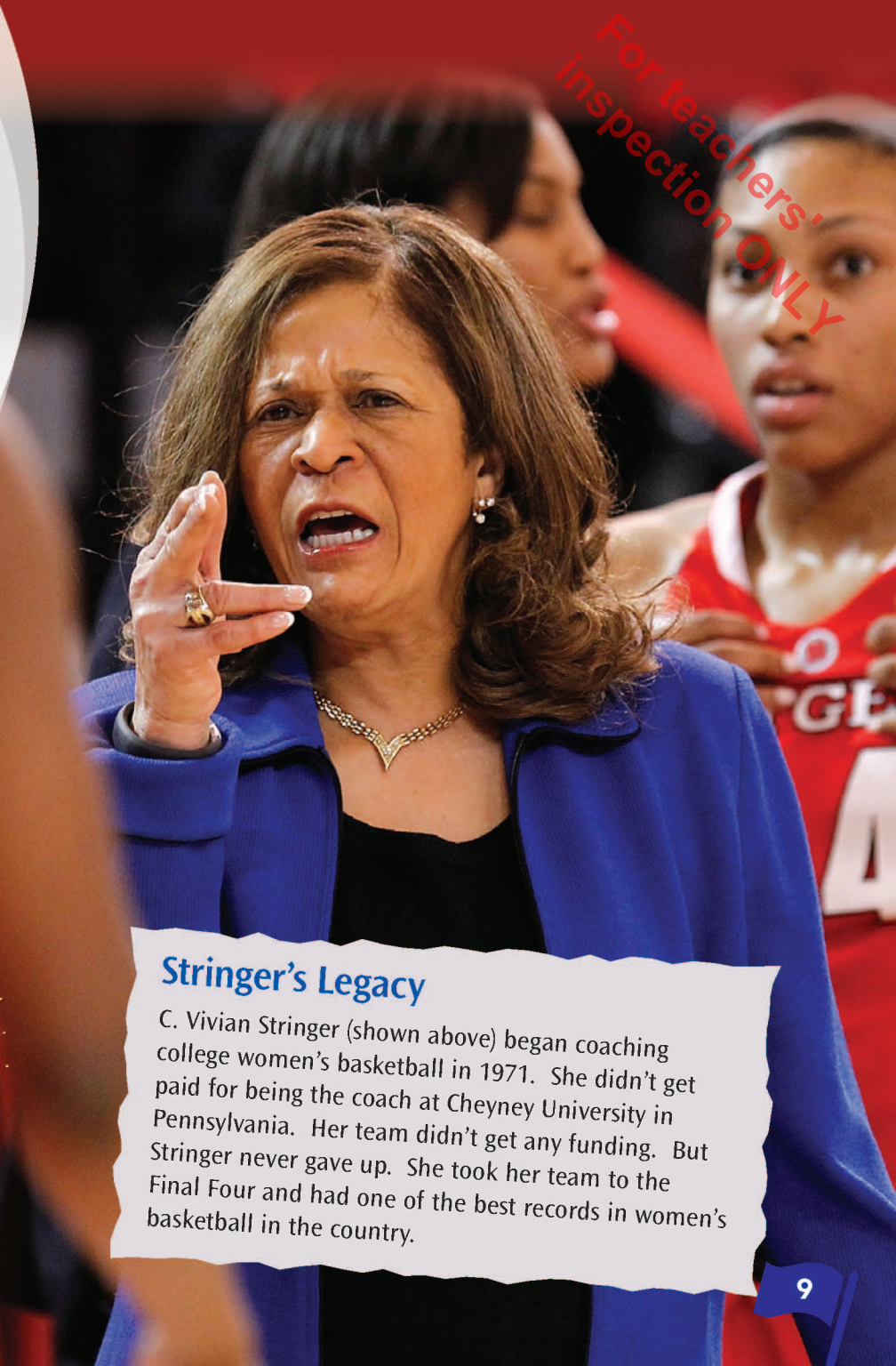
Before Title IX, many girls found ways to play sports, but it was not easy. Female athletes had to make their own opportunities in the late 1960s. They organized their own teams and made their own uniforms. They held fundraisers, such as bake sales and car washes, to raise the money they needed.

Athletic girls played sports for the pure joy of it. They knew that they would not have large crowds show up to watch them play. Scholarships for girls were almost nonexistent. Still, female athletes worked hard to build and improve their skills.

Pay to Play

Lynn Colella was a student at the University of Washington in the late 1960s. She was a great swimmer. But her college only had a swimming club for women, not a team. To travel to swim meets, Colella and her teammates sold fruit to pay their way. Her hard work paid off. Colella went on to win a silver medal in the 1972 Olympic games.

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Stringer's Legacy

C. Vivian Stringer (shown above) began coaching college women's basketball in 1971. She didn't get paid for being the coach at Cheyney University in Pennsylvania. Her team didn't get any funding. But Stringer never gave up. She took her team to the Final Four and had one of the best records in women's basketball in the country.

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Reader's Guide

1. What stereotypes existed about girls and women before Title IX?
2. What are some arguments against the law?
3. How did Title IX help girls and women in sports?
4. What are some ways the law helped people outside of sports?

