
Women's Sport in Scotland During World War I – so NOW we can golf whenever we want - and even play football!

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Résumé

This paper examines women in sport in Scotland during World War I, demonstrating controlled inclusion and exclusion. During the war women's golf became a financial lifeline for an exclusive golf club, and women's football became a popular diversion. Primary sources from The National Records of Scotland and The National Library of Scotland document the fortunes of several golf clubs, and minute books and correspondence provide context. This evidence shows that before the war women's access to exclusive golf courses was tightly controlled. During the war the absence of male participants created financial difficulties; the North Berwick Golf Club solved its financial problems by granting unprecedented access to women golfers, while raising their fees. This enabled the club to meet its financial obligations and to improve its financial position. Once the war ended, pre-war limitations on women's use of the facilities were quickly restored. War time increased women's access to golf, a game that had already been considered acceptable for them. In contrast, women playing football had not been acceptable, but during the war women's football matches were widespread and popular. Peace time saw women once again excluded from football facilities.

Scottish society had to put aside its image of what was proper behaviour for women in sport and in many occupations, just to get through the war. Once the crisis was over, societal forces worked to reassert pre-war norms. Earlier ideas of what was 'ladylike' and what was not once more excluded football completely and reimposed tight controls on golf. The genie was stuffed back into the bottle, for now...

Biography:

Wilda is a recent graduate of the University of Guelph European Studies and Tri-University History master's programs. Working with both sport historian Dr. Alan McDougall and Scottish historian Dr. Kevin James, her research has centered on sport in Scotland.

Mots-Clés: women, golf, football, Scotland, war

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