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# To Win in Toulouse: Exploring the First Women's Sports Movement outside Paris in the 1920s.

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## Résumé

In France, the first step in the development of women's sports was to separate them from men's institutions. In 1917 in Paris, the leaders of the first three women's clubs founded a 'federation of French women's sports clubs' (FSFSF), chaired from 1919 onwards by Alice Milliat (1884-1957). This original federation played a major role in promoting women's sports across the country. However, although Paris was certainly ahead in terms of participation in sport, new institutions emerged outside the capital. This paper therefore presents research that combines local history (that of the city of Toulouse, 175,000 inhabitants, capital of the Occitanie region), the history of sport and the history of women at the time of Milliat's dynamic National Federation. The sources used are the local general press (*La Dépêche*), the national sports press (*L'Auto*) and FSFSF newsletters (*La Femme sportive*, *Sportives*). Initial findings show that the first public women's competition in Toulouse was a football match in April 1922 between *Femina Tolosa Sports* and *Cadettes de Gascogne*. However, later, it was 'barette', an invented version of rugby for women, that was played more often by the athletes of these clubs. The Toulouse women played against players from Agen (23,500 inhabitants, 110km north-west of Toulouse) and were regular finalists in the FSFSF French championship. The local press also shows that women in Toulouse were playing volleyball as early as the 1920s at *Clémence Isaure Sports*, which also offered athletics. This ongoing research aims to compile an inventory of existing local women's clubs, the sports they offer, the regularity of competitions, their longevity in the interwar period, and to identify the athletes in order to trace their life stories. Finally, links with local feminist circles will be examined, as will the various forms of resistance that these early sportswomen may have faced.

**Mots-Clés:** Women's Sports History, Local Sports History, Gender History, Toulouse, France

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